

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## 1. Name of Property

historic name The Hardcastle Store

other names/site number Countryview Grocery, WA-201

## 2. Location

street & number 7286 Cemetery Road

NA
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not for publication

city or town Bowling Green

x
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vicinity

state Kentucky code KY county Warren code 227 zip code 42103

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Signature of certifying official/Title Mark Dennen, SHPO Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office**

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register

other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

NA

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE – department store

Vacant/Not in Use

COMMERCE/TRADE – specialty store

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century/Turn of the Century Rural  
Country Store

foundation: STONE

walls: WOOD weatherboard

roof: ASPHALT shingles

other: CONCRETE

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## Narrative Description

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### Summary Paragraph

The Hardcastle Store (WA-201) is located at 7286 Cemetery Road (Highway 234) in Warren County, Kentucky, and stands about 7 miles southeast of downtown Bowling Green, the county seat and a regional trade center. The Hardcastle Store was constructed circa 1888 and is a fine example of a late-19<sup>th</sup>-century rural general store. It is a one-story front-gable building with a nearly full-length shed-roofed side addition of indeterminate date. Inside, many of the original fixtures and fittings survive, including a tongue and groove counter, an 1873 safe, and shelving. The store served as a general store and meeting place for the local farming community, and as a stopping point for people traveling on the Barren River, which flows adjacent to the property. The surrounding area was very rural at the time it was built and largely remains so today.

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## Narrative Description

### Character of site

The Hardcastle Store stands on the east side of State Highway 234 and faces south. The Barren River runs just behind the store, down a steep and tree-lined embankment (see photo 5). The 1.57-acre lot on which the building stands includes the embankment in back, a gravel parking lot in front, and land on all sides. A tall post stands a few feet to the west of the building and is topped by a blue red and white sign that features a Royal Crown logo and the words: "Countryview Grocery". There are some houses and buildings in the immediate vicinity of the store, though in general, the setting outside the nominated property retains its rural character.

### Exterior Description of Store

The wood-framed building stands on a continuous cut stone foundation. The main part of the building has a rectangular plan and was constructed in 1888 by Francis Marion Hardcastle and Ewing Hardcastle, two brothers from a local family. The addition runs most of the east side of the building. The addition was probably added not long after the original construction, and echoes the style of the earlier part. The exterior walls of the building largely consist of wooden weatherboarding and are painted white.

The front door stands in the center of the original portion's front façade (see photos 1, 6 and 7). Three poured-concrete steps run the length of the front elevation of the original building and a few feet beyond on the west side. On the east side, in front of and slightly beyond the shed-roofed addition, poured concrete forms a solid pedestal-type block. The front door itself is the only part of the front of the original building which is notably newer: it is metal-framed with a large glass panel. This door is flanked on both sides by two large windows. They are fixed sash, cross mullioned and consist of four lights. The door and all four windows are topped with two-light transoms. White painted metal bars front all of the windows and these, like all the windows themselves, appear to be original. The front elevation has a pedimented gable covered in decorative fish-scale shingles, with an octagonal modillion in the center of the gable. A small porch roof projects over the front façade.

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The west elevation runs adjacent to the road (see photo 2). Toward the building's rear on that side is a door into the main shop room. Next to that door is a coal chute that goes to the basement. There is no fenestration on this side or on the back or east side.

Both the south-facing front and the west elevations of the building are clearly visible from the road and well maintained. The rear of the building faces north and cannot be seen from the road (see photo 3). There is a door in the center of this elevation several feet above ground level, which presumably once had steps below it. This side is weathered and needs some maintenance and repainting work. The external part of an air-conditioning unit can also be seen on this elevation.

The east elevation is also not visible from the road. It has the aforementioned shed-roofed addition (see photo 4) which stops five feet short of the entire length of the original building at the rear, and is flush with the building's front. A few of the boards are missing from the lower part of the shed addition, toward the rear. A slim brick flue rises from the point where the addition meets the east elevation of the original building; that flue used to be connected to a wood stove in the store. A door to the basement is on the original building's east side.

The roof of the building, both in its original part and the addition, consists of asphalt shingles and is reddish-colored.

### **Interior Description**

Inside, the first floor of the main building forms a single room covering 1806 square feet (see photos 8 and 9). This room housed the public part of the store. Many of the fixtures and fittings appear to be original, including shelving along the east and west walls. These are all painted white. The building is currently being used for storage and not all the shelves are visible; however, those that can be seen appear to be in excellent condition. Other original features include a large and heavy 1873 Mosler antique safe and a tongue and groove counter (see photos 9 and 10). There is also an antique Royal Crown (RC) Cola cooler which probably dates from the 1940s (see photo 11). The basement occupies half the length of the original building, and was used to store coal when the Hardcastle Store was operating.

The interior of the addition is also a single room and consists of 492 square feet. When the Hardcastle Store was in operation, this part was used for storage. The floor is oak tongue and groove in the main store and pine tongue and groove in the addition.

### **Changes to the property during and after the Period of Significance**

The shed-roofed addition has already been discussed. Other than that, changes to the store building itself have been relatively minor, and include the new front door and the removal of the coal stove that used to sit in the centre of the shop floor.

There were various buildings close by the store which belonged to the Hardcastles and which were used for activities which related to and complemented the Hardcastle Store business. These included a tobacco barn which stood north of the Hardcastle residence and which was on the opposite side of the road from the store (the residence is still standing.) The barn predated the building of the store and was used until the late 1940s. Immediately north of the store, on the same

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side of the road, there were two separate buildings which housed a grist mill and a blacksmith. None of these buildings survive today.

A gas pump was installed in front of the store probably during the 1940s, where the gravel lot is now. This was later removed, and the underground tank remains covered up.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

SOCIAL HISTORY

**Period of Significance**

1888-1960

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Hardcastle, Francis Marion (builder)

Hardcastle, Ewing (builder)

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### Period of Significance (justification)

The property was built and began operating commercially as a rural country store in 1888. For many decades, it operated as a rural country store, during which time it was a vital resource and meeting place for much of the surrounding rural community. Improved roads and transport meant that the central part the store played in the rural community had begun to fade by 1960, as more distant shopping opportunities became available to the store's patrons.

### Criteria Considerations NA

### Statement of Significance: Summary Paragraph

The Hardcastle Store (WA-201) in Warren County, Kentucky, meets National Register Criterion A, and is significant within the context "Rural Commerce in Warren County, Kentucky, 1888-1960". From the time it was built, the store was the focal point of the local rural community who could buy virtually anything they needed there for their farms and their homes. In addition, the store was a vibrant social center and the one public place where local people could gather regularly to pass the time of day. It was, therefore, a vital resource for the residents of Warren County in a way that was emblematic of rural general stores across the southern states of America during the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Its heyday passed as larger stores arrived in Bowling Green (the nearest big town) and use of the automobile increased; factors which led not only to its own demise, but also to that of thousands of similar stores across the US.

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### Statement of Significance: Detailed Narrative

#### Historic Context: Rural Commerce in Warren County, Kentucky, 1888-1960

##### Setting

Warren County is one of the 38 central Kentucky counties that make up the Pennyryle Cultural Landscape, an area defined by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for planning and which includes not only the Pennyryle region, but also the counties in Kentucky's Western Coal Fields. Folklorist Charles Martin examined the agriculture of this region in his study of *The Pennyryle Cultural Landscape*. His work shows that during the late-19<sup>th</sup> century, most of Warren County land was in farms, and continued that way through the period covered by the context. More specifically, Martin notes that in 1930, 98% of Warren County's acreage was in farms (Martin 1988:52). In 1975, much of the eastern, central and southern Pennyryle (which includes Warren County) still had a high percentage of land committed to agriculture (Martin 1988:1).

Warren County's excellent soil quality allowed it to rise as one of the region's leading cattle producing counties, with corn and wheat being key crops during the contextual period, and tobacco providing the main cash return per acre. (Martin 1988: 27-8, 32, 37, 46). Martin writes that "tobacco is the only crop in the Pennyryle which has maintained impressive growth and acreage." He also points out that, prior to the building of sturdy roads, tobacco's weight meant that the most practical way to transport it to market was via navigable rivers, as the road system was too poor to accommodate it. "This alone accounts for the principal [tobacco] producing counties in the Pennyryle being situated along the Ohio, Cumberland, Green and Barren rivers" (Martin 1988:10). The Barren River runs just below the Hardcastle Store, and was a viable transport corridor until the building of Barren River Dam began in 1960. Indeed, tobacco farmers were an important part of the Hardcastle Store's clientele, and the Hardcastles themselves owned a tobacco barn across the road from the store.

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## The Country Store and Rural Commerce

The Hardcastle Store was founded at a time when similar kinds of enterprises were springing up across the rural south. According to historian Thomas Clark, the country store began to make its mark on the rural scene in the decades following the Civil War, thanks to a demand “for an agency which could exchange small quantities of goods for equally small amounts of diverse rural produce... Thus it was that the stores became ...community markets for almost everything that could be sold for a profit” (Clark 1944: 28).

Despite the nostalgic and folksy associations that country stores have today, as early as the 1920s, economists and historians regarded these places as serious subjects for their study. Percy Bidwell (1921) and Harvey A. Wooster (1926) each saw country stores in antebellum New England as providing a vital link that facilitated the move from the earlier subsistence-farming economy to large-scale farming economy some decades later. Antebellum country stores introduced farmers to goods produced outside the local realm (1926: 14). In the store, farmers, local craftsmen, and others could exchange of goods in a cash-poor market via barter (1921: 684).

Wooster also sees country stores as helping introduce farmers to forces of modernization, which were pressing themselves even upon the rural arena during the antebellum era. He writes, “From...three points of contact--the outside market in nearby city or distant port, the outlying farm population surrounding his village, and the villagers themselves—the store-keeper constructed the beginnings of a manufacturing system that replaced the older handicraft organization and the still older house-hold industry, only to give way in turn to the ‘merchant capitalist’ of the city and the yet more highly capitalistic factory system” (1926: 15-16).

Two interdependent forces began to reshape the American farm economy well before 1860—the railroad and the specialization of production. The railroad gave advantage to farmers in the west (the current Midwest) of the 1840 and 1850s, who adopted large-scale commercial farming early, and found that their goods could sell in very distant markets, such as New England and the South. By contrast, many farmers at that time, with smaller acreage, struggled to move beyond subsistence general farming. The country store provided a needed system of credit for that local farmer, enabling him to make purchases before his harvest arrived, allowing him to use his on-hand capital to hire workers (Bidwell: 700). Yet, by selling the latest implements rolling off the factory assembly line, the country store owner became an agent by which a farmer could convert to large-scale farming (Wooster: 26). Wooster sees this conversion as part of a profound social shift, away from the days when purchasers bought items directly from the craftsman, to the consumer world that we continue living in, where purchases involve numerous middlemen. He says the country store “represents the beginning of industrial control by mercantile rather than craft skill, the entry of profits as against wages, and the beginning of the decline in economic and social status of the hand worker in industry” (1926: 27).

Louis Bean (1931) saw the value of the country store coming from its extreme flexibility in sales transactions. More than urban retailers could, the country store owner had greater ability to reduce prices, and/or to extend a credit to patrons, both of which would facilitate purchases during tight economic cycles (p. 238). James Norris observed that pricing in country stores was standardized as early as the 1830s, but acknowledged the time-honored tradition of price haggling was also a part of

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many sales (1962: 455-458). Thomas Clark, though, downplays this pricing nimbleness, instead, seeing rural stores as purveyors of stability, as preservers of the status quo. He wrote in 1943, "Basically, two forces dominate the history of a major portion of Southern retail trade: isolation and the burden of ultra regional conservatism... Since an isolated storekeeper had little fear that his customers would compare his prices or his variety of merchandise with a rival's, there was no incentive to create a mercantile business along improved lines which would give the customer a better selection of newer seasonal goods" (p. 45).

If the country store was less flexible in pricing than some thought, the store owner often showed great variability in the extent of his or her role. Jacqueline Bull lists many of the ways that these places and owners functioned for their patrons: post office, news center, social gathering place, de facto bank. The store owner could also be a part-time farmer, politician, or banker. Bull sees these owners as having to be shrewd operators, for they would have to pay cash to producers for the supplies in the spring, such as seed and fertilizer, which they in turn sold to the farmer on a credit basis (1952: 50).

Charles Martin deals more specifically with the region where the store stands and notes that up until the post-World War II period, the Pennyryle "had limited towns and accompanying commerce" (Martin 1988: 119). He goes on to say that in the southern Pennyryle, "the small general purpose stores in each agrarian crossroads community was the norm" (Martin 1988: 121). The Hardcastle Store was precisely such a store. In keeping with such stores in rural Kentucky and indeed across much of the rural south, the Hardcastle Store also followed the general pattern being identified chiefly through the store owner (Cain 2000: sect 8 p 5). In fact, the area around it was known locally as the Hardcastle Community.

The Hardcastle Store was one of a number of country stores that were doing business in the southeastern part of Warren County. For example, within a radius of 5 miles, there were at least three other stores—one in Claypool just before the border with Allen County, one in Motley and one in Green Hill. The first two of these had post offices. Although the Hardcastle Store didn't have a post office, it offered other services and a vast range of goods which made it vital to the local community. It did indeed offer "almost everything that could be sold for a profit" and virtually anything residents of the local farming-based area could want to buy, including needles, plough points, seed corn, beans, feed, fencing, roofing, shoes, work clothes, horse collars, fabric, buckets, straw hats, hand tools, kerosene and coal.

The people interviewed for this nomination came from farming families and they all stressed the diversity of goods on offer at the store. Current owner Gerald Loafman was born in 1949 and remembers going there regularly as a child in the 1950s; indeed, it is the only one of those local stores that he remembers. "This was the store that had everything", he says, "anything that you needed for the farm." Kenneth Hardcastle, a distant relation to branch of the family which owned the store, was born in 1921 and lived a mile east of the store. He recalls that "you could buy a hoe or shovel or hammer. They had one section where you could buy all kinds of bolts that was in a different bin. And there were bins of nails all in different categories. But [Euclid Hardcastle] used to get mad. People would come in and bring their children and they'd go in the back and mix the nails and the bolts. And the beans was the worst thing. There were different bins of beans for you to plant and he'd catch them taking a handful and putting them in another bin. So you'd buy what were supposed to be stick beans and they wasn't, they was some other kind of beans." Mr. Loafman also

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remembers the bins of beans but for other reasons: apparently Bessie Hardcastle kept a cat in the store which had its kittens in a bean barrel “but she still went ahead and sold the beans anyway. We weren’t clean freaks back in those days.” (Euclid was the son of Francis Hardcastle, and Bessie was Euclid’s daughter. For more information on the family, please see the section on “Hardcastle Store History” below.) Glen Sisk, studying a 10-county area of Alabama, produced a very extensive list of items that a typical country store might sell (1955: 705-715).

With tobacco an integral part of local farming life, and the weight of tobacco encouraging farmers to ship it by water, farmers would send their crop down river on rafts which would stop at a tobacco warehouse to sell the crop, or stop at a country store for a break in the journey. The Hardcastles operated both entities: a store and a warehouse, taking advantage of the store’s location along the Barren River. Irene Sumpter, who features the Hardcastle Store in her book *An Album of Early Warren Country Landmarks*, writes of it in a way that could apply to numerous stores in a similar riverside situation: “The rafts usually made the one way trip down stream from Barren and Allen Counties during high water...The country store lunches were available to refresh the crew. The crude rafts were the best, if not the sole means of transporting timber and tobacco out of the back country. The back roads were in no condition to carry such heavy traffic and in wet weather they were nearly impassable... Many of the log raft crews would break up their rafts ...and sell the timber. Then they would start the long trek home fortified with jugs of liquor.” (Sumpter 1976: 88). The Hardcastles prized and cured the tobacco, which was then packed in tobacco hogsheads (large wooden barrels) for shipment onward to Bowling Green or to Louisville.

In addition to crop warehousing, some country stores, including the Hardcastle Store, provided additional services vital to an agricultural market such as a blacksmith and a grist mill, which would function as a local community mill for the grinding of grains like wheat and corn (Martin 1988: 8-9). In 1972, then-student Sondra Richardson explored a country store in Cave City of Barren County, the county east of Warren (Western Kentucky University Folklife Archives). In her report, she interviewed owner Rascal Quigley, who said, “We put in a grist mill about 1918. The farmers would shell their corn and grade it by hand. The good grains were used for cooking and the rotten ones were fed to the livestock. They’d bring in a meal sack full of corn. I’d either grind it for them or swap with them for groceries. We pulled the mill with a gas engine. You pour the meal into the hopper and the corn was shaken down through a spout into the burrs where it was ground. It went from there to a sifter to get out the brand [husks]. If it was to be sold at the store we stored it in cracker drums.” He added “I’d take toll out of it about fifteen pound out of fifty ground. You charge more toll when they swapped for groceries.” Kenneth Hardcastle remembers that the Hardcastle Store offered their customers a similar service. Such facilities meant that the stores that oversaw them “functioned as a rural community’s nucleus” (Bradley 1996: sec 8 p 2)

## Social History

It wasn’t just the goods and services on offer that made establishments like the Hardcastle Store so central to their communities. In *Pills, Petticoats and Plows*, historian Thomas Clark writes that “stores of the southern countryside quickly became the heartbeat and pulse of a good portion of American business. In their own communities they were centers of every sort of neighborhood activity. Everything of importance that ever happened either occurred at the store or was reported there immediately.” (Clark 1944: 32). A previous nomination for a Kentucky country store similarly found that they could be a “gathering place for local crowds” and a “social center” (Cain 2000: sect 8 p 5).

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The memories of two people interviewed for this nomination, Gerald Loafman and Kenneth Hardcastle, support the truth of this description with regard to the Hardcastle Store. They both recall that it was very busy and often people would come in to sit around and chat more than to shop.

### **Demise of the Country Store**

Peter FitzRandolph studied the economic forces that affected country stores, challenging the conventional notion that one store owner would thrive as long as he or she had near-monopolistic control over his or her market area. FitzRandolph found that one country store could co-exist with another store nearby, where parts of each store's market area would overlap and competition between the stores prevailed. But this competition between country stores did not lead to their disappearance, he concludes. He sees the rise of the automobile as a greater nemesis—that the car enabled farmers to drive into town to get their goods more cheaply, or at least the many stores in town offered a greater range of choices than a single country store could (1981: 187-188).

In 1948, the Kentucky State Legislature passed a bill which “provided for all-weather highways into rural areas.” That legislation began to open up the state's more isolated rural areas (Martin 1988: 60). Following this, the gravel road on which the Hardcastle Store stood was paved over and straightened out, probably around 1952 according to Jim Hudson at the Bowling Green Department of Highways. The consequence to the Hardcastle Store must have had echoes across the southern landscape. Kenneth Hardcastle described the widening of choices brought to rural residents by better roads: “It's what, 10 minutes to Bowling Green? Why stop at the store?”

At the same time as the automobile was becoming increasingly important in post-war American culture, another factor in the store's demise, and thousands like it across the US, was the rise of chain stores in urban centers like Bowling Green. Bowling Green, only 7 miles from the Hardcastle Store, is the second largest commercial center in the Pennyriple. Charles Martin writes that “with the addition of the modern highway system and automobiles, established commercial centers continued to benefit, drawing in consumers from the surrounding counties willing to drive for a day's shopping” (Martin 1988:124). The large stores in town could undercut small store prices. Kenneth Hardcastle remembers the owner of another country store telling him in reference to these larger businesses: “I can't compete. You can buy a gallon of milk there for what I can pay for it.”

There isn't a clear date in which the historic country store could be said to have ceased to serve as a self-supporting economic entity. This nomination has selected 1960 as the end of the contextual period, because it fits with the National Register's 50-year window defining the historic period. That 1960 date might stand as a worthy point in time to use for a closer analysis of the performance of country stores, before and after, to gain a clearer understanding of their viability. These entities have not disappeared entirely; in fact, they continue to thrive to this day, in a different form.

The modern country store today is found along the modern transportation corridor: the highway. The area served by the modern country store is much greater in square miles than the service area of the historic country store, a product of today's near-universal car ownership and many more miles of paved roads. The places today that continue this tradition play a number of similar roles that historic stores played: sales of gasoline, of an array of snack and prepared/delicatessen foods, of some basic

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consumer items, and providing a gathering area for social interactions. With the change in patterns of acquisition of consumer goods among rural people, it is rare to find a country store that thrived during the historic period and which continues to provide a substantial economic return to its owner today.

### Hardcastle Store History

For the entire period of significance, the store remained within the same branch of the Hardcastle family. The original owners, the brothers Francis Marion Hardcastle and Ewing Hardcastle, were born in 1840 and 1841 respectively. They were raised in a log cabin on land their family had settled during the pioneer era on what is now Green Hill Road, a few miles southwest from where the store stands. Ewing's name appears alone on the deeds, but Irene Sumpter writes that the brothers built and ran the store together as a joint enterprise (Sumpter 1976: 88). The brothers already owned the tobacco barn across the road where they prized, cured and then sent tobacco on to Bowling Green and Louisville. They oversaw a "thriving business" (Sumpter 1976: 88), and it is possible they decided establish the store since they had a pre-existing customer base in the form of the local farmers who were already visiting them to sell their tobacco.

In 1890, Francis' son Euclid entered the business and he inherited full ownership of the store after Ewing's death in 1921. Euclid managed the store and also worked in a financial institution in Bowling Green. In 1913, a newspaper article in the daily *Times-Journal and Twice-a-Week Warren County Courier* lists him as being the Vice President of the Potter-Matlock Trust Company, which formed part of the American National Bank. Euclid's wife, Mrs. Mary Alice Coleman Hardcastle, worked in the store. Euclid and Mary's daughter, Bessie Gai Hardcastle Wooten, born in 1901, also helped out in the store and she later inherited it after her father's death in 1944, and ran it until the early 1970s.

The standing of the Hardcastle family in the community was a factor in the Hardcastle Store's importance to the area. Francis and Ewing Hardcastle were prominent local businessmen. Euclid Hardcastle's position at the bank in Bowling Green lent him both stature and resources. Kenneth Hardcastle remembers that although Euclid was not always present in the store, it was known he would help out farmers struggling during the Depression by allowing them up to a year's credit. He also remembers a period when the banks closed, probably during the banking crisis of March 1933, when his father, in despair, went to see Euclid Hardcastle, who told him, "Don't worry, I'll bring you all the money you need".

Euclid and his wife lived in the property across the road from the store, as did their daughter Bessie. Current owner Gerald Loafman was born in 1949, three miles away, and remembers back to the early 1950s. In an interview for this nomination, he said that Bessie "took care of the farm, baled hay, everything. She'd get out there and work with the men. Everybody called her the bulldog. She said what she thought; she was a bulldog of a lady." He also recalls her unconventional business practices. She would often challenge customers to flip "double or nothing" for items they wanted to purchase. On one occasion Mr. Loafman accompanied a farmer, Hugh Kirby, to the store to buy a post-hole digger. Kirby flipped for it and "on that particular day he had to pay double for it, and of course he was mumbling and cussing because he had to pay twice what it was worth, but everything he bought, he'd flip."

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The road where the store stands has seen various changes over the years of the Period of Significance. A map dating from the late 1870s shows that it used to turn off to the east immediately south of where the store stands, along what is now Pleasant Hill Road. By the time of Kenneth Hardcastle's earliest memories, which date back to the late 1920s, the road continued along the route of the current State Route 234, which runs southeast of the store into Allen County, thereby improving access to the store for a larger part of the community. Until the early 1950s, the road was gravel and more crooked than it is today.

The Hardcastle Store occupied the prominent place in social history that any country store might. In winter, the store was heated by a coal stove that stood in the middle of the shop-floor. Two lines of chairs would be arranged on either side of it, and men would spend the day there, talking and chewing tobacco. Bessie Hardcastle kept a sign on display which read: "if you spit on the floor at home, go home and spit".

In keeping with Thomas Clark's assertion that "everything of importance that ever happened" either occurring at the store or being reported there immediately afterwards, both Kenneth Hardcastle and Gerald Loafman recalled separate but similar incidents of attempted robbery. With the owners living in a house across the street from the store, they installed an alarm system to connect the two properties. The 1873 Mosler safe (that is still in the store today) was used to store the daily takings, not least, according to Kenneth Hardcastle, to discourage people from assuming that the money was being taken across the road to the family's residence. That meant, though, the store itself became a target for thieves. Kenneth Hardcastle recalled a time when Euclid Hardcastle was alerted by the alarm to an intruder. "He shot them and [the intruder] ran. The next day somebody went to the doctor that'd been shot but [Euclid] couldn't prove that was the one." Gerald Loafman remembers a later time when there was another attempt to break into the store and Bessie "started after them and chased them all the way past the cemetery on Cemetery Road and she was shooting them from the car." The recountings of these incidents would have first taken place in the store.

For both Gerald Loafman, and Evelyn Vaughan (Kenneth Hardcastle's daughter, born in 1944), their strongest memories of the store date from the years when they were children, and visiting it was a treat. Mrs. Vaughan says "it was exciting to go to the store. You didn't go to Bowling Green a lot because the road was still gravel." Both spoke about the soft drink cooler—a Royal Crown Cola machine which was part filled with ice water and in which the cans and bottles of drinks would sit. Mr. Loafman remembered that the cooler used to stand by front door on left as one walked in (See photo 11). This cooler is still in the store, but Mr. Loafman said it cannot be used now because of health department regulations. Mr. Loafman's weekly treat came in the form of a chocolate drink which he would fish out of the cooler and which cost a nickel. "That was a big deal, nickels were hard to come by," he said. He also said that when he had that chocolate drink he was "in heaven." Mrs. Vaughan remembers "the candy – Baby Ruth candy bar. It was 9 inches long at least and it cost a dime and it was so much candy that mom and dad wouldn't let us eat it all at one time." She also recalls candy you could buy by the pound "like in *The Waltons*". In particular she mentioned the chocolate drops. "My granddad would come back with this tiny brown paper bag and leave those for me when he'd been to the store."

Since the Hardcastle Store was at the heart of its community, it adapted and catered to the changes within that community, including the rise in local use of the automobile. In response, a gas pump was

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installed in front of the store. Kenneth Hardcastle can remember a hole being dug in the earth to contain the underground tank. The pump itself had a glass top and was operated by a manual lever.

### **Changing Times and the Hardcastle Store**

Even as the owners of the Hardcastle Store adapted to the rise of the automobile with the installation of the gas pump, the increasingly widespread use of the car began to affect business at the store and the way of life in which it had played a central part. The families of both Mrs. Vaughan and Mr. Loafman had vehicles when they were children, so even then the bulk of the family shopping was already taking place in Bowling Green. Mrs. Vaughan specifically mentions her father buying his feed in town and her mother her fabric. And Mr. Loafman, for whom the Saturday stop-offs for the chocolate drink at the store were such an important part of his childhood, recalls that this ritual of the weekly visit would take place *after* his father and grandfather had gone into Bowling Green to do the bulk of the grocery shopping at Houchens, a large store in town. They stopped at the Hardcastle Store on the way home, partly because it was still a social center but also because it sold Pepsi Cola, which Houchens at that time did not. Incidentally, the Houchens regional chain of grocery stores began as a one-room store, expanding to become a group of stores serving in-town shoppers, each under the Houchens name.

The Hardcastle Store passed out of the Hardcastle family hands in the early 1970s. It has since had various owners and various guises, including that of a tackle shop and an antique shop. It has largely stood empty since Mr. Loafman, a well-known and well-respected builder/property developer in the local area, bought it for sentimental reasons, because of the important part it played in his childhood and for the fond memories he has of the place: "I was afraid what could happen to it and I didn't want to see that. I've lost money on it every year I've had it. But it's still standing here and I like that."

Mr. Loafman hopes to run it as an antique store himself when he retires, but as a hobby, rather than to make a profit. He is nostalgic about the era when the store was thriving: "Back then you knew everyone who lived up and down Cemetery Road. Everybody knew everybody. Now you don't even know the person who lives next door to you. That was certainly different back then."

### **Evaluation of the Hardcastle Store's Significance within the Context "Rural Commerce in Warren County, Kentucky, 1888-1960"**

The Hardcastle Store is significant for showing how rural commerce in Warren County operated between 1888 and 1960 in a number of different respects. The store fits the pattern recognized by Charles Martin: a country store serves a particular agrarian community. In fact, it was the hub of the community to such an extent that the area around it became known as the Hardcastle Community and continues to be called that even though the store ceased to operate under that name almost four decades ago. The goods and services offered at or via the store catered precisely to the needs and demands of the local community, according to the typical farming patterns of Warren County, and thus included farming equipment, supplies and feed, and crop processing facilities, as well as household items. The store also met the social needs of its community in a way that was also typical of such country stores, as explored by historian Thomas Clark, and became an essential meeting place for local people.

### **Evaluation of the Hardcastle Store's Integrity**

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A country store in Warren County can be evaluated as a type of construction (Criterion C) or for its role in rural commerce (Criterion A), and the criterion selected will affect the needed integrity levels which lead to the conclusion of eligibility. A property being said to meet Criterion A will need to have integrity of location and setting, and a moderate integrity of materials and design. If it has these integrity factors, it will be said to have integrity of association, which is the primary integrity factor leading to the conclusion of eligibility, as Criterion A hinges upon the property's important historic associations.

For a country store in Warren County to be said to have integrity of **location**, it must be on its original site. The site of a country store contains much vital information that maintain the important associations. In the case of the Hardcastle Store, the location along the Barren River signals the importance of river commerce to the store's commercial life during the Period of Significance. This location in relation to Bowling Green, a regional trade center, is also an important part of the property's story. The store's proximity to Bowling Green made the farms in the Hardcastle Store's market area more valuable for their nearness to the major trade center for the sale of agricultural produce. That proximity to Bowling Green also meant that as soon as roads improved and personal automobile ownership increased, the surrounding market's population would begin to frequent the urban stores over the Hardcastle Store. The location of the Hardcastle Store provides a rich instance for us to look at the shift in rural commercial patterns of consumption. And, of course, it continues to stand on its original location.

A country store in Warren County can be said to have integrity of **setting** if the property's extra-site setting is intact. While this setting does not become part of the nominated area, the continued existence of a mainly rural environs surrounding the historic country store reinforces the identity of the place. The country store was intimately connected to and dependent upon those people and farms that surrounded it. A store that remains within a largely rural and farming landscape will continue to be perceived in the physical historic context that it once served. The Hardcastle Store remains within such a setting.

A country store in Warren County can be said to have moderate integrity of **materials** if the key exterior materials date from the period of its historic significance. In the case of the Hardcastle Store, the exterior of the building remains much as it was at the time of construction (or shortly thereafter in the case of the shed addition), i.e., weather-boarded on a masoned stone foundation and with the front façade consisting largely of windows and the front door. Only minor alterations have been made that affect the materials, such as the modern front door, but these do not detract from the overall impression. The store can therefore be said to maintain integrity of materials.

In order for a country store in Warren County to have moderate integrity of **design**, the design decisions that informed the process of construction must remain largely in place and visible. In fact, in the case of the Hardcastle Store, there have been only minor alterations since the time of construction. Both the exterior and the interior of the building remain fundamentally as they were when first constructed or, in the case of the addition, apparently shortly thereafter and in the same style. The elevations visible to the public, including the striking front façade with its decorative gable, sash windows and transoms, are in excellent condition and are not obscured by more recent building or developments. Many of the design features of the interior have also been maintained including the shelving, and the tongue and groove floors and counter. Therefore the building's design remains

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in keeping with its original purpose: to be a rural general store. The Hardcastle Store can therefore be said to have integrity of design.

If a country store in Warren County possesses integrity of location, setting, and modest amounts of materials and design, it can be said to possess integrity of **association**. The Hardcastle Store retains high levels of all 4 of these integrity factors, and so, it has integrity of association, and thus is eligible to the National Register.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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### Bibliography

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Martin, Charles E. *The Pennyryle Cultural Landscape*. Prepared for The United States Department of Interior, National Park Service and the Kentucky Heritage Council State Preservation Office. 1988.

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#### Articles:

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**Websites:**

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crop-lien\\_system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crop-lien_system)

**Previous National Register of Historic Places Nominations:**

Cain, Donovan G and Pickering Mimi. C. B. Caudill Store, Letcher County, KY. 07/20/2000

Bradley, Amanda and Amos, Christine. Penn Store, Boyle County, KY. 11/21/1996

**Other:**

Kentucky Historic Resources: Individual Inventory Form. Resource Number WA-198. Prepared by Gary Whittle and Rosalie Stafford of Landmark Association, June 1986

Kentucky Historic Resources: Individual Survey Form. Resource Number WA-201. Prepared by Janet L Johnston of BUILDING HPB for KHC/WKU, 10/8/97

TVA North Mills Architectural Survey. P12-13, undated.

Auction Notice, undated.

Chain of title deeds

**Other Books Available on the Subject** (all in University of KY collection)

- o ***Country storekeeper in Pennsylvania : creating economic networks in early America, 1790 -1807***, by Wenger, Diane E., University Park, Pa. : Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008
- o ***Evolution of the country community; a study in religious sociology***, by Wilson, Warren H., Boston, New York [etc.] : Pilgrim press, 1912
- o ***In the absence of towns: settlement and country trade in Southside Virginia, 1730-1800***, by Farmer, Charles J., Lanham, Md. : Rowman and Littlefield, 1993
- o ***Old country store***, by Gerald Carson, New York, Oxford University Press, 1954
- o ***Our common country : family farming, culture, and community in the nineteenth-century Midwest***, by Rugh, Susan Sessions, Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 2001
- o ***Over the counter and on the shelf; country storekeeping in America, 1620-1920***, edited by Johnson, Laurence Ayres, and Ray, Marcia, Rutland, Vt.: C.E. Tuttle Co., 1961

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University

Hardcastle Store  
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\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): WA-201

### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 1.57  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

### UTM References

**Polkville Quad**

**UTM coordinates calculated by GIS (KYGeonet)**

#### UTM coordinate values according to NAD 27

1 16 559 503 4088 776  
Zone Easting Northing

#### UTM coordinate values according to NAD 27

1 16 559 503 4088 984  
Zone Easting Northing

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The PVA map code for this property is 065A-14J and the account code is C7182800. See copy of map – the lot proposed for listing is lot number 2.

**Boundary Justification** With the focus of this listing being the country store, the area proposed for listing is the appropriate area in which to view the intact historic identity of that resource. It is the area which contains the highest degree of integrity of all property that historically was associated with the Hardcastle operation.

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rachel Hopkin, Graduate Assistant  
organization Department of Folk Studies, Western Kentucky University date 12/7/2010  
street & number 850 Sledge Road telephone 270 991 5340  
city or town Alvaton state KY zip code 42122  
e-mail [rachel.hopkin@gmail.com](mailto:rachel.hopkin@gmail.com)

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Hardcastle Store

Warren County, KY

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County and State

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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### Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Hardcastle Store, 7286 Cemetery Road

City or Vicinity: Bowling Green

County: Warren

State: Kentucky

Photographer: Rachel Hopkin

Date Photographed: 2 November 2010

Location of Original Digital Files: 850 Sledge Road, Alvaton, KY, 42122

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo 1 (KY\_Warren County\_Hardcastle Store\_0001)  
Interior of store, main room. Camera pointing north.

Photo 2 (KY\_Warren County\_Hardcastle Store\_0002)  
Interior of store, main room. Original tongue and groove counter is towards right. Camera pointing south

Photo 3 (KY\_Warren County\_Hardcastle Store\_0003)  
1873 Mosler safe (in main room of store)

Photo 4 (KY\_Warren County\_Hardcastle Store\_0004)  
Royal Crown Cooler (in room in shed addition)

Photo 5 (KY\_Warren County\_Hardcastle Store\_0005)  
Front façade of store (south facing elevation). Camera pointing north.

Photo 6 (KY\_Warren County\_Hardcastle Store\_0006)  
West facing elevation of store. Camera pointing east.

Photo 7 (KY\_Warren County\_Hardcastle Store\_0007)  
Rear of store. North facing elevation. Camera pointing south.

Photo 8 (KY\_Warren County\_Hardcastle Store\_0008)

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East facing elevation of store showing shed roof addition. Camera pointing southwest.

Photo 9 (KY\_Warren County\_Hardcastle Store\_0009)  
Barren River and embankment to the east of the store. Camera pointing east.

Photo 10 (KY\_Warren County\_Hardcastle Store\_0010)  
Front façade (south facing elevation) of store (left) and shed roof addition (right). Camera pointing northwest.

Photo 11 (KY\_Warren County\_Hardcastle Store\_0011)  
Front façade (south facing elevation) of store and gravel parking lot. Camera pointing north.

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**Property Owner:**

---

name Gerald Loafman  
street & number 1874 Iron Bridge Road telephone 270-791-8904  
city or town Bowling Green state KY 42103

Hardcastle Store  
Warren County, Ky  
Polkville Quad

Zone 16

4089

Coordinates = NAD 27

Easting 559 503

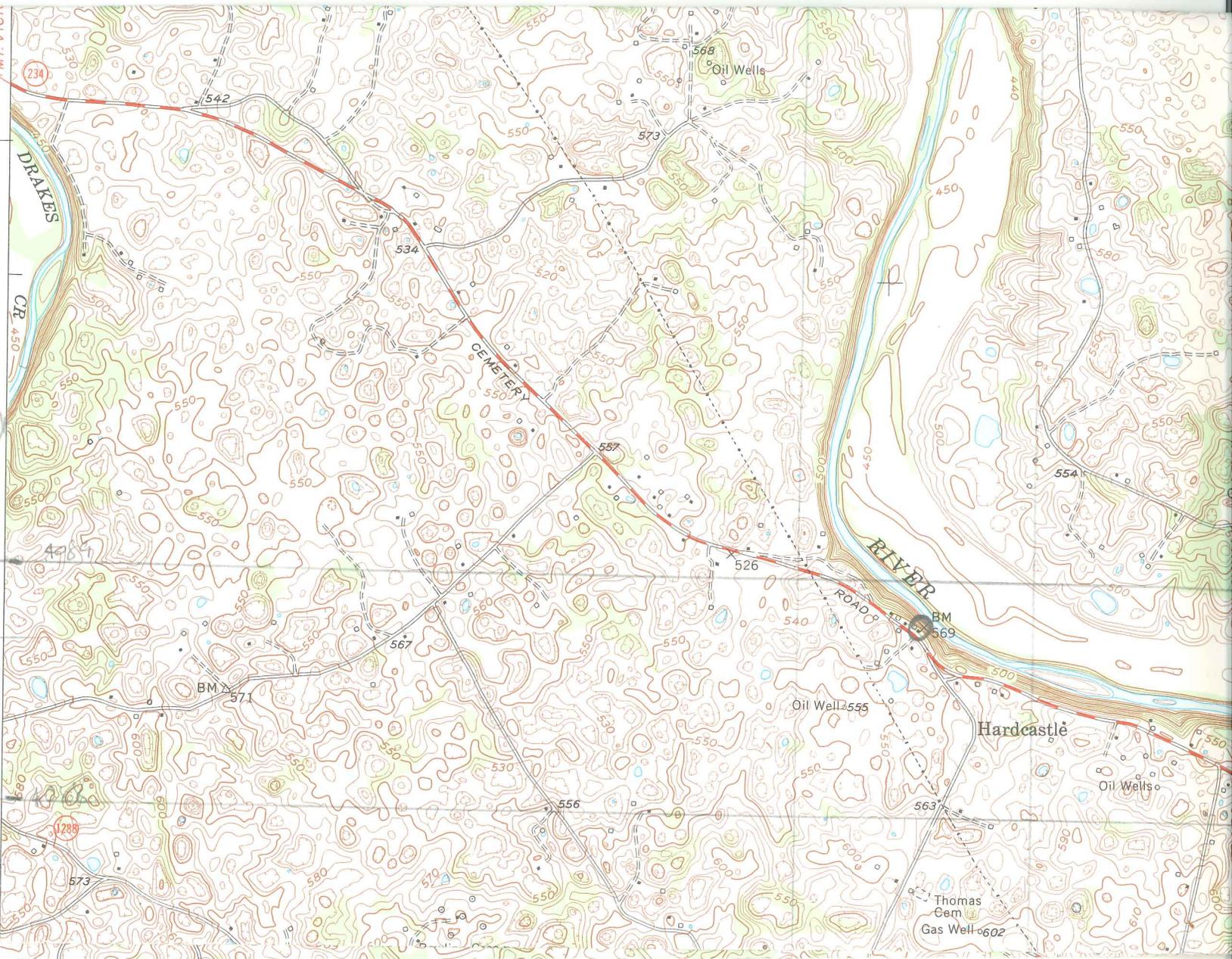
Northing 4088 776

Coordinates = NAD 83

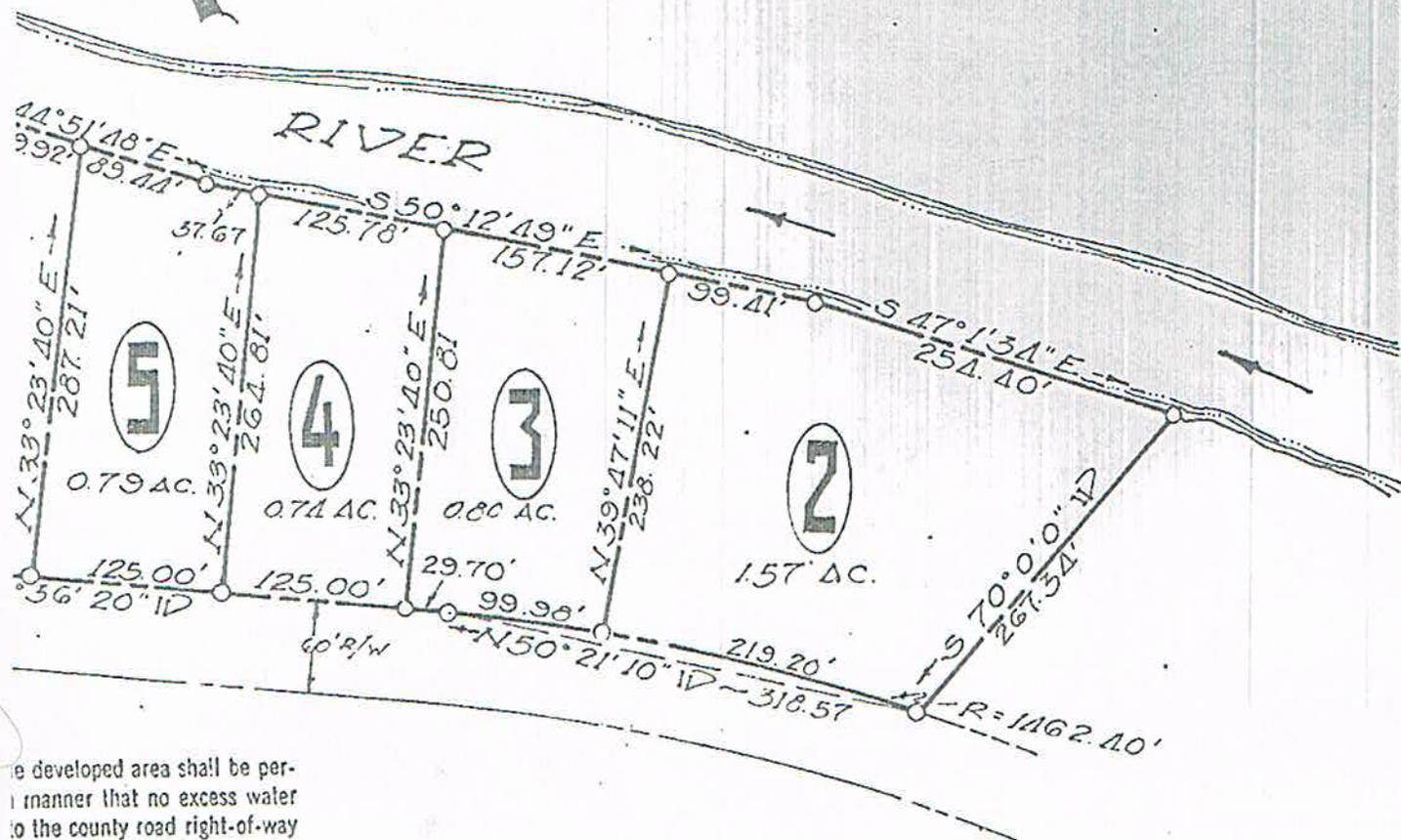
Easting 559 503

Northing 4088 984

3757 IV NW  
WILING GREEN SOUTH  
3.5 MI. TO S. 231



The Hardcastle Stone Lot  
is Lot number 2



The developed area shall be per-  
in manner that no excess water  
to the county road right-of-way  
of the County Engineer.

*W. F. Doremman*  
County Engineer

STATE OF KENTUCKY  
JAMES G. DINNING  
747  
REGISTERED  
LAND SURVEYOR

JUL 17 74  
LODGED FOR DE  
CHAS. W. MC  
WARREN CL

STATE OF APPROVAL  
by my approval of all ac-  
roads shown on this plat.

*W. F. Doremman*  
COUNTY ROAD ENGINEER

*James G. Dinning*  
STATE OF KENTUCKY  
J. G. DINNING  
6274  
REGISTERED  
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER

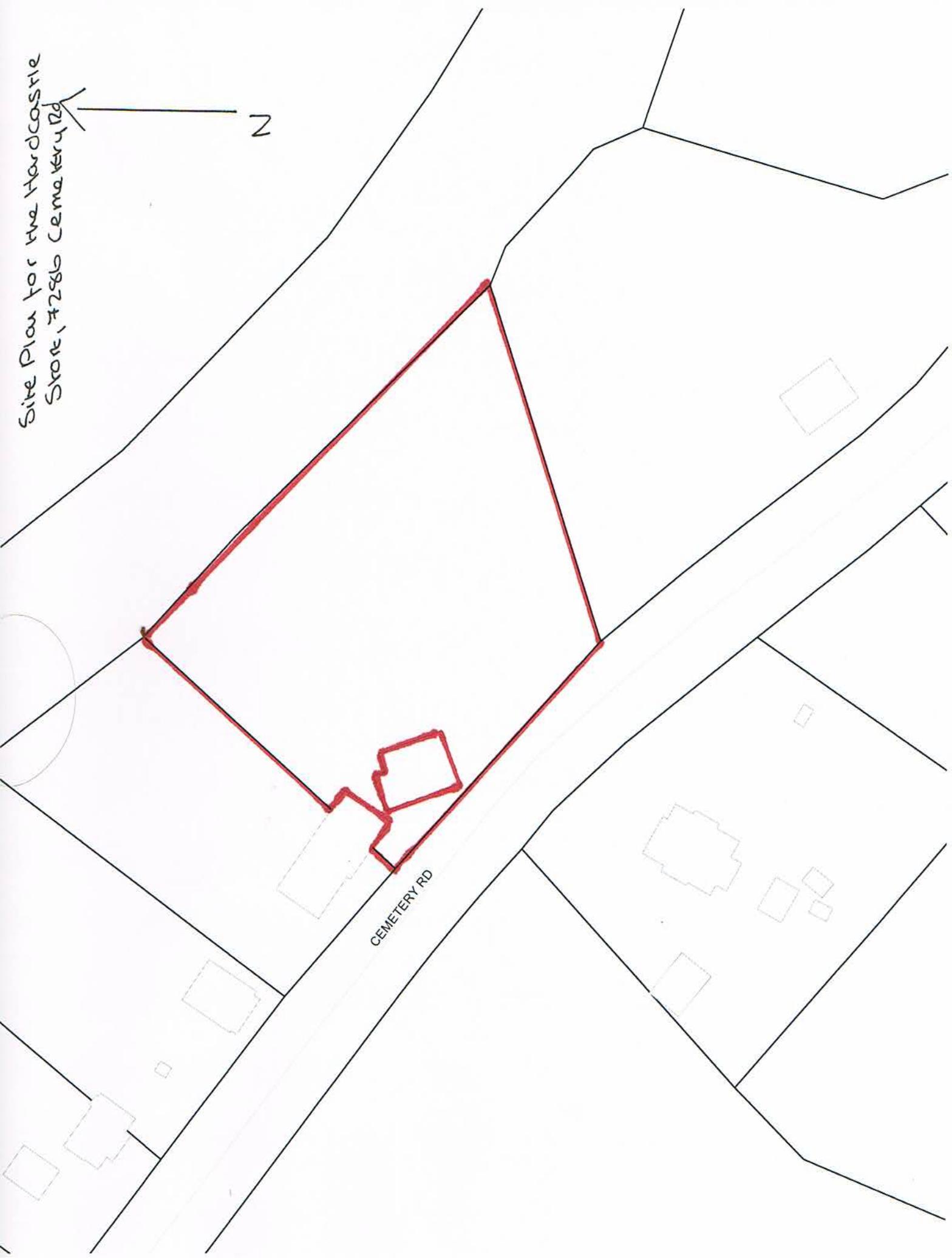
*James G. Dinning*

y, entrances or/and driveways to  
estimated with a minimum of 24

Site Plan for the Hardcastle  
Store, 7286b Cemetery Rd

N

CEMETERY RD











W. L. YARBROUGH.

*The Mosler Safe Co.*



HAMILTON, O.





the fresher refresher  
**Royal Crown  
Cola**

  
**Royal Crown  
Cola**





TRC  
COUNTRYVIE  
GROCERY



SMALL BUSINESS  
**RC**  
COUNTRYVIEW  
GROCERY







