

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Rollins Hospital
other names/site number Baxter County Community Hospital/ BA0002

2. Location

street & number 107 East Main Street not for publication
city or town Gassville vicinity
state Arkansas code AR county Baxter code 005 zip code 72635

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 for 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
 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional
comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
 determined eligible for the
National Register.
 See continuation sheet
 determined not eligible for the
National Register.
 removed from the National
Register.
 other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

Rollins Hospital
Name of Property

Baxter County, Arkansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

HEALTH CARE/hospital

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls CONCRETE

roof OTHER/Tar built-up

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

LOCAL

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

HEALTH/MEDICINE

Period of Significance

1923-1954

Significant Dates

1923

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Ben Lamb/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Documentation criteria with checkboxes.

Primary location of additional data:

- Location criteria with checkboxes.

Name of repository:

Baxter County Heritage Museum

Rollins Hospital
Name of Property

Baxter County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>545391</u> Easting	<u>4015238</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Maryanne Edge/President; and Jane Andrewson/Secretary; Edited by Elizabeth J. Blackwell/Preservation Outreach Coordinator

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date August 2, 2007

street & number 323 Center Street, Ste. 1500 telephone 501.324.9788

city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Baxter County Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc.

street & number P.O. Box 675 telephone 870-435-6988

city or town Gassville state AR zip code 72653

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Summary

The 1923 Rollins Hospital sits just a few steps off of Highway 62 in downtown Gassville. The building is an intact example of an early 1920s hospital in Arkansas. Rollins Hospital is rectangular in plan and built entirely of concrete blocks with modest detailing. The original core of the building is the east side of the present structure. Between 1936 and 1937 Dr. Rollins extended the original structure to the west and the parapet wall was continued in a consistent height and form across the north façade to make it appear as one complete block. The raised parapet steps down from nearly two-stories in height at the front to just one story at the rear of the building and masks the varying rooflines on the separate sections visible from the rear. Little has changed on the exterior of the building since its completion in 1937. The exterior walls and openings remain in their original locations and reflect the intent of the building's design.

Elaboration

Dr. Rollins was the first doctor in the county to have an entire building devoted to a hospital. The building's modest detailing speaks to the economy of the area when this structure was built in the early 1920s. The population was sparse and access to the area was limited. Therefore, architecture in Baxter County tended to be simple and utilized materials that were either locally available or easy to manufacture nearby. The concrete blocks used in the construction of this building are molded to look like stone. Many other buildings in Baxter County are built of stone or clad in stone due to its wide availability in the area. The concrete block emulates the look of the stone buildings in the area. The machine used to create these shaped blocks was provided locally by a man by the name of John Mac Medley and the concrete came from J. A. Messick who also laid most of the block for the building.

Front/ North Façade

The north side of the building is the front of the structure facing Highway 62. This façade is accentuated by an asymmetrical configuration of six windows and three doors. Each of the windows on this façade are of consistent size and shape. They are single fixed-pane windows set in a rectangular opening with a wood frame and concrete sill. Each of the doors are recessed approximately two feet from the front of the building. The openings on this façade are organized in three distinct groups. The group on the far east end consists of a window on either side of a door opening. The second group is in the center of the façade with a door on the far east side and two windows situated to the west of it. The final configuration takes up nearly half of the front of the building and is the original façade of the building Dr. Rollins first completed in 1923. One window is set to the east of a door opening and two windows are set to the west. The door opening in this final configuration was the main entrance and it is accented by a brick arch above it, which sets it off from the remaining two doors. There are three decorative finials adorning the parapet wall. There is one on the east and west corners of the north side and one in the center. The central finial denotes the location where the original 1923 structure and 1937 addition meet. These finials are simple concrete spheres, which when combined with the brick arch over the easternmost door they comprise all of the decoration on the Rollins Hospital building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Side/ West Façade

The west side of the building is the second most viewed side of the structure due to its location facing traffic as it enters Gassville along the highway. This façade is also treated with molded concrete block. The most prominent feature of the west side of the building is the parapet wall that steps down from the front to the back of the structure. The wall drops a full half-story over the length of the west side of the building. Four to five foot horizontal segments step down approximately 10-12 inches at a time over the length of the wall. The steps are emphasized by the use of smooth finished concrete capped with a slightly overhanging concrete slab that casts a shadow on the wall beneath. This helps to further define the lines of the steps and make it a prominent feature of the west façade. There are four window openings and a single door opening on the west side of the building. A fixed-pane square window capped with a concrete lintel is the northernmost opening along this wall. To the south of this window is a door that is set back from the façade approximately eight inches. This door has a large wooden frame and now serves as the main entrance to the building. The door is not original to the structure and has a single window comprising the upper half of it. There are three windows of varying sizes providing the fenestration on the remainder of the west side of the building south of the original ambulance entrance. The first two windows are single fixed-pane windows set in wooden frames. They each have a concrete lintel. The southernmost window opening is visible, however most of original opening has been filled in with wood and a smaller one-over-one double-hung aluminum frame window is suspended in the center of the infill. This original opening is also capped with a concrete lintel.

Rear/ South Façade

When looking at the rear of the structure it becomes clear where the 1923 building stops and the 1937 building begins. Perhaps to save money, only the highly visible portions of the 1937 addition utilize the molded concrete block, but smooth blocks are used on the rear of the structure and the east side of the building. The original 1923 structure uses molded block on all three visible sides (including the rear). The rear of the building is utilitarian in its design. A single door on the southwest corner of the building is the only exterior access to older section of the building on this side. That portion of the building was the operating room and has windows on the west side that look into it. Approximately halfway between the two ends of the south façade the wall material changes from molded concrete block to smooth concrete block. Here, the building extends further toward the south. The west facing wall of this longer portion of the building is fenestrated by two aluminum frame two-over-two double-hung windows. A large wood-frame door opening leads into a small shed addition on the south side of the 1937 addition. A second shed roof addition forms the southwest corner of the structure. A single doorway opens into this section on the south side.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Side/ East Façade

The east side of the building has the same stepped parapet profile found on the west side of the building. The wall steps down from the front to the back of the structure. It drops a full half-story over the length of the west side of the building. Four to five foot horizontal segments step down approximately 10-12 inches at a time over the length of the wall. The steps are emphasized by the use of smooth finished concrete capped with a slightly overhanging concrete slab that casts a shadow on the wall beneath. The wall on the east side of the building is finished in smooth concrete block. It is less visible than the north and west sides of the building and the expense to complete the wall in molded block was likely more than necessary. There are a few molded blocks used along the parapet wall which helps to further emphasize this part of the building. The east wall is fenestrated by six fixed-pane glass windows with concrete sills and lintels. On the north end there are two windows evenly spaced apart. To the south of these windows is an opening that has since been in-filled. Next to this is a standard sized door opening recessed approximately two feet from the main façade. This was originally the entrance used by ambulances. Four windows are evenly distributed along the remainder of this wall.

Interior

The interior of Rollins Hospital no longer reflects its original use as a hospital. However, there are several original features still intact within the building. Although the interior has been remodeled to accommodate a museum, most of the original walls are still in place as they are load-bearing concrete walls. The 1923 portion of the building originally had twelve foot pressed-tin ceilings. The pressed-tin ceilings greatly deteriorated over the years and the ceiling has been lowered throughout much of the building, however, the pressed tin has been preserved wherever possible. Additionally, a wooden ceiling original to the operating room remains in tact.

Integrity

Rollins Hospital has a high level of integrity around the exterior of the building. Over the years most of the windows have been replaced from two fixed-pane windows per opening to a single fixed-pane window configuration. Additionally, many of the doors have been replaced over the years, but the size of the openings remains as it was originally conceived. The building has been maintained by the Baxter County Historical and Genealogical Society since 1992. During that time the roof has been replaced, but no other major changes have been made. Maintenance issues continue to arise, such as the current need to re-point and re-paint much of the exterior. In general, Rollins Hospital continues to look much as it did when Dr. Rollins finally completed the building in 1937.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Summary

Rollins Hospital is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **local significance** for its association with early health care in Gassville, Arkansas. Rollins Hospital was the first building to be fully utilized as a hospital in Baxter County, Arkansas, and for many years was the only hospital serving surrounding Fulton, Izard, and Marion counties. The 1923 concrete block structure was built for Dr. William James Rollins and maintains a high level of architectural integrity in its original location along a commercial strip in Gassville.

Elaboration

Baxter County was formed in 1873 and Mountain Home was designated as its county seat. Around this same time the town of Gassville was formed. The town was originally called "Turkey Neck" as it lies in a neck of the White River. Gassville was formed by settlers from Georgia and a family named Gass. Other founding families were the Coffee, Denton, and Marler families. The first businesses in Gassville were a blacksmith shop, cotton gin, and mercantile stores. The town also had a hotel called the Denton Hotel. Some of the earliest medicine practiced in the area was done by Dr. Denton and Dr. Marler who each had offices in town.

Gassville has been known for the many firsts it has had in Baxter County. Some of these are positive and some are more dubious honors. Gassville proved itself to be a progressive small community by having the first Rural Free Delivery service from their post office in Baxter County. Rollins Hospital was the first hospital in Baxter County, which was located in Gassville. In the 1950s a shirt factory was opened in Gassville as part of joint effort between Marion and Baxter counties to help the area develop further. Gassville also is home to the first recorded feud in the county that resulted in the deaths of two men. A store owner and the first sheriff of the county killed each other in a feud. The sheriff was the first sheriff killed in the line of duty in Baxter County.

Gassville's Rollins Hospital was founded by Dr. William James Rollins. He was born in what is now the city of Shawnee, Oklahoma, on February 9, 1892 (Shawnee became a city in 1895, and Oklahoma became a state in 1907). He was one of five children (three of whom became doctors). He grew up in Shawnee and lived at 414 North Tucker Street. Rollins attended high school in Shawnee and went to St. Louis University Medical School to become a dentist in 1910. After finishing dental school he then returned to the same school to become a medical doctor. Dr. Rollins worked as a barber while attending medical school. He met and married Ada Russell there during his time in medical school while she was working in a Kress department store. The couple moved to Gassville in 1920 and Dr. Rollins began his medical practice soon after their arrival.

The hospital that Dr. Rollins opened in 1923 was significant for several reasons. It was the first hospital in the area. At the time most doctors in the area had an office and maybe one or two rooms set aside for patients, but for the most part patients were treated at home. Prior to its opening, the nearest hospital was

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

located in Harrison, Boone County, Arkansas, a full fifty miles away. The mountains and unpaved roads of north central Arkansas complicated the lengthy fifty-mile trek making it nearly impossible for anyone in dire need of hospital services to make it to the hospital quickly enough. Rollins hospital opened up the possibility for professional medical care in a hospital setting to a host of people who had never had access to it before. Patients from larger communities in neighboring counties and even from the neighboring state of Missouri made the trip to Rollins Hospital due to the scarcity of medical care in the area.

Another factor that contributed to the popularity of Rollins Hospital was the doctor himself who treated everyone who came to him. His attitude toward medical care was that the patient and needs came before he considered whether they could pay for his services. In fact, he is rumored to have treated notorious outlaws of the day and even they found ways to pay their bills. Many of his patients paid with meat, produce and when he was lucky they might offer him moonshine. Another testament to Dr. Rollins's concern for his patients was his willingness to use his car for an ambulance. In the rough terrain of the area he often got the car stuck in creeks that he had to ford. At times, his grandson, Bill, was sent to a nearby farmer's house to get the mules or horses to get the car out of the creek. The hospital later obtained their own ambulance.

Dr. Rollins proved himself to be a colorful character in the area and much of his personality had an impact on the community through his work at the hospital. In addition to his unconventional methods of accepting payment, he also had some strange work habits that would not be acceptable in modern medicine. Dr. Rollins enjoyed the moonshine that he received as payment for bills and kept a supply in the pharmacy. His wife was not keen on his moonshine habit and it is said that when the nurses would see Mrs. Rollins coming over to the hospital from the house, they would begin singing "Onward Christian Soldiers" to warn the doctor to put the moonshine away. Dr. Rollins had a German shepherd named "Sir Boss," who was in the hospital daily making rounds with the doctor. The dog was well known in the community as he took mail to the post office and brought the mail back to the hospital as well. The dog was, in fact, such a known fixture in Gassville that when he died his obituary was announced in the *Baxter Bulletin*. Dr. Rollins was also known to always smoke a cigar when he was working on a patient or checking on a patient. There are reports from occupants of the building today that footsteps are occasionally heard and cigar smoke sometimes appears in the air. A cigar kept in one of the showcases for the doctor has disappeared and needed to be replaced on several occasions. The vibrant personality of Dr. Rollins coupled with his sincere desire to help people was a part of the great draw to this institution in the region.

When Dr. Rollins originally built the 1923 portion of the building he was only using one third of the structure as the hospital. He leased the remainder of the space to a store and a movie theater. He later expanded the hospital into those spaces as the businesses left. The third of the building utilized by Dr. Rollins included an office, exam room, and two patient rooms. In those early years the hospital was a success and much needed addition to the area, however, in the mid-1930s Dr. Rollins decided that the hospital could use the addition of a surgeon. He traveled to Chicago to find a surgeon to work in his hospital. Dr. Rollins found Dr. John F.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Guenthner working as a resident at a Chicago hospital and talked him into coming to Gassville to work for him. Dr. Rollins offered him \$2500.00 a year which was a vast improvement over the \$600.00 a year he was making in Chicago. Dr. Guenthner drove a new Buick from Chicago to Gassville in 1936 to begin working for Dr. Rollins. In 1937 the pair added the last rooms to the hospital and had a grand opening celebration.

In 1946, Dr. Rollins sold his partnership in the hospital to Dr. Guenthner and they changed the name of the hospital from Rollins Hospital to Baxter County Community Hospital. Dr. Guenthner operated the Baxter County Community Hospital for several years. He sold the hospital to Dr. J.A. Van Bebers around 1952. The building remained in use as a hospital until Dr. Van Bebers's death in November 1954. The hospital closed the day after Dr. Van Bebers passed away. Any patients remaining in the hospital that day were told to find another hospital or to go home. The building later operated as a nursing home for a short while, but November of 1954 was the last time the building functioned as a hospital.

After the closure of the hospital, the nearest place to receive medical services was at a clinic in Mountain Home, Baxter County, Arkansas, approximately fifteen miles away. Additionally, Dr. Rollins opened another clinic in the area after leaving his hospital to Dr. Guenthner. In the late 1940s Dr. Rollins retired and moved to Cotter, Baxter County, Arkansas. His popularity was evident as he had so many visitors to his home seeking medical treatment that he eventually opened a small office in Cotter. He practiced medicine here, mostly for free, until the office burned. Dr. Rollins died January 10, 1957 and is buried in the Gassville cemetery. The clinic in Mountain Home remained open until 1965. The clinic closed to make room for a state sponsored hospital in Baxter County.

Before closing in 1954, Rollins hospital was the only hospital in the region. After ceasing operations as a hospital, the building has been actively used in Gassville for several other purposes. As already mentioned, the building operated as a nursing home for a short time. It was later used as a warehouse for the shirt factory that opened in Gassville in the 1950s. The building was later purchased by J.A. Gregory who converted it into a commercial strip in the 1960s. At this time the building was subdivided on the interior to be three distinct spaces. Two additional entrances were added to the front of the building to provide access to the separate interior spaces. Over the years these spaces were occupied by a real-estate company, a dental office, and various retail operations. The building was later turned over to the Baxter County Historical and Genealogical Society who currently operate it as a museum celebrating both Dr. Rollins and Baxter County History.

Statement of Significance

Rollins Hospital is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **local significance** for its association with early health care in Gassville, Arkansas. Rollins Hospital was the first building to be fully utilized as a hospital in Baxter County, Arkansas, and for many years was the only hospital serving surrounding Fulton, Izard, and Marion counties. The 1923 concrete block structure was built

Rollins Hospital
Name of Property

Baxter County, Arkansas
County and State

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

for Dr. William James Rollins and maintains a high level of architectural integrity in its original location along a commercial strip in Gassville.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

Remembrances of Bill Rollins, grandson of Dr. Rollins. This was an interview with Bill via e-mail in August 2006 and conducted by Jane Andrewson

Memories of Dr. Guentner to the Baxter County Historical and Genealogical Society in the 1990's. This was a speech that Dr. Guentner gave the historical society and we have copy on CD.

History of Baxter County by Frances Shiras, 1937.

History of Baxter County by Mary Ann Messick, 1973.

Bull Shoals Gazette, June 1949.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

Part of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 33, Twp. 19 North, Range 14 West, described in Rural Survey Record D, page 195 as follows:

Starting at the NW corner of the said NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, thence S. 1 deg. 27' 00" West 102.4 feet to the South right-of-way of Highway 62, thence N. 85 deg. 07' 00" East along said right-of-way 96.5 feet to the point of beginning; thence N. 85 deg. 07' 00" East 185.5 feet, thence S. 1 deg. 39' 30" East 108.0 feet, thence N. 88 deg. 24' 30" East 136.1 feet to the West line of street, thence S. 1 deg. 16' 00" East along the West line of Street, 13.9 feet, thence S. 88 deg. 22' 30" West 196.3 feet to the SW corner of boiler room foundation, thence S. 0 deg. 09' 00" East 83.00 feet, thence S. 88 deg. 03' 00" West 124.5 feet, thence N. 1 deg. 06' 30" West 195.1 feet to the point of beginning, containing 0.78 acres, more or less.

Being same lands as lands conveyed by Hicks to Blanche Wagner, as set out in Deed Record 122, page 259.

LESS AND EXCEPT the following described tract of land: A part of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, Section 33, Township 19 North, Range 14 West described as follows: Starting at the NW corner of the said NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ thence S. 1° 27' 00" West 102.4 feet to the South Right of Way of U.S. Highway 62, thence N. 85° 07' 00" E. 282.0 feet, thence S. 1° 39' 30" E. 108 feet, to the point of beginning, thence N. 88° 24' 30" E. 136.1 feet, thence S. 1° 16' 00" E. 13.9 feet, thence S. 86° 22' 30" W. 196.3 feet, thence N. 1° 36' 30" W. 18.7 feet to the point of beginning.

This exception being the same lands as conveyed by the Baxter County Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc. to Daniel J. Forker and Frances L. Borowski, recorded as Instrument No. 3256-2006.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The above verbal boundary description includes all land historically associated with the Rollins Hospital.