

10-00-090-33



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

NR 12-1-78

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Clark County Courthouse *CL0354*
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Fourth & Crittenden (Court Square)

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Arkadelphia

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourth

STATE

Arkansas

VICINITY OF

CODE

05

COUNTY

Clark

CODE

019

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Judge R. W. Stevenson

STREET & NUMBER

Clark County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Arkadelphia

STATE

Arkansas 71923

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Clark County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Courtsquare

CITY, TOWN

Arkadelphia

STATE

Arkansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Clark County Courthouse, built in 1899, is a two and one-half story structure. The major mass of the structure is rectangular with a six story parapeted clock tower on the northwestern corner, hexagon towers on the three remaining sides, a projecting enclosed entrance porch on the north, and a twice-projecting bay with enclosed entrance porch on the west. The roof is a combination of hips and gables with six sided conical roofs on the hexagon towers. The towers are topped in finials and there is cresting on the roof major. Windows are segmental arches on the first story, and full arches with double rows of brick voussiors on the second, with the exception of the north elevation, where windows are flat arches on the first story and relieving arches on the second. Windows have stone lentils and sills. Opening on entrance porches are three centered arches whose radii are trimmed in terra cotta.

Walls on the first floor have wainscots of narrow vertical boarding. Floors are finished in ceramic tiles. Air vents are iron filigree. Two stairs lead to the second floor; both have elaborately turned newel posts and balusters. The second floor passageway has a vaulted ceiling, (non-structural). Jury boxes, judge's bench, floors, and lighting fixtures are original.

Alterations include a small rectangular addition to the east elevation of the building and a dropped ceiling in the courtroom. Originally the clock tower was topped by a conical roof.

SIGNIFICANCE

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

PERIOD	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE <input type="checkbox"/> ART <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE <input type="checkbox"/> LAW <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
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SPECIFIC DATES 1899 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Charles Thompson

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1899 by R. S. O'Neal after a Charles Thompson design, the Clark County Courthouse is a Romanesque-styled, architecturally significant structure that occupies a site and serves a purpose (i.e., county courthouse) closely connected with the early settlement of Arkadelphia, the county seat. Also, in the area of community planning, the original town plan in Arkadelphia utilized the courtsquare as a community focal point. However, this initial plan was soon abandoned and the business/commercial district developed along an east-west Main Street axis. Finally, the county courthouse in Clark County, as in the rest of Arkansas, acts as a structural symbol of American government while it serves as the center of political activity.

Named for William Clark, Governor of the Missouri Territory, Clark County was created as the fourth county in the Arkansas Territory by the Missouri Legislature on December 15, 1818. In 1842 Arkadelphia became the fifth location for the county seat when a brick courthouse was built in the center of the townsquare.

The construction of the courthouse provided the major impetus for the early settlement and growth of Arkadelphia. Originally called Blakeley's Hill, the town-site was a high bluff on the west bank of the Ouachita River, a large, navigable river which cuts across the county. The commissioners who chose the site changed its name to Arkadelphia, platted lots and held a public sale of lots on February 8, 1843, for the purpose of raising funds to pay for the courthouse.

In 1899 the county hired Charles Thompson, then Arkansas's leading architect, to design a new and larger courthouse. The end product was the large two and a half story, brick Romanesque-style structure that continues to dominate the courtsquare in Arkadelphia. The courthouse occupies the site of its predecessor. Virtually unaltered, the irregular mass of the structure features a six-story parapeted clock tower on its north-east corner. The conical roof which once surmounted this tower has been removed. Hexagonal towers with steeple roofs are located on the three remaining corners. The three entrances to the building (north, west and south elevations) are approached through Romanesque-arched porches. Terra cotta tablets bearing the name of the courthouse and its date of construction molded in script are located above the porch arches. A compatible, rectangular one-story brick addition projects from the east elevation.

The interior remains in excellent condition and is distinguished by the amount and condition of the original wooden trim. Both large interior stairways are in excellent condition and are unaltered. Detailing in the second floor courtroom, judge's chamber and jury room exhibits a high degree of craftsmanship. However, a modern drop ceiling obscures the original ceiling in the courtroom.

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In Arkansas the county government is the first and perhaps most personal link in the chain of representative democracy and the county courthouse serves as a tangible symbol of this fact. Most administrative and judicial officials in county government are elected through a county-wide election, while the members of the fiscal body, the Quorum Court, are elected in township elections. It is the responsibility of county government to assess and tax property, maintain the county highways, provide rural law enforcement, maintain the county jail, regulate the incorporation and boundary expansion of towns and cities, issue marriage licenses, systematically file records of deeds, mortgages, liens and bonds, perform judicial duties in minor civil or criminal cases and other duties too numerous to list.

The building which houses county government in Arkansas is often the most elaborate structure in the county. The Clark County Courthouse was probably, at the time of its construction, the finest and largest building in Clark County and today stands as one of the most impressive examples of historic architecture in Arkadelphia. After a survey of all Arkansas courthouses conducted by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program in 1975, the Clark County Courthouse was rated as being one of Arkansas's most significant surviving county courthouses.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY LESS THAN ONE ACRE

QUADRANGLE NAME Arkadelphia, Ark.

QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 495300 3775280

B _____

C _____

D _____

E _____

F _____

G _____

H _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Frezil Miller, Architectural Historian, Mike Shinn, Historian

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

371-2763

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Suite 500 Continental Building

STATE

CITY OR TOWN

Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

[Handwritten Signature]

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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A Survey of Arkansas Courthouses. Compiled by the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Arkansas. Mrs. W. G. McDonald, Chairperson, Historical Activities Committee. Arkansas Room, Little Rock Public Library.

Wagoner, Paul W., Ed. County Government Across the Nation. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1950.