

NR listed 6/5/91

CL0901

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Old Bank of Amity

other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number Northwest Corner of Square

not for publication N/A

city, town Amity

vicinity N/A

state Arkansas

code AR

county Clark

code AR 019

zip code 71921

### 3. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

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

#### Category of Property

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

#### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Cathryn H. Bopel  
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

Date

4-23-91

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Bank

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in use

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Plain Traditional

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Metal Porch Roof

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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### Summary

The Old Bank of Amity is a two-story, brick masonry commercial building located on the northwest corner of the town square. It was designed in a simple, vernacular style with Italianate influences.

### Elaboration

Constructed between 1906 and 1907, the Old Bank of Amity is a two-story, red-brick masonry commercial building designed in a simple, commercial vernacular style with Italianate influences. The plan is basically rectangular, though the front (or southern) elevation features a two-story bevelled entrance bay at the southeast corner. The brick foundation supports brick walls which are covered with a flat roof set behind a raised brick parapet.

The southern or front elevation consists of two bays with a bevelled entrance bay at the southeast corner. The first floor contains two single-pane windows with single-pane transoms. The eastern window contains a window air-conditioning unit in the transom leaving a single-pane half the width of the other transom. The entrance features a simple, single-pane oak door surrounded with wooden panels and a single-pane transom. All windows and entrances of the southern and eastern elevations are capped by segmental arches. The entire first story on the southern and western elevations is covered by a later-addition, metal-shed porch supported by metal posts set in concrete. The second-story southern elevation features three two-over-two double-hung windows with the third placed above the first-story entrance. Above each window, diamond-shaped patterns from missing brick are located within corbelled brick panels. The diamond shapes of the western and bevelled bay panels consist of four missing bricks, while the central panel utilizes eight missing bricks to form the diamond. A brick dentil course lies underneath the cornice at the top of the parapet.

The first story of the eastern elevation is fenestrated by five unevenly spaced two-over-two double-hung windows. This elevation is accessed by two entrances with the first located to the north of two widely spaced windows. Two narrowly spaced windows are placed north of the first door, and the second door is to the north of these windows. The final window is located to the north and adjacent to the northernmost entrance. The doors are identical to the main entrance in the bevelled bay but lack the wooden side panels and contain two-pane transoms instead of single-pane. The second-story also contains five windows; however, they are spaced differently from their first-floor counterparts. All were originally two-over-two double-hung windows, but the upper sash of the third window from the south has been replaced with a four-pane sash. The northernmost window has been boarded over. The parapet is divided into three equally-spaced sections and descends one-half foot in succession to the north.

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### **Continuation Sheet**

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The northern or rear elevation consists of two boarded-over first-story windows protected with later iron bars and capped with segmental arches. The second story also contains two boarded-over windows without segmental arches. A second-story fire escape is located to the west with a recent metal staircase descending to the east. The western elevation is an adjoining building.

The interior of the bank appears to have most of the original bank furnishings intact, especially the window and doorway trim. The various desks and counters remain as well.

The Old Bank of Amity as a whole has suffered few alterations. The only addition of significance has been the sheet metal canopy of the southern and western elevations of the first floor, and this is easily removable.

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## Summary

Criterion C, local significance

The Old Bank of Amity is significant under Criterion C as the best extant example of a two-story commercial building in Amity. This vernacular structure features some restrained Italianate influences and remains as the most prominent symbol of turn-of-the-century downtown Amity.

## Elaboration

The town of Amity in Clark County was founded in 1842 with the establishment of a general store by William F. Browning. The first post office was granted in 1848 with Robert Billingsly as postmaster. The first doctor and preacher in town, Dr. Amariah Biggs, named the settlement "Amity," meaning "friendship and neighborliness." By 1890 the town had grown considerably, and according to *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas* contained "six general stores, a steam saw, grist-mill and cotton gin combined, a blacksmith and wood shop, three churches - Methodist Episcopal; Methodist Episcopal, South; and Baptist - a drug, school-house, and about 150 inhabitants."

The Bank of Amity was incorporated on November 30, 1905 with a capital stock of \$25,000, of which \$10,000 was paid up. The bank was organized by William Curtis Hays who served as the bank's president. Hays was born in 1856 and moved to Amity in 1869. He was engaged in the mercantile business for sixty-three years. As a champion of education, Hays founded the old Amity Academy which was organized in 1892. He twice served as delegate to the General World Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and was a charter member of Amity Masonic Lodge. Hays was considered a philanthropist and a promoter of civic organizations in the community.

It is probable that the Old Bank of Amity, located on the northwest corner of the square, was built between 1906 and 1907. In the August 4, 1906 edition of the *Gurdon Times* a paragraph announced that "Mr. M. D. Lowe [of Gurdon] has just returned from Amity where he went to figure on building a brick bank building for the bank at that place." An article by M. M. Hunter entitled "Then and Now" in the *Amity Lions Roar* newspaper recounted how in 1907 the Bank of Amity was the only brick building on the square, which establishes the date of construction sometime between August 1906 and 1907. Hunter further described the town square as:

high in the center and you could only see the tops of the buildings on the opposite sides. This was graded down and a band stand was erected over the well which was located near where the city hall now stands. Yes, we had a brass band at one time but like many of the organizations in Amity, it survived

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only until the novelty was worn off. The stand was pulled down one Halloween night.

Hunter also mentioned a general store owned by W. C. Hays and a thriving lumber plant in West Amity. She noted that West Amity was comprised mostly of cheap houses for the plant employees.

The officers of the early bank were W. C. Hays, President; G. W. Tolleson, Vice President; W. H. Olds, Cashier; and B. W. Fincher, Assistant Cashier. The directors were Hays, Tolleson, Olds, J. F. Brown, and W. S. Watson. The cashier, W. H. Olds, was the son-in-law of W. C. Hays and essentially administered the operation of the bank. Incidentally, Olds was related to R. E. Olds of the Reo automobile fame. Upper-story office space was leased to other businesses, and advertisements in the *Amity Enterprise* indicate that in 1913 a lawyer, Fred Chadwick, and a dentist, Dr. J. W. Scoggins, occupied the upstairs offices.

The bank existed in this building until February 17, 1976 when the bank moved into a new building on the southwest corner of the square. The current bank president is Cleda Olds, daughter of W. H. Olds. Another daughter, Hazel Richardson, is the assistant cashier.

The Old Bank of Amity is significant under Criterion C as the best example of an early twentieth-century two-story brick masonry commercial building. Although basically vernacular in style, the old bank building features some Italianate influences as seen in the segmental arches over the windows and doorways. The Old Bank of Amity remains in good condition and reflects the architectural heritage of Amity.

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**Bibliography**

*Amity Enterprise*. Amity, Arkansas. Feb. 7, 1913. (from the collection of Mrs. Ida Duren, Arkansas History Commission).

*Amity Lions Roar*. Amity, Arkansas.

*Arkansas Democrat*. Little Rock. Dec. 2, 1905. p. 5. col. 5.

*First Annual Report of the Arkansas Bank Commissioner*. 1913-1914. p. 3.

*The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas*. Chicago, Nashville, and St. Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1890. p. 121.

*Gurdon Times*. Gurdon, Arkansas. August 4, 1906. p. 4. col. 3.

*Personal Interview with Hazel Richardson*. 02/25/91.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

c. 1906  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet



**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**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
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than one

**UTM References**

A 15 457550 3791470  
Zone Easting Northing

B \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_

D \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

East Half of Lot 12 of Original Town of Amity.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

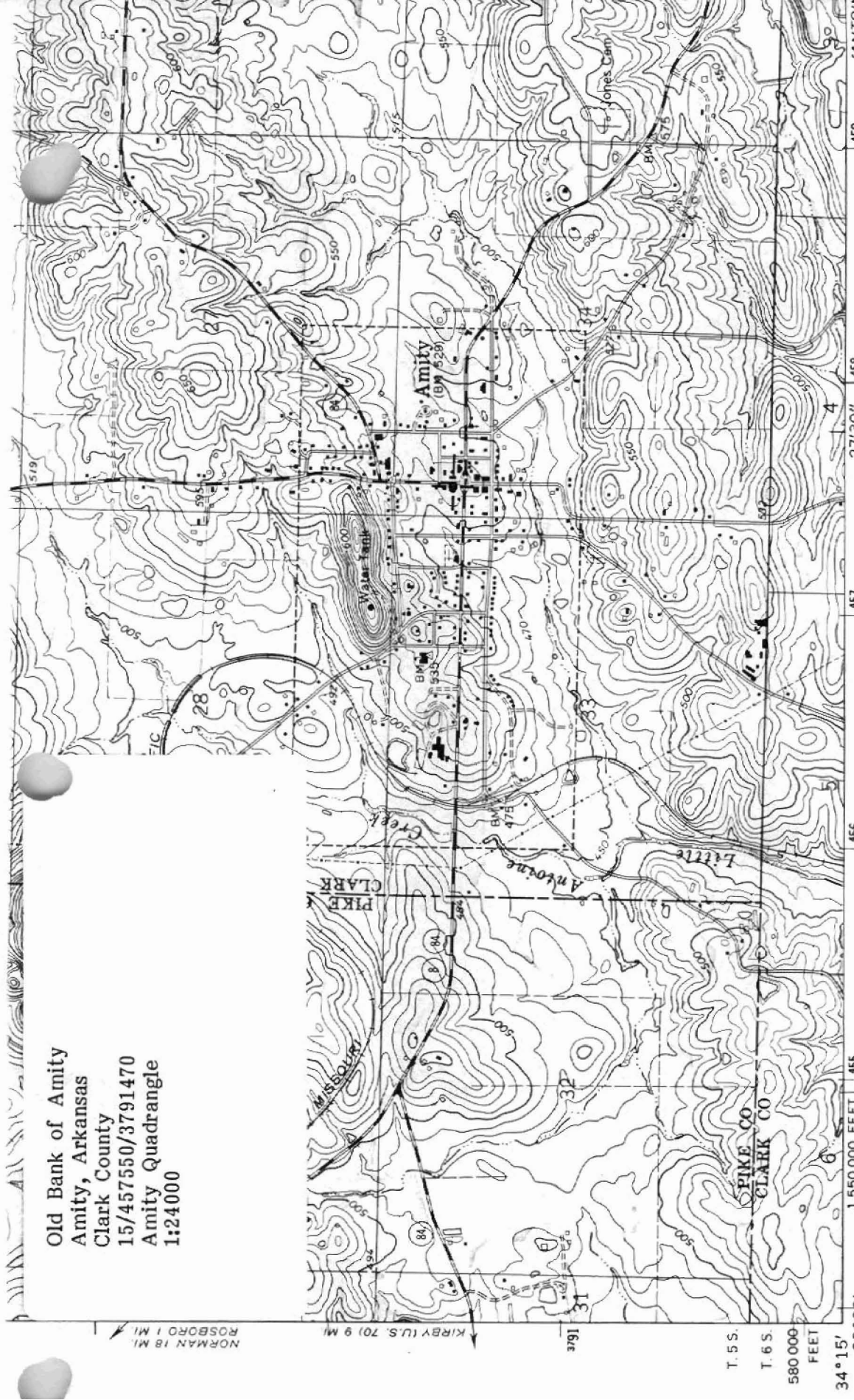
This boundary includes all the property historically associated with this resource.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Patrick Zollner/National Register Historian  
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 4/10/91  
street & number 225 East Markham, Suite 300 telephone (501) 324-9346  
city or town Little Rock state Arkansas zip code 72201

Old Bank of Amity  
 Amity, Arkansas  
 Clark County  
 15/457550/3791470  
 Amity Quadrangle  
 1:24000



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

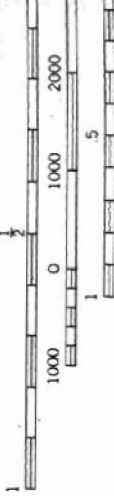
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1963. Field checked 1966

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Arkansas coordinate system, south zone  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
 zone 15, shown in blue

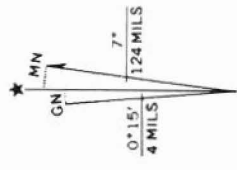
Area covered by dashed light-blue pattern  
 is subject to controlled inundation

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
 generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

SCALE



CONTOUR INTERVAL  
 DATUM IS M



UTM GRID AND 1966 MAGNETIC NORTH  
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL  
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER  
 AND BY THE ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

