

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Arkansas Christian College Administration Building

Other names/site number: Southern Christian Home Administration Building

Name of related multiple property listing:

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

2. Location

Street & number: 100 West Harding Street

City or town: Morrilton State: Arkansas County: Conway

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this X 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 X 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 X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B ___ C ___ D

| | |
|---|--|
| <p><u>Martha Miller</u></p> <p>Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u></p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p> | <p><u>12/5/13</u></p> <p>Date</p> |
|---|--|

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p> | |
| <p>Signature of commenting official:</p> | <p>Date</p> |
| <p>Title :</p> | <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p> |

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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

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

| 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> </u> | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/College
RECREATION AND CULTURE/Auditorium

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/Civic
RECREATION AND CULTURE/Auditorium

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE, BRICK, TAR

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Arkansas Christian College Administration Building is a two-story Colonial-Revival style building located on the campus of the Southern Christian Children's Home on the north side of Morrilton. The building is located on a large lawn set back from West Harding Street, and the site was originally the northern edge of the city. The building rests on a continuous stone foundation and has brick walls with stone detailing at the corners and the cornice line. The main section of the building has a flat roof with a parapet, while the auditorium wing has a hipped roof with a flat top. The building's windows currently consist of a mixture of double-hung and stationary windows of various pane arrangements.

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Narrative Description

The Arkansas Christian College Administration Building is a two-story Colonial-Revival style building located on the campus of the Southern Christian Children's Home on the north side of Morrilton. The building is located on a large lawn set back from West Harding Street, and the site was originally the northern edge of the city. To the south of the building is a residential neighborhood and newer residential neighborhoods area also now located north of the building.

The building rests on a continuous stone foundation and has brick walls with stone detailing at the corners and the cornice line. The main section of the building has a flat roof with a parapet, while the auditorium wing has a hipped roof with a flat top. The building's windows currently consist of a mixture of original double-hung windows with nine-over-nine or six-over-six pane arrangements and replacement stationary windows that consist of single panes of glass. In addition some of the basement windows and windows in the auditorium wing have been removed and boarded up.

Front/South Façade

The front façade faces south towards West Harding Street and is symmetrical in its composition. The center of the façade consists of the main entrance which has replacement metal-framed plate-glass doors that are surrounded by plate-glass sidelights and transom windows. The main entrance has a stone surround with a projecting cornice. Above the main entrance and its cornice is a stone panel that is topped by a multi-pane segmental-arched window, also with a stone surround. On each floor of the building, the entrance and the arched window are flanked on each side by a pair of six-over-six, double-hung windows. All of the windows on the façade have stone sills.

The central entrance and window above, along with the flanking windows are sheltered by a monumental projecting portico, which is supported by engaged pilasters at each corner. Towards the center of the building, each pilaster is flanked by a round, unfluted, stone column. The entrance and portico is approached by a set of stone steps flanked by stone wingwalls. The portico is topped by a stone cornice that reads "ARKANSAS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE." The cornice is topped by a brick parapet, and semicircular stones at the top of the portico's parapet at each end read "19" and "20".

On each side of the projecting portico and main entrance, each floor of the building is fenestrated by a row of five, double-hung, nine-over-nine windows. The projecting stone cornice with the brick parapet above it is located directly above the second-floor windows. The rusticated-stone foundation of these sections of the façade used to have four windows each, although the openings are now covered with corrugated metal.

At each end of the façade is section that projects from the main plane of the façade. These projections have the projecting stone cornice and brick parapet of the rest of the façade as well as the rusticated stone foundation. In addition, stone quoins are located at each corner of the projections. The western projection is fenestrated by a single, single-pane replacement window

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on each floor while the eastern projection is fenestrated by a single double-hung, six-over-six window on each floor. The basement level of each projection used to have a window each, although the openings are now covered with corrugated metal.

Side/West Façade

Like the front façade, the west façade of the main section of the building is symmetrical in arrangement. The first floor of the façade is oriented around a central entrance, which has a pair of metal-framed, plate-glass doors with a plate-glass transom above it. The entrance also has a stone surround and projecting stone cornice above it. A new, shed-roofed metal awning shelters the entrance, and it is approached by a set of stone and brick steps.

The first floor of the front section of the façade is fenestrated on each side of the entrance by a row of five windows. The windows to the south of the entrance are replacement, single-pane windows with concrete sills while the windows to the north of the entrance are double-hung, nine-over-nine windows, also with stone sills.

The second floor of the main section of the façade has a pair of replacement single-pane windows in the center of the façade above the entrance. As on the first floor, a row of five windows fenestrates the façade to the north and south. All of these windows are replacement single-pane windows.

Above the second-floor windows is a projecting stone cornice topped with a brick parapet that matches the cornice and parapet on the first floor. The cornice connects stone quoins that exist at each corner. In addition, the rusticated stone foundation, on either side of the steps, used to have four windows on each side, although the openings are now covered with corrugated metal.

In addition to the front section of the building is the rear auditorium wing. The west façade of the basement level of the wing, which contained the gymnasium, has four large rectangular window openings with concrete sills, although all of the window openings have been covered with red corrugated metal. In addition, the west side of the concrete-block addition has a painted-over, double-hung, twelve-over-twelve window.

Above the basement level is a stone water table. The upper two floors of the wing contain the auditorium space. On the upper floors, the windows in the northern two bays have been covered with red corrugated metal. Also, a new entrance has been cut into the second floor window that is second from the north end of the façade, and a metal stairway has been added to the façade. The windows in the wing's southern two bays have been partially replaced with large plate-glass windows and partially covered with red corrugated metal.

Rear/North Façade

The rear façade is also symmetrical like the front façade and is dominated by the projecting auditorium wing. The rear façade of the auditorium wing, at the basement level, contains the concrete block addition, which used to be larger and housed an indoor swimming pool. The west side of the addition has a gable roof and has a loading dock and garage door at the west end and a wood-panel door near the east end. The east side of the addition has a hipped roof and is

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fenestrated by a single double-hung window. The upper floors of the auditorium wing were fenestrated by three large windows, one in the center of the wing and one near each end. However, these windows have been replaced by red corrugated metal.

On either side of the auditorium wing, the rear façade of the main section of the building is recessed. Each floor of these parts of the façade, including the basement level, was fenestrated by windows. However, all of these windows have been covered with red corrugated metal. The recessed portion to the west of the auditorium wing has the rusticated stone foundation and projecting stone cornice with brick parapet on top of it while the portion to the east of the auditorium wing does not.

At either end of the façade are projections that mirror the projections on the front façade. These projections have the projecting stone cornice and brick parapet as well as the rusticated stone foundation. In addition, stone quoins are located at each corner of the projections. The western projection is fenestrated by a single, single-pane replacement window on each floor while the eastern projection is fenestrated by a single double-hung, six-over-six window on the first floor and a single-pane window on the second floor. The basement level of each projection used to have a window each, although the openings are now covered with red corrugated metal.

Side/East Façade

Like the front façade, the east façade of the main section of the building is symmetrical in arrangement. The first floor of the façade is oriented around a central entrance, which has a pair of metal-framed, plate-glass doors with a plate-glass transom above it. The entrance also has a stone surround and projecting stone cornice above it. The top of the stone surround says "BOYS."

The first floor of the front section of the façade is fenestrated on each side of the entrance by a row of five windows. The windows are all double-hung, nine-over-nine windows, also with concrete sills.

The second floor of the main section of the façade has a pair of replacement single-pane windows in the center of the façade above the entrance. As on the first floor, a row of five windows fenestrates the façade to the north and south. The windows to the north are replacement single-pane windows while those to the south are double-hung, nine-over-nine windows. All of the windows have stone sills.

Above the second-floor windows is a projecting stone cornice topped with a brick parapet that matches the cornice and parapet on the first floor. The cornice connects stone quoins that exist at each corner. In addition, the rusticated stone foundation, on either side of the steps, used to have four windows on each side, although almost all of the openings are now covered with corrugated metal. (The second window to the south of the entrance is not covered and it is a double-hung, six-over-six window.)

In addition to the front section of the building is the rear auditorium wing. The east façade of the basement level of the wing, which contained the gymnasium, has four large rectangular window

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openings with stone sills, although all of the window openings have been covered with red corrugated metal. In addition, the east side of the concrete-block addition has a double-hung window.

Above the basement level is a stone water table. The upper two floors of the wing contain the auditorium space. On the upper floors, the windows in the northern two bays have been covered with red corrugated metal. Also, a new entrance has been cut into the second floor window that is second from the north end of the façade, and a metal stairway has been added to the façade. The windows in the wing's southern two bays have been partially replaced with large plate-glass windows and partially covered with red corrugated metal.

Integrity

Since the time that the Arkansas Christian College Administration Building was built, there have been two significant changes to the building's integrity. First, the replacement of some of the windows with non-historic plate-glass windows, which was done in 2000, has changed the character of the building, as has the removal of windows, especially in the auditorium wing of the building. The setting around the building has also changed somewhat since it housed Arkansas Christian College. When the building housed the college, two other buildings existed on the site, one immediately to the east and one immediately to the west. As the Southern Christian Children's Home has expanded, additional buildings have been built on the site. Even so, the "campus" setting is still apparent from the time of the building's period of significance.

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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.

Criteria Considerations

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

- 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1919-1934

Significant Dates

1919-1920

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Arkansas Christian College Administration Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its associations with higher education in Morrilton and Conway County. Founded in 1919, Arkansas Christian

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College was the second college established in Morrilton and was an important component of the education system in Conway County in the first part of the twentieth century. Arkansas Christian College merged with Harper College in 1924 to become Harding College, and it remained in Morrilton until 1934 when Harding College moved to Searcy, Arkansas. Today, the Administration Building is the last and most intact remnant of the college and an important reminder of the college's role in Conway County education.

Since the building is owned by Southern Christian Home, a mission of the churches of Christ, the building is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration A** as a property owned by a religious institution.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

Some of the earliest settlement in Conway County began southeast of the Menifee vicinity in the Cadron Creek Valley. In 1778 John Standlee and some others explored the area near the mouth of Cadron Creek, and he selected a place that he wished to return to to live. He eventually returned to the site in 1814 and lived there until his death in August 1820. Settlement continued in the area in the 1810s and 1820s with the arrival of John C. Benedict and his family in the spring of 1818 and B. F. Howard who settled on the Arkansas River above the mouth of Cadron Creek in 1828.¹

By the 1820s there were enough people in the area for the creation of Conway County, which occurred in October 1825. Conway County was named for the Conway family, and at the time of its creation by the Territorial Legislature, included parts of Faulkner, Van Buren, Pope, Perry and Yell counties. The first county seat was at Cadron.²

Railroad construction in Conway County was the single most significant event in the county's development. In 1853, a charter was granted to the Cairo & Fulton Railroad to construct an east-west connecting line from Little Rock to Fort Smith. After two years of little progress on the Fort Smith Branch, a new company, the Little Rock & Fort Smith Railroad, was formed and chartered in 1855. The railroad moved slowly westward from what is now North Little Rock. Construction was interrupted by the Civil War in 1860 and did not resume until 1866. An initial survey for a potential line west to Fort Smith from Little Rock planned to take the railroad through Lewisburg. Residents of the town were asked to donate money to help build the railroad line to ensure it would pass through their town. They refused to raise the \$2,000 that the Little Rock & Fort Smith Railroad wanted. The citizens felt the town's position was so strategic in Conway County that the railroad would have to come through it anyway. As a result, the Little

¹ *Historical Reminiscences and Biographical Memoirs of Conway County, Arkansas*. Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Historical Publishing Company, 1890, p. 20.

² *Ibid*, p. 11.

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Rock & Fort Smith Railroad re-surveyed the proposed line, and moved it to pass north of Lewisburg.³

The "Lewisburg Station" opened for railroad service in November 1870. Although called "Lewisburg Station," its actual location was three miles north of Lewisburg. This railroad station was the genesis of Morrilton.⁴

In 1873, Morrilton was established on property donated from the Morrill and Moose Farms. One of Lewisburg's most prominent residents was Edward James Morrill. Originally from Massachusetts, Morrill moved to the thriving town of Lewisburg in 1840. He was a druggist and quickly established a successful business. Morrill had a farm north of Lewisburg, which is the present-day area from Division Street to the Cherokee line, west of Morrilton. George Hall Morrill, son of Edward James Morrill, was the first of the Morrill family to settle in the area. The nearest neighbor was the Moose family who farmed the adjacent land, east of what is now Division Street.⁵

The first "Lewisburg Station" was a boxcar fitted beside the railroad track. Moose and Morrill proposed to the Little Rock & Fort Smith Railroad to give them a town site in order to construct a permanent station. If the railroad station were maintained, then Morrill and Moose, in return, would receive every alternate block within the town site. The railroad station agent, Captain J. W. Boot, is credited with naming the town, choosing between Morrill and Moose by a flip of a coin.⁶

The town site was laid out in 1876. Division Street is named for the dividing line between the two farms; the Morrill farm to the west and the Moose farm to the east. East Street was the eastern boundary of the town, West Street was the western boundary, North Street was the northern boundary, and Church Street was the southern boundary. The two streets between the east and west boundaries, were named for the town founders, Morrill and Moose streets.⁷

The railroad quickly replaced the Arkansas River as the favored means of both commercial shipping and passenger travel. As the railroad became more and more popular, the population of Lewisburg moved to be near the railroad station in Morrilton. However, the early growth of Morrilton scarcely qualified the community as a "Boomtown." It took ten years before Morrilton supplanted Lewisburg as the major community in the area. In January 1880, Morrilton was incorporated, and became the Conway County seat in 1883. Lewisburg still had a population of 1,000 in the early 1880s. However, the residents eventually abandoned Lewisburg. Old cisterns and two cemeteries are the only visible remains of the once thriving town and county seat.⁸

³ Smith, Sandra Taylor. "Morrilton Commercial Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. In the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. 2002.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

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In the 1870s, the remaining Morrill family members left Lewisburg to settle in their new town, Morrilton. Edward James Morrill died in 1885 in the home that he built near the new railroad and his holdings were divided among his children. The Morrill family continued to contribute to the growth and stability of the town named after their father as Morrill's children donated lands to various churches and town institutions. One son, Henry Morrill, gave the site for the first school in Morrilton.⁹

As Morrilton and Conway County grew, providing educational opportunities for the residents became increasingly important. Although it is not known who the first teacher in the county was, it is known that the first school, which was also used for church services, was built at Lewisburg prior to 1836, and William Watson was the teacher. Other early schools in the area included one at Sardis Camp Ground and Wiley P. Owens taught at a school on Point Remove in 1847.¹⁰

Although the Civil War disrupted the development of schools and educational opportunities in Conway County, the post-war period brought about great strides in education. By the 1890s, Conway County schools were "in a most healthy and flourishing condition" and there were 76 school districts in the county. A description of the education system in Conway County in 1890 stated:

During that year [1889] there were \$27,295.96 paid into the county treasury for school purposes, and \$17,739.40 paid out in teachers' salaries, leaving the abundant sum of nearly \$10,000 still on hand. New school houses are being built in all parts of the county, and an almost unanimous desire is manifested by the citizens to build up and protect this bulwark of the people's intellectual advancement – the public free school.¹¹

However, the desire for a good education system in Conway County did not stop with grade schools or high schools, but included the desire to have a college as well. The citizens of Morrilton first had the idea of establishing a college in the spring of 1889, and subscribed \$15,000 to help in getting a college going. After the city's failed attempt to secure Hendrix College, "The former idea was then at once revived, and a stock company, with a capital of \$50,000 [was] organized." It was further stated that "The pride of Conway County will in the future, rest in the Morrilton Male and Female College, now in the course of erection at Morrilton. It is the purpose of the citizens of that beautiful city to erect a college building, and

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Historical Reminiscences and Biographical Memoirs of Conway County, Arkansas*. Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Historical Publishing Company, 1890, pp. 25-26.

¹¹ *Historical Reminiscences and Biographical Memoirs of Conway County, Arkansas*. Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Historical Publishing Company, 1890, p. 26.

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endow it with such support that it may not only be their pride, but will also reflect on the State at large.”¹²

The Morrilton Male and Female College opened for classes on Tuesday, September 1, 1890, and the courses that the college required students to take consisted of “Latin, Greek, the sciences, full course in mathematics, commercial course, music, art, and elocution.” The building was extensively described in the *Historical Reminiscences and Biographical Memoirs of Conway County, Arkansas*. It stated:

The college has a most conspicuous location in the eastern part of town, has a most graceful and symmetrical appearance, and adds greatly to the beauty of Morrilton. It is a two and a half story and basement building, surmounted by a tower, with a pinnacle [sic.] ninety-one feet above the foundation walls. The foundation is stone, and the walls are brick with stone trimmings. The basement floor consists of the boiler and two recreation rooms, one each for the male and female pupils. The first floor is divided into five rooms, with a broad hall through the building east and west, and an intersecting hall from the north to the main hall. The rooms are the president’s office, two class and two school rooms. The second floor has four rooms, consisting of a large assembly hall and three class rooms. The dormer story has three music rooms, a chemical laboratory and a society hall.

The building is furnished with all needed appliances and apparatus, is heated with steam, surrounded by pleasant grounds...[and] the completed building stands as a monument to the pride and credit of Morrilton.¹³

The college only lasted until the 1890s, however, when the building became part of the Morrilton public school system.¹⁴

Even though the Morrilton Male and Female College was a short-lived institution, the citizens of Morrilton did not want to lose a college’s presence in their community, and the void left by the Male and Female Academy was eventually filled by Arkansas Christian College. Arkansas Christian College was chartered in 1919 as a junior college and operated as such until 1924 when the college and Harper College in Harper, Kansas (founded in 1915), merged to become a senior college named Harding College.¹⁵ In fact, the amount of money that the citizens were willing to

¹² *Historical Reminiscences and Biographical Memoirs of Conway County, Arkansas*. Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Historical Publishing Company, 1890, p. 26.

¹³ *Historical Reminiscences and Biographical Memoirs of Conway County, Arkansas*. Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Historical Publishing Company, 1890, pp. 26-27.

¹⁴ “Conway County.” *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=759>.

¹⁵ Information on the history of Harding University found at: <http://www.harding.edu/about/history.html>.

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give to establish Arkansas Christian College was the largest amount ever paid for a school in Arkansas up to that time.

President A.S. Croom of Arkansas Christian College, having heard that Harper College was considering a move, made an unexpected visit to the campus in Kansas. He proposed to Harper College's President, J.N. Armstrong, a merger of the two schools stating, "We have the building, but you have the college." Croom felt that Morrilton had the finest administration building among the Christian schools, and that the location in the heart of the part of the country served by the churches of Christ would assure support in both students and funding. It is interesting to note that two board members in Morrilton objected to the change and one elderly board member is reported to have protested by stating, "If we change the name of Arkanshaw Christshan College, we'll be shinnin' againsht God, we'll be shinnin' againsht the church, and we'll be shinnin' againsht the shtate of Arkanshaw." Those two board members resigned.

This new college was named in memory of James A. Harding, co-founder and first president of Nashville Bible School (now David Lipscomb University) in Nashville, Tennessee. A preacher, teacher and Christian educator, James A. Harding inspired his co-workers and associates with an enthusiasm for Christian education that remains a significant tradition at Harding University. With the merger, J.N. Armstrong, who had served five years as Harper's president, became President of Harding College, and A.S. Croom, President of Arkansas Christian College for two years, became Vice President for Business Affairs.¹⁶ Harding College began with registration on September 23, 1924, on a 40-acre campus on the north side of Morrilton, Arkansas. Although the grounds were unfinished upon opening, the area was beautiful and Petit Jean Mountain could be seen in the distance towering over the Arkansas River. About 288 students from 17 states attended the first year. Only 75 of the total were on the college level. The remaining students were enrolled in Harding Academy at either the elementary or secondary levels.

In 1934 Harding was moved to its present site in Searcy, Arkansas, on the campus of a former women's institution, Galloway College. Galloway College had closed in 1933 due to a large deficit and declining enrollment. Upon completion of a study begun in May 1978, the board of trustees approved the study's recommended change of Harding to university status, and on August 27, 1979, the name of the institution officially became Harding University.¹⁷

The Administration Building of Arkansas Christian College was built in 1919-1920 as the centerpiece of the campus. The building was constructed of pressed brick and Bedford stone with cement floors and ceilings. The building consists of two stories with a full basement, and originally housed the college's administrative offices, classrooms, and laboratories. In addition, an annex on the rear of the building houses Matthews Auditorium, which was named in honor of Dr. J.M. Matthews, a former President of the Board of Trustees. The auditorium seats over 600 people and was designed so that a balcony may be added that could seat an additional 250 people.

¹⁶ Information on the history of Harding University found at: <http://www.harding.edu/about/history.html>.

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The use of elements from the Colonial and Classical Revival styles for the Arkansas Christian College Administration Building was not an unusual choice, since it was a style that was popular throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The use of the style for academic buildings was a popular choice throughout the twentieth century, since, in some people's opinions, it "conformed to the traditional spirit of the American college" and also harkened back to the colonial buildings of some well-respected eastern colleges, such as Yale, Harvard, and the University of Virginia.¹⁸

In addition to the Administration Building, the campus also included two dormitories, one for male students and one for female students, and a president's house. Although the dormitories have both been demolished and other buildings occupy the site, the president's house remains, although greatly altered, on the south side of West Harding Street.

After Harding College moved to Searcy in 1934, the Administration Building was vacant until 1936 when the trustees of Arkansas Christian Home decided that they wanted to purchase the former Harding College property. J.C. Dawson, school superintendent, travelled to St. Louis to meet with the property owners. His appeal for the children touched them and they agreed to sell the buildings and land for \$15,000.

The Southern Christian Home was founded in 1926 by Mrs. W. T. Bush, when she took two homeless children to James E. Laird, minister of the Church of Christ in Fort Smith. Laird recommended that they be placed with Mrs. Bush in a private home, and the effort eventually became the Arkansas Christian Home. The name was later changed to the Arkansas-Oklahoma Christian Home and then changed again to the Southern Christian Home in 1936.¹⁹

The articles of incorporation for Southern Christian Home were filed with the Circuit Court of Conway County, Arkansas, on June 4, 1936. Southern Christian Home was created by a merger between the Arkansas Christian Home and the Arkansas-Oklahoma Christian Home. The purpose was "to care for, adopt, keep, train, and educate orphan children and to find homes for and place in Christian homes children committed to this association, and to act for and on behalf of orphan children and dependent and neglected children and to care for and provide for such children aforesaid in any and all ways that may be necessary for the proper care and education of orphan children and dependent and neglected children, and in all lawful matter and by all appurtenances thereto belonging in the carrying out of the general plan of this association for the care, education, and maintenance of orphan children and neglected and dependent children..." Spanning 70 years from a small beginning at Fort Smith, Arkansas, to the present Southern Christian Home at Morrilton, the organization operates on this location to the present day. Today, the building continues to serve the home as office space and an auditorium space for assemblies and graduations, and serves as a reminder of the history of higher education in Conway County.

¹⁸ Axelrod, Alan, ed. *The Colonial Revival in America*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1985, pp. 355-356.

¹⁹ Information on the history of the Southern Christian Home found at: <http://schome.org/page/history>.

Arkansas Christian College Administration Building
Name of Property

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SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

From the earliest points of Conway County's nineteenth-century history, education was an important part of life in the county. Once Morrilton was established in the late nineteenth century, education became an important part of life in the new county seat as well. The fact that in 1889 there was a \$10,000 surplus for education in the county treasury – a very large sum of money for the period – speaks to the importance that the county's residents placed on education. The importance of education is also illustrated in the fact that there were 76 school districts in the county.²⁰

However, it was not just grade-school education that was important to Morrilton's and Conway County's residents. Higher education was also important to the area's residents from just after the founding of Morrilton. The fact that by 1890 two efforts at establishing a college in Morrilton had been undertaken gives an indication of the importance of higher education to the area. Although the attempt to secure Hendrix College for Morrilton was unsuccessful, the establishment of the Morrilton Male and Female College with \$50,000 again shows the sacrifices that the local residents were willing to make to establish a college in their community. Although the College only lasted about ten years, it whetted the appetite of Morrilton for another institution of higher learning.

The establishment of Arkansas Christian College in 1919 brought higher education once again to Morrilton. The importance of the institution to the area's residents was once again illustrated in the amount of money that they gave for the college's establishment, which was the largest amount ever paid for a school in Arkansas up to that time. In addition, Arkansas Christian College was the longest lived college in Morrilton, until the establishment of the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton in 1963.

The Arkansas Christian College Administration Building is the last remaining vestige of the school, and is the last remaining resource associated with higher education in the Morrilton area. The Morrilton Male and Female College building has been demolished and the two dormitory buildings that stood on the Arkansas Christian College campus have been demolished or extensively altered. Even though the Arkansas Christian College Administration Building has also been altered, notably with the replacement or removal of many windows, it best represents the importance of higher education in Morrilton and Conway County. As a result, the Arkansas Christian College Administration Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its associations with higher education in Morrilton and Conway County. Since the building is owned by Southern Christian Home, a mission of the churches of Christ, the building is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration A** as a property owned by a religious institution.

²⁰ *Historical Reminiscences and Biographical Memoirs of Conway County, Arkansas*. Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Historical Publishing Company, 1890, p. 26.

Arkansas Christian College Administration Building
Name of Property

Conway County, Arkansas
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Axelrod, Alan, ed. *The Colonial Revival in America*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1985, pp. 355-356.

“Conway County.” *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at:
<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=759>.

Historical Reminiscences and Biographical Memoirs of Conway County, Arkansas. Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Historical Publishing Company, 1890.

Information on the history of Harding University found at:
<http://www.harding.edu/about/history.html>.

Information on the history of the Southern Christian Home found at:
<http://schome.org/page/history>.

Smith, Sandra Taylor. “Morrilton Commercial Historic District.” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. In the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. 2002.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Arkansas Christian College Administration Building

Conway County, Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

Name of repository: Harding University (Searcy, AR), Southern Christian Home
(Morrilton, AR)

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): Site #CN0397

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one.

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 35.164123 | Longitude: -92.743223 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 523383 | Northing: 3891273 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

Arkansas Christian College Administration Building
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Beginning at UTM point 15/523350/3891307, proceed easterly for 185 feet to UTM point 15/523408/3891311, thence proceed southerly for 200 feet to UTM point 15/523408/3891246, thence proceed westerly for 185 feet to UTM point 15/523349/3891249, thence proceed northerly to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses the Arkansas Christian College Administration Building and its immediate surroundings.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Susan Dumas, edited by Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator

organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

street & number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500

city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201

e-mail: ralph@arkansasheritage.org

telephone: (501) 324-9787

date: September 21, 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Arkansas Christian College Administration Building
Name of Property

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Arkansas Christian College Administration Building

City or Vicinity: Morrilton

County: Conway

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Travis A. Ratermann

Date Photographed: May 23, 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 7. View of the south façade, looking northwest.

2 of 7. Cornice detail over the main entrance, looking northwest.

3 of 7. View of the west façade of the front section of the building, looking northeast.

4 of 7. View of the west façade of the auditorium wing, looking southeast.

5 of 7. View of the north façade, looking southeast.

6 of 7. View of the north façade, looking southwest.

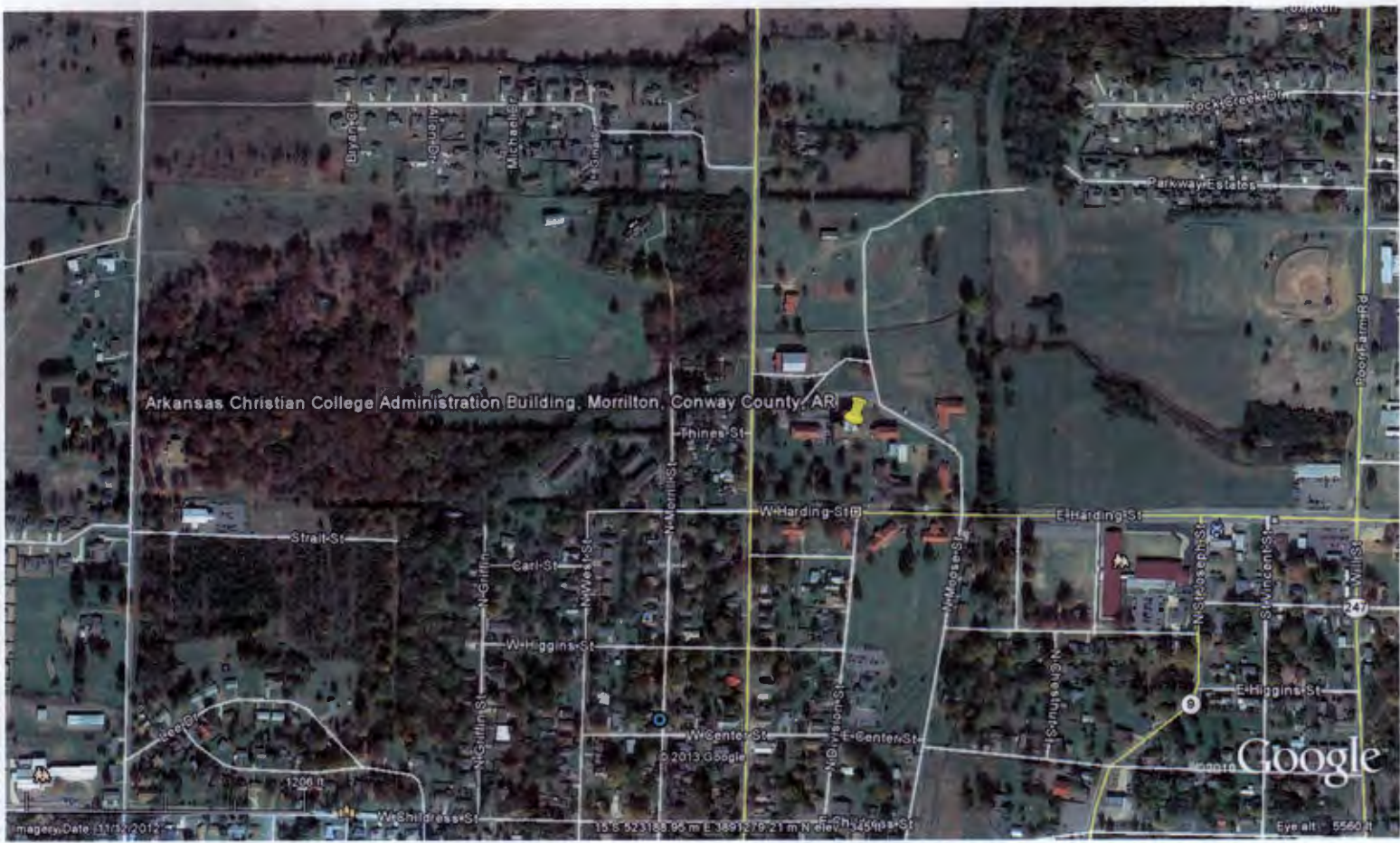
7 of 7. View of the east façade, looking southwest.

Arkansas Christian College Administration Building
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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 listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Arkansas Christian College Administration Building
Conway County, Arkansas
Latitude: 35.164123 Longitude: -92.743223

|-----1206'-----|

↑
North









ST. JOHN'S
SCHOOL
1950-1951

ST. JOHN'S
SCHOOL





