

NR LISTED

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 12 1996

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

AHPP

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1. Name of Property

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Historic Name: Altus Well Shed / Gazebo

Other Name/Site Number: FR 0144

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2. Location

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Street & Number: NW Corner of N. Franklin & E. Main Streets

Not for Publication: N/A

City/Town: Altus

Vicinity: N/A

State: AR County: Franklin Code: AR 047 Zip Code: 72821

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Public-local

Category of Property: Structure

Number of Resources within Property:

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

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Altus Well Shed/Gazebo  
Name of Property

Franklin Co., Arkansas  
County and State

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**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**  
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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A. Slatu  
Signature of certifying official

7-26-96  
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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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**5. National Park Service Certification**  
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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 Keeper Date  
of Action

Altus Well Shed/Gazebo  
Name of Property

Franklin Co., Arkansas  
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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic: Transportation Sub: Rail-related (well)  
Recreation and Culture Outdoor Recreation

Current : Recreation and Culture Sub: Outdoor Recreation

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification:**

Other: Octagonal Gazebo

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundation Concrete roof Metal  
walls Concrete other Wood

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

**Summary**

Located at the southeast corner of the city park and just west of the northwest corner of the intersection of N. Franklin and E. Main Streets, the Altus Well Shed/Gazebo originated as a water supply well for the railroad. According to local oral tradition, the well was capped and the current concrete and wood octagonal gazebo erected c. 1920.

**Elaboration**

Located at the southeast corner of the city park and just west of the northwest corner of the intersection of N. Franklin and E. Main Streets, the Altus Well Shed/Gazebo originated as a water supply well for the railroad. According to local oral tradition, the well was covered over and the current gazebo erected c. 1920. The octagonal gazebo is constructed upon a green-painted cast concrete block foundation with each side measuring 80 inches in length. The floor of the gazebo is a smooth, green-painted poured concrete pad with several cracks. Eight white-painted, stepped columns consisting of four square concrete blocks with the three interior sides slightly shouldered (the exterior face is flush) support the octagonal frame roof that is sheathed with silver decorative pressed metal shingles and capped by a simple metal finial.

Altus Well Shed/Gazebo  
Name of Property

Franklin Co., Arkansas  
County and State

The eaves and ceiling of the gazebo are finished with white tongue-and-groove, double-beaded boards and trimmed by a green-painted fascia board. A small concrete step provides access from the southeast side of the gazebo.

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**8. Statement of Significance**  
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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: c. 1920

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

**Summary**

The Altus Well Shed/Gazebo is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best example of a historic gazebo in Altus.

**Elaboration**

The community of Altus was first settled around 1875 with the arrival of the Little Rock & Fort Smith Railroad, which for a period of a year terminated at Altus. Although the railroad soon proceeded with its plan to complete the line through to Fort Smith, Altus remained a principal freight and passenger stop on the line; in fact, the town acquired its name through its association with the railroad, as it occupied the highest elevation on the railroad between Little Rock and Fort Smith (the name "Altus" came from the Latin "alta," meaning "high"). Originally, Altus was located about a quarter of a mile east of where it is today. Mr. U.J. Nichols laid out the new site and offered the railway every alternate lot, and a 300 x 300 feet depot site to move Altus to the present location. The town consisted of four streets situated around the depot as a square.

Coinciding with the arrival of the railroad was the founding of Central Collegiate Institute in October of 1876 by Reverend Isham L. Burrow. The college grew gradually over the years, and a new three story building was constructed in 1884. Later that year the college was purchased by the Arkansas Valley, Little Rock, and White River Methodist Conferences. The name was changed to Hendrix College in honor of Bishop Hendrix of Kansas City. In 1890, the three Methodist conferences decided to relocate the college to a town larger than Altus in order to ensure the future growth of the institution. After accepting bids from all over Arkansas, the town of Conway was chosen as the new location, and the college remains there today. After Hendrix College left Altus, however, Rev. Burrow reopened another school on the same campus called Hiram and Lydia College in honor of his mother and father. The new school flourished for sixteen years, 1890-1906, at which time Rev. Burrow decided to close the school because of his advanced age.

German and Swiss settlement in Altus began in 1881 when immigrants from the wine-making regions of both countries were encouraged to settle there by the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad Company. Many of the families settled on Pond Creek Mountain to the north of Altus and began growing grapes. An active vinyard and wine-making industry soon developed with such families and the Posts and Wiedekehrs achieving considerable success in bottling and marketing their wines broadly. Altus remains the wine-making capital of the state, with three active wineries still in operation.

Altus was incorporated on August 31, 1888 at which time the town had a population of five hundred. Altus' status as an early college town was soon complimented by its role as a shipping center for the burgeoning local coal mining industry. Coal had been discovered in Old Spadra, Johnson County, as early as 1873; by 1880 it was a prosperous local industry. The mining community of Denning, located approximately two miles south of Altus, was the most productive mining community and was connected to the main rail line via a branch line constructed in 1895. This line was subsequently extended to Ozark for the purpose of bypassing the steep grade between Altus and Ozark. Shortly thereafter, it became the main line, and in 1936, the railroad track through Altus was pulled and all traffic diverted through Denning.

The history of the Altus Well Shed/Gazebo is tied directly to that of the railroad, but there is some confusion as to the dates of construction. According to several eighty-year old Altus residents, the well was dug by the Missouri Pacific Railroad about the time the original depot was built in Altus. A trough extended to the north from the well and provided water for the horses and mules used for hauling cotton from the ferry on the Arkansas River to the railroad for shipment. The oral history further relates that around 1920 the well was covered over and the current gazebo, known as the "Well Shed" by many of Altus's senior citizens, was constructed of cut stone similar to that used in the construction of St. Mary's Catholic Church. Despite being covered by several coats of paint, it is the opinion of the AHPP staff that the gazebo is constructed of formed, cast concrete blocks which resemble cut stone for the foundation and poured concrete for the floor and columns.

Other evidence that conflicts somewhat with the oral history is found in the history of the Missouri Pacific Railroad. According to the *WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas*, the Little Rock & Fort Smith Railroad was acquired by Jay Gould's St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern railroad in 1882. The Missouri Pacific Railroad did not formally absorb the Iron Mountain system until 1917. It is certainly possible that the original well was dug under the auspices of the Iron Mountain or even the Little Rock & Fort Smith Railroad. Also, the date of the first depot in Altus is not known, and the extant depot in Altus is attributed a c. 1920 date. In any event, the Altus Well Shed/Gazebo is certainly a historic landmark to the town of Altus, and it is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best example of a historic gazebo in Altus.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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Canady, Virginia. *Altus, Arkansas: 100 Years, 1888-1988*.

Information submitted by Jo Eveld, January 1996.

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Altus Well Shed/Gazebo  
Name of Property

Franklin Co., Arkansas  
County and State

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreeage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

|   |           |               |                |   |     |     |     |
|---|-----------|---------------|----------------|---|-----|-----|-----|
| A | <u>15</u> | <u>430830</u> | <u>3922570</u> | B | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| C | ___       | ___           | ___            | D | ___ | ___ | ___ |

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at the northwest corner of N. Franklin and E. Main Streets, proceed due west for 40 feet; thence proceed due north for 25 feet; thence proceed due east for 40 feet to the western curb of N. Franklin St.; thence proceed south along said curb for 25 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

This boundary includes the nominated property and a portion of the surrounding property historically associated with the well shed/gazebo.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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Name/Title: Patrick Zollner, Architectural Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: July 22, 1996

Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg., 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201

Altus, Okla. 1937  
Census  
1937  
177M  
15/430230/  
3919





