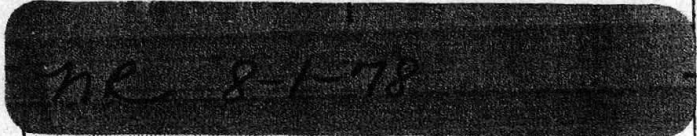


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STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Merchants and Planters Bank Building

AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

100 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Pine Bluff

STATE

Arkansas

VICINITY OF

CODE

05

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourth

COUNTY

Jefferson

CODE

069

## 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

Jim Hood

STREET & NUMBER

100 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Pine Bluff

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Jefferson County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

1800 East Harding

CITY, TOWN

Pine Bluff,

STATE

Arkansas

## REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

TE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Merchants and Planter's Bank is a large rectangular brick building with a hipped roof. It is flanked by smaller commercial structures of approximately the same age and general design.

Entrance to the two-story bank building is a triangular porch, inset on the north-east corner. The porch is composed of two rusticated arches resting on a capitated marble column. Above the entrance is a three-story round tower, articulated between the second and third floors in terra cotta. The conical roof of the tower is shingled and topped with a finial.

Stone banding articulates the building between floors. Windows on the first story are rectangular, while windows on the second floor are framed in masonry arches.

The attached building on the east side is a two-story store front divided into three bays on the first level and four on the second. The building has terra cotta hood molds and trim.

On the <sup>504</sup> north side is a two-story building topped with an overhanging cornice of geometrical pattern. This structure is also detailed in terra cotta.

This group of buildings rests on their original site across from the Jefferson County Courthouse site. All three buildings are virtually unaltered.

# SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Oct. 31, 1892

BUILDER/ARCHITECT B-W.I. Hilliard, Pine Bluff  
A-Thomas A. Harding, Little Rock

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Merchants and Planters Bank Building is a large brick structure featuring in its architectural design round turrets, arched windows, granite foundation and decorative brick work. In addition to its architectural significance, the Merchants and Planters Bank Building represents a large part of downtown Pine Bluff's commercial development.

The site of the building - 100 Main Street - was the location of one of Pine Bluff's first commercial banks. On or about June 1, 1870, John L. Buck and Felix G. Smart of Pine Bluff combined with S. H. Tucker, a Little Rock banker, to form a banking house called Buck, Smart and Company. The firm operated from "the East room of the Evergreen House opposite the courthouse." Charles A. Clark, who had been cashier of the Merchants' National Bank of Little Rock, was the first employee of the new institution.<sup>1</sup> The first bank was successful and constructed a new building exclusively for banking purposes on the property. This structure was completed on September 1, 1872.<sup>2</sup> Later, James A. Hudson obtained an interest in the bank and the name was changed to Smart, Hudson, and Company.

On December 1, 1876, the Merchants and Planters Bank was formed for the purpose of acquiring the assets of Smart, Hudson and Company. V. D. Wilkins was president of the new firm, Gabe Meyer, vice president and H. H. Hunn, cashier. The Merchants and Planters Bank was organized under the laws of Arkansas with capital of \$58,000.<sup>3</sup> The bank was reorganized in January, 1889, and the capitalization increased to \$100,000.<sup>4</sup> The institution built another new building to replace the 1872 structure in 1891. A feature of the new building was a vault which contained a safe described as "of the 'screw lock' pattern and having two revolving panels in the door which, on being turned by a crank, made it absolutely burglar-proof."<sup>5</sup> The installation of the vault and safe proved to be a good investment as a fire on January 24, 1892, destroyed the new building and everything on the north half of the block between Barraque Street and West Second Avenue and Main and Pine Streets except Dewoody's drugstore which was protected by a firewall.<sup>6</sup>

The bank officials immediately employed Thomas A. Harding, a Little Rock architect, to draw plans for a fine new building. A contract was let to W. I. Hilliard of Pine Bluff and the new building was completed on October 31, 1892. The plumbing and gas fixtures were installed by F.A. Stanley and John P. Haight furnished the millwork. The interior fixtures of polished oak with brass railings were supplied by A. H. Andrews of

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Chicago, "well-known bank outfitters." The bank had a tile floor and entrance which consisted of two polished marble columns "supported and arched" by massive blocks of Fourche mountain (Pulaski County) granite. The building was described as of modern bank architecture and, in exterior and interior adornment, as "one of the handsomest bank buildings in the South." The Merchants and Planters bank was a victim of "The Great Depression" in 1930 after 60 years of continuous operation.

The exterior of the structure has not been altered. Jim Hood, the present owner, has taken considerable pride in the building and has maintained the exterior in excellent condition. The interior has been remodeled into offices for his insurance and real estate business. This building is considered to be of great significance to the community and state from an architectural and historic standpoint.

Footnotes

1. The Pine Bluff Weekly Press, June 2, 1870, p.3.
2. The Weekly Press, September 5, 1872, p.3.
3. The Weekly Press, December 7, 1876, p.3.
4. The Pine Bluff Press-Eagle, February 1, 1890, p.3.
5. Press-Eagle, August 11, 1891, p.3.
6. Press-Eagle, January 26, 1892, p.2.
7. Press-Eagle, November 1, 1892, p.4.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	D	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James Leslie

Description: Frezil Miller

ORGANIZATION

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

DATE

December 1977

STREET & NUMBER

500 Continental Building

TELEPHONE

501-371-2763

CITY OR TOWN

Little Rock

STATE

Arkansas

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_

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

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

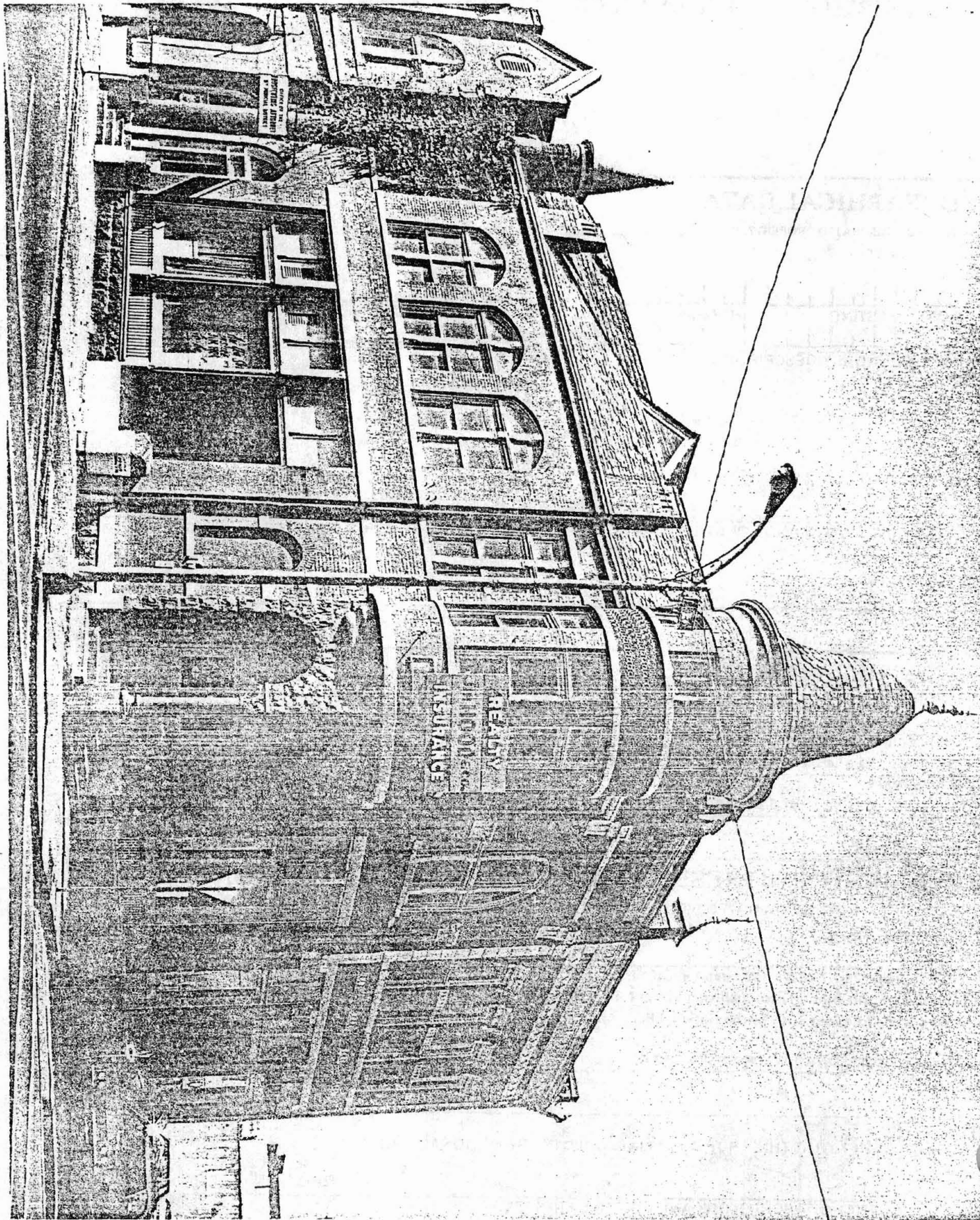
DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

EST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



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

## **National Register of Historic Places**

### **Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page \_\_\_\_\_

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After the bank failed Jefferson County took ownership of the property. In 1946 E. W. Hood (1886-1972) purchased it from Jefferson County, and then in 1956 Jim Hood (1928-1999) bought it from his father. For 43 years Jim and Avis Hood ran Hood & Company Realty & Insurance and Southern Development Corporation here.

After the 1976 fire that destroyed the Jefferson County Courthouse, the "Hood Building", as it has been called, was condemned by the county government under eminent domain along with all the other properties in the north half blocks between Pine Street and State Street. They wanted to make a courthouse parking plaza out of it. Jim Hood filed a lawsuit contesting the price the county government deemed to be the fair market value as required by law. The "plaza plan" was subsequently abandoned after having been delayed by the court case until another County Judge, Earl Chadick, took office, and enough public sentiment for preserving the historical landmark resulted in the condemnation being rescinded. If it had not been for the tenaciousness of Jim Hood this building might not be here today.

The present owner, Southern Development Corporation, maintains the historic integrity of its exterior. Operating as an office building, today it remains one of Pine Bluff's landmarks to the prosperous 1890s.