

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

=====

1. Name of Property

historic name: Pennington House

other name/site number: N/A

=====

2. Location

street & number: 317 Johnson Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Clarksville

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Johnson code: AR 071 zip code: 72830

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

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

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

=====

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

=====

I, 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. Slater _____ 10-24-94 _____
Signature of certifying official 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

=====

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 Keeper Date
of Action

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic: DOMESTIC _____ Sub: Single dwelling _____

Current: DOMESTIC _____ Sub: Single dwelling _____

=====
9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

X See continuation sheet.

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 #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

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

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property: 1.42

Table with 6 columns: TM References, Zone Easting, Northing, Zone Easting, Northing. Rows A, B, C, D.

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Part of the Southeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter, Section 32, Township 10 North, Range 23 West, Johnson County, Arkansas being more particularly described as follows: Commencing at the Northwest corner of Lot 14, Block 3, Ward Addition to the City of Clarksville, Arkansas; thence South 19.0 feet; thence North 88 degrees 16 minutes West 80.3 feet to an existing Iron Pin on the West Right of Way of Johnson Street and Point of Beginning; thence North 88 degrees 58 minutes 51 seconds West 255.1 feet to an existing Iron Pin on the West line said Forty; thence North along said West line 159.0 feet to an existing Iron Pin; thence South 88 degrees 16 minutes East 100.0 feet to an existing Iron Pin; thence North 0 degrees 00 minutes 24 seconds West 113.48 feet to an existing Iron Pin in the centerline of an existing Alleyway; thence South 81 degrees 06 minutes East along said Alleyway 203.81 feet to the West Right of Way of Johnson Street; thence South 10 degrees 47 minutes 45 seconds West along said Right of Way 246.83 feet to the Point of Beginning containing 1.42 acres more or less and being subject to existing Road Rights of Ways.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

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

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

Name/Title: Kenneth Story, Architectural Historian
Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 10/14/94
Street & Number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500 Telephone: (501) 324-9880
City or Town: Little Rock State: AR Zip: 72201

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 1

Summary

Located at 317 Johnson Street near downtown Clarksville, the Pennington House is a two-storey, wood frame residence designed in an erudite interpretation of the Italianate style. The intersecting gable plan -- with its full gable end placed to the north of the side gable wall and porch -- is augmented with such Italianate details as the chamfered and bracketed porch columns, the cornice brackets, and the elaborate, complex hood molds.

Elaboration

The Pennington House is a two-storey, wood frame residence designed in an erudite interpretation of the Italianate style. The irregular, intersecting gable plan -- with its full gable end placed to the north of the side gable wall and porch -- features a single-storey, elaborately-decorated front porch, a three-sided beveled bay on its southern elevation, and a later, shed roof porch on the western elevation. A single chimney rises through the center of the ridge on the southern intersecting gable (though at least two other chimneys have been capped below roofline during the last restoration), and the asphalt shingle roof and wood weatherboarded walls rest upon a continuous brick foundation, sheathed in stucco, that itself shelters a full basement.

The eastern or front elevation is composed of the side wall of the rear kitchen section to the north, the large projecting gable end next to the south, followed by the intersecting side gable wall, and finished by the projecting three-sided bay that projects from the southern elevation. The side wall of the kitchen is relatively simple and contains but a single central window. The projecting gable end is fenestrated with a group of three windows on the first storey and two separate windows above, all placed symmetrically within the gable end. An elongated, hexagonal attic vent is placed in the gable peak, just below the projecting cornice. The group of three windows on the first floor are covered with a projecting shed roof, supported upon decorative Italianate brackets. Two smaller windows light the raised basement below. To the south, a continuous concrete staircase provides access to the single-storey porch that projects from the side gable wall. The staircase is framed by the two flanking wood balustrades. The wall beneath the shed porch roof is lighted with two two-over-two windows placed to the south of the tall single-leaf entrance and transom located at the top of the staircase. The four-panel door contains two arched lights in the upper panels and two rectangular wood panels below. The second storey above is fenestrated with three two-over-two windows -- each placed directly above the windows and entrance below -- and two rectangular window openings in the basement below complete the elevation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

The southern elevation is dominated by the slightly-projecting gable end to the east (with its beveled bay below) and the side wall of the intersecting gable to the west. The hipped roof beveled bay on the first storey of the projecting gable is supported upon a continuous foundation that itself is fenestrated with a single window in each of the flanking walls and a single-leaf entrance in the center. The second storey wall contains two two-over-two wood windows, placed symmetrically in the wall, and the wall bay is finished by a hexagonal attic vent identical to that seen on the eastern elevation. The side gable wall to the west is symmetrically fenestrated with two two-over-two windows on each floor, and a rectangular window opening in the basement below, along with a smaller, square coal chute. The elevation is finished by the shed roof of the first storey porch attached to the western elevation.

The western or rear elevation consists of the two gables (the northern projecting slightly) connected by the side wall of the intersecting gable, and the side wall of the kitchen section at the northern end. The wall to the south is fenestrated with two single two-over-two windows in the second storey and covered with the single-storey shed roof porch on the first storey. The projecting gable is symmetrically fenestrated on both floors with two two-over-two windows. The side wall of the kitchen at the northern end is punctuated with a central, single-leaf door.

The side wall of the northern intersecting gable (as seen from the front or eastern facade) comprises most of the northern elevation, along with the gable end of the single-story kitchen room that projects from the western end. The projecting kitchen gable is fenestrated with a single two-over-two window, and the side gable wall to the east features a total of three identical windows on each floor, placed one above the other.

Significant exterior details include the elaborate Italianate trim on the porch, including the porch cornice brackets to either side of the chamfered posts and the jig-sawn balustrade; the ornamental cornice brackets beneath the projecting eaves; the heavy cornice returns; the handsome window and door moldings; and the frieze panels placed between the brackets and beneath the projecting cornice throughout the design.

The interior retains a substantial amount of its original detail. Of particular note are the solid wood, panelled pocket doors that separate the southern parlor from the library to the west; the panelled arch that separates the afore-mentioned parlor from the three-sided bay at its southern end; several hand-grained doors and fireplace mantels; the stained hardwood hall staircase, complete with Italianate newel post and turned balusters; and the hardwood door and window trim that survives throughout. The current owner has also retained several original furnishings.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

The Pennington House is in very good condition and has suffered relatively few alterations. Apart from the capping of two chimneys, the rebuilding of the wooden front porch staircase (which originally was constructed completely of wood) and the removal of original plaster from several of the chimneys inside, the Pennington House is intact.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 1

Summary

Criterion C, local significance

The Pennington House is locally significant under Criterion C as the finest example within the city of Clarksville of a high-style Italianate residence. The characteristically Italianate cornice brackets, chamfered porch posts and ornamental window and door moldings decorate an intersecting gable plan that is also considered typical of the Italianate style.

Elaboration

Johnson County was created on November 16, 1833 from part of Pope County. Wesley Garrett, a legislator from the newly-formed county, named the county not after himself but after his close friend and territorial judge, Judge Benjamin Johnson. The temporary seat of justice was held at the house of Elijah B. Alston in old Spadra or Spadra Bluff. Following statehood in 1836, three commissioners, Elijah Alston, Abraham Laster, and Lorenza Clark were elected to decide upon a location for a new county seat. A local state legislator, James Cravens, proposed his farm, four miles north of Spadra, as the new location. Laster was favorable to this proposition because of the pure water springs in the area. Clark favored his hometown of Morrison's Bluff for the new county seat, and Alston likewise supported his hometown of Spadra even though the water was somewhat polluted by the underlying coal. A compromise was eventually reached when Clark agreed to support Craven's location in exchange for Laster's vote that the town be named Clarksville.

For many years after its creation, Clarksville fared poorly in relation to the thriving river landing towns of Pittsburg, Spadra, and Morrison's Bluff. In 1844, a Frenchman named Procta opened the first coal mine in Spadra, enriching the economy of that town and further establishing it as the leading town in Johnson County. The river towns thrived during the late 1840's and 1850's when commercial trade on the Arkansas River increased dramatically. Clarksville also grew during this period, and the town was incorporated on December 21, 1848. Notably, the first school for the blind in Arkansas was established in Clarksville in 1850. The Civil War, however, greatly disrupted the growth of Clarksville and the other communities. Although no major battles were fought in Johnson County, the area suffered from various skirmishes and bushwacker raids. Most of Clarksville was burned by the Federals to prevent the approaching Confederates under General Fagan from acquiring valuable stores and supplies left behind.

Clarksville recovered slowly from the effects of the war; several of the river towns disappeared altogether in its aftermath. In 1871, an Arkansas company negotiated for the railroad to extend

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

from Little Rock to Fort Smith. Hopes were dashed, however, when shortly after the railway beds were completed the company went bankrupt. Fortunately for Clarksville, Jay Gould acquired the defunct railroad, made it part of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad network, and Clarksville subsequently became a prosperous railroad town, far surpassing in population and commercial activity the neighboring river communities that had eclipsed it earlier. By the early 1890's, Clarksville could boast of approximately 2,000 residents, over one hundred relatively new residences, sixteen brick and stone business houses, an opera house and a hotel, the Arlington.

Benjamin Druery Pennington -- commonly known as B. D. -- and his twin sister Elizabeth were born April 22, 1828 in Mecklenburg, Virginia. He traveled west in his youth, stopping in both Memphis and New Orleans where he acquired experience in the cotton business. He came to Arkansas via the Mississippi River, landing at Helena, and by 1852 he had arrived in the small, struggling community of Clarksville. He immediately went into business for himself, serving as the local agent for the Studebaker Wagon Company of South Bend, Indiana until 1892, and then became the representative of the Lesser-Goldman Cotton Company when it was founded in that same year.

Prior to 1891, Benjamin and his wife Mary Davis Pennington lived in an early house on Cravens Street in Clarksville. During that period Mary was active in the community, serving as the first president of the Ladies Aide Society of the First Methodist Church in 1875 and as vice-president of the Woman Christian Temperance Union of Clarksville in 1885. She remained active after they built their new home, as she devoted a great deal of time to the Cemetery Association, to which her husband also donated a considerable amount of time as a member of its executive committee.

The Pennington family began work on their new house in 1888, with construction continuing through until 1891 when the house was completed. Located on a large plot of land on the west side of Johnson Street in one of the city's most beautiful residential areas, the Pennington House was obviously intended to reflect the success and social standing of the Pennington family. A full two storeys in height with a raised basement and designed in the Italianate style, the Pennington House was one of the finest and most grand new residences in Clarksville at the time of its construction. It remained the family's residence through the first decade of the twentieth century, and after B. D.'s death in 1910, other family members remained in the house until 1918, after which time it was sold out of the family. The current owner, Dr. Don Pennington, a descendent of B. D. Pennington, purchased the property in 1979 and began its restoration.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

The Pennington House is eligible under Criterion C with local significance as the finest extant example within the city of Clarksville of a high-style Italianate residential design. Though Italianate-influenced designs are relatively common throughout the state, such relatively pure interpretations of the Italianate aesthetic are relatively rare, largely because the Italianate in general never attained the popularity in Arkansas that it did elsewhere. The Pennington House remains unique and distinctive by virtue of its stylistic purity, and by virtue of the fact that the design was ultimately so aesthetically successful. The Pennington House stands as one of the finest late nineteenth century, high-style residences in the city of Clarksville, Arkansas.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

Johnson County Deed Records, Pg. 48, Book 36.

Langford, Ella Molloy, *History of Johnson County, Arkansas*, (Clarksville, Arkansas: 1921).

Personal files of Dr. Don Pennington, owner, Clarksville, Arkansas.

55155
ARMONY

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

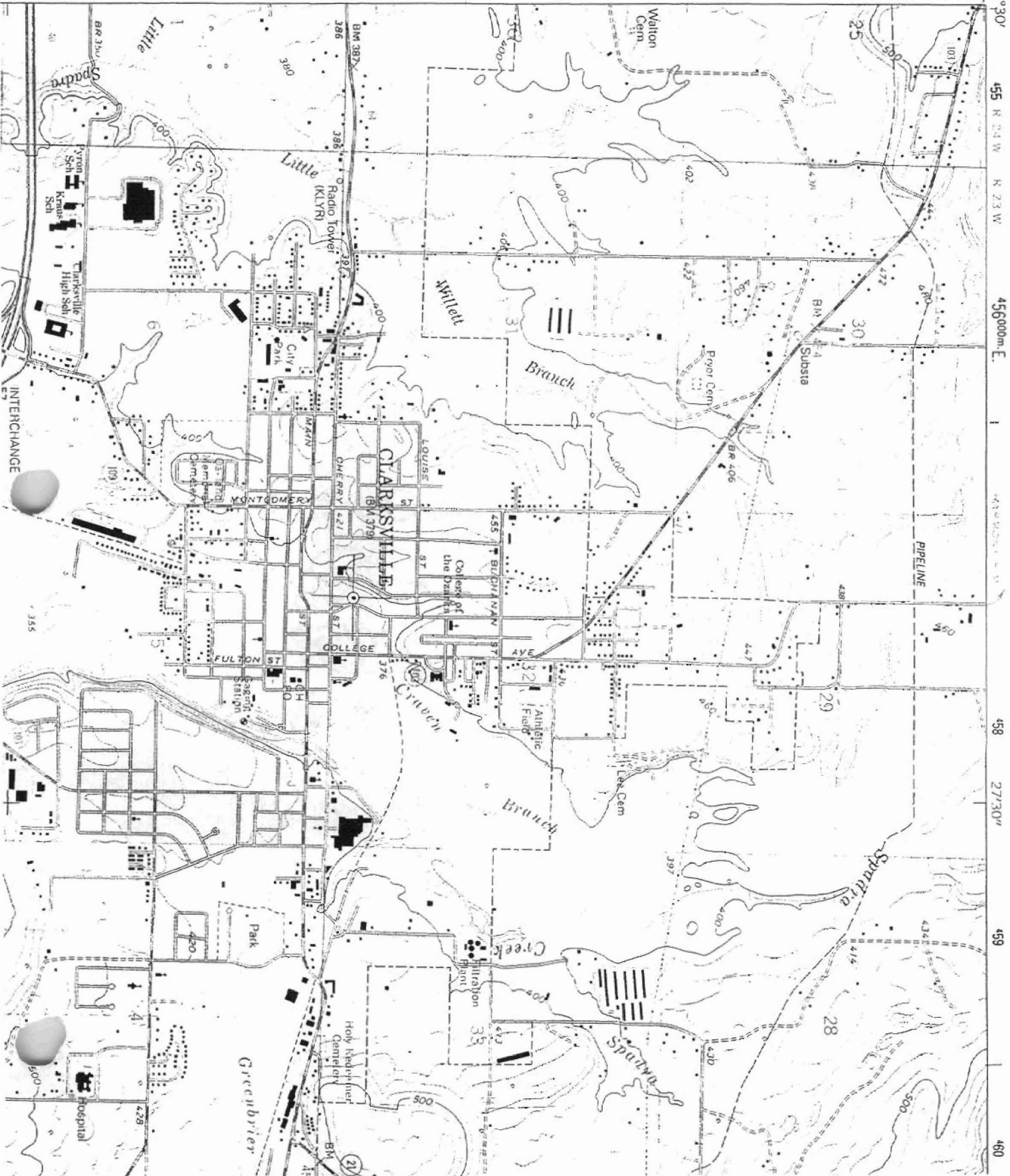
93°30' 35°30' 456000m E 458 27'30" 459 460

3927000m N

FORT SMITH 54 MI
HARTMAN 7 MI

PARK 17 MI
HARMONY 4.8 MI

27'30"



3925

27'30"

