

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Marion County Courthouse

other name/site number: N/A

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2. Location

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street & number: Courthouse Square

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Yellville

vicinity: N/A

state: AR

county: Marion

code: AR 089

zip code: 72687

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Public-local

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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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.

Calhoun A. Slater _____ 4-4-94
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

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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

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6. Function or Use
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Historic: GOVERNMENT Sub: Courthouse

Current : GOVERNMENT Sub: Courthouse

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification:

Art Deco

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation Stone/limestone roof Other/tar
walls Stone/limestone other concrete

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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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: 1943/44

Significant Dates: 1943/44

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown
Tom Eads, Contractor

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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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:

- 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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Acreage of Property: less than one acre

UTM Reference's: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>528580</u>	<u>4008830</u>	B	<u>15</u>	_____	_____
C	<u>15</u>	_____	_____	D	<u>15</u>	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ____ See continuation sheet.

Property is a 150 foot by 150 foot square lot which is bound by Church street (U.S. Hwy 62) on the north side, Mill street on the west, Main street on the south and Berry street on the east.

Boundary Justification: ____ See continuation sheet.

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

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Todd L. Ferguson, Survey Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: April 04, 1994

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

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

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Summary

The Marion County Courthouse is a two story, stone and concrete structure with a flat roof. The structure has symmetrical fenestration on all sides except the western facade. The structure has a full basement, one chimney for the heating of the structure and two prominent entrances on the northern and southern facades.

Elaboration

The Marion County Courthouse, constructed in 1943-44, is a stone and concrete structure constructed to replace a 1905 courthouse which burned on the same site in January of 1943. The structure is oriented with its primary entrance to the south and sits on a single city block surrounded by a small stone and concrete wall.

The southern facade of the structure is the primary entrance to the structure which is approached by a single set of concrete steps flanked with a stone supporting wall topped with concrete; there is also a concrete handicap accessible ramp on this elevation. A set of descending steps forms an entrance to the basement of the structure on the east side of the principle steps. This facade has symmetrical fenestration on all three levels and features two stone pilasters flanking the entrance. The primary entrance is a set of aluminum double doors with a full transom above. There is a stone belt course surrounding the structure which appears above the basement area of the building. The projecting central bay is flanked by the remnants of two towers of the 1905 structure; they are now three sided bays which extend toward the wings of the structure. This entire front portion of the structure is topped with a concrete parapet which has "MARION COUNTY COURTHOUSE" inscribed above the primary entrance.

The eastern facade has symmetrical fenestration on all three levels and has an entrance to the basement boiler room on the east side of the east wing. The eastern elevation has the protrusion of the east wing near the southern end of the elevation. On this wing is the only chimney, descending directly to the boiler room. The northern elevation has symmetrical fenestration on all three levels and a central aluminum double door entrance with full transom. This facade is also approached by a single set of concrete steps flanked on each side by a stone support wall with concrete top. This facade also has a descending set of steps just to the east of the entrance which serves as an entrance to the basement. The western facade has symmetrical fenestration on the lower two levels and two windows symmetrically placed on the north and south end of the northern section. The west facade has the protrusion of the west wing which has a single, central window on each side of the third level of the wing. The entire structure is topped with

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a flat roof. The primary window type is a double hung window with an eight-over-eight light arrangement.

The only variation of this window style occurs on the north section on the third level only. Here the only window type is a double hung window with a nine-over-nine light arrangement.

The interior halls have retained most of their original integrity from the 1944 construction. The original doors and window facings have been retained. Unfortunately, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, work spaces were renovated to meet the increasing needs of the county.

The structure has a cast concrete walkway that circles the building on the east side only. The grounds are lightly vegetated with an assortment of shrubs, small evergreens and deciduous trees. Located on the southern side of the courthouse is an Arkansas History Commission plaque about the history of the first Marion county seat. Other site features on the grounds are located of the north side of the courthouse. These are a modern war monument dedicated to the sons of Marion county that died in our nations armed conflicts from World War I to the Vietnamese Conflict and a double turbine water wheel which was used to power the Hollinsworth grist mill on the Little North Fork River.

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Summary

Criterion C, local significance

The Marion County Courthouse is eligible under Criterion C with local significance by virtue of its status as a remarkable adaptation of an earlier Queen Anne/Romanesque courthouse into an Art Deco influenced courthouse building.

Elaboration

Marion County was established on September 29, 1836, by the First General Assembly of the state of Arkansas. The county was named in honor of General Francis Marion, known best for his nickname from the American Revolutionary War, the "Swamp Fox" (the name was given to Marion by his British counterparts based on his ability to elude them). Shortly after the establishment of Marion County a large portion of its original area was divided up to form much of Baxter and Searcy counties as well as parts of Boone and Newton counties. The first Marion County seat was established at the home of Thomas Adams, but soon moved to Yellville.

Until 1836, the present site of Yellville was known as Shawnee Town. It was said to have been named for the tribe of Indians who had a village at the site when whites first began to inhabit the area. Yellville was named in honor of Archibald Yell, the first Arkansas representative to congress and the second governor of the state. According to local legend, Yell offered the founding fathers of the town \$50 to name the site for him. The town was so-named but the founding fathers claim that no money was received. Yellville has remained the county seat since 1836. Yellville was incorporated as a city in 1872.

The city of Yellville has had a rich history of its own. One of the most outstanding accomplishments of the town came in the 1930s when Yellville was the only town in the state to have an all woman city government. One of the pieces of legislation passed by this city government was a city ordinance which prohibited livestock running at large in the city streets.

For all of the accomplishments of Marion County and Yellville, they have had a problem in preserving the county courthouse. The county had the first recorded courthouse fire, as many counties did, during the Civil War. Most of the county records were lost to the fire and had to be re-established after the war. For several years, Yellville had to do without a courthouse; for that matter, its residents also had to do without a jail, school, churches or homes. Yellville did recover from the war and Marion County was able to build another courthouse soon thereafter. This courthouse would be in use until August 10, 1887, when another fire destroyed the courthouse and many of the courthouse records. A new courthouse was constructed in 1890 by

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Jim "Uncle Jim" Wickersham. Unfortunately in 1899, another fire destroyed this courthouse also.

The courthouse was temporarily located in a frame and log building until the construction of a new county courthouse in 1905 designed by Architect George E. McDonald. This structure was an impressive Queen Anne style courthouse featuring two towers on the front facade and a large hipped roof. This was a truly magnificent courthouse structure and among the finest in the entire state for its day. Early on the morning of January 12, 1943, the Marion County Courthouse burned once again. The fire was allegedly set by an arsonist to destroy some personally-damaging records; however, many of the county records were saved in a fire proof vault. Unfortunately, the fire reduced the courthouse to just a stone shell of the once impressive structure. It is thought that part of the reason for the severity of the fire was a peculiar cleaning method used to keep the courthouse's wooden floors clean. A mixture of kerosene was added to sawdust to clean the floors; this was to keep down the dust and give the floors a shine. Over the almost forty years of maintenance of the structure the floors surely retained some of the kerosene, and this accelerated the fire.

Soon after the fire, an effort was undertaken to construct a new courthouse on the same site. The building commissioners George Caveness, Dr. A.V. Adams, W.N. Christian, R.W. Elam, and Don Matthews began the process to receive bids for the new construction of the courthouse. The 1905 courthouse had been insured for \$10,000 but the cost of a new courthouse would be \$35,000. The bid for the new construction was secured by Tom Eads of Fayetteville, Arkansas. It was thought that the building would be ready for use by the first of the following year. On March 29 of 1944, The Mountain Echo of Yellville reported that the new courthouse was ready for business except for some cleanup from the construction.

The present courthouse has been witness to several events in the county history including two jail escapes and a prisoner hanging himself in his cell (the second story of the facility served as the jail and the courtroom. The west side of the second story served as the men's jail and the east side as the woman's jail. The courthouse was last used as a jail in 1978 when a separate facility was constructed. It was around this time that the interior of the courthouse had renovation work done to the courtroom and the former jail space to make offices). The courthouse was the site of a notable case in the late 1980s. A woman from Flippin, a town in the county was tried for murdering her husband after repeated abuse. This was a case which closely resembled several other cases around the country collectively known as "burning bed" cases. Wives were allegedly retaliating against abusive husbands by killing them and burning their husbands bodies or burning them while the husbands were asleep.

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The Marion County Courthouse is eligible under Criterion C with local significance by virtue of its status as a remarkable adaptation of an earlier Queen Anne/Romanesque courthouse into an Art Deco influenced courthouse building.

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Bibliography

Berry, Earl, *History of Marion County*, Pub. Marion County Historical Association, 1977.

The Mountain Echo, Vol. 57, No. 43; January 13, 1943.

The Mountain Echo, Vol. 58, No. 25; September 15, 1943.

The Mountain Echo, Vol. 59, No. 01; March 29, 1944.

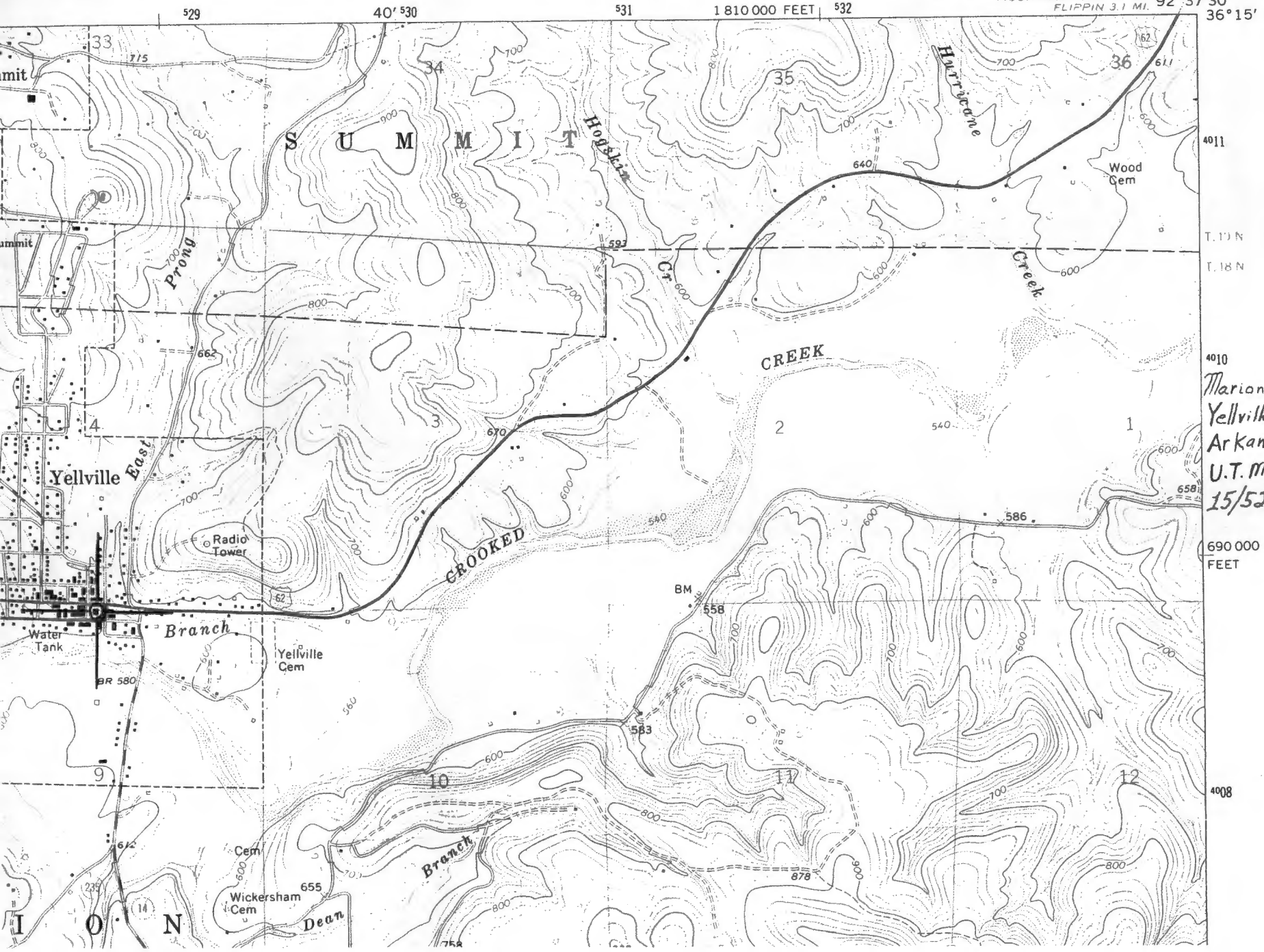
Interview with Marian Burns of Yellville, local historian, February 03, 1994.

Interview with Marion County Municipal Clerk, Sharon Herner; February 03, 1994.

Phone interview with Carl McBee, Marion County Deputy Sheriff, February 03, 1994.

YELLVILLE QUADRANGLE
ARKANSAS—MARION CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

MOUNTAIN HOME 18 MI. 92°37'30"
FLIPPIN 3.1 MI. 36°15'



4010
4011
T. 17 N
T. 18 N
Marion County Courthouse
Yellville, Marion County,
Arkansas
U.T.M.
15/528580/4008830

690 000
FEET

4008



