

NR 6-18-76

UNITED 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
Modern News Building

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
216 North Main

CITY, TOWN
Harrisburg

STATE
Arkansas

VICINITY OF
CODE 05

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
First

COUNTY
Poinsett

CODE
111

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
MRS. L. D. FREEMAN

STREET & NUMBER
P.O. Box 375

CITY, TOWN
Harrisburg

STATE
Arkansas

VICINITY OF
72432

SB-3/26/81

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Poinsett County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN
Harrisburg

STATE
Arkansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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 Modern News office is a single-storey, header-bond brick building constructed in a simplistic rectangular fashion. Built in 1888 by L.D. Freeman, Sr., the structure has a flat roof, while the tops of the side walls are covered with tile. The tops of these two walls descend front-to-rear in stairstep fashion. Tile caps the wall of the facade just above the lettering that spells out the words "The Modern News - Established 1888".

The windows toward the front in the side elevations are recessed; the tops of the openings are segmental arches. All the windows are double-hung and have plain molding with slipsills. A double-leaf, single-panel door forms the main entry, while a large, two-tone, metal awning extends across the facade above this entry.

The original building was constructed by W.C. Pratt to provide housing for the newspaper business of L.D. Freeman, Sr. As the paper's circulation increased and more space was needed, an additional fifteen feet was added to the rear of the building in 1910. Another addition occurred in 1952, with approximately fifteen more feet added to the 1910 addition. The only other major change that was made to the building came in 1953 when brick was laid across the front to give the facade the appearance of having been newly constructed.

SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1888 - Present BUILDER/ARCHITECT L.D. Freeman, Sr.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Modern News building derives from the significance of the newspaper which the building represents. This newspaper, the Modern News, has come to be a symbol of the history of Harrisburg, Arkansas. The long and consistent service of the Modern News has earned this standing for the newspaper. The newspaper's longevity of publication has also earned for the paper a certain statewide and, possibly, even a certain national distinction within the journalism field.

The Modern News newspaper was established by L.D. Freeman, Sr., in November, 1888, and has continued uninterrupted operation since that time by the Freeman family. The paper is one of the oldest established weekly newspapers in Arkansas. Several sources, including Who is Who in Arkansas, assert that the Modern News is the oldest weekly newspaper in the nation to be "operating under the founder's family name and continuously owned and published by a member of the original family." According to L.D. Freeman, Jr., the Modern News has never missed an issue and has been one day late only four times.

L.D. Freeman, Sr., moved to Arkansas from Alabama with his family at age five. He began serving his apprenticeship at age fifteen. One of the newspapers for which Freeman worked and which gave him valuable journalistic experience was the Memphis Avalanche.

In 1888 Freeman bought a printing business in Harrisburg, Arkansas, from H.M. Phelps. Phelps had printed the Arkansas Tribune. This paper had been the first to be printed in the Harrisburg vicinity. Its editor had been Foster Freeman, the brother of L.D. Freeman, Sr. The new owner changed the name of the paper to the Modern News and had the present-day Modern News office built. He started printing under the new name in November, 1888.

Freeman acquired his first typesetting machine in 1895. It was one of the first typesetters ever made, and Freeman found the machine impossible to operate. After months of confused frustration, Freeman decided to rid himself of the folly. Unable to move the assembled monstrosity, he tore out the wood floor in the Modern News building, dug a hole large enough to accommodate the huge machine, and buried it underneath a layer of concrete which still serves him as a sturdy floor for his shop.

In 1910 Freeman bought a Stover gasoline engine to furnish the power for the operation of his printing press. Local sources report that it was

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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the first gasoline engine to make an appearance in Poinsett County and that people came from miles around Harrisburg to observe the operation of the new gadget.

Freeman's sons, Ewell Freeman and L.D. Freeman, Jr., stayed with the newspaper that had been so much a part of their lives as youths. After completing their formal education, Ewell joined his father as partner in 1919, and L.D. Freeman, Jr., became a partner in 1923.

Following the death of their father in 1934, the brothers continued the Modern News, together with a commercial printing plant. They operated as partners under the name of "Freeman Brothers." Ewell H. Freeman died in 1949, and since that time ownership of the newspaper has been jointly held by Mrs. Ewell Freeman and L.D. Freeman, Jr., with L.D. Freeman, Jr., serving as the newspaper's editor.

The cost of a year's subscription to the paper has increased over the years. Starting with \$1.00 for a year's subscription, the amount had increased to \$2.00 per year by 1960 and today is \$4.00 per year. This price change is reflective of the newspaper's many decades of service.

In 1962, after searching unsuccessfully for help to operate the press, L.D. Freeman, Jr., started using the services of other printers. From 1962 to 1973 the Modern News was printed at Wynne, Arkansas, and for the last two years it has been printed at Newport. The offices and nerve center of the paper, though, have not left Harrisburg.

Printed on Wednesdays and delivered on Thursdays, the Modern News has served the information needs of the Poinsett County area for 86 years. News has been circulated to people in rural Arkansas, as the paper has met over 4,500 deadlines.

Such is the significance of the Modern News. For 87 years it has been a part of the history of Harrisburg and Poinsett County. It is one of the oldest weekly newspapers in Arkansas and, in the category of weekly papers still published by the same families which founded them, it is probably the oldest in the United States. The building in which this paper is printed is indeed very humble in appearance, but the building has housed the paper since its inception and thus shares in the very considerable significance of the Modern News.

FOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Allard, Chester C., comp. Who is Who in Arkansas. Edited by Bessie B. Allard.
Little Rock: Allard House, 1959.

Allsopp, Fred W. History of the Arkansas Press for a Hundred Years and More.
Little Rock: Harper Publishing Co. 1922.

Freeman, L.D., Jr. Modern News, Harrisburg, Arkansas. Interview, September, 1975.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	115	706175	39377510	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Paul McCormack, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

DATE

December 9, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

300 West Markham

TELEPHONE

(501) 371-1639

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 Anne Bartley



TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 12-9-75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Modern News. May 6 and December 23, 1910.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Modern News Building

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Harrisburg

___VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

COUNTY

Poinsett

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Paul McCormack

DATE OF PHOTO September, 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

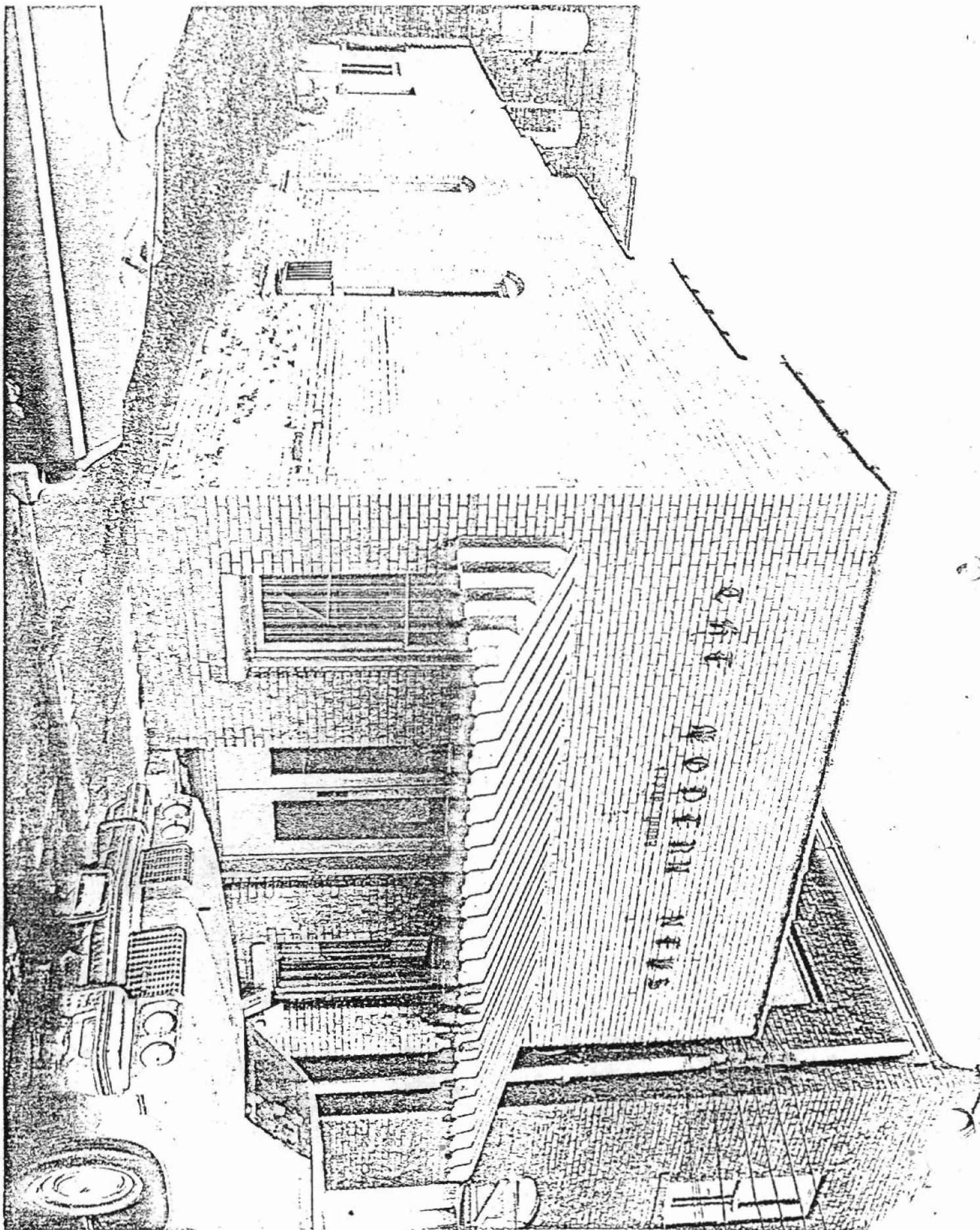
4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.

West (front) and north elevations viewed from northwest

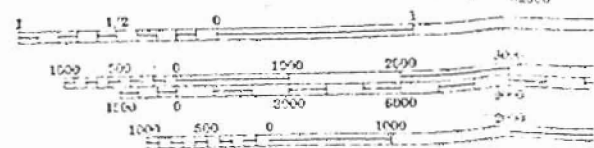
1



MODERN NEWS BUILDING
 HARRISBURG, AR.
 UTM REFERENCE:
 15/706175/3937750



Prepared under the direction of the President, Mississippi River Commission
 by the U. S. Army Engineer District, Memphis, Corps of Engineers.
 Edited and published by the Mississippi River Commission, Corps of Engineers,
 U. S. Army, Vicksburg, Mississippi.
 Control by the U. S. Army Engineer District, Memphis, Corps of Engineers
 and U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.



Contour intervals 5 and 20 feet changing on

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

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TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Modern News Building

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Harrisburg

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Poinsett

STATE

Arkansas

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE United States Geological Survey

SCALE 1:62500

DATE 1958

4 REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES