

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: American Legion Hut - Des Arc

other name/site number: PR 0050

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2. Location

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street & number: 206 Erwin St.

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Des Arc

vicinity: N/A

state: AR

county: Prairie

code: AR 117

zip code: 72040

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Public

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: N/A

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.

Walter A. Slator _____ 4-12-95 _____
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: Social Sub: Meeting Hall
Current : Social Sub: Meeting Hall

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification:
Other: WPA Rustic

Materials: foundation Brick roof Asphalt
walls Log other Brick, Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

Summary

Located at 206 Erwin Street in Des Arc, the American Legion Hut is a rectangular-plan, single-story log structure constructed in 1934 in the style known as "WPA Rustic."

Elaboration

Constructed in 1934, the American Legion Hut at 206 Erwin Street in Des Arc is a rectangular-plan, single-story community hall built of saddle-notched round logs on brick piers and covered by a composition-shingled, side-gable roof. The peeled logs are natural in color except of the sawn ends, which are painted white. As this method of log construction is ill fitting, copious quantities of white cement mortar is used for chinking. Exterior window and door trim is painted white, and unpainted, coursed wood shingles of indeterminate age are utilized in the two gable ends.

The front, or southern, elevation is dominated by a massive exterior brick chimney with "weeping" mortar joints in the center of the symmetrical facade. To either side of the chimney, respectively, is a small wood-frame, nine-pane casement window, a single-leaf entrance, another nine-pane casement window, and a large wood-frame, twelve-over-twelve double-hung window. Both entrances are shielded by a small projecting gable roof supported by two triangular knee brackets. A nonhistoric shed-roof begins at the western entrance, which has been converted for handicapped accessibility, below the gable roof and wraps around to the western elevation. This shed roof is supported by simple diagonal braces and covers a new concrete sidewalk.

A projecting log bay defines the center of the western elevation and is fenestrated with a twelve-over-twelve window. The main wall to either side of this bay contains a nine-pane casement window.

The rear, or northern, elevation is partially obscured by a nonhistoric board-and-batten shed-roof addition on the western end and an older drop-sided, gable-roof addition at the eastern end. The center of the elevation, however, presents another projecting log bay and twelve-over-twelve window via a shed-roof extension of the side gable.

The eastern elevation is identical to its western counterpart except that the center bay retains its original shed roof.

Featuring exposed log interior walls and an impressive brick fireplace, the interior is virtually unchanged with the exception of the aforementioned additions.

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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: 1934

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Works Progress Administration
Johnson, Charlie.

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

Summary

The American Legion Hut is locally significant under Criterion C as the best example in Des Arc of the Depression-era style known as "WPA Rustic."

Elaboration

The settlement at Des Arc, located on the White River in northern Prairie County, dates to before the Civil War. According to Dallas T. Herndon's, *Annals of Arkansas*, the town was formally laid out around 1850 by the major landowner of the area, George C. Watkins, who was later Chief Justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court (1852-54). The town was incorporated on December 28, 1854 and in 1875 gained the county seat of Prairie County. By the twentieth century the river port's transportation capabilities were enhanced by a branch line of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific railroad.

When the American Legion Hut was constructed in 1934, Des Arc contained one state and one national bank, a foundry and machine shop, newspapers, a number of sawmills and woodworking concerns, stores, public schools, and other such establishments common to a vibrant town. An idea concerning the population at the time can be garnered from the 1920 census, 1,307, and the 1940 census, 1,410.

Although it is not specifically mentioned in the report, *A Review of Work Relief Activities In Arkansas, April 1st, 1934 to July 1st, 1935*, the American Legion Hut in Des Arc was perhaps counted as part of 113 "combination community recreation halls" constructed by the Works Progress Administration during those years. According to information submitted by Bonnie Rieke, the American Legion Hut was constructed by both volunteers and WPA-paid local workers. The logs for the structure were purchased by Will Johnson and cut from the King property by Josh Stanley. After being floated down the White River for nine miles, the logs were then hewn or peeled on site by Calvin Vance Hall and his son. Glen Pay fitted the logs into their present form, and Bruce Garth constructed the fireplace. This construction was supervised by Charlie Johnson. The American Legion utilized the building exclusively until 1983 when the Women's Auxiliary Veterans of Foreign Wars, Moore Johnson Post, obtained the lease. Currently used as a community building, the American Legion Hut provides a meeting place for a variety of local organizations.

The American Legion Hut is locally significant under Criterion C as the best example in Des Arc of the style commonly known as "Rustic" or "WPA Rustic." In Depression-era Arkansas, this style was considered the latest trend in architecture, and *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas* referred to these structures as "forest houses" and noted ". . . the impression given is one of complete solidity and honesty." The American Legion Hut exemplifies the essence of the "Rustic" style and is somewhat unusual by virtue of its symmetrical plan with the primary emphasis bestowed upon the exterior chimney on the front elevation.

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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A Review of Work Relief Activities in Arkansas, April 1st, 1934 to July 1st, 1935. Little Rock: Parke-Harper Co., 1935.

Information submitted by Bonnie Rieke, July, 1994.

Workers of the Writer's Program. The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas, with new introduction by Elliot West. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1987 (original copyright 1941).

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:

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
A 15 637420 3871220 B
C D

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the northern curbline of Erwin Street and a line formed by, yet ten feet from, the eastern elevation of the Legion Hut, proceed north along said line to its intersection with a line formed by, yet ten feet from, the northern elevation of the building; thence proceed west along said line to its intersection with a line formed by, yet ten feet from, the western elevation of the building; thence proceed south along said line to its intersection with the northern curbline of Erwin Street; thence proceed east along the curb to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with this resource that retains its integrity.

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11. Form Prepared By
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Name/Title: Patrick Zollner, Architectural Historian

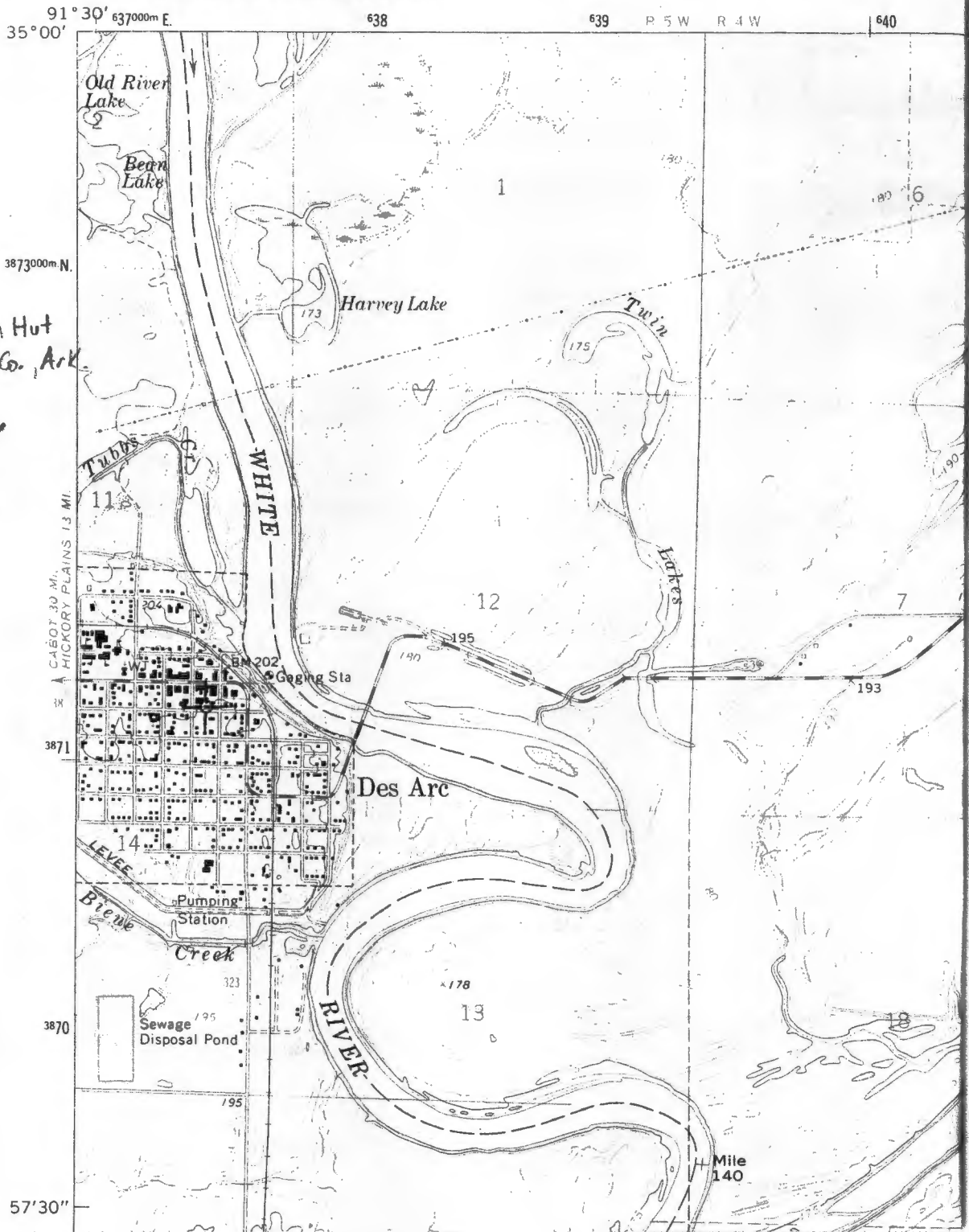
Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: April 5, 1995

Street & Number: 323 Center, 1600 Tower Bldg. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

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

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(JASMINE)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



American Legion Hut
Des Arc, Prairie Co., Ark.
UTM:
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