

NR listed 9/04/92

OMB No. 1024-0018

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

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: Damascus Gymnasium

other name/site number: VB0028

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2. Location

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street & number: State Highway 285

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Damascus

vicinity: N/A

state: AR

county: Van Buren

code: AR 141

zip code: 72212

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private

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: Public Schools in the Arkansas Ozarks, 1920-1940

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification:

Craftsman

Other Description: N/A_____

Materials: foundation Concrete_____ roof Metal_____
walls WOOD/Weatherboard other N/A_____

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: Locally_____.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A_____

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A_____

Areas of Significance: EDUCATION_____
SOCIAL HISTORY_____

Period(s) of Significance: 1933-1940_____

Significant Dates: N/A_____

Significant Person(s): N/A_____

Cultural Affiliation: N/A_____

Architect/Builder: Works Progress Administration_____

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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See "Public Schools in the Arkansas Ozarks, 1920-1940" Multiple Property Form, Section H.

___ 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

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>553600</u>	<u>3913750</u>	B	___	_____	_____
C	___	_____	_____	D	___	_____	_____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ___ See continuation sheet.

Beginning at a point located on the northern edge of State Highway 285 formed by its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel to the gymnasium's eastern elevation and located 25 feet to the east thereof, proceed along said line for a distance of approximately 200 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel to the gymnasium's northern elevation; thence proceed westerly along said line for a distance of approximately 200 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel to the gymnasium's western elevation; thence proceed southerly along said line for a distance of approximately 200 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running along the northern edge of State Highway 285; thence proceed easterly along said line for a distance of approximately 200 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification: ___ See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes both the historic resource and all the surrounding property known to have been historically associated therewith that retains its integrity.

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11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Patrick Zollner, National Register Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: July 2, 1992

Street & Number: 225 E. Markham, Suite 300 Telephone: (501) 324-9346

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

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Summary

The Damascus Gymnasium is a Craftsman-style, single-story structure with a two-story clerestory constructed in 1933 by the WPA. A metal, gable-on-hip roof with single-story shed roofs at the eastern and western elevations covers the weatherboard-clad frame walls. The entire structure is supported by a continuous cast-concrete foundation. The gymnasium features Craftsman exposed rafters and ornamental brackets, two interior brick chimneys, and a central, projecting gable roof porch.

Elaboration

A central, projecting gable roof porch signifies the eastern or front elevation. The porch is composed of a raised concrete deck and two wood posts, which support the flush, horizontal board pediment. The deck is accessed by five concrete steps, and entry is gained by two single-leaf wood doors. The eastern elevation is fenestrated by six, symmetrically arranged stationary windows that are placed just below the eaves. The clerestory consists of seven identical windows that are likewise symmetrical.

The southern elevation contains two raised, single-leaf door entrances, both of which are covered by metal shed roofs supported by brackets. The western shed roof bay is accessed by a modern folding overhead door. The clerestory is lighted by three symmetrical one-over-one, double-hung doors. Two brackets support each shed roof at its intersection with the clerestory.

The western elevation is composed of two six-over-six, double-hung windows near each corner and two raised, single-leaf door entrances placed between the two groups of windows. The clerestory is fenestrated by four stationary windows. The northern elevation is identical to the southern elevation except the eastern shed-roof covered entrance is missing.

The building is currently unoccupied.

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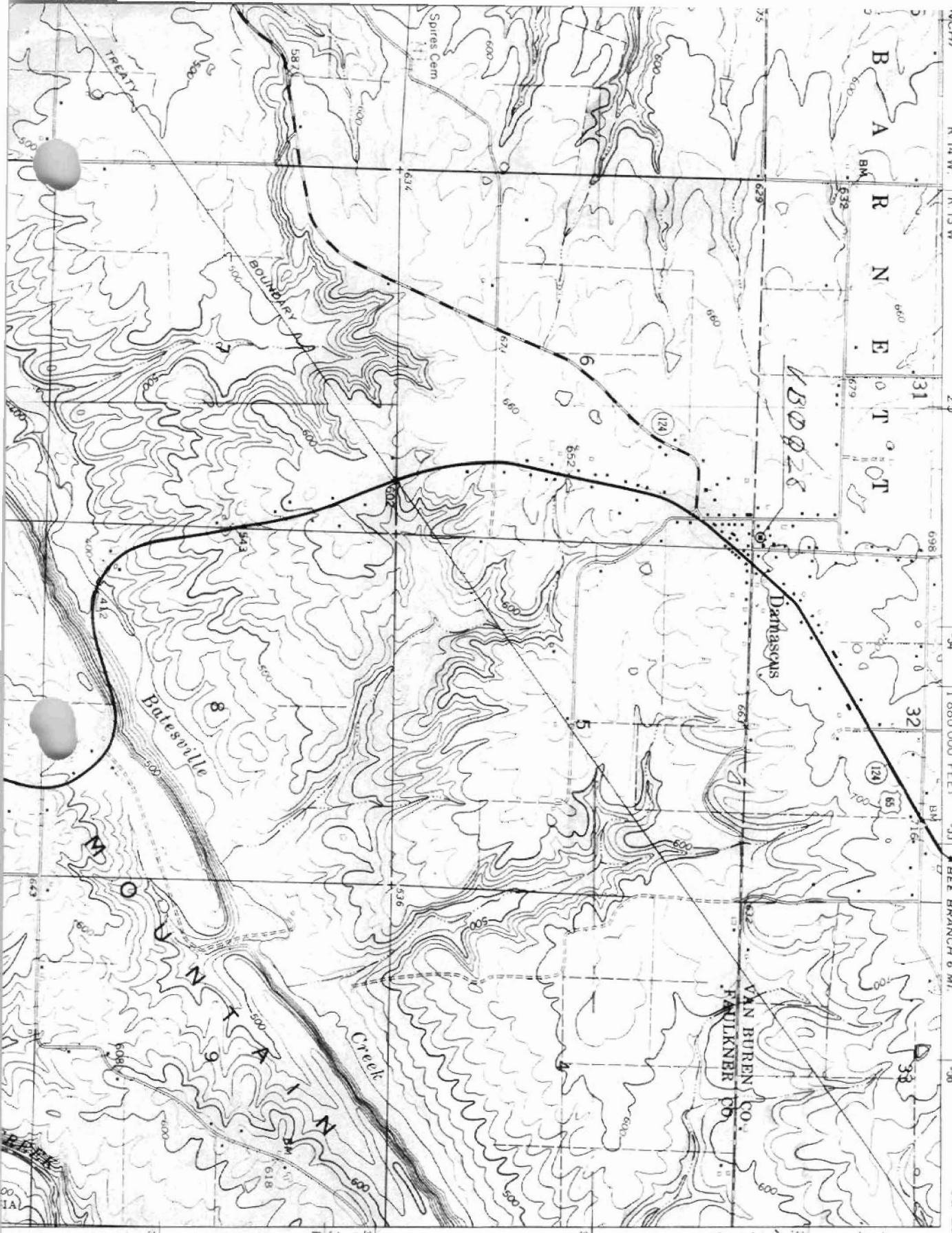
Damascus Gymnasium

The Damascus School District in southern Van Buren County was established in 1910, and in 1926 the Damascus High School consolidated with the nearby community of Southside to establish the Southside Consolidated System. Following the recommendations of the 1928 Department of Education study, Van Buren County "caught the spirit" of school consolidation in the early 1930's. New teacher certification standards were established for the county's districts required college training for the first time, and graduation standards were raised for the district's students. Despite vociferous opposition from a few county superintendents, during the early years of the decade all districts with fewer than 350 pupils were consolidated, and the number of school districts in Van Buren County fell from 92 to 40.

Damascus was suffering economically in 1933, a result of both the national depression and the local re-routing of Highway 65 that year that bypassed the community's original downtown. The establishment of a CCC camp to the east of town later that year helped to resuscitate the local economy somewhat; the town's population is reported to have "doubled in just a few days" as families moved to the area to work in the camp or establish new businesses. Local citizens donated money to ensure that the Damascus High School remained open during these trying times, and in 1933 the Works Progress Administration provided funding to construct a gymnasium adjacent to the school to accommodate the school's popular basketball team.¹

The Damascus Gymnasium, constructed during the period covered by the historic context *The Evolution of the Public School System in the Arkansas Ozarks, 1920-1940*, is a representative example of a large wood frame school building constructed for a rural school district. Its documented construction by the W.P.A. and its use during this period as a local school building clearly identify it with this historic context and with this property type. It is significant locally under Criterion A through its direct associations with both the history of the evolution of the public school system in the Ozark Mountain region of the state during this period and the W.P.A.

¹A History of Van Buren County (Conway, AR: Red River Press, 1976), 76.



NW
 R 14 W R 13 W
 25'
 31
 32
 33
 54
 55
 56
 1 880 000 FEET
 MARSHALL 38 MI.
 BEE BRANCH 6 MI.
 SW 1/4 BEE BRANCH 15' QUADRANGLE
 92° 22' 30"
 35° 22' 30"
 25° 14' NE
 (MORGANTON)

DAMASCUS QUADRANGLE
 ARKANSAS
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
 SW 1/4 BEE BRANCH 15' QUADRANGLE

3914
 1553600/3913750
 1.9 N
 T. 8 N
 180028
 VAN BUREN CO.
 FALKNER CO.

370 000 FEET

3911

3912

3913

Batesville

Damascus

VAN BUREN CO.
FALKNER CO.

180028

1553600/3913750

VAN BUREN CO.
 DAMASCUS, ARK.
 1553600/3913750