

## Walks through History Downtown Bentonville

Begin at the 1866 Bentonville Schoolhouse, 306 N.W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street

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By: Rachel Silva



### Intro

Good morning, my name is Rachel Silva, and I work for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Welcome to the “Walks through History” tour of Downtown Bentonville. I’d like to thank the Benton County Historical Society for co-sponsoring the tour, and I especially want to recognize Leah Whitehead for her help.

For any architects in the audience, this tour is worth 2 hours of HSW continuing education credit through the American Institute of Architects. See me after the tour if you’re interested.

There are a total of 36 Bentonville properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, including two residential historic districts (and each of those contains multiple houses). During our walking tour, we will talk about 10 NR-listed buildings.

### Brief History of Bentonville

Benton County was created on September 30, 1836, making it the first county created after Arkansas statehood (of course, other counties were formed before that during the territorial period). Benton County and Bentonville were named for

U.S. Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, who worked diligently to achieve Arkansas statehood. Bentonville was named the county seat and grew slowly until its incorporation in 1873. The arrival of the railroad in the early 1880s initiated a building boom.

The St. Louis–San Francisco Railway (Frisco) was completed through eastern Benton County in 1881 but missed Bentonville by about six miles. Rogers was established along the tracks southeast of Bentonville, and in 1883, the Bentonville Railroad Company completed a spur line to Rogers. This track later became part of the Arkansas and Oklahoma Railroad. The spur line was soon extended through Bentonville and went west to Gravette, giving people the option of using the Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf Railroad (Kansas City Southern) instead of the Frisco. In the next year, this line was continued to Grove, Oklahoma. In 1900, the Frisco bought the line and ran it until 1940.

In 1901, Benton County led the nation in apple production, producing 2.5 million bushels of apples and became known as the Land of the Big Red Apple. Benton County had a bumper crop of 5 million bushels of apples in 1919. But by 1930, the apple industry was suffering due to drought, disease, and pests. In the mid-30s, the poultry industry became profitable, and by 1938, Benton County was the largest broiler-producing county in the nation.

Because it is home to Wal-Mart headquarters, Bentonville is now one of the fastest growing towns in the country. Between 2000 and 2010, Bentonville's population increased by 75 percent, growing from about 20,000 to over 35,000 people. With the opening of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in 2011, Bentonville has become an international destination.

### **Individual Properties**

306 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> St.—1866 Bentonville Schoolhouse

Bentonville's first subscription school was constructed in 1841 on this site. The log structure was destroyed during the Civil War, as most of the town was burned in

March 1862, before and after the Battle of Pea Ridge. In 1866 another building was constructed on this site and was used by different denominations for church and Sunday school. It soon became known as the Bentonville Sabbath School and was then expanded for use as a regular school. By the 1890s, a public school was built at SW 4<sup>th</sup> and SW E streets, and the building on NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street became a private residence. The 1866 Schoolhouse was altered over the years with an addition on the north side, a full front porch with a large gabled dormer, and the application of stucco to the exterior walls, among other things.

The City of Bentonville acquired the house in 2009, and it was scheduled for demolition to make way for a new public parking lot. However, some people remembered that the building had once been used as a school. Upon closer examination, it was discovered that the four original brick walls and stairwell remained intact inside the residential shell. The Peel-Compton Foundation purchased the old schoolhouse, and Jameson Architects of Little Rock supervised the rehabilitation of the structure, which now houses the Benton County Historical Society.

Walk west on NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street toward Bentonville High School (Old High).

Point out the Craig-Bryan House to the south at 307 W. Central—NR-listed 1/28/1988. Built ca. 1875, the Craig-Bryan House is an excellent example of the Italianate style of architecture. The central tower may have been a later addition. Local legend holds that an attorney who lived in the house with several sons built the tower room so he would have a quiet place to read. The wrought-iron balconies on the house were salvaged from the 1874 Benton County Courthouse, which stood at the northwest corner of NW 2<sup>nd</sup> and Main. After the current courthouse was completed in 1928, the old courthouse was demolished, and people were allowed to salvage useable parts of the building. The home was originally built for early settler James Toliver Craig and his family. Beginning in the 1890s, it was occupied by the Bryan family for over 70 years. Troy and Suzanne Parnell later acquired the house, which has been restored to its original beauty.

406 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> St.—Bentonville High School (Old High; NR-listed 1/28/1988)

This building was constructed in 1928 to house the Bentonville Public School. Primary grades were housed in the east wing, and secondary grades were in the west wing. The auditorium, gymnasium, and administrative offices were located in the middle. [Keep in mind that the entire population of Bentonville in 1930 was about 2,200.] The Spanish Revival-style building was designed by Little Rock architect John Parks Almand, who served as the lead designer for Little Rock Central High School (1927), which was named the most beautiful high school in America at the time of its opening. If you've ever seen Central High, you know that this school is laid out with a smaller but similar V-shaped plan. Almand also designed the Spanish Revival-style Lane Hotel in Rogers (1929).

By 1950, the school was busting at the seams, and new schools were built to handle the younger grades, beginning in 1951 with what is now R. E. Baker Elementary. This building served as the high school until 1975, when a new high school building was completed at 402 Tiger Boulevard. The middle school grades were then moved into the old high school. It has been called Old High Middle School since 1990. Interesting note—the Bentonville/Bella Vista Rotary Club worked with the community to raise money for the renovation of the old high school in the late 1980s and early '90s. One-third of the money raised came from a 1989 concert by New Kids on the Block held at Tiger Stadium!

Walk back to the east on NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

Northwest corner of NW 2<sup>nd</sup> & NW A—First Christian Church

The congregation of the First Christian Church held its first service in this building on January 14, 1906. The Gothic Revival-style building features a corner bell tower, lancet-shaped window and door openings, and a steeply pitched roof with parapets. The Christian Church sold the building in 1979 and constructed a new church on Hwy. 102. The old stained glass windows were removed and incorporated into the 1979 church building. The 1906 building is the oldest standing church in Bentonville. Apparently, the bell tower never had a bell. The building is now being converted into a high-end restaurant.

Walk south on NW A Street.

#### Northwest corner NW A & Central—First United Methodist Church

The Methodist Church has occupied this site since the 1830s but has had multiple buildings. The cornerstone for the current Methodist sanctuary was laid on March 22, 1952, and the first service was held in the church on January 3, 1954. This building replaced an earlier Methodist Church, built in 1900 on the same site. The current church was designed in the Neoclassical style with fluted, Ionic columns supporting a triangular pediment with garland and wreath decoration. At least one addition (possibly done in 1986) has been built on the west side of the sanctuary.

#### Point to A Street—Bentonville Interurban Coach

In 1912 a charter was granted to the Arkansas Northwest Railroad Company to operate an interurban train between Rogers and Bentonville. The streetcar started running in July 1914 and went from Second and Cherry streets in Rogers north to the Frisco track, which it used to get to Bentonville, and then left the Frisco line by the Bentonville Depot and ran north on A Street. The coach stopped at NW A and Central at the Massey Hotel and then went on to the Park Springs Hotel at NW A & NW 10<sup>th</sup> streets. The fare was initially 15 cents for a round trip, but was later increased to 40 cents for a round trip, 21 cents one-way, and 5 cents from the Massey Hotel to Park Springs. The first run left Bentonville at 6:15 a.m. and returned to Bentonville at 11:30 p.m. The coach seated 130 people. It made its last trip in June 1916 after the Frisco Railroad prohibited use of its track due to nonpayment of lease dues.

Cross to the Massey Hotel.

#### Southeast corner of SW A & Central—Massey Hotel (NR-listed 12/1/1978)

Prior to the construction of the Massey Hotel, the ca. 1840 wood-frame Eagle Hotel was located on this site. Union General Franz Sigel and some of his men were staying at the Eagle Hotel and had just ordered breakfast on March 6, 1862, when staff reported that the Confederate Army was approaching town. Sigel had

to leave his meal unfinished. The armies met the following day at the Battle of Pea Ridge. General Sigel returned to Bentonville about 25 years later and remarked that he had come back to finish his breakfast. By 1904, the Eagle Hotel building was used as a marble works and monument plant (manufacturing grave markers and other statues). The old building was demolished in 1908 to make way for the Massey Hotel.

Built in 1910, the Colonial Revival-style Massey Hotel was designed by architect A. O. Clarke for Robert D. Massey. However, Massey died in November 1909 in a runaway horse accident while the hotel was still under construction. It was later purchased by C. R. Craig. The Massey formally opened on June 28, 1910, and had an opening reception with 240 guests. The building was constructed with a combination of brick, cast-stone, and rough-cut limestone. Hotel rooms were located on the upper floors, but the lobby has shared space with numerous tenants over the years, including the Bentonville Interurban Coach ticket office, a radio station, barber shop, real estate office, insurance office, gift shop, and bus station. The hotel was purchased in 1961 by the Burger family and became The Town House. A fire in 1975 destroyed the roof of the building. It was later purchased and renovated by the Walton family. The Bentonville Public Library occupied the first floor from 1979 to 2006, when a new library was completed at 405 S. Main. Crystal Bridges at the Massey served as a temporary gallery and office space for staff before the museum officially opened in 2011. The first floor is now the Phat Tire Bike Shop, and offices for the Walton Foundation are upstairs.

Pressroom—

Built ca. 1930 and was a short-lived location of the post office (1933 Sanborn).

117 W. Central—Bentonville City Hall

Built ca. 1910 on the lot occupied in the 1890s by McSpadden's and later, Hawkins's, Livery stable. The current building was a standard early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial-style building with two storefronts. By the 1930s, the west side was the ABC Store, which sold men's and women's clothing and fabric as well as paint,

furniture, and undertaking supplies. The façade has been altered with a balcony and new window openings on the first floor.

#### 115 W. Central—Benton County National Bank (NR-listed 9/1/1983)

Designed by A. O. Clarke, the Benton County National Bank was built in 1906 in the Neoclassical style and features pink granite columns with Corinthian capitals. Albert Oscar (A. O.) Clarke was born in 1859 at Ridgeway, New York, and moved to St. Louis in the 1880s. Clarke worked as a draftsman under J. B. Legg, the premier St. Louis architect at that time. In 1892 Clarke and two of Legg's other associates started their own firm, which was called Matthews, Clarke, and James. They enjoyed a successful practice in St. Louis. In 1904 Clarke was recruited by William "Coin" Harvey, builder of the Monte Ne Resort, and relocated to Rogers. Clarke designed and built Missouri Row, the Monte Ne Bank, and Oklahoma Row. After his work at Monte Ne, Clarke was in high demand in northwest Arkansas. He designed more than 27 buildings in Benton, Carroll, and Washington counties, four of which are in downtown Bentonville. A. O. Clarke died in 1935 and is buried in the Rogers Cemetery.

In 1934 the bank building became offices for the City of Bentonville and the library. The building was later used for municipal court and city council meetings.

Look across to the north side of W. Central.

#### Meteor & Plaza Theater Building—

Built in 1927 to house the Meteor Theater and later became the Plaza Theater.

#### Vacant lot to east—

There was an auto sales and service business on this lot, built ca. 1920. The little Bloom store may have been part of the building, and if so, it was the office.

#### 116 W. Central—H. A. Luckens Building, 1905

Built in 1905. In its early years, the building housed a meat market and hide processing business. By 1914, it was a movie theater (silent movies). For many

years, this building housed Black's Dress Shop. It features nice brick corbelling at the cornice and arched window openings on the second floor.

Sesquicentennial mural—

This mural was painted in 1986 by local artist Randall Townzen in celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Arkansas statehood and depicts an early scene from rural Benton County.

113-111-109-105 W. Central—

These buildings were constructed in the late 1880s. 109 and 105 W. Central feature Italianate-style details like a projecting cornice and hood molding above the second story windows. 113-111 W. Central may have been remodeled in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

113 W. Central—This building housed the Trotter & Wilkes Tobacco Factory in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was a hardware store at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and then was a meat market and grocery. In more recent memory, it was Putman's Ladies' Store. Mrs. Putman was the mother-in-law of Dr. Neil Compton, well-known Bentonville physician and founder of the Ozark Society, which fought to preserve the Buffalo River in its natural, free-flowing state.

111 W. Central (currently under renovation)—For most of its history, this building housed a furniture store. By the 1940s, it was Crow Drug Store. In more recent memory, it was Gene's Barber Shop.

109 W. Central—This building was a grocery store during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and by the 1940s, it was the Bentonville Variety Store.

105 W. Central—From at least 1897 to 1908, this building housed the post office and a stationery and confectionery store on the first floor and the Knights of Pythias lodge hall on the second floor. The post office remained here until about 1930, when it moved down the block to the current location of the Pressroom sandwich shop. In the 1940s, the western half of the building was the Horseshoe Café.

North side of old People's Bank (Town Square Office Suites)—



There were two storefronts on this side of the old People's Bank building, but they have been unrecognizably altered. These spaces housed a drug store and grocery, and by the 1940s, one side was the Bentonville News Company's Newsstand.

#### 112-114 W. Central—

In the 1880s and 1890s, this site was occupied by a large wood-frame livery stable, successively operated by William Terry, J. T. Vaughn, and J. R. Johnson. This building was constructed about 1900 and housed the Benton County Hardware Company, which operated stores in Bentonville, Rogers, and Siloam Springs and had controlling interest in many hardware stores throughout the region. Like all early hardware stores, Benton County Hardware sold everything from hardware to furniture to appliances, farm implements, automobiles, gasoline, feed, caskets, etc. W. J. Doke, president of Benton County Hardware Company, also owned Doke Motor Company, which was operated by the hardware store chain. They sold Fords in every store. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Benton County Hardware Company was the largest business in the county, but it went bankrupt during the Great Depression.

#### 108-110 W. Central (Dreamworks)—

Constructed about 1900 and housed a dry goods store, and later, a department store. Was this the location of the D & H Department Store, which closed during the Depression? D & H was owned by the same people that ran Benton County Hardware, W. J. Doke and Connelly Harrington (D & H).

#### 101 W. Central—People's Bank

The People's Bank was built in 1887, and at that time, it was the most ornate commercial building in Bentonville. Its original Renaissance Revival design featured a cast-stone cornice and belt course, hood molding above the windows, and a decorative parapet above the corner entrance (above the current broken pediment and urn).

In June 1893 the People's Bank was robbed by Henry Starr, Kid Wilson, and four members of their gang. During the getaway, bank cashier George Jackson was

forced to carry a bag containing \$900 in silver, but he was saved by Ms. Maggie Wood, who pulled him into the *Benton County Sun* newspaper office. The outlaws escaped with \$11,000 and outran the sheriff and his posse. [Henry Starr was shot and killed in 1921 at Harrison during an attempted robbery of the People's National Bank.]

After the People's Bank, the building was occupied by First National Bank. In 1931 the Bank of Bentonville opened in this location and remained here until 1962, when a new building was completed on the site of the old opera house on the north side of the square.

Cross Main Street.

South side of square—

102 E. Central—

Built ca. 1885. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, this was Craig & Sons Dry Goods. By 1904, it was Brown's Drug Store.

104 E. Central—

Built ca. 1885. Nice vernacular Italianate detailing with brick corbelling at the cornice and hood molding over second story windows. This building housed the Craig & Sons Saddlery in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was later the popular Elkhorn Barber Shop, owned by Kit Campbell. The Elkhorn was decorated with hunting trophies and had a tradition of keeping individual shaving mugs for each customer.

106 E. Central—

Built ca. 1885. Italianate detailing. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, this was J. C. Knott Grocery. In the 1920s, it was Puryear's Cash Grocery, and by the 1950s, it was Oklahoma Tire and Supply Company (OTASCO). In recent memory, this building was part of Roy's Office Supply.

108 E. Central—Roy's Office Supply (NR-listed 1/28/1988)

Built ca. 1892. Nice Italianate detailing with a pressed metal cornice and hood molding above second story windows. The western half (right) of the building housed a drug store for much of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the 1930s, the western storefront was Perry's Eat Shop. The eastern side (left) was home to C. C. Clarke Bakery and Groceries in the early years. In recent memory, this was Roy's Office Supply. Roy's occupied the buildings at 106, 108, and 110-112 E. Central.

110-112 E. Central—Bohart Hardware Building (NR-listed 1/28/1988)

Built ca. 1890. Decorative brick corbelling at the cornice. Home to Foster & Son Meat Market (west storefront) and Bohart Hardware (east storefront). This building retains its original cast-iron storefront columns, stamped "Neosho Foundry, Neosho, MO."

114 E. Central—

Built ca. 1885. Was a drug store, millinery, grocery, and meat market over the years.

Southeast corner of E. Central & SE A St.—Tucker's Corner (W. T. Ivy Block)

Just after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this block was occupied by the E. S. Wilkes lumber yard. Around 1910 it became Ferguson Lumber Company. The current brick building was constructed about 1920 by W. T. Ivy (see name plate on building). It is a red brick building painted gray. The 1920 structure was an auto garage with a 20-car capacity and a filling station, as well as a lumber company office in the back. In the late 1920s, it was called the O. T. Garage and sold Texaco Gasoline. A square area was cut out at the corner to create a drive-thru area for pumping gas. If you look closely, you can see where they filled in the opening. The building is now referred to as Tucker's Corner because it was the longtime home of Tucker Abstract.

East side of square—

Benton County Courthouse (NR-listed 1/28/1988)

The current Benton County Courthouse was built in 1927-1928 and was designed by A. O. Clarke in the Neoclassical style with a rusticated stone lower level, arcaded front porch, and arched windows in the second floor courtroom.

However, this is not Benton County's first courthouse. The first meeting of the county court was held in 1837 in the home of the first Benton County Judge, George P. Wallace (the site is now near Memorial Park east of downtown). And Benton County has had five "permanent" courthouse buildings after meeting in the judge's home.

1838—log courthouse constructed on the northern portion of the public square

1842—brick courthouse constructed in the center of the square. This was burned in December 1862 by Union troops.

~1865—2-story, frame courthouse constructed northeast of the square.

July 1873—3-story, brick, Italianate-style courthouse completed at the northwest corner of Main and NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. This building was dedicated in 1874 and cost \$60,000.

1927-28—current courthouse built. Designed by A. O. Clarke. Cost \$200,000 to build and \$10,000 to buy lighting and furniture. This building required 12 railcars of cut stone, 30 cars of brick, 40 cars of crushed stone, 4 cars of lumber, 4 cars of reinforcing steel, 12 cars of cement, and 16 cars of sand.

Note the panel on the front façade reading, "Sovereignty rests with the people."

#### Bentonville Confederate Monument (NR-listed 4/26/1996)

The Bentonville Confederate Monument is a commemorative sculpture erected in 1908 by A. J. Bates and the James H. Berry Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. James Henderson Berry was a Confederate veteran, Bentonville attorney, Arkansas Governor (1883-1885), and U.S. Senator (1885-1907).

Although a plaque in honor of Berry was placed right below the Confederate soldier statue, the soldier is not intended to depict Berry. This was a popular stock soldier used on similar commemorative sculptures throughout the South. [Plus, James Berry lost his right leg above the knee in the Battle of Corinth, MS, in 1862.] Memorializing Confederate veterans, the monument reads, "Their names are borne on honor's shield. Their record is with God," and "They fought for home and fatherland."

Point down NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street toward the Town Branch.

The Macon-Carson Distillery was located about 2 blocks northeast of the square on the western bank of the Town Branch. The distillery was known for its delicious applejack brandy, made with locally-grown apples. At one time, it was the largest distillery west of the Mississippi River. In 1914 the O. L. Gregory Vinegar Company purchased the plant and used it to produce apple cider. The buildings are no longer extant, but you can see the remains of the foundations.

Northeast corner of NE A & NE 2<sup>nd</sup>—Bentonville Post Office (now the Benton County Courthouse Annex)

This corner was home to the Robinson Hotel in the late 1890s and early 1900s. About 1905 the U.S. Department of Agriculture built a 2-story building on this corner to house the Benton County Weather Bureau. This was necessary to protect hundreds of acres of fruit orchards. But by the early 1930s, the apple industry was in decline due to the Great Depression and disease and pest problems with the apple crop. The current building on this site was constructed in 1935 to serve as a U.S. Post Office.

North side of square—

The north side of the square was filled with brick commercial buildings by the early 1880s (north side rebuilt after an 1880 fire destroyed earlier buildings).

However, only two of the historic buildings remain standing—101 and 103 NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street (Cripps Law Office and Overstreet Jewelry at the west end of the block). Historically, a 2-story, brick opera house was located on the east end of this block (where it says “Bank of Bentonville” today). Traveling vaudeville musicians and entertainers performed at the opera house. During World War I, the 142<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery drilled upstairs in the opera house. By the late 1920s, the Royal Theater was located in the old opera house building, and it later became the Park Theater. The opera house/theater was demolished in 1962 to make way for the new Bank of Bentonville building, which was designed by Fayetteville architect T. Ewing Shelton. Sam Walton bought controlling interest in the Bank of Bentonville in

1961, and it later became part of Arvest Bank. The majority of the north side of the square was rebuilt in the 1980s to replicate historic commercial buildings in scale and design.

103 NE 2<sup>nd</sup> St. (Overstreet Jewelry)—built ca. 1880 and has been stuccoed. In the early years, this was home to Bates & Meador Grocery, and a telegraph office was located upstairs.

101 NE 2<sup>nd</sup> St. (Cripps Law Office)—built ca. 1880 and has been stuccoed. The building retains its original cast-iron storefront columns stamped, “Neosho Foundry, Neosho, MO.” In the 1880s, this was a boots and shoes store. An old 2-story, wood-frame hotel was located just to the north of this building (behind it). Over the years, it had several different names, including the Western Hotel, Blake Hotel, and Southern Hotel. In 1914, the Southern Hotel used the second floor of this building for hotel rooms. The hotel remained until at least 1940.

Walk across NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and go behind the commercial buildings on the north side of the square.

21c Museum Hotel Bentonville—

The 21c Museum Hotel Bentonville opened in February 2013 and features 104 luxury hotel rooms, a restaurant, and 12,000 square feet of art exhibition space that is free and open to the public.

Walk down Legion Lane.

203 NE A St. (now Klothe)—

Built sometime after 1940 to serve as the Ray Keith Chapter of the American Legion.

212 N. Main—Benton County Jail (NR-listed 1/28/1988)

When the 1874 Benton County Courthouse was completed at the northwest corner of Main & NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, the county jail was located in the building’s third floor. In 1888 a new jail was constructed to the north of the old courthouse on the west side of Main Street (across from the 1911 jail). On March 4, 1905, the jail

caught on fire, and two inmates burned to death because the jailer could not be located to get the keys. A temporary jail was erected after the fire and was used until 1911, when a new jail was constructed at 212 N. Main.

The 1911 Jail was designed by A. O. Clarke in the Neoclassical style and included living quarters for the jailer and his family, in order to avoid the problem they had in 1905. The main cell block was located upstairs and had 6 cells, which held 4 prisoners each. Local builder Lon Pace was the contractor (for this and other downtown buildings). In 1967 a bond issue passed to pay for the construction of a new county jail and administration building...I'm assuming the county moved out of this building soon after that? The old jail is currently used as a private residence.

Northwest corner Main & NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street—

Location of the 1874 Benton County Courthouse. It was demolished shortly after the current courthouse was completed in 1928. By 1933, a filling station occupied this corner. In August 1967 the Mid-Town Shopping Center opened on this corner. It was touted as the first downtown shopping center in Arkansas, with free off-street parking for more than 100 cars. Sam Walton closed Walton's 5 & 10 at 105 N. Main in 1967 and opened Walton's Family Center in the new Mid-Town Mall. Walton's Family Shoe Store was also in the Mid-Town Center, along with Andy's TV and Appliance, Edmondson's Laundromat, and the dental office of Drs. Gill and Finley. In 1978 Walton's Family Center became Wal-Mart Store No. 75. By the early 1980s, Phillips Food Center occupied the former Wal-Mart location in the shopping center. In recent memory, this location was Harp's Food Center. The Mid-Town Mall was recently demolished to make way for the new Midtown Center office and retail development (currently under construction).

West side of square—

The buildings on the west side of the square were constructed about 1880, with the exception of the Terry Block Building, which was constructed in 1888.

Blue Moon Market—

This building served as a hardware store in the early years. It was later a dry goods store and a grocery. Altered with stucco and changed window openings.

The Station Café—

Housed a millinery, dry goods and clothing store, and a grocery in the early years. By the 1950s, this was the Cozy Theater, which boasted an unusual neon sign featuring a box of strawberries at the top that appeared to fall over and spill strawberries down the side. Altered with stucco and second floor window openings closed.

109 N. Main—

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, this was the D. H. Woods Dry Goods Store. Altered with stucco.

105 N. Main—Walton's 5 & 10

The old Walton's 5 & 10 has a 1950s façade, but the building is actually much older. This building was constructed ca. 1880 and had two storefronts. The northern (right) side housed the City Drug & Book Store, Post Office, and a printing office in the 1880s and early 1890s. The south side (left) was J. H. and J. P. Burns Grocery, followed by Peel & Lefors Grocery (by ca. 1890).

On May 1, 1950, Sam Walton moved from Newport to Bentonville and purchased the Harrison Variety Store, which was part of the Ben Franklin Store franchise. On May 9, 1950, Sam Walton opened his original Walton's 5 & 10 at this location. It was the first self-service variety store in Arkansas (and the third in the country), whereby the clerk did not bring goods to the customer; rather, customers were allowed to browse freely and take goods to the clerk for payment. Walton's 5 & 10 remained here until 1967, when it became Walton's Family Center and moved to the nearby Mid-Town Mall.

Walton opened the first Wal-Mart on July 2, 1962, in Rogers. In 1991 Wal-Mart became the nation's largest retailer with 1,700 stores. Sam Walton died in 1992, and at the time of his death, his net worth was estimated at \$21-23 billion. Of course, Wal-Mart is now the world's largest retailer and maintains its home office in Bentonville. The presence of the home office and Wal-Mart vendors has



contributed tremendously to the Bentonville economy over the years. The original Walton's 5 & 10 is now the Wal-Mart Museum and Visitors Center.

101-103 N. Main—Terry Block Building (NR-listed 5/13/1982)

In the 1870s and early 1880s, the W. A. Terry & Co. Mercantile and Peel & Clark Drugs occupied wood-frame buildings on this corner. When Col. William A. Terry built the 3-story Terry Block Building on the site in 1888, he moved his 1874 frame building around the corner behind the Terry Block facing W. Central. Terry's Dry Goods and Clothing Store occupied most of the Terry Block's first floor, but the Benton County Bank had a space in the front corner of the building. Terry was also president of that bank. The Terry Block is an excellent example of late 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial-style architecture with a projecting metal cornice, brick corbelling, and cast-stone details. Now part of the Wal-Mart Museum/Visitors Center/Soda Fountain.

Questions?

Encourage everyone to patronize a local restaurant for lunch.

Walk back to schoolhouse along NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.