

**Walks through History
Bradford (White County)**

Begin at the southeast corner of Highways 367 & 87

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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 Bradford. I’d like to thank the White County Historical Society for co-sponsoring the tour, and I’d especially like to recognize Bill Leach, Scott Akridge, and Tom Winningham for their help.

This tour is worth two hours of HSW continuing education credit through the American Institute of Architects. Please see me after the tour if you’re interested.

Brief History of Bradford

White County was created by Arkansas’s Territorial Legislature on October 23, 1835, from parts of Independence, Jackson, and Pulaski counties. No one is certain how the county got its name. It was either named for the White River, which forms its eastern boundary, or it was named for Senator Hugh L. White of Tennessee, who was a Whig Party candidate for president in 1836.

Located in northeastern White County, Bradford traces its origin to 1872, when the Cairo & Fulton Railroad was being built from Argenta (North Little Rock) to the

Mississippi River opposite Cairo, Illinois. Prior to that time, the area's population was about six miles northeast of present-day Bradford on the White River at Old Grand Glaise. Grand Glaise was a bustling river town in the early-to-mid-19th century. Located on one of the highest banks on the White River, the settlement became an important steamboat stop and shipping hub by the late 1820s and continued to prosper until the Civil War. During its heyday in the 1850s, Grand Glaise had about 75 homes, two cotton gins, a packing house, a barrel factory, and other businesses. Because of the town's position on the White River, Union and Confederate armies frequented Grand Glaise during the Civil War, resulting in several nearby skirmishes. Grand Glaise slowly recovered after the war, but a decline in river commerce and the growing popularity of the railroad ultimately delivered the death blow.

The Bradford Allen Station was established in 1872 at present-day Bradford. The station was named after Cairo & Fulton Railroad president Thomas B. Allen's son, Bradford Allen. After an 1874 merger between the Cairo & Fulton and St. Louis & Iron Mountain railroads, Thomas Allen became president of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern Railway. He was later elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Missouri's second district. He and his wife, Ann Russell Allen, had seven children. Bradford Allen was the couple's fourth son and died at St. Louis on November 27, 1884, at the age of 30.

The railroad provided an easier and quicker way to ship goods to larger markets, so people relocated to be near the railroad. A post office opened in 1873, and Loyd Bailey was the first postmaster. A settlement soon developed around the station, which became a major shipping hub. By 1890, Bradford had a population of 100 people as well as four general stores, a drug store, millinery, gristmill, sawmill, public school, two blacksmith shops, two physicians, and three fraternal organizations. The Baptist and Methodist congregations held services at the schoolhouse. Timber, livestock, cotton, strawberries, grapes, mussel shells, and pecans were shipped from Bradford on a regular basis.

Bradford officially incorporated in 1893. The town's first mayor was Joseph W. Price. By 1908, Bradford was home to more than 20 businesses, including a bank, five general stores, a hotel, and an undertaker. According to the 1908 Bradford School Handbook, Bradford was a very healthy location. It said, "The healthfulness of Bradford cannot be surpassed anywhere in the state, the death rate being exceedingly low. Old settlers say they have observed no deaths to occur in the town for a period of twelve months at a time." Railroad passenger service stopped in the 1960s, but U.S. Highway 67 continued to bring motorists through the center of town. Although Bradford's population has slowly decreased since 1980, the town still retains several businesses, churches, and its public school.

Individual Resources:

Walk south along Hwy. 367 (Second Street)

Bradford Memorial Funeral Home—

The funeral home now encompasses two historic buildings. The building on the north side (left) was John Ward's Grocery & Dry Goods and later became Pratt's Grocery. The building on the south (right) was an earlier location of the post office.

Green stucco house at the southeast corner of Hwy. 367 and Elm—

Dr. John Frizzell House (National Register-listed 7/12/1992)—

This Craftsman-style home was built about 1929 and features multiple porches supported by tapered columns on concrete bases, exposed rafter tails, and triangular knee braces in the gable ends. The ancillary structure, which served as Dr. Frizzell's office, is also listed in the National Register. According to the 1940 Census, Dr. Frizzell was still practicing medicine. He was 63 years old in 1940.

Cross Hwy. 367 and continue west on Elm

Smith Hospital—

The Smith Hospital opened on January 1, 1952. The hospital was operated by Dr. Bernard (“Ber-nerd”) C. Smith and remained open until December 1, 1972, when the building became Smith Clinic. The Smith Clinic was open until at least 1993 and later became the Knowles Clinic, run by Dr. Glen Knowles. The building now houses the Senior Center.

White building on north side of Elm across from Smith Hospital—

In the early 1950s, this building was constructed to house the Bradford Fire Department, which had previously been located in the City Hall at Walnut and Second streets.

Cross back to east side of Hwy. 367 and go north

Southern Bank—

The bank was built on the site of Estelle Whitley’s residence, which was moved to a location behind Erica’s Beauty Shop and was demolished about 2005. Ms. Whitley taught third grade at Bradford.

Area north of the Southern Bank—

Site of a shoe repair business owned by Ben Sims and later, Mr. Tackert, as well as an Esso filling station.

Vinyl-sided house north of bank—

Site of the Bradford Theater, which operated until the late 1950s or early ‘60s.

New pavilion at southwest corner of Hwy. 367 & Hwy. 87—

This was the site of Whitley’s Drug Store, which later became Ferguson’s Drug. In more recent memory, a building on this site housed Pearrow’s “Pay-roh’s” Furniture Store. A pool hall and beer joint called the Silver Grill was located just west of Pearrow’s. White County voted to become dry in 1960.

North side of Hwy. 87 (Main St.), going east from Hwy. 367

Winningham Pharmacy—

Historically, this building housed Ward's Grocery and Mercantile, followed by Ferguson's Drug Store. It has been Winningham Pharmacy, owned by Tom and Kaye Winningham, since March 1967.

JoAnna's Beauty Shop—

This was Finis Hodges's Barber Shop.

Yellow hollow tile block building—

Ida's Café, which was open all day, six days a week, and served breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Concrete block with wood parapet—

Sexton's Grocery, which also had a meat counter that sold whole chickens, steaks, and more.

Alley

South side of Hwy. 87 (Main), going east from Hwy. 367

Parking lot at southeast corner of Hwy. 367 & Hwy. 87—

A building on this site housed Whitley's Drug Store. This lot has been vacant for at least 30 years.

L. E. Ray General Merchandise, 1934 (now Bradford Feed & Supply)—

Good example of an early 20th century commercial-style building with transom windows and a stone exterior with grapevine mortar. Will McKnight was the local stonemason who constructed the building with rock hauled from west of Bradford.

Bradford Computers—

This building was constructed ca. 1905 to house the Bradford State Bank, which was organized in 1905 with a capital stock of \$10,000. The building was later

home to Citizens State Bank. In the 1940s and '50s, A. C. Frazier was the banker. You can still see the old bank vault inside the building (look through the storefront window). A newer brick veneer has been added to the building's front façade, but the original brick is visible from the side elevation.

North side of Main, continuing east from the alley

White frame & stucco building—

This building housed the post office in the 1940s and '50s. Herbert Whitley was postmaster. It later became a laundromat. It appears to be quite old.

Profiles—

Hickmon's Barber Shop (Ray Hickmon, barber). Prior to Hickmon, Alan Butler had a barber shop here.

Hammertime Fitness (building with mural)—

In the early 20th century, this corner was occupied by a white, wood-frame building with a gabled roof that faced east toward the railroad tracks. Old photos indicate that it was a general merchandise store and service station. The frame building was demolished sometime after 1967 and replaced with the current structure, which probably dates from the early-to-mid-1970s. This was the location of Trent Hays's Television Repair and later, his men's store.

South side of Main, continuing east from alley

Vacant lot—

This was the site of a ca. 1935 two-story, stone building that burned sometime shortly after 1993. The building housed a meat market and grocery on the first floor, and the second floor was probably an apartment for the store owners. Early grocery store owners were Red Floyd and later, G. C. Twyford and Dutch Harris. Bill Burruss had a grocery store there until about 1970, when he built Bill's Food Center on Hwy. 367. The building later housed Leo McDougal's Grocery (when was McDougal's Grocery here?) and a café before it burned in the 1990s.

Old Knowles Clinic—

This building dates from the mid-20th century, but the fire that destroyed the two-story building also damaged this one, so the original façade was covered with metal siding and rose colored brick. In the 1950s, this was Noah Milligan's Appliance Store. By the 1960s, this building housed Leo McDougal's Variety Store and was managed for a time by his son, Jim McDougal of Whitewater fame, who was born at Bradford in 1940. Jim McDougal also provided income tax services for the people of Bradford. Carl Siler later operated Siler's Variety Store here. In more recent memory, Dr. Glen Knowles had his medical clinic in the building.

Point to site of railroad depot at Main & SW Front Street. It was a wood-frame depot with board-and-batten siding. The depot was moved in the early 1960s to Possum Grape, where it burned.

Cross to north side of Main and continue on NW Front Street

Mural—

The mural, which was painted by artist Gene Reagan about 2003, honors Bradford's veterans.

Two I-houses on NW Front Street—

The I-house was a vernacular house form popular in Arkansas during the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is called an I-house because the layout or form of the house is shaped like a capital "I" with a central hall separating two rooms upstairs and two rooms downstairs. Traditional I-houses were only one room deep, but a kitchen ell was often added to the rear of the house at some point. This house form was studied in the 1930s by Fred Kniffen, a cultural geographer at Louisiana State University, who supposedly coined the term "I-house" after noting the prevalence of the house form in the rural farming areas of Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, which all begin with the letter "i." In the mid-20th century, the cream-colored house on the south was the home of Sally Reeves, while the white house on the north was Bob James's home.

Empty space now occupied by driveway and gate—

Site of Bradford's first city hall and later, a feed store operated successively by Garland Jennings, Dutch Harris, and Bert Middleton and Leo McDougal (Middleton & McDougal Feed Store).

White concrete block house at southwest corner of NW Front and Walnut—

This was the home of Leo and Lorene McDougal. Leo McDougal and his wife, Lorene, had one child, James Bert "Jim" McDougal of Whitewater Scandal fame. Leo McDougal co-owned and operated the Middleton & McDougal Feed Store on Front Street in Bradford. He later purchased and operated two grocery stores and a furniture store and retooled an old cotton gin to make cattle feed. I already told you that McDougal operated a variety store on Main Street in the 1960s.

The McDougal House was built with local, hand-tamped concrete block. Leo McDougal's father-in-law, Bert Middleton, was blind and lived in the northern wing of the house.

Northwest corner of NW Front & Walnut—

Ward-Stout House (National Register-listed 9/5/1991)—

This house, built in 1932, was designed and built for Bradford merchant Burley Oscar Ward in the Craftsman style with a full front porch supported by square columns, three-over-one windows, and exposed rafter tails (**the house has been altered with new windows, and the eaves are now partially boxed, hiding the rafter tails). This was later the home of Bradford stationmaster Chester Stout.

West on Walnut

At the corner of Walnut & Hwy. 367, point out a few things—

Valero—By the early 1940s, a Sinclair service station run by Russell Coffman was located on this site.

Vacant lot between Valero and Winningham Pharmacy—Site of Mutt Goad's Burger Joint, which served "chili buns" for five cents and "Mutt burgers" for ten cents. Because the Bradford School didn't have a cafeteria until the late 1940s, every child ate lunch at Mutt's.

Stone retaining wall and steps behind Hickmon's Hardware—In the early 20th century, the two-story Hotel Main occupied this site. It stood until the late 1970s and was last occupied by the Lindsey family.

Vacant lot at southwest corner Walnut & 367—Site of another filling station operated by Norman Hale (1940s) and later, Joe Morris (1970s). There was a café next to the service station.

Bradford Public Library—

Bradford City Hall/Byers Masonic Lodge (National Register-listed 10/21/1999)—This building was constructed in 1934 at the cost of \$1,574 to house the Bradford City Hall and Byers Lodge No. 81. The building exhibits some elements of the Craftsman style, including exposed rafter tails and a mixture of exterior materials. The first story is fieldstone, while the second story is stucco. Byers Masonic Lodge No. 81 was organized on November 9, 1854, at Old Grand Glaise. In the 1870s, the lodge relocated to Bradford and constructed a new building, which was destroyed by fire in 1930. After the current building's completion, city hall (and the two-cell city jail) occupied the first level, and the lodge hall was on the upper level. In 1960 the Byers Lodge moved to a new building on Acacia Street, and the Boy Scouts met upstairs in the former lodge hall. City Hall moved to its current location at 308 W. Walnut in 1995. The building was restored with the help of grants from the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program and has housed the Bradford Public Library since 2009. The library was a bookmobile from 1988 to 2001, when it moved into the old Citizens State Bank building on Main Street. It remained there until 2009. **Restroom and water break. See pressed tin ceiling and jail cells. The jail cells were used until at least the late 1950s. The original traffic light, installed in 1954 at the intersection of Main and Second, is in the old jail.

Stucco building with stone chimney—

Wallace Post 144 American Legion Auxiliary, built 1934. The Boy Scouts meet here, too.

Current Bradford City Hall

Stone house across Walnut Street from the current City Hall—
Home of John and Inez Ward, who owned Ward's Grocery.

Joyce's Flower Shop—

Dr. J. N. Lovell House (National Register-listed 7/20/1992)—

Built about 1902, the Dr. J. N. Lovell House is another example of an I-house, but it features a more elaborate two-story front porch with turned spindles and gingerbread trim. Dr. Lovell practiced medicine at Bradford from 1904 to 1919. The house has been occupied by flower and gift shops since at least the early 1990s.

Bradford United Methodist Church—

Organized in 1879 at Bradford, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, constructed a new building in the 1890s. The 1890s building burned on March 29, 1930. The fire, which actually started in the Methodist parsonage, destroyed several buildings in Bradford. The Methodists rebuilt after the fire, and the current building was constructed around the 1930s structure in the mid-1970s. The old church bell is displayed next to the church. The bell, which is made of cast steel, was manufactured sometime between 1882 and 1894 by C. S. Bell & Company of Hillsboro, Ohio.

Bradford Water Tower—

Based on its design, the water tower probably dates to the 1920s or early 1930s. The old water tower will soon be refurbished and used as a back-up.

Point up the hill to the back of the old gymnasium, which was probably built in the 1940s. The building was constructed with ornamental concrete block, an affordable and durable material that could be customized with different textures.

White concrete block building—

This building was constructed in the early 1960s to house Cy Soliday's Restaurant and later became a laundromat.

Residence at 430 W. Walnut—

Williams House—The Williams family was in the undertaking business, and there was an undertaker's office located east of the house. In the late 1950s and 1960s, this was the home of Bradford School Superintendent Gerald Harris. The porch columns have been replaced, and the lattice panels are not original. The house may have had more Queen Anne-style detailing like gingerbread brackets.

Walk back to east on Hwy. 87 (Main)

424 Main—

Ca. 1910 Colonial Revival-style house with stained glass transom and decorative window pane arrangements. Actress Mary Steenburgen's grandmother (Ms. Ryan) lived here.

Next white wood-frame house—

Built ca. 1900, this house mimics a saddlebag, which was a vernacular house form characterized by a double pen with a central chimney. The house also exhibits some transitional Colonial Revival details with its one-story, wrap-around porch. The decorative brackets and sunburst above the front porch are interesting architectural details. The telephone switchboard used to be located in this house.

Bradford Baptist Church—

The Bradford Baptist Church was organized in 1894 (according to the church cornerstone) and initially met in people's homes. Some early services were even held in an old boxcar on the railroad tracks. The historic Baptist Church was a stone building with grapevine mortar located west of the present church (in the parking lot today). Then-used as an education building, the historic church was destroyed by fire in 1987. However, the current church was already built—it was constructed in 1979.

Northeast corner Main & Third—

Site of George Bright's Esso Station.

Bradford Church of Christ—

The Church of Christ began meeting near the old city hall at Bradford as early as the 1930s. A wood-frame church was built in the 1940s on SW Third Street. The current church building on Main Street was completed in the 1960s. The wooden shed building on the alley by the Church of Christ served as fertilizer storage for Hickmon's Hardware.

Commercial buildings on south side of Hwy. 87 (Main)

311 W. Main (former location of Bradford Feed & Supply)—

Reeves Grocery and later, Wells Grocery, was located in this historic commercial building. Bradford Feed & Supply was located here before moving to its current building down the street.

Alley

Thrift Shop—

This and the Erica's building are older commercial buildings with a new brick façade. This may have been a filling station run by Algee Falwell.

Erica's Beauty Shop & other storefront—

The western half of this building (west of Erica's) was Teddle McSpadden's Grocery. The grocery was there by the early 1950s and maybe earlier. Erica's Beauty Shop was Hickmon's Pawn Shop.

North side of Hwy. 87 (Main)

Hickmon's Hardware (National Register-listed 9/5/1991)—

This building was constructed in 1925 by local contractor John Calhoun using reinforced concrete covered with stucco to house Hickmon's Hardware Store. The building features arched transom windows under the metal awning. Hickmon's Store was founded in the early 20th century by postmaster (1910), businessman, and school board member Ulysses L. Hickmon (the store was open by 1908 and

maybe earlier). When people were afraid to put their money in banks during the Great Depression, they kept cash in the safe at Hickmon's Store. The store was operated by at least four generations of the Hickmon family. It remained open until at least the mid-1990s. Bradford's fire alarm used to be activated by a push-button box on the pole by Hickmon's Hardware.

Small building west of Hickmon's Hardware—

This building housed Dr. Dunn's office and was later a burger joint.

Vern Gulley Greenhouse ruins—

Site of the Queen Anne-style Hickmon House.