

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: New Rocky Comfort Jail

other name/site number: N/A

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2. Location

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street & number: SE Corner of Third and Schuman Streets

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Foreman

vicinity: N/A

state: AR

county: Little River

code: AR 081

zip code: 71836

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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: 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.

Cathryn A. Statu \_\_\_\_\_ 10-14-94  
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: Government Sub: Correctional Facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Current : Recreation and Culture Sub: Museum  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**7. Description**  
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Architectural Classification:

Other: Plain Traditional  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Description: Stacked-plank construction

Materials: foundation Concrete roof Metal  
walls Weatherboard other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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: local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: 1902 - c. 1928

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Hopson, Bun  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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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X 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:

- 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 370650 3732100 B
C D

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

The New Rocky Comfort Jail is situated on part of Block 30, the public square of the City of Foreman. Beginning at the southeast corner of the intersection of 3rd and Schuman Streets, proceed east along the southern curblin...

Boundary justification: See continuation sheet.

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: Robin Baldwin, Survey Historian  
Lynne Braddock, Special Projects Coordinator  
Patrick Zollner, National Register Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 10/14/94

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

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

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### Summary

The New Rocky Comfort Jail, located near the southeast corner of Third and Schuman streets in Foreman, is a single story building in the Plain Traditional style resting on a foundation of concrete block piers and covered by a metal gable roof. Built in 1902 by local carpenter Bun Hopson, the structure is unusual as it is constructed of stacked two-by-six planks for the floor, walls, and ceiling of the rectangular section.

### Elaboration

Located near the southeast corner of Third and Schuman streets in Foreman, the New Rocky Comfort Jail is a single story, T-shaped building constructed in 1902 in the Plain Traditional style. Originally, the building consisted of a forty-three feet by twenty-one feet rectangular plan; however, prior to 1928, a "T" addition was added to the southern side. The walls are constructed of stacked two-by-six rough pine lumber, while the ceiling and floor are constructed of the same two-by-six boards laid edge-wise. On the exterior, the walls are sheathed with white-painted, drop-type, novelty wood siding and covered by a silver-painted, battened-metal gable roof (previously covered with asphalt shingles and, originally, split wood shingles) and rest on concrete block piers. All of the windows are of the two-over-two double-hung type.

The present front entrance is located on the western elevation of the building. A poured concrete stoop leads to a centrally located single-leaf door that is protected by a gable roof porch supported by wood posts. The northern elevation is composed of six evenly spaced two-over-two double-hung windows. In contrast, the eastern elevation is not fenestrated and is marked only by an elevated, centrally located shed placed over the air-conditioning unit.

A conventional-frame "T" addition was built onto the center the southern elevation prior to in 1928. Likewise covered by a gable roof, this addition may have been used as the main entrance to the building after construction. Visible on the original walls on either side of the "T" are four window openings. Three of these are covered and the fourth window is located on the far western end. The eastern and western elevations of the "T" are lighted by single, centrally placed windows. The southern elevation is composed of a central single-leaf entrance with a window on each side. A shed-roof porch supported by chamfered posts extends from the addition.

Other than the historic "T" addition, the structure has been little altered. In the 1930's, the building was used at times as a dance hall, and a conventional pine floor was installed over the edgewise-laid, plank flooring to better facilitate this purpose. Later a wall partition was added at the western end to create an office space and a bathroom.

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### Summary

Built in 1902, the New Rocky Comfort Jail has served the community of Foreman almost continually since its construction. It is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as an excellent representative of the stacked-plank type of construction.

### Elaboration

According to Indian folklore, Rocky Comfort, originally called Willow Springs, was so named because there was a spring, shaded by many willow trees, running through the lime rock. Animals would come to the spring to drink the cool water and rest under the willow trees, therefore the Indians called it "Rocky Comfort" because it was rocky and the shade gave comfort to the animals. By 1850, Rocky Comfort was a thriving community on top of a hill, and by the 1860's, it began to develop down the hill and across the fairly level ground below. The courthouse, blacksmith shop, stores, and other establishments spread out in several different directions. Rocky Comfort was named the county seat in 1868, and remained the center for county government until 1880 when the county seat was moved to Richmond.

When the Arkansas and Choctaw Railroad built its line from Ashdown to Arkinda in 1895, it cut through virgin forest one mile north of Rocky Comfort on right-of-way easements sold to the company by Carl Schuman, Bettie Bell, Joe Madden and Horace Coontz. By 1900, businessmen, as well as residents, of Rocky Comfort recognized the potential and added convenience of locating directly on a rail line. A new community began to grow, and the residents called it "New Rocky Comfort." The Arkansas and Choctaw Railroad, however, named the community "Foreman" in honor of Ben Foreman, a noted republican from Texarkana. When the Post Office was officially established in 1900, it was named Foreman in keeping with the railroad designation. Because of the dual identity of the town, all mortgages and deeds carried a description in the new town as being situated in New Rocky Comfort (Foreman). It was not until 1959 that Act 83 proposed by Marion Crank, legislator from Little River County, legally changed the name of the town from New Rocky Comfort to Foreman.

In 1902 the county seat was moved from Richmond to Foreman and the New Rocky Comfort Jail was built on Block 30, which was set aside for county government. Located in the middle of town, Block 30 was donated by C.A. "Carl" Schuman, a successful local businessman. Bun Hopson, a local carpenter, built the jail. The stacked two-by-six pine boards used in construction of the building would ensure no one would escape from the jail. Ironically, local legend holds

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that Mr. Hopson was also the first citizen to be incarcerated in the facility, for public intoxication. Before a courthouse could be erected, however, the county seat moved in 1905 to Ashdown, and the jail remained the solitary government building on the block, much of which remains vacant.

Serving the community at various times as a jail, city hall, dance hall, civic club meeting place, and library, the building currently houses the New Rocky Comfort Museum.

The New Rocky Comfort Jail is significant as an excellent representative of the unusual stacked-plank method of jail construction. Although it is recorded that the town of DeQueen in neighboring Sevier County also utilized this vernacular building technique for its 1890's jail, the New Rocky Comfort Jail is the only known specimen in Southwest Arkansas to have survived. As such, it is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance.

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## Bibliography

Information submitted by Louise Knickerbocker, February 1994.

Beasley, Bill. *Little River County*. Little River County Historical Society, 1986 (original copyright 1975).

FOREMAN QUADRANGLE  
ARKANSAS-OKLAHOMA-TEXAS  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

(WINTHROP)

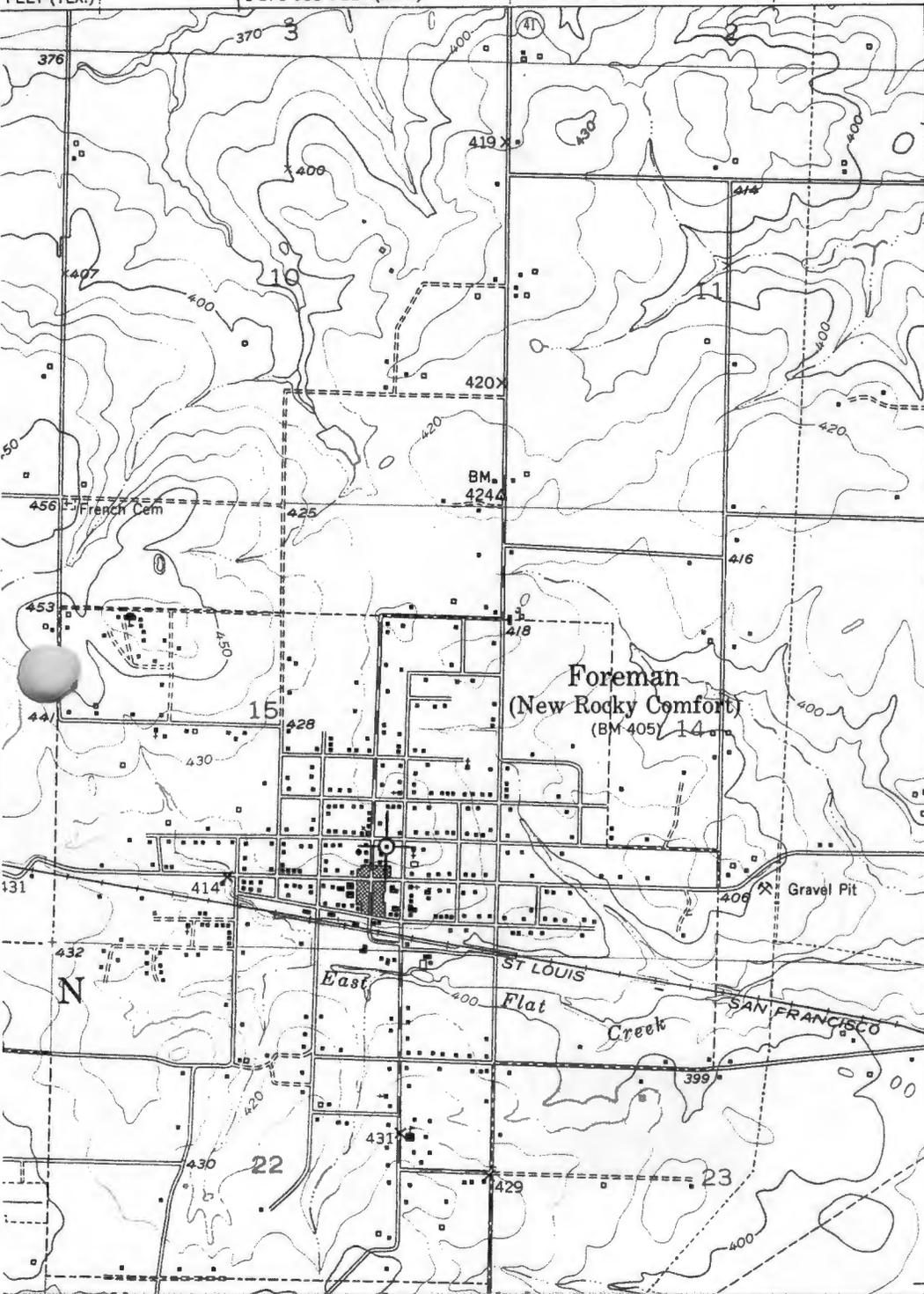
FEET (TEX.);

1 270 000 FEET (ARK.)

DE QUEEN 24 MI.  
HORATIO 16 MI.

94°22'30"

33°45'



770 000 FEET  
(TEX.)

400 000 FEET  
(ARK.)

New Rocky Comfort  
Jail  
Foreman, Little River  
Co.  
Arkansas

UTM: 15/370650/  
3732100

42'30"

