

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic Name Jasper Commercial Historic District

Other Names/Site Number NW0004-NW0005, NW0010, NW0050 and NW0104-NW0125

2. Location

Street & Number Roughly bounded by Sycamore Street, E. Elm Street, N. Spring Street,
and Clark Street. not for publication

City or Town Jasper vicinity

State Arkansas Code AR County Newton Code 101 Zip Code 72641

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ 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 for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet. | _____ | Signature of the Keeper | _____ | Date of Action |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet. | _____ | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register | _____ | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register | _____ | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____ | _____ | | | |

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 14 | 8 | buildings |
| | 2 | sites |
| | | structures |
| | | objects |
| 14 | 10 | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

2

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- COMMERCE/TRADE/Financial Institution
- COMMERCE/TRADE/Department Store
- COMMERCE/TRADE/Restaurant
- COMMERCE/TRADE/Business
- GOVERNMENT/ Courthouse
- GOVERNMENT/Post Office
- RECREATION & CULTURE/Theater
- DOMESTIC/Hotel
- SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- COMMERCE/TRADE/Financial Institution
- COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store
- COMMERCE/TRADE/Restaurant
- COMMERCE/TRADE/Business
- GOVERNMENT/ Courthouse
-
-
-

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Modern Movement/Art Deco
- Late 19th and Early 20th Century American
- Movements/Commercial Style
- Late Victorian/Italianate
- Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals/
- Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Foundation - Brick, Concrete
- Roof - Asphalt, Metal
- Walls - Wood, Stone, Metal, Stucco, and Concrete
-
-
-

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
See Continuation Sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Commerce, Architecture, Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1873 - 1960

Significant Dates

1873, 1894, 1903, 1939, 1947

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

- Waldo Fowler, Builder; Gould Jones, Builder; Fay Jones, Architect; Heilman Construction Company, Builder; WPA, Builder; B. F. Ruble, Builder

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

- Criteria for bibliographical references with checkboxes.

Primary Location of Additional Data

- Criteria for primary location of additional data with checkboxes.

Name of repository:

Newton County Library

10. Geographical Data

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|------|---------|----------|------|---------|----------|
| 1 | 15 | 483157 | 3984864 | 3 | | |
| 2 | | | | 4 | | |

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara Smart, Vice-President

organization Hutchins & Wunnenberg Engineering, Inc. date August 29, 2009

street & number 110 Harrison Street telephone (870) 836-9331

city or town Camden state AR zip code 71701

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state ____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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SUMMARY

The Jasper Commercial Historic District is located in Jasper, Newton County, Arkansas. It is in the Little Buffalo River Valley, surrounded by the Ozark Mountains. The buildings in this district are unique in that most of the properties are built of native stone that was quarried locally or from the rocks and stones which were dug from the river bed of the Little Buffalo River. The district is made up of twenty-six properties. Included in the number are two individually listed properties, (7.7%). There are fourteen contributing properties (53.8%) and ten non-contributing properties (38.5%).

ELABORATION

The Jasper Commercial Historic District has two properties that were built before 1900. The historic Brasel Mercantile Store, currently the Ozark Café Building II, was built in 1873. It is located at 105 E. Court Street. It was the first of the buildings with a stone foundation and construction. The large granite blocks have been covered with stucco on the top of the front (east) façade above the canvas awning which covers the width of the building, protecting the windows and the entrance to the café. Centered above the awning is a large sign that reads "Ozark Café." As was common, bricks rather than stone were placed under the windows on top of the stone foundation.

The B.F. Ruble Building at 101 W. Church Street was built in 1894 to house the Newton County Bank. The two-story rectangular building was built of large blocks of cut granite. The clipped corner entry is flanked by large stationary windows. Below the windows bricks rather than granite covers the façade. Centered above the two narrow windows in the second story of the front façade is a plaque, framed by darker colored stones, which reads "B.F. Ruble, 1894." The building is in excellent condition, retaining the integrity of style. It is currently occupied by a photography studio, with living quarters on the second story of the building.

In 1903, the second B.F. Ruble Building was built at 103 W. Church Street. The earliest known occupant was the Continental Auto Company, which occupied the first floor of the two story building. The second story was the location of the Masonic Hall. The building was built in the Italianate style. The second-story windows in the front (west) façade have arched transoms. Granite pilasters flank a recessed front entry. The brick

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wall material under the windows appears to be somewhat newer, perhaps c.1950s. A plaque is centered in the cornice below the roofline that reads "B.F. Ruble, 1903." The building has a flat, tar built-up roof with a parapet. There are two cut stone interior chimneys on the roof. The building is in excellent condition.

The Newton County Jail at 300 N. Spring Street was also built in 1903 in the Italianate style. The original rectangular building was built by the Heilman Construction Company, using granite, which is abundant in the area, for the building material. There is a concrete block and brick one-story addition to the rear (north) façade of the jail and a chain link fence was built around an area on the side (west) facade. The second-story window on the front (south) façade of the original structure is a double window with bars and an arched transom with a keystone above the window. At the corners of the roof of the original building are ball shaped finials. Below the roofline of the original building is a cornice with dentils. The jail was built to house as many as four prisoners. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1994.

In 1905, the building at the corner of N. Stone Street and East Court Street was built. It is a rectangular building made of native stone, probably blocks of granite, as is the pier foundation. It was built at 207-209 N. Stone Street and occupied by the Phillips General Store and the Jasper Post Office. The front section of the building is two stories and the rear section is one-story. The Jasper Post Office occupied the rear (south) section of the building. The roof over the two-story section is a flat tin roof with a parapet. The roof over the rear section is a tin shed roof. The first-story section of the front (north) façade is asymmetrical with the door off-centered on the right of the facade and there are mismatched stationary windows. A white steel awning covers the first-story front façade. The second-story portion of the front (north) façade is symmetrical with stationary windows spaced evenly and all the windows have a one-over-one pane arrangement. The first-story of the front façade has a darker color stone than the second-story of this façade, and has five pilasters in the darker color stone flanking the door and windows. The Jasper Post Office eventually occupied the entire building.

In 1909, the Ozark Cafe was opened at 107 E. Court Street. The building has had many owners through the years, but it has always been a café. The current owners decided to name it after the original Ozark Café. The frame building is built on the side of a hill and like most of the buildings on the east side of E. Court Street, it has a partial basement.

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The front and rear façades have stucco covering the concrete block and weatherboard walls. A tin shed roof covers the original roof on the building and the projection on the rear (west) façade. The concrete blocks and the stucco on the front (east) façade were added in the 1950s to “update” the building. A mural has been added to the upper portion of the front (east) façade.

Three buildings were added on the square in 1910. The three buildings were built of granite with continuous native stone foundations. These buildings were located at 105 W. Church Street, 203 – 205 N. Stone Street and 200 N. Spring Street.

The Buffalo Theater Building is at 200 N. Spring Street. It is a granite constructed building with a stone continuous foundation. The roof is tar built-up and it is flat with a parapet. There are two exterior brick chimneys on the roof. A triangular metal awning/marquee is located on the front (south) façade and an uncovered railed stoop is on the side (east) facade. The building is vacant.

The historic Gorden’s General Store is located at 203 - 205 N. Stone Street. It is built of native stone with a concrete slab. The roof is a tin gabled roof with two interior chimneys. The one story building has a symmetrical front (north) façade with a recessed front entry. Two store fronts occupy the building and two entries are centered in the recessed area. Each business has a large stationary window that looks out on N. Stone Street. A wood awning with a shed roof covers the front (north) façade of the building. A half rear porch is on the south (rear) side of the building. A wooden fence encloses a large portion of the rear of the building allowing no access. The building is occupied by Harp Real Estate and Lisa’s Flowers and Gift Shop.

The third 1910 building is the Hicks Auto Parts Store at 105 W. Church. The building is another native stone building with a continuous stone foundation. It has a large frame and concrete block addition on the rear (east) façade. There is also a large porch with a tin shed roof on the rear addition. The building is in very good condition.

In 1920, Gould Jones built three buildings at 202, 204, and 206 N. Spring Street. Gould Jones was known for his innovative way of mixing stone and bricks in his buildings. The building at 202 N. Spring Street has a continuous stone foundation and the wall material

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is granite. It has a rolled rubber roof and is currently being renovated. The interior of the building is well maintained with original wood floors and an old pressed tin ceiling that is in pristine condition. The Jasper Chamber of Commerce is located in the building at 204 N. Spring Street. The bricks below the awning on the front (south) façade appear to be newer, c.1950s. The multi-colored bricks above the awning appear to be original and are present on other Gould Jones buildings in the area. Concrete blocks on the rear (north) façade have been used to repair previous water damage. The building at 206 N. Spring Street originally had brick and granite wall material. The granite was covered with stucco. The stucco is not new, probably placed in 1940s-1950s. The brick on the upper portion of the front façade is believed to be the same multi-colored brick that is on the building next door. The front boarded window is to be replaced as well as the transom windows. Concrete blocks on the rear (north) façade cover previous water damage. The rear (north) elevation is obstructed.

In 1929 Gould Jones added another building which is included in the proposed district. The Service Station Building at 209 E. Court Street is built of grey native stone with a concrete foundation. There is a hip roof with asphalt shingles. Supporting the roof of the porte cochere are two wooden posts on brown stone piers. A large garage is behind the service station. Also on the property are a car lift and a cistern.

The Newton County Courthouse was built in 1939 by W.P.A. (Works Progress Administration, re-named in 1939, Works Projects Administration.) The Courthouse is the anchor for the district. Placed on the National Register of Historic Places 12/1/1994, the building has an H shape and is built of granite and limestone set on stone piers. The style of the building is Art Deco. A plaque on the front (west) façade reads “U.S.A./1939/W.P.A.”

The next building in the district was built in 1947 by Gould Jones. Located at 203 E. Court Street, it is a native red limestone and buff brick building with a gable roof with asphalt shingles and a stepped parapet. It has a concrete slab foundation. Vines cover a portion of the front (east) façade and the side (south) façade. An antique shop is currently in the building which was built for the Gilbert Pool Hall.

The next two years brought three new building on the square. In 1948, Pearl’s Café opened at 109 E. Court in the frame and concrete block building. The gable roof is

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covered by asphalt shingles. There has been a second story addition to the building as well as improvements made in the basement, creating apartments for rent. The old restaurant building now houses a gift shop.

The two Fowler Buildings at 103 and 101 E. Court Street were built in 1949. They are concrete block buildings with brick facades. Both have partial basements. On the front (east) façade, plywood covers the upper portion of the façade. The plywood was painted green and has a large PIZZA sign on it.

The Carroll Electric Building / Yesterdays Attic at 107 W. Church Street was built in 1950. The single story brick building has been painted white. An awning porch is on the front (north) façade and on the side (west) façade. The porches are supported by three brick partial walls that are attached to the building. A chain link fence encloses the yard at the rear of the property.

The little concrete block house at 106 E. Elm Street is a single-story frame building built in 1955 as a residence for the owners of the Ozark Café Building. The house is built in a Plain-Traditional style. The house is built on concrete block piers.

The Bank of the Ozarks, formerly Newton County Bank, occupies the 100 block of E. Church Street. The architect for this building is Fay Jones. It was built by the Nance Family to house the Newton County Bank when it moved from 101 W. Church Street. The name was changed to the Bank of the Ozarks c.1980. The construction material was reinforced concrete. It has a flat tin roof and brick wall material on a concrete slab. A tin shed roof awning covers the doors in the front (west) façade. Concrete steps with iron banisters lead to the front glass double doors. A porte cochere with a flat tin roof serves as a drive-through on the side (north) façade of the building with a service window under the cover of the porte cochere. A stone wall defines the parking area on the north side of the property. A decorative brick fence runs around a portion of the rear (west) façade.

INTEGRITY

The Jasper Commercial Historic District is a cohesive collection of buildings that reflect the unique building style of the Buffalo River Valley and the "Mountaineer Ingenuity." It is also a group of buildings that have retained the purpose for which they were created.

Jasper Commercial Historic District
Name of Property

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County - State

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The commerce of over 100 years has taken place in these buildings, and continues to do so today.

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| <u>Resource No.</u> | <u>Property Name</u> | <u>Address</u> | <u>Map No.</u> | <u>C/NC/IL</u> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| NW0005 | Newton County Courthouse | City Square on E. Court Street | 1 | IL |
| NW0050 | Buffalo Theater | 200 N. Spring Street | 2 | C |
| NW0104 | Arbaugh's Drug Store | 202 N. Spring Street | 3 | C |
| NW0105 | 204 N. Spring Street Building | 204 N. Spring Street | 4 | C |
| NW0106 | 206 N. Spring Street Building | 206 N. Spring Street | 5 | NC |
| NW0107 | Site of Buckhorn and Murray Hotel | S.E. Corner of N. Spring Street and E. Court Street | 6 | NC |
| NW0004 | Newton County Jail | 300 N. Spring Street | 7 | IL |
| NW0108 | Ozark Abstract Company Building | 201 N. Stone Street | 8 | NC |
| NW0109 | Gorden's General Store | 203-205 N. Stone Street | 9 | C |
| NW0110 | Phillips General Store and Jasper Post Office | 207-209 N. Stone Street | 10 | C |

Chart Reference: C - Contributing

NC - Noncontributing

IL - Individually Listed

Name of Property

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County and State

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| <u>Resource No.</u> | <u>Property Name</u> | <u>Address</u> | <u>Map No.</u> | <u>C/NC/IL</u> |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| NW0111 | Robbie's Coinomatic Laundry | 304 N. Stone Street | 11 | NC |
| NW0112 | Newton County Bank #2 | 100 E. Church Street | 12 | NC |
| NW0010 | Newton County Bank #1 | 101 W. Church Street | 13 | C |
| NW0113 | Continental Auto Building | 103 W. Church Street | 14 | C |
| NW0114 | 105 West Church Street Building | 105 W. Church Street | 15 | C |
| NW0115 | Carroll Electric Building | 107 W. Church Street | 16 | C |
| NW0116 | Site of Keef's Grocery Store | N.E. Corner of E. Court Street and N. Stone Street | 17 | NC |
| NW0117 | Fowler Building I | 101 E. Court Street | 18 | C |
| NW0118 | Fowler Building II | 103 E. Court Street | 19 | NC |
| NW0119 | Brasel Mercantile | 105 E. Court Street | 20 | C |

Chart Reference: C - Contributing

NC - Noncontributing

IL - Individually Listed

Jasper Commercial Historic District

Name of Property

Newton County, Arkansas

County and State

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| <u>Resource No.</u> | <u>Property Name</u> | <u>Address</u> | <u>Map No.</u> | <u>C/NC/IL</u> |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| NW0120 | Ozark Café Building | 107 E. Court Street | 21 | C |
| NW0121 | Pearl's Café Building | 109 E. Court Street | 22 | NC |
| NW0122 | 201 East Court Street Building | 201 E. Court Street | 23 | NC |
| NW0123 | Gilbert Pool Hall | 203 E. Court Street | 24 | C |
| NW0124 | 209 East Court Street Service Station | 209 E. Court Street | 25 | C |
| NW0125 | 106 E. Elm Street House | 106 E. Elm Street | 26 | NC |

Total # of Buildings: 26
Percentage C: 14 (53.8%)
Percentage NC: 10 (38.5%)
Individually Listed: 2 (7.7%)

Chart Reference: C - Contributing NC - Noncontributing IL - Individually Listed

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SUMMARY

The Jasper Commercial Historic District is being nominated with **local significance** to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** and **Criterion C**. The district is being nominated under Criterion A for the impact the district had on the commercial development of Jasper during the late 19th century to mid 20th century, and also for its role in the politics and government of Newton County. The district is being nominated under Criterion C for the collection of good examples of architecture and the distinctive use of local building materials that are unique to this area.

ELABORATION

Jasper is located in Newton County, Arkansas, in the Little Buffalo River Valley. Newton County was Arkansas's forty-seventh county to be created. It was named in honor of Thomas Willoughby Newton, who was a U. S. Marshal when the county was organized on December 14, 1842. Newton was active in the public affairs in the Arkansas Territory and later in state government serving in the state legislature. The first temporary county seat of Newton County was located at the John Bellah home and then permanently located in Jasper in 1843.

There was a village known as Jasper long before Newton County was organized. There is more than one theory about how the village was named Jasper. No one is sure about how the town was named but the following is one of the more widely circulated theories. The theory is that near the time that Arkansas became a state in 1836, John Bellah and the Harp brothers, Elijah, Samuel and William, quarried a large block of marble near Marble Falls, just north of the town of Jasper. It is said that the colors of the block of marble reminded the men of the precious stone frequently mentioned in the Old Testament and the New Testament of the Bible. According to the theory, these men named the village Jasper because the large stone reminded them of the stone. The huge block of marble that was quarried by the Harp brothers and John Bellah was shipped to Washington, D.C. for a memorial stone in the Washington Monument.

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During the 1850s, the population began to increase. John R. Thurman and his wife Nancy opened a trading post and became the first to sell goods in Jasper. Then John Kelly set up a blacksmith shop. A school teacher moved to town and a school was started. Robert Harrison, a young lawyer from Tennessee set up a law practice and provided legal advice. Lucas Woodard set up shop to repair wagons and buggies. More stores were opened, an inn was opened, and a physician began his practice in Jasper.

The early settlers recognized the need for a mill and a cotton gin in order for the area to grow and prosper. Abner Casey built a water mill below Boxley Spring and later sold the mill to Samuel Whiteley, who called the mill the Whiteley Mill. Sawmills and the timber industry also added to the growth of Jasper. Sawmills were built along the Little Buffalo River. Trees were cut and loaded onto wagons or pulled by horses and mules to the river where they were floated downstream to be sawed into lumber for building material. Fire was always a danger to the wooden buildings, frequently destroying the homesteads. At one time, it appeared that the timber was a limitless resource but by the 1920s, through ignorance and poor management, the forest lands were depleted.

The growth and progress slowed dramatically during the 1860s because of the Civil War. The Civil War also took its toll on the buildings in town. Many people lost their homes to fires set by the skirmishes between the two armies. The courthouse was also destroyed by fire during the war. One of the fiercest battles in the area during the engagement between the Union and the Confederate armies was fought at the Whiteley Mill.

Following the Civil War, Jasper became a boom town. Bountiful crops of cotton, corn, and wheat were brought to the mills and cotton gins. Money was plentiful. Long lines of wagons loaded with cotton waiting for their turn at the gin were common. Young boys with bags of corn or wheat rode their horses to the mills while the men and older boys in the family worked in the fields. The cornmeal and flour were made into breads that were staples in the diet of the Newton County families.

More farming activities brought about more commerce in town. One of the new merchants in Jasper was James Vanderpool, a captain in the Union army. Following the war, he moved to Jasper and opened a general store.

Even before timber became scarce, a new building trend had begun that brought a unique character to the district. Rock and stone were being extracted from the land and river

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bottoms and used to build the buildings in Jasper. This material had two advantages over wood. It was plentiful and it would not burn. Most of the buildings in the district are built using river rock and native stone that was extracted from the land and the river that runs just north of the district.

Architecturally, the Jasper Commercial Historic District is a microcosm of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century architectural style influences and building forms. By far the most popular form in the district is what is referred to as the one-part commercial block, a one-story building that is a simple box with a decorated façade. Most of the buildings that follow this form have little or no ornamentation. What ornamentation that does exist is usually expressed through decorative brickwork above the storefront, such as the building at 204 N. Spring Street. Occasionally, the one-part commercial block building would exhibit characteristics of other popular styles, such as the buildings at 200 and 202 N. Spring Street, which with their heavy stonework, with some carving at the ground level, illustrate hints of the Romanesque Revival style.

Although the one-part commercial block is the most popular building form in the district, the most popular form nationally is the two-part commercial block, a building that has two distinct zones, the first floor public space and a second floor space that is often more private. One of the most elaborate two-part commercial block buildings in the district is the Continental Auto Building at 103 W. Church Street. With its round-arched windows, stone carving and elaborate stone cornice, it shows influence of the Romanesque Revival style. Other good examples of two-part commercial blocks include the building at 101 W. Church Street and the building at 207-209 N. Stone Street.

The leading factor in the lack of population growth in Jasper and Newton County was the fact that there was no railroad located in the county. In addition, because of the mountainous terrain, there was a lack of good roads to transport goods and services into and out of the Jasper area. This isolation forced the people to be resourceful and self-sufficient, with the stores and businesses in the district providing the essentials for the residents in Jasper and Newton County. Many people left the area, moving north to Harrison, in Boone County, or south to Pope County in order to have access to a railroad and highway system. The very things that brought the settlers to the Little Buffalo River Valley, the peaceful mountains, rugged terrain, large rocks and boulders, rivers, isolation and forest lands, were a hindrance to building a railroad and limited the growth of the area.

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The isolation that prevented Jasper from growing and from the railroad reaching the area also influenced the town's architecture. Where other communities were influenced by architectural styles from around the country, the buildings in Jasper did not illustrate those influences. The buildings that were built in downtown Jasper only needed to be utilitarian in nature, and did not necessarily need to be elaborate. Rather, what makes Jasper distinctive architecturally are the materials that were used, specifically stone.

The variety of stonework in the downtown area is what gives Jasper its character. Cut stone, for example, was used in some of the older buildings in the district. The Newton County Jail at 300 N. Spring Street and the Continental Auto Building at 103 W. Church Street are by far the most elaborate cut-stone buildings in the district. However, other buildings that employ cut stone also have some elaboration. The Newton County Bank Building #1, for example, at 101 W. Church Street has subtle quoins at the front corner and Arbaugh's Drug Store at 202 N. Spring Street has subtle decoration in the stone carving on either side of the storefront windows.

However, it is not just cut stone that gives the district its unique architectural character. Jasper's location on the Little Buffalo River meant that river rock was readily available to the residents, and it was a great building material to use. Gorden's General Store at 23-205 N. Stone Street is the largest example in the district, although the service station at 209 E. Court Street is another great, although smaller, example of river rock construction.

Later in the twentieth century, there was a trend in Jasper, with stone construction, to move away from river rock and utilize fieldstone instead. The Newton County Courthouse, built in 1939 by the WPA, is one of the first buildings that utilized fieldstone rather than cut stone or river rock. The Courthouse is also significant to the district as the governmental seat of Newton County and for its Art Deco influences, particularly around the main entrance. Fieldstone was also used for the building at 203 E. Court Street, not only in the front façade, where it is mixed with brick, but also in the base of the sidewalk out front.

One thing not lacking in the lives of the people of Jasper and Newton County was a newspaper. "The Newton Herald," a Jasper publication, was started in 1891 with the motto "In God and the Republican Party We Trust – Everybody Else Cash." News and community events are still important in Jasper and a newspaper is published weekly.

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The oldest building in the Jasper Commercial Historic District is the Ozark Café II Building built c.1870. Native Stone was used in the construction as well as the foundation piers. The building has the original wood floors and walls. A hand-crafted bar which is an exact replica of the original fixture in the café has been added.

The Newton County Bank #1 / B.F. Ruble Building #1 was built in 1894 at 101 E. Church Street. It retains much of the original characteristics with only a projection added on the rear façade. Built by B. F. Ruble for the Nance Family, the building served for seventy years as the Newton County Bank before a new building was built at 100 W. Church Street.

The 300 Block of N. Spring Street is the location of the old Newton County Jail. The jail was built in the Italianate style in 1903 by the Heilman Construction Company using native stone. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994

The B.F. Ruble Building #2 at 103 W. Church Street was built in 1903. Though being used as a storage building now, it was once an important part of Jasper life. Continental Auto Dealership was on the ground floor of the building and the Masonic Hall was on the second story. B. F. Ruble served as a judge from 1898 – 1900.

As you go around the square, the buildings represent an historic as well as a current view of life in Jasper. The buildings at 207-209 N. Stone Street that once housed the Phillips General Store and Jasper Post Office now house a computer store and continuing education classes. This 1905 building still serves a purpose and provides a service in 2009.

At 203-205 N. Stone Street was Gordens General Store. The building was built c.1910. Currently it houses Harp Real Estate and Lisa's Gifts. The change from a General Store to a real estate business and a gift shop reflects a change in the needs of the people in Jasper and Newton County. The fact that it is still providing a service shows the significance that the district has in the life of people in Jasper .

Gould Jones was considered Jasper's Renaissance Man. He was a blacksmith, carpenter, builder, plumber, electrician and stone mason. He liked working with wood, iron, and stones. He built five of the buildings in the Jasper Commercial Historic District. The

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buildings at 202 and 204 N. Spring Street, built c.1920; and the buildings at 203 E. Court Street built c.1947 and 209 E. Court Street, built c.1929 contribute to the significance of the district. The c.1920 building at 206 N. Spring Street, also a Gould Jones Building, has been renovated and no longer contributes to the significance of the district.

The Newton County Courthouse is the anchor and the center of the district. The current building is the fourth courthouse built in this location. The first structure, built of logs, was destroyed by fire during the Civil War. The second courthouse was built in 1874 of wood and again was destroyed by fire. In 1902 the third courthouse and jail were built of bricks and stone. This building had stone window sills and iron cresting on the roof. It was considered fire-proof, but burned in 1939. That same year construction was started on the present building. The current courthouse was built by the WPA program and completed in 1942. The Newton County Courthouse is built in the Art Deco style and has limestone floors and exterior construction of grey granite quarried from the bed of the Little Buffalo River. It was added to the National Register Places on December 1, 1994.

Politics was a huge issue in the lives of people in Jasper. In the 1940s, politics was centered around two cafés located in the district. Upton's Café at 107 E. Court Street was the Republican gathering place and Pearl's Café at 109 E. Court Street was the Democrats' hang-out. Today, Upton's Café is now the Ozark Café and politics is still a large part of the daily discussions at the café. In addition, groups meet under the shade trees that grow around the Newton County Courthouse whittling on a chunk of cedar from one of the many cedar trees in the area and discussing politics and current events.

The significance of Gould Jones' life and work extends beyond the district. Outside of the district he built the Church of Christ church building, a stone gas station with a tile roof, the Arkansas House Inn and Café, a stone retaining wall along the Little Buffalo River, and a water wheel that supplied water to 65 families. In addition, he built the Jasper Water Tank which served as a public water source for Jasper from 1948-1952. He built this tank out of concrete and bricks with a rounded top. The rounded top was a feat that was said could not be done, but Gould Jones did it. The water tank was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on August 24, 1998, and continues to be a local landmark and a symbol of mountaineering ingenuity.

The Bank of the Ozarks, located at 100 E. Church Street, was originally the Newton County Bank. It is an important building even though it was built in 1964. The bank was

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started in 1894 by the Nance family. The original bank location was 101 W. Church Street. The Nance home was located where the current bank's parking lot was placed. The bank became Bank of the Ozarks c.1980. The Bank of the Ozarks building was designed by Fay Jones, Architect, for the Nance family.

The Ozark Café occupies three of the buildings on E. Court Street. It is a thriving business with customers coming and going all day. The gift shops and antique shops in town are well stocked and have interesting interiors as well as maintaining the integrity of the buildings they occupy.

The buildings in the Jasper Commercial Historic District were built adjacent to the courthouse, the historic core of the community. As the town grew, new streets were added and new businesses and services opened to accommodate the citizens of Jasper. The Jasper Commercial Historic District reflects the historic growth of the commercial core of Prescott, and the buildings in the district reflect some of the popular building forms and style influences of the late 1800s and 1900s. The buildings in the Jasper Commercial Historic District also reflect the creative use of readily available materials, specifically stone, to decorate and elaborate on vernacular building forms. Jasper's importance commercially is still true today as it has been throughout the twentieth century. As the largest town in Newton County, and as the county seat, Jasper still remains the business and commercial center of the area.

The architectural variety that is found in Jasper is the most extensive in Newton County. Other communities in the county did not grow as Jasper did, nor did they have the wealth that equaled Jasper's. As a result, other commercial buildings in the area gravitated towards the one-part commercial block. Also, since Jasper has remained the commercial center in Newton County, many of the commercial buildings in the other communities have been lost, leaving Jasper with the most intact and most extensive commercial district in the county.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Jasper Commercial Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its relationship to the growth of commerce in the district and the city of Jasper. It is also being nominated for its associations with government and politics in Newton County. As the county seat,

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Jasper represents the governmental center of Newton County. The Jasper Commercial Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under **Criterion C** for the building materials and architectural styles which embody the unique qualities in this Ozark Mountain river valley.

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Verbal Boundary

Beginning at the center of intersection of N. Stone Street and E. Elm Street, proceed northeast along center of E. Elm Street to center of intersection with N. Spring Street, then proceed southeast along center of N. Spring Street to 300 N. Spring Street. Then travel along northwest property line of 300 N. Spring Street and then along northwest property line of 209 E. Court Street to northeast property line of 209 E. Court Street. Then travel along northeast property line of 209 E. Court Street to center of E. Court Street. Then travel southwest along center line of E. Court Street to alley running behind buildings 200, 202, 204 and 206 N. Spring Street. Then travel southeast along this alley to center of E. Church Street. Then travel southwest along E. Church Street to center of intersection with N. Spring Street. Then travel southeast along center of N. Spring Street to center of intersection with Clark Street. Then travel southwest along center of Clark Street to center of intersection with N. Stone Street. Then travel northwest along center of N. Stone Street to alley behind buildings 101, 103, 105 and 107 W. Church Street. Then travel southwest along this alley to center of Sycamore Street. Then travel northwest along center of Sycamore Street to center of intersection with W. Court Street. Then travel northeast along W. Court Street to center of intersection with N. Stone Street. Then travel northwest along center of N. Stone Street to center of intersection with E. Elm Street and the beginning.

Boundary Justification

This boundary was drawn to include properties in the Jasper Commercial Historic District that maintain the highest level of historic integrity in architecture. The Jasper Commercial Historic District is also important for the relationship of these properties to events that made a contribution to growth of Jasper and to the broader pattern of history.

JASPER COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Name of Property

NEWTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS

County and State

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LEGEND

- BOUNDARY
- P PARKING
- 1 BUILDINGS
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SKETCH MAP

