

NR-LISTED

9/21/89

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Rock Island-Argenta Depot
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Corner of 4th and Hazel not for publication N/A
city, town North Little Rock vicinity N/A
state Arkansas code AR county Pulaski code 119 zip code 72119

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Cathryn H. Bradford 8-8-89
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

5. National Park Service Certification

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 the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/Rail-Related

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not In Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals/
Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Ceramic Tile

other Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY

The Rock Island-Argenta Depot is a single story brick passenger depot constructed in 1913 and designed in the Mediterranean style common to the contemporaneous depots of the Rock Island Railroad Company. It has a simple Latin cross plan with the telegrapher's bay and corresponding cargo room on the street elevation forming the transept.

ELABORATION

The Rock Island-Argenta Depot is a single story, Latin cross plan railroad passenger building with a Mediterranean red clay tile gable roof set behind parapet gable ends. Its walls are constructed of red brick and it sits upon a continuous concrete foundation. It has a single brick chimney rising through the ridge toward the western end of the building.

The southern or street elevation is punctuated by a large cargo door at the western end, and two passenger entrances to the east flanking the projecting cargo room bay. Each of the passenger entrances is surmounted by a tall three-pane transom and flanked by two large windows symmetrically placed around the doorway. These windows, now boarded over with plywood, contained two-over-two wood sash originally. The cargo room bay is lighted by two-over-two wood sash windows. The entrances are covered by projecting shed porches which continue the roof pitch and are accessed by poured concrete stairs. Two fixed wood basement windows flank the cargo entrance.

The eastern and western elevations are similar, as they both feature concrete coping on the gable parapet, a concrete panel station sign set into brick below, and three symmetrically placed windows lighting the interior, the central being broader than those flanking it. The only difference is that the windows on the eastern elevation are taller.

The northern or track elevation is almost a mirror image of the southern elevation, with the exception of the cargo room bay being replaced by the telegrapher's three-sided bay and surmounting Spanish Colonial roof dormer featuring the station name, and the windows flanking the entrances being placed slightly farther apart. The windows here, also formerly two-over-two wood sash, are largely boarded over now with plywood.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

This elevation also features the decayed remnants of the original full-length porch, continuing the pitch of the roof, and which sheltered waiting passengers. The exterior detail is limited to the signage panels, the single signage dormer on the northern elevation, and the decorative panels and rafters which supported the porch roof deck on the northern elevation.

The entrance configuration on the exterior reveals the essentials of the plan. The black and white waiting rooms are placed to either side of the ticket window, which opens onto a hall which connects the two rooms. To the west is the separate cargo room. The entire interior is simply detailed, with panelled wood doors, boxed decorative ceiling beams in the connecting hallway, and black and white patterned floor tile.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation
Architecture

Period of Significance

1913 - 1945

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SUMMARY

The Rock Island-Argenta Depot is locally significant both for its status as an outstanding example of the Mediterranean style depot popular throughout Arkansas (and with the Rock Island Railroad Company in particular) after the turn of the century and for its association with the important role played by the railroads in the growth of the city of North Little Rock (nee Argenta) in the early twentieth century.

ELABORATION

The first operating railroad company in Arkansas was the Memphis and Little Rock Railroad, which began in the 1850's amidst much interest in establishing railroads in the state. It initially operated only near the Mississippi River in eastern Arkansas, but finally laid rails from the White River community of DeValls Bluff to the north side of the Arkansas River - opposite the commercial center of Little Rock - in 1862. The fledging community on this site at the time was known as Huntersville and by all accounts consisted of little more than a pair of ferry landings for boat transport back and forth across the Arkansas River, a few houses, and small shops. During the Civil War, first the Confederates and then the Union forces developed the part of present-day North Little Rock just to the south of the Rock Island-Argenta Depot into a large railroad terminal and roundhouse for the main purpose of serving the war effort. The railroad terminal and associated structures comprised virtually the entire settlement on this side of the river until after the war.

Within six years after the end of the war the little town of Huntersville had become the terminus of three railroads: the Memphis and Little Rock, the Cairo and Fulton (which ran to the northeast and intersected with the tracks of the St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railroad), and the Little Rock and Fort Smith. At this point in time the town started to grow, developing a commercial center to service the various businesses brought into the area by the railroads. By the fall of 1871 a post office had been set up for the community, and the name of Argenta had been substituted for Huntersville, a change the Memphis and Little Rock Railroads would recognize the following spring in

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

their train schedules (according to folklore, the name Argenta came from the belief that silver ore had been found in the lead mines in the hills to the north of the city).

The completion of the Baring Cross Bridge on December 20, 1873 - spanning the Arkansas River between Argenta and Little Rock to the west of the original center of Argenta - signaled the beginning of the development of the neighborhood of North Little Rock known then and since as Baring Cross. This trainyard was originally established as the eastern terminus of the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad, but was expanded when this company entered into an agreement with the Cairo and Fulton to share the use of the trainyards and repair facilities. This bridge was the impetus for the consolidation of the railroad that had been built earlier between Little Rock and Texarkana, known as the Cairo, Arkansas and Texas, with the Cairo and Fulton and the St. Louis and Iron Mountain forming the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern. This railroad completed the vision held by many for years of a rail line between St. Louis and Texas, though it transferred the freight and passenger facilities from Argenta to Little Rock (to the site of the present-day Union Station), leaving Argenta with only the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad as its own.

The ensuing years saw ever-increasing railroad activity in Argenta: the expansion of the Baring Cross yards; the construction of a second railroad bridge in 1884 connecting the Little Rock, Mississippi River and Texas Railroad (running between Little Rock and Pine Bluff) with the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad (at the site of the present-day Missouri-Pacific Bridge); and the construction of a third railroad bridge (extant) in 1899 by the Choctaw and Memphis Railroad, which had earlier taken over the old Memphis and Little Rock Railroad and became known as the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific in 1904. In the meantime, the settlement of the area immediately north of Little Rock on the opposite bank of the Arkansas River had expanded to such a degree (both in terms of population and area) that there was strong sentiment among the residents to remove themselves from being a ward of the city of Little Rock - a situation which had prevailed for several years - and to declare themselves a separate, incorporated city. In 1904, the city of Argenta was recognized by the Arkansas legislature and was approved.

The Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific (also known as the Rock Island) became involved in a controversy almost immediately after taking control of the older lines as it was rumored that the city of Little Rock was attempting to lure the Rock Island's maintenance operations away from the old Memphis and Little Rock facilities in Argenta and to relocate them in the Fourche Creek bottoms to the south of the city. This was an especially sensitive issue in Argenta as by this time only the Little Rock and Fort Smith depot to the west of old Argenta allowed passengers to board at any location north of the river, and all the other passenger stops were made in Little Rock.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

This sentiment, coupled with the fact that the Rock Island did move its shops to Little Rock by 1910, certainly played a role in the construction of the Rock Island-Argenta Depot in 1913. The trains travelling between Memphis and Little Rock now served Argenta directly and allowed residents access to another major railroad without the trouble and expense of crossing the river to do so. The importance and accessibility of this depot was only enhanced in 1914 with the extension of the Intercity Terminal Company (formerly the Argenta Street Railway Company) tracks to the station, thereby providing public transportation between the residential areas and the depot.

The Rock Island-Argenta Depot also played a role in the development of the Argenta area as an active Southern military post. Accessibility to rail transportation was one of the considerations in the planning and construction of Fort Logan H. Roots in 1893, the area's first federal military installation after the development of the rail system. The troubles along the Mexican border had necessitated the mobilization of troops at Fort Roots as early as 1912 and troops reported for duty in Laredo, Texas from this post in 1916. It was the decision of the United States to enter into World War I, however, that saw the largest expansion of military activity here. Under the command of General John J. Pershing, Fort Roots was named the officers' training camp for the entire Southern Department, which was comprised of twelve divisional areas.

Ironically, it was W.B. Smith, the head of the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce, who began the effort to secure the local cantonment for the Twelfth Divisional Area of the War Department (which included all of Arkansas) which eventually resulted in the establishment of Camp Pike in Argenta. The camp opened in August of 1917 with the arrival of 40,300 men at an installation containing over 2,000 buildings. The entire area developed quickly in response to this influx of population and commercial demand, and the camp operated at peak activity through the end of the war (it was in 1917 that the city formally changed its name to North Little Rock). In 1921 Camp Pike was turned over to the State of Arkansas as a National Guard training camp and continued to serve as such for the next fifteen years. Camp Pike served briefly as a Civilian Conservation Corps camp, bringing hundreds of men in from around the country, and in 1939 again became an Army training facility in anticipation of possible U.S. involvement in the escalating warfare in Europe. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Camp Pike continued to operate as an active training center and saw the arrival and departure of literally thousands of soldiers during World War II. The Rock Island-Argenta Depot continued to serve the general populace after the war, but suffered the fate of all passenger railroads during this time and was finally abandoned in 1960.

The Rock Island-Argenta Depot is also significant as an outstanding local example of the Mediterranean style of architecture that was popular after the arrival in America of the Classical Revival Renaissance villas designed by such architects as McKim, Mead and White and Richard Morris Hunt. However, while these east-coast architects typically applied this style to large, grandiose residences and major public commissions, the Rock Island

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

-Argenta Depot displays a mastery of 'scaling down' the vocabulary of this idiom and distilling the essential proportions and elements to create a simple and elegant solution to the requirements of a passenger railroad station. The Rock Island Railroad depots generally display a subtle variety of renderings within this style, and this is arguably the finest with explicitly Spanish Colonial influences.

The growth and development of North Little Rock has always been intimately tied to the railroads that served its residents, energized its commercial districts, and employed a large share of its working force. The Rock Island-Argenta Depot is one of the finest surviving railroad structures from the era of most rapid growth in the city of Argenta and the only one rendered in this architectural style.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Adams, Walter, North Little Rock, The Unique City, (Little Rock, 1986).

Official Annual, Civilian Conservation Corps, Arkansas District, Seventh Corps Area, 1937.

Sayger, Bill, "The End of the Line," Arkansas Times, July, 1985.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

acreage of property Less than 1

UTM References

A 15 | 568320 | 3846125
 Zone Easting Northing

B _____ | _____ | _____
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____ | _____ | _____

D _____ | _____ | _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 29, Rock Island Railroad Right of Way Subdivision to the City of North Little Rock, Arkansas

See continuation sheet

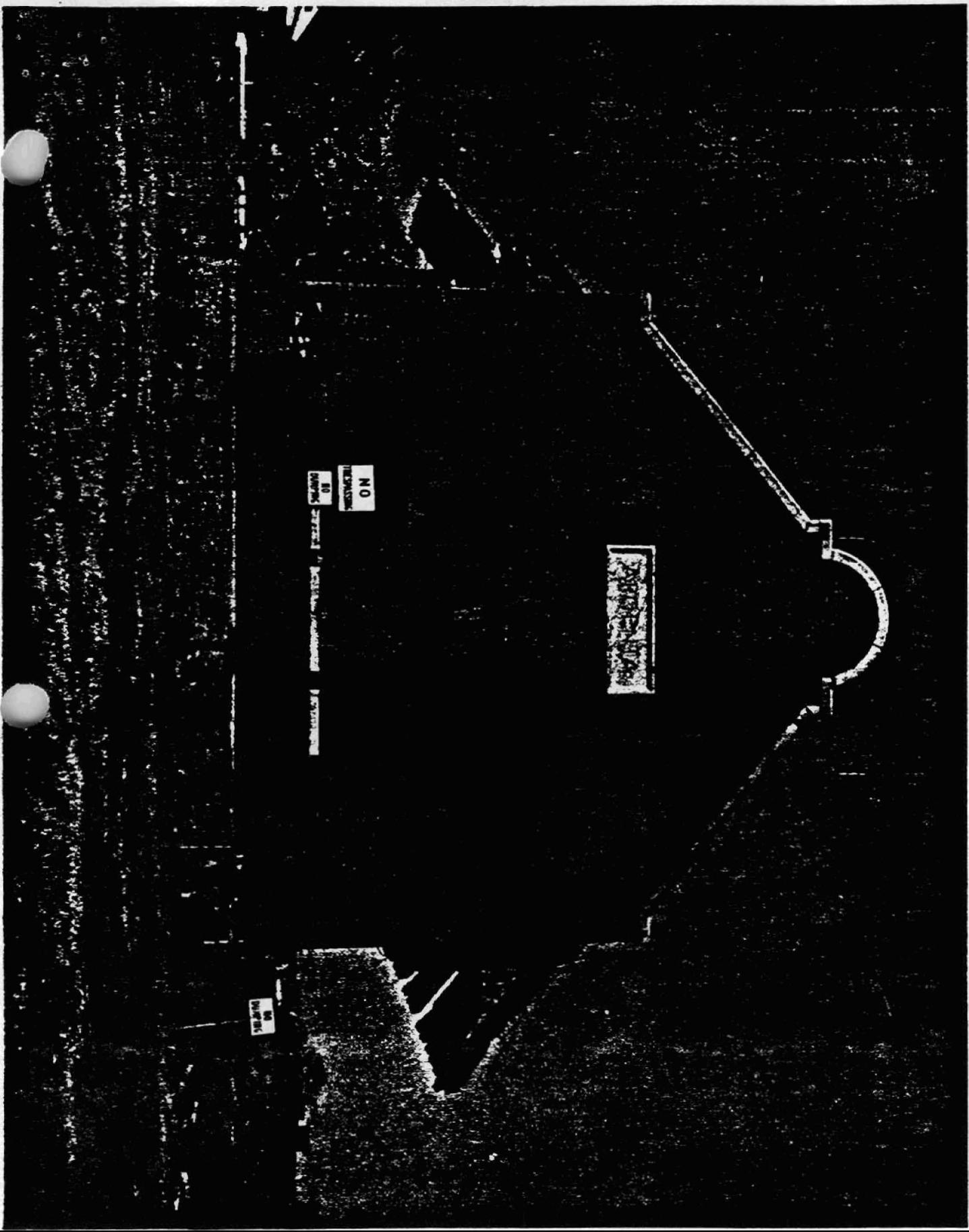
Boundary Justification

This boundary includes all the property historically associated with this resource.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kennerb Story, National Register Coordinator
 organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date July 19, 1989
 street & number 225 E. Markham, Suite 200 telephone (501) 371-2763
 city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201



NO
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