

AR0121

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Arkansas County Courthouse - Northern District

other name/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number: Southwest corner of East 3rd and South College Streets

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Stuttgart

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Arkansas code: AR 001 zip code: 72160

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public-local

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	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

11-11-11 11:11



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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

Classical Revival

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation Brick/Stucco roof Asphalt
walls Brick other N/A

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: Locally.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1928

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Barrett and Ogletree

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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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 H. Byrd _____ 10-12-92
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: Courthouse _____

Current: GOVERNMENT _____ Sub: Courthouse _____

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

Name/Title: Kenneth Story, Architectural Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: October 12, 1992

Street & Number: 323 Center Street, 15th Floor Telephone: (501) 324-9880

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

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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:

- 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	<u>15</u>	<u>632980</u>	<u>3818330</u>	B	___	___	___
C	___	___	___	D	___	___	___

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ___ See continuation sheet.

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the western edge of S. College Street with a perpendicular line formed by the southern edge of E. 3rd Street, proceed westerly along said line for a distance of approximately 200 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel to the building's western elevation; thence proceed southerly along said line for a distance of approximately 200 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel with the building's southern elevation; thence proceed easterly along said line for a distance of approximately 200 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running along the western edge of S. College Street; thence proceed northerly along said line for a distance of approximately 200 feet to the point of beginning.

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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Summary

The Arkansas County Courthouse in Stuttgart is a two-story, structural brick courthouse building with a raised basement designed in the Classical Revival style. It retains virtually all of its original windows, and has otherwise suffered relatively few alterations on its exterior. It is in very good condition.

Elaboration

The Arkansas County Courthouse in Stuttgart is a two-story, structural brick courthouse building with a raised basement designed in a restrained interpretation of the Classical Revival style. Its plan is essentially rectangular, with low stoops projecting from the center of both the northern and eastern elevations of the original structure and a two-story compatible brick addition to the western or rear elevation. A single brick chimney rises above the roofline at the intersection of the original structure and the addition. The built-up/tar roof behind the raised parapet and the brick walls are supported upon a continuous brick foundation that has been stuccoed to resemble stone.

The northern and eastern elevations are very similar, in that both are dominated by a broad pediment and entablature capped by a stepped brick parapet, coped with concrete. Each pediment is fenestrated only by a small, central oculus window, with the surrounding tympanum being surfaced with stucco. Two small blind oculi, flanking the pediment, are also filled with stucco. The northern bay is accessed via its central stoop and recent double-leaf aluminum entrance. A pair of original one-over-one wood windows lights the second story above. The two window bays to either side of the entrance bay are recessed slightly behind raised brick pilasters that rise to support their capitals upon which rests the pediment. Each of the window openings on both floors is filled with a pair of one-over-one wood sash windows and ornamented with small square stucco inserts placed into the brick at each corner. The concrete panel above the doorway on each of the two elevations reads "Courthouse/Arkansas County/Northern District." The only difference between the two elevations is the fact that the northern elevation is a total of five bays across, while the eastern elevation is but three bays across.

The southern elevation is asymmetrically fenestrated, with three of the four window bays concentrated near the eastern end, and the fourth bay located toward the western end. All the window openings are filled with a pair of one-over-one wood sash windows. The western elevation is composed of the central projecting addition flanked on both sides by a pair of one-

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over-one wood sash windows on the first story with the metal fire escape rising to two separate single-leaf entrances on the southern side of the second story (leading to the vault area and the back of the original structure); the northern side of the second story is also fenestrated with a pair of one-over-one wood sash windows.

The raised basement on all elevations is fenestrated with pairs of smaller one-over-one wood sash windows that are generally placed directly below the afore-mentioned window bays, with the exception of the southern elevation, which features a row of these windows extending across the entire basement level.

The significant exterior detail is largely limited to the afore-mentioned pediment and entablature details, the small stucco inserts, and the concrete stoops.

The interior retains most of the original door and window moldings, though the walls have largely been covered with non-historic wood paneling. However, original newel posts and balustrades have also survived, as have their associated stairs.

Apart from the refinishing of the interior walls, the building remains largely as it appeared when it was constructed in 1928 and is in good condition.

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Summary

Criterion C, local significance

The Arkansas County Courthouse in Stuttgart, constructed in 1928 and designed by J. B. Barrett with the Stuttgart firm of Barrett and Ogletree serving as contractors, remains one of the finest examples of the Classical Revival style in the city of Stuttgart, and in the entire county. It is thus eligible under Criterion C with local significance for the quality of its architectural design.

Elaboration

Arkansas County was first formed on December 31, 1813 through the passage of an act by the legislature of the state of Missouri, of which this county was a part at the time. However, the first organized civil government within the present boundaries of the state had actually been established as early as 1804 -- after the completion of the Louisiana Purchase by the United States Government -- with the appointment of James B. Maney as the civil Governor to preside at Arkansas Post, a trading center on the north bank of the Arkansas River and the only such organized settlement within the state at that early date. The initial boundaries of Arkansas County included approximately ninety per cent of the modern land area of the entire state, with Arkansas Post as its county seat. Many counties were subsequently carved out of that enormous area, eventually resulting in the establishment of its current boundaries by 1871.¹

As the local and regional importance of Arkansas Post dwindled in the early years of the territorial period, which saw the capital moved up the Arkansas River to the more central location at Little Rock, and as the county boundaries came to more closely resemble their modern configuration, the city of DeWitt (named for De Witt Clinton, governor of New York) became the natural candidate for the relocation of the county seat, largely through its central location relative to the shrinking county boundaries. The initial land for the town was purchased by investors in 1853, and the land was platted soon thereafter, with the construction of the first log courthouse buildings taking place in 1855 (located approximately one block from the current site). The county records were moved to it from Arkansas Post and the first probate and county court sessions were held in October of that year. This was replaced with a second, two-story red brick courthouse in 1862, which was in turn replaced with a larger red brick structure in 1893. However, its construction proved faulty, as cracks developed in the foundation, and it

¹Ironically, though Arkansas Post has long since ceased to serve as the center of county government, its most recent site and its earlier locations, both known and suspected, all remain within the drastically-reduced modern boundaries of the county.

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deteriorated to the point that it was finally condemned. The current courthouse structure was erected on the same site and completed in 1932.

DeWitt remained the sole county seat until the early twentieth century, which saw a confluence of important events that resulted in the dramatic growth of the city of Stuttgart, the bustling agricultural, commercial and transportation hub in the northern part of the county. Stuttgart's humble beginnings date to 1878, when the Reverend Adam Buerkle and his brother "M." (full name unknown, though he was reportedly also a reverend) and twelve families of German immigrants from Michigan, Ohio and Illinois settled the site of the former Gum Pond plantation, the roughly 7,500-acre antebellum estate established by the Mitchell family that included much of the Grand Prairie surrounding the modern site of Stuttgart. They were joined by sixteen more families in the next year, and by 1880 a post office had been established for the new town of Stuttgart, reputedly named by Rev. Buerkle after his birthplace in Germany. Stuttgart's fortunes were improved by the arrival in 1882 of the city's first railroad, the Texas and St. Louis Railroad. Though this did not run directly through the existing site of Stuttgart, Rev. Buerkle and his followers immediately realized the wisdom of locating adjacent to this important connection to the outside world, and the community relocated to the railroad line. This railroad line, running roughly east-west, was later complimented by the construction of both the Kansas City and New Orleans Railroad (later incorporated into the Rock Island Railroad system) that ran roughly north-south, and the short-line Grand Prairie Railroad that ran to the northwest. The city's first major sources of commercial income were cattle and hay, though the railroads soon brought several small manufacturing enterprises, such as furniture and woodworking shops, farm implement factories and an assortment of mills.

Ironically, the descendants of several of these early settlers departed Stuttgart at the turn of the century, as the agricultural potential of the Grand Prairie was thought to be "played out"; and indeed, the cultivation of the traditional crops of cotton and hay had sapped the soil of the required nutrients. It was within the first decade of the new century, however, that saw the first successful experiments in cultivating rice on the Grand Prairie with the harvesting of a three-acre plot near Hazen to the north. By 1904, local entrepreneurs worked with the railroads -- and the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad in particular -- to encourage more German immigration to the Grand Prairie to provide the manpower to transform more acreage into rice farms. The state's first rice mill was constructed in Stuttgart in 1907 -- the Stuttgart Rice Mill -- and by 1909, 27,000 acres of the prairie are planted in rice. By 1919, just ten years later, the total acreage of rice farms surrounding Stuttgart totaled 143,000.

The last years of the century's second decade witnessed the first surge of prosperity for the city;

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one of the city's banks, which in 1915 claimed total deposits of only \$118.00 could boast of over \$800,000 in total deposits as of 1918. After some drastic fluctuations in the price of rice that occurred in the first year or two of the 1920's, the price rose dramatically thereafter, and Stuttgart experienced a period of growth and prosperity that has largely continued to this day.

Unlike most of the other counties within the state that host dual county seats, the establishment of both northern and southern districts within Arkansas County appears to have been motivated by the vastly-increased level of civic and legal activity that attended the dramatic growth of the city in the 1920's rather than the approximately twenty-mile distance from the older county seat at DeWitt or any natural and/or seasonal barriers between them (though the Grand Prairie had a shallow water table and was prone to shallow flooding, particularly in the early twentieth century before the establishment of effective regional drainage districts).

The Arkansas County Courthouse in Stuttgart was constructed in 1928 by the firm of Barrett and Ogletree of Stuttgart according to the designs of the firm's designer, J. B. Barrett. Its design, which employs a clear though restrained Classical Revival vocabulary through the use of the projecting pediment and entablature supported upon raised brick pilasters on its two principal elevations, is the finest example of this style within the city of Stuttgart and is thus eligible under Criterion C with local significance.

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Bibliography

Goodspeed's *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Eastern Arkansas*, 1890.

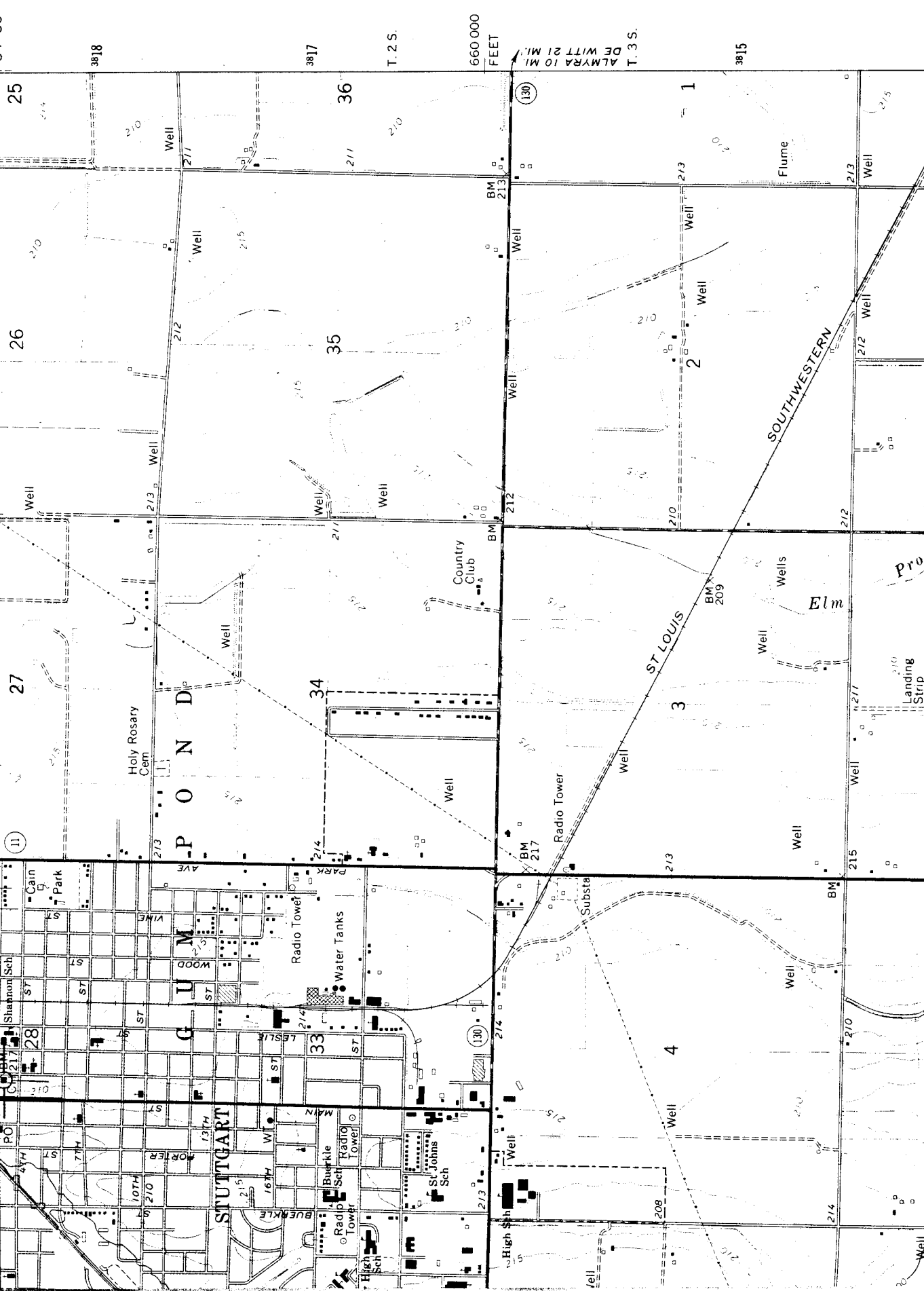
Unsigned manuscript, National Register nomination file on the *Buerkle House* (Stuttgart, Arkansas County, Arkansas), on file at the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

Workers of the Writers' Program, *The WPA Guide to 1930's Arkansas*, with a new introduction by Elliott West; University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas; 1987 (original copyright 1941), pp. 344-345.

At 1055 P. BENTHOUSE (MONTANA DIST. T)
15/632980/3818330

STUTTART SOUTH QUADRANGLE
ARKANSAS
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

HUMNOKE 15 MI. 0.6 MI. TO U.S. 79
 32°30" 21 MI. TO U.S. 70. 0.9 MI. TO U.S. 79
 636 635 637 2 150 000 FEET 91°30' 34°30'



753 (11 SW)
 DE WITT 21 MI. T. 35.

T. 25.

660 000 FEET

ALMIRA 10 MI. DE WITT 21 MI. T. 35.

3815

SOUTHWESTERN

Elm

Pro

Landing Strip

210

Well

215

Well

210

Well

210

Well

210

Well

210

