

**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 an 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 Wynne Commercial Historic District

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number Roughly bounded by Front Street, Commercial Avenue, Terry Street, Wilson Street, and Pecan Avenue  not for publication

city or town Wynne  vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Cross code 037 zip code 72396

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for 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 certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the 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

## 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 count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
33	23	buildings
	2	sites
		structures
		objects
33	25	Total

### Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business, Financial Institution

Specialty Store, Department Store, Restaurant,

Professional

RECREATION & CULTURE: Music Facility (opera House)

GOVERNMENT: Courthouse, post office

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business, Specialty Store,

Professional

RELIGION: Religious Facility

PARK: City Park

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate, Richardsonian

Romanesque

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation    BRICK, CONCRETE

walls    BRICK, STUCCO, CONCRETE, WOOD

SYNTHETICS

roof    ASPHALT, METAL

other

### Narrative Description

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

**SEE ATTACHED NARRATIVE: SECTION 7**

**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.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B**. removed from its original location.
- C**. birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Levels of Significance** (local, state, national)

**LOCAL**

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

**COMMERCE**

**Period of Significance**

1891-1959

**Significant Dates**

1891 – Construction of the Bank (oldest resource)

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

None Identified.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**SEE ATTACHED NARRATIVE: SECTION 8**

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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### Bibliography

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

SEE ATTACHED BIBLIOGRAPHY: SECTION 9

#### 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

Name of repository:

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**10. Geographical Data****Acreage of Property** Approximately 15 acres.**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A	<u>15</u>	<u>700949</u>	<u>3900202</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

  

B	<u>15</u>	<u>701183</u>	<u>3900202</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>15</u>	<u>701063</u>	<u>3900016</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

  

D	<u>15</u>	<u>701063</u>	<u>3899904</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

 See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

See attached map of the said boundaries. The designated boundary is as follows: Beginning at the junction of East Pecan Ave. and North Front St. (following the west side of the road along Front St.) the boundary continues in a northerly direction along Front Street (approximately 5 city blocks) to the point where it meets East Commercial Avenue. Here the boundary turns east following East Commercial Avenue (approximately 2.5 blocks) where it turns south following the unnamed street to the east of resource CS0110 for approximately 1/2 a city block where the boundary then turns west (following the southern property line of Resource CS0110) until it meets North Terry Street where the boundary continues south for the remainder of the 1/2 city block. At the point where the boundary intersects East Merriman Avenue, it continues north for approximately 1/2 a city block where the boundary then turns south following the property line along the east side of Resource CS0089 (or 305 E. Merriman Ave.) and CS0088 (300-302 E. Union Avenue) to where it intersects East Union Avenue, at which point the boundary then turns west for approximately 1/2 a city block where it meets South Terry Street. At this point the boundary continues south along South Terry Street for approximately 1/2 a city block where the boundary then turns west following the rear property line of resource CS0087 (251 East Union) the boundary continues until it meets South Wilson Street. At this juncture, the boundary then proceeds south (crossing E. Levesque Ave.) until it meets East Canal Avenue, where the boundary then turns west for approximately 1/2 a block where it then turns south following the rear property lines of CS0057 and CS0058 (312 S. Front Street) until it intersects with East Pecan Avenue, where the boundary then turns west for approximately 1/2 a city block to where it intersects with North Front Street at the point of origin.

**Boundary Justification**

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

The designated boundary encompasses most of the original part of the commercial area as identified on early Sanborn Maps. The boundary also encompasses commercial buildings only. The area lying west of the district was primarily Industrial in nature, while the areas to the north and south of the district are and have always been primarily residential. The development east of the district is primarily commercial with newer construction dates, parking lots, and some residential.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title	<u>Kara Oosterhous, Consultant, Edited by Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register &amp; Survey Coordinator</u>		
organization	<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>	date	<u>November 3, 2009</u>
street & number	<u>1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street</u>	telephone	<u>(501) 324-9787</u>
city or town	<u>Little Rock</u>	state	<u>AR</u>
		zip code	<u>72201</u>

Wynne Commercial Historic District  
Name of Property

Cross County, Arkansas  
County and State

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### **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.)

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### **Property Owner**

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

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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**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 listing. 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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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### **SUMMARY**

The Wynne Commercial Historic District is being submitted for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. The proposed district is an active commercial center that was first developed in 1882 at the junction of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad. By the turn of the century Wynne was a thriving commercial center serving the surrounding area. The district is made up of **58 resources**: 56 buildings and 2 sites. Of the 58 resources, 33 (57%) contribute to the district's significance and 25 (43%) are noncontributing to the district's period of significance spanning 1891 to 1959, either because they were constructed outside of the district's period of significance or because they have been altered in such a way that their integrity has been compromised. The proposed district is comprised entirely of commercial stock, most of which is brick nineteenth and twentieth century commercial architecture. Some of these buildings display architectural embellishment reflecting the Italianate, Art Deco, Mediterranean, and Romanesque Revival styles. There is very little new construction located within the district boundaries; the main visual intrusion would be the few vacant lots that mark where buildings once stood. The buildings as a whole adequately convey a sense of time and place validating the district's period of significance that spans 1891 to 1959 (1891 being the district's oldest identified, extant building).

### **ELABORATION**

Since 1903, Wynne has been the county seat of Cross County. Highway 1, Highway 64, Highway 284, and Business Route 64 all serve the city of Wynne. It is located approximately 46 miles from West Memphis, 18 miles north of Forrest City, 50 miles south of Jonesboro, and 100 miles east of Little Rock. The city is located at an elevation of approximately 260 feet and currently occupies approximately 8.15 square miles.<sup>1</sup> Crowley's Ridge runs through the center of the county, the east side being drained by the St. Francis River and the west side by the L'Anguille. Wynne is situated on an elevated plateau at the western base of Crowley's Ridge, and since the turn of the century it has been the most substantial town in Cross County. Wynne is located in the vicinity of two of Arkansas's distinctive geological features: Crowley's Ridge and the Arkansas Delta. The area that now makes up the city of Wynne was originally part of large U.S. land grants. In 1882, after the completion of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad, a boxcar fell off the track and was uprighted and named Wynne Junction. It was there that a new town began to develop and it is in this general vicinity that the proposed historic district lies. The commercial area is located east of the railroad tracks running north and south and south of the tracks running east to west. Front Street is the "main street" running through Wynne's commercial area, which parallels the tracks running north to south. The district is bounded by Front Street on the west, Commercial Avenue to the north, and Pecan Avenue to the south. The eastern boundary is comprised of alleyways, Wilson Street and Terry Street. Merriman Avenue, Levesque Avenue, and Canal Avenue are the major east to west roadways running through the district.<sup>2</sup>

### **Commercial Development**

Established as Wynne Station in 1882, the town was incorporated as the city of Wynne in 1888. The impetus for the development of the town was the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad (later known as the Missouri Pacific Railroad). It was at the junction of this railroad that the town began to develop as Cross County's most significant

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<sup>1</sup>"Wynne, Arkansas," <http://www.city-data.com/city/Wynne-Arkansas.html>.

<sup>2</sup>Merriman Avenue appears to be named after an early settler whose name was B. B. Merryman; the area and Levesque Avenue appears to be named after J. M. LeVesque, an early settler in the area, who also had a railroad stop named "LeVesque" after him.

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commercial and political center. As far as can be determined, all of the extant buildings in the district were constructed post 1887 when a fire destroyed two-thirds of the commercial area's buildings. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps were made of the city in 1897, 1903, 1908, 1913, 1919, and 1951. Therefore, from 1887 through the 1920s, there is a fairly accurate depiction of the new construction occurring in the area approximately every five years. These maps coupled with an article published in 1891, aid in determining the age of some of the oldest extant one- and two-story brick buildings in the district. Below are some descriptions excerpted from the 1891 article published in the *Gazette*:

Daltroff & Sparks (Building date: ca 1888)

In 1887, they had the misfortune to get their entire stock burned, but they soon resumed business in a new brick, which is the property of the firm, consisting of two stores, one 24x65, and the other 21x80, each two stories.

Smith, Graham & Jones (Building date: ca 1888)

They have two storerooms 50x90 feet, two stories high, and carry a stock that will, on average, invoice \$20,000.

Samuel Goodman

...Mr. Goodman has a neat storeroom, covering a lot 24x60 feet, next door to the Cross County Bank...

Minton & Duggan

They have one of the neatest drug stores in the State, ...They were fortunate to securing the post office building in which to carry on their business ...

Cross County Bank (Building date: 1891)

... The building in which the bank is to conduct its business is just being completed, is built of brick, and was especially designed for the business of a bank.

Baker House & New Hotel (Hotel building date: 1891)

Mr. G. N. Sparks is building a large hotel which he has rented to Mr. Baker, and which will be occupied by the 10<sup>th</sup> of September. The new building is being constructed at a cost of \$5,000. It has sixteen large comfortable rooms, a dining hall 16x30, double parlors 18x20, office 16x16, two halls 8x40 and two 8x18. It has 212 feet of veranda with bathrooms and other conveniences.

After examining the maps, it appears that most of the development began on the north end of Front Street and spread southwards. A Stave mill was the anchor business for the South end of Front Street until some time after 1919 (it is absent from the 1951 Sanborn Map). Also, between 1913 and 1919, the streets running north to south were renamed: 2<sup>nd</sup> became Woodrow (which is now Wilson St.) and 3<sup>rd</sup> became Oliver (which is now Terry St. It was originally Terry on the north end but 3<sup>rd</sup> on the south end).

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### **Building Styles**

Most of the buildings are solid brick; however some of the newer constructed buildings such as 300-302 Union Avenue are frame construction with a brick or cast concrete veneer. The majority of the buildings share a party wall while an alleyway separates some of the buildings; also, the rear façades of the buildings generally open up to an alleyway. All of the buildings in the district are one or two-stories in height and are representative of Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century architecture. Some of the buildings have very subtle architectural embellishments reflecting various architectural style influences such as Italianate, Art Deco, Romanesque Revival and Modern. Most of the information in the following style descriptions are taken from personal observations and A Field Guide to American Houses by Virginia and Lee McAlester.

### **Late Nineteenth & Twentieth Century Architecture**

Late Nineteenth & Twentieth Century Architecture as applied to historic buildings (pre 1959) are generally free standing buildings or a continuous row of buildings of brick or frame construction. Many buildings constructed during this time period, especially in the early- to mid-twentieth century, are solid brick or solid concrete block construction, or at least present a veneer of brick, concrete, or stone. These commercial buildings vary in height based upon when and where they were constructed and the technology employed. The commercial buildings in the Wynne Commercial Historic District are primarily one or two stories and are of solid brick construction, some of the buildings are frame construction with brick overlay. The following are good examples of this style of architecture 104 Front Street, 116 East Merriman Avenue; 108 Front Street.

### **Italianate**

The Italianate Style was popular during the late Nineteenth Century and was used often for architect-designed landmarks in major metropolitan areas. Prior to WWI, vernacular interpretations of the style spread widely with the perfection of masonry veneering techniques. Some characteristics include: symmetry, heavy brackets, hood moldings, colonnade entries, quoining, roofline parapet or balustrade, and a rusticated first story. Many of the buildings in the district display restrained characteristics of this style. A good example of this style is 218 Front Street.

### **Art Deco**

Geometric motifs such as decorative elements on the façade, towers and other vertical projections that thrust above the roofline characterize Art Deco architecture. This style was emulated during the 1920s through the 1940s. Examples include the Wynne Water Utilities building on Merriman Avenue and 210 East Merriman Avenue.

### **Romanesque Revival**

Popular features of these revival buildings are round arches, semi-circular arches on windows, and belt courses. Inspired by the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century Romanesque style of architecture, this building style was popular in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike the historic Romanesque style, however, Romanesque Revival buildings tended to feature more simplified arches and windows than their historic counterparts. The Cross County Bank (1891), 102 Front Street, shows some restrained elements of this style.

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There are other buildings in the district that are 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial building that have a very modern feel to them, displaying very straight and clean lines as well as some sharp angles. These buildings include 251 Union Avenue, 211 Merriman Avenue, and 200 East Merriman Avenue

### Conclusion

Throughout the years Wynne's commercial area has undergone changes: the loss of the earliest frame buildings to deterioration or the 1887 fire, which were replaced with more permanent structures; primitive ways of life that were made easier with the arrival of a telephone exchange in 1897 and electricity and a water works facility by 1904; streets that were being paved by 1917 to accommodate the ever-present automobile; and the new buildings that were constructed using modern techniques during the economically good and depressed times of the 1920s, 30s and 40s. Today, the biggest challenge the commercial area faces is keeping businesses downtown as opposed to the growth of businesses that has occurred during the last thirty years along Highways 1 and 64. Overall, many of the buildings located in the historic downtown area appear to be structurally sound and viable places to do business. The downtown area possesses the character, charm, and design that only historic buildings display. Longtime businesses Wynne Feed Store and Graham Hardware are two of the anchor businesses that have remained downtown throughout the years, recognizing the historic significance, potential, and promise this downtown area holds.

### INTEGRITY

The Wynne Commercial Historic District is a cohesive group of buildings that maintains the integrity needed to convey their architectural and historic significance. These buildings possess integrity of location and setting as they still possess their original setbacks and configurations. The buildings, which contribute to the district's significance are still true to their original design displaying the historic materials used in their construction as well as the attention to detail that validates the workmanship displayed when built. Many of the alterations that have occurred to the storefront area are reversible. The buildings continue to maintain their integrity of association as they have continually been used as places of commerce. The buildings serve as a reminder of how well historic buildings were constructed and connect us to our past. Although the streetscape has changed in appearance since it first began to grow as a commercial area in the 1880s, the extant buildings still convey a nineteenth and twentieth-century ambience. The district is made up of **58 resources**: 56 buildings and 2 sites. Of the 58 resources, 33 (57%) contribute to the districts significance and 25 (43%) do not (See the list below).

Resource Number:	Historic Name:	Property Name:	Address:	Date:	C/N C:
CS0057		Wynne Feed Store	312 S. Front Street	c.1915	C
CS0058		Wynne Feed Store Storage	S. Front Street	c. 1915	C
CS0059		Building at 218 Front Street	218 Front Street	c. 1900	C
CS0060		Building at 210-216 S. Front Street	210-216 S. Front Street	c. 1935	C
CS0061		Building at 218 S. Front Street	208 S. Front Street	c. 1905	C
CS0062		On Point Detail Shop	206 S. Front Street	c.1905	C
CS0063		Metal Pre-Fab Building	Corner of Levesque and Front Street	c. 2005	NC
CS0064		Building at 108 S. Front Street	108 S. Front Street	c.1910	C
CS0065		Big Money Tax Service	106 S. Front Street	c. 1935	NC

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<b>Resource Number:</b>	<b>Historic Name:</b>	<b>Property Name:</b>	<b>Address:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>C/N C:</b>
CS0066		Ricks Beauty Supply	102 Front Street	c.1900	NC
CS0111	Steinburgs	Steinburgs	113-115 Union Avenue	d. 1935	NC
CS0112	Graham Hardware	Graham Hardware	111 Union Avenue	d.1935	NC
CS0113	Graham Hardware	Graham Hardware	109 Union Avenue	c.1935	NC
CS0071	Cross County Bank	Cross County Bank	102 N. Front Street	d.1891	C
CS0072		Haircuts Unlimited	104 N. Front Street	c.1908	C
CS0073		Building at 106 N. Front Street	106 N. Front Street	c.1919	C
CS0074		Building at 108 N. Front Street	108 N. Front Street	c.1903	C
CS0075		Building at 110 N. Front Street	110 N. Front Street	c.1905	NC
CS0076		Building at 112 N. Front Street	112 N. Front Street	c.1905	C
CS0077		Building at 114 N. Front Street	114 N. Front Street	c.1915	C
CS0078		Cross County Abstract & Title Insurance Company	202 N. Front Street	c.1908	C
CS0079		Building at 204 N. Front Street	204 N. Front Street	c.1908	C
CS0080		Little Village Bar	206 N. Front Street	c. 1908	C
CS0081		Ray's Appliance Center	208 N. Front Street	c. 1908	NC
CS0082		Building at 113-115 E. Levesque Avenue	113-115 E. Levesque Avenue	c.1935	C
CS0083		Pipe Department	118 E. Levesque Avenue	c. 1945	NC
		Wynne Tile Company	116 E. Levesque Avenue	c.1915	NC
CS0084		Building at 102 S. Wilson Street	102 S. Wilson Street	c. 1950	NC
CS0085		Building at 100 S. Wilson Street	100 S.. Wilson Street	c.1950	NC
CS0086		Building on Wilson Street	102 N. Wilson Street	c. 1913	NC
CS0087		Mohr Heating and Cooling	251 E. Union Avenue	c. 1965	NC
CS0088		Exquisite Lock Beauty Salon & Temple of Healing Outreach Center	300-302 E. Union Avenue	ca. 1955	C
CS0089		Darlene D. Andrews	305 E. Merriman Avenue	ca.1945	NC
CS0090		Enrichment Activity Center	211 E. Merriman Avenue	ca. 1960	C
CS0091	Woncomb Building	Woncomb Building	205 E. Merriman Avenue	d.1945	NC
CS0092		Building at 203 E. Merriman Avenue	203 E. Merriman Avenue	ca.1910	C
CS0093		Wynne Water Utilities	117 E. Merriman Avenue	ca. 1935	C
CS0094		Hair Jazz	119 E. Merriman Avenue	ca.1905	C
CS0095		Building at 111-113 E. Merriman Avenue	111-113 E. Merriman Avenue	ca.1905	C
CS0096		Building at 108 E. Merriman Avenue	108 E. Merriman Avenue	ca.1915	C
CS0097		Building at 110-112 E. Merriman Avenue	110-112 E. Merriman Avenue	ca.1900	C
CS0098		David Bionolillo, Attorney at Law	114 E. Merriman Avenue	ca. 1900	C
CS0099		Building at 116 E. Merriman Avenue	116 E. Merriman Avenue	ca. 1905	C

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<b>Resource Number:</b>	<b>Historic Name:</b>	<b>Property Name:</b>	<b>Address:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>C/N C:</b>
CS0100		Esther Witcher, Accountant	200 E. Merriman Avenue	ca. 1950	C
CS0101		Building at 206 E. Merriman Avenue	206 E. Merriman Avenue	ca. 1950	NC
CS0102		Bank of Wynne	210 E. Merriman Avenue	ca. 1900	C
CS0103		Building at 211 N. Wilson Street	211 N. Wilson Street	ca. 1930	NC
CS0104		Building at 215 N. Wilson Street	215 N. Wilson Street	ca. 1955	C
CS0105		Building at 217 N. Wilson Street	217 N. Wilson Street	Post 1959	NC
CS0106		Christian Fellowship Church	218 N. Wilson Street	ca. 1905	C
CS0107		Building at 216 N. Wilson Street	216 N. Wilson Street	ca. 1905	C
CS0108		Building at 212-214 N. Wilson Street	212-214 N. Wilson Street	ca. 1935	C
CS0109		Studio 251	251 Commerce	ca. 1955	NC
CS0110		James C. Luker, Attorney	Commerce Street	ca. 1915	NC
CS0		Building		ca. 1960	NC
CS0		Building		ca. 1960	NC
CS0		Park			NC
CS0		Park			NC

**Total # of Buildings: 56**

**Total# of Sites: 2**

**Percentage C: 33 (57 %)**

**Percentage NC: 25 (43 %)**

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### SUMMARY

The Wynne Commercial Historic District, located in Wynne, Arkansas, is being submitted for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A**. The proposed district has been the largest commercial center in Cross County since the beginning of the Twentieth Century, developing around the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad. The district is made up of **58 resources**: 56 buildings and 2 sites. Of the 58 resources, 33 (57%) contribute to the district's significance and 25 (43%) are noncontributing to the district's period of significance spanning 1891 to 1959, either because they were constructed outside of the district's period of significance or because they have been altered in such a way that their integrity has been compromised. Almost all of the buildings within the district are brick, nineteenth or twentieth-century commercial buildings, some of which display elements of styles such as Italianate, Art Deco, and Romanesque Revival styles. Approximately eight city blocks comprise the district. There is very little new construction within the designated boundaries; however, there has been some loss of original buildings that has resulted in vacant lots. Overall, this cohesive group of buildings adequately conveys a sense of time and place. The existing building stock validates the districts period of significance spanning 1891 -1959.

### ELABORATION

#### Cross County

In November of 1862, Arkansas's General Assembly passed an act entitled "An Act to establish the County of Cross." At that time, portions of Poinsett, St. Francis and Crittenden counties were used to form what is now Cross County. The act noted, "...the temporary seat of justice of said county of Cross, and until the same may be permanently located, shall be at Wittsburg at said county."<sup>5</sup> Cross County was named for Colonel David Cross, an officer in the Confederate Army and extensive landowner. The first county seat was located at Wittsburg where it remained until 1863; when due to the Civil War, it was moved to Pineville where it remained until 1865. From 1865 to 1868, the county seat was located at Cleburne, on land donated by Colonel David Cross. A courthouse was never erected at Cleburne, and due to the lack of growth, the county seat was moved back to Wittsburg in 1868 and it remained there until 1884 when it was moved to Vanndale. On May 24, 1888, construction was complete on the county's *first* courthouse. However, in 1903, due to the decline of Vanndale and the growth of Wynne, county citizens held an election and voted to move the county seat from Vanndale to Wynne, where it remains today.<sup>6</sup>

#### Wynne: Late 1800s-1900

In the 1880s, the St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Southern Railroad laid tracks through northeastern Arkansas, crossing from Crowley's Ridge into the flat, fertile Arkansas Delta. According to local history, the town of Wynne, "literally fell off the tracks." Soon after laying this portion of the tracks, in 1882, a train derailed. The boxcar that was left behind was up-righted and named Wynne Station after businessman Captain Jesse Wynne of Forrest City who was influential in starting Forrest City's first bank, the Bank of Eastern Arkansas. Goodspeed notes that the first house was built in 1883. That same year, Mr. B. B. Merryman started the first store and Mr. Austell received the commission as the first postmaster. In 1888, the completion of the tracks running east to west resulted in the name of the town being changed to Wynne Junction. Wynne is one of the only towns in Arkansas laid out at the junction of the same railroad;

<sup>5</sup> Goodspeed: Cross County Reproduction (CD: by HearthstoneLegacy.com), pg 321.

<sup>6</sup> "Welcome to the Cross County, Arkansas Genealogical Home Page." <http://www.couchgenweb.com/arkansas/cross/>

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the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad crossed itself running east to west (Bald Knob Branch) and north to south (Helena Branch). At the time of its incorporation, on 28 May 1888, Wynne's population was 400 and the town's name was changed from Wynne Junction to Wynne.<sup>7</sup>

During the late 1800s, Wynne was like many "western frontier towns" growing up around the railroad.<sup>8</sup> The earliest business establishments in Wynne were frame buildings. By 1887, businesses included six general stores, seven grocers, two drug stores, two hotels, two meat markets and a few barbers. On 2 September 1887, Wynne's commercial area sustained major damage when a fire burned more than two-thirds of the town's business district. Damage was estimated at \$200,000. The town's merchants/businessman quickly rebuilt. Many of the new buildings were made of brick so that they were "fireproof" and larger and more opulent than their frame predecessors. By 1891, the commercial area had fully recovered and was thriving with numerous businesses. Goodspeed (1890) and an article written in the *Gazette* (1891) listed many of the businesses at that time as noted below.

<b>Churches</b> Methodist Presbyterian Baptist	<b>Drug Stores</b> T. A. Bedford J. W. Hazelwood & Co.	<b>Lawyer</b> J.R. Robertson
<b>Public School</b> One (150 pupils)	<b>Jeweler</b> Harry Vaughn	<b>Gents' Furnishing Goods</b> R. G. Oliver
<b>General Stores</b> Smith, Graham & Jones Johnson & Hamilton Daltroff, Sparks & Oliver Goodman & Potlitzer Martin & Neely	<b>Hotels</b> E. J. Commercial Traveler, J. Badinelli, proprietor Wynne Hotel, B. F. Stanley, proprietor	<b>Saloons</b> Robert Orr Brusch & Hamilton
<b>Grocers</b> John Cobb Landers & Mitchell W.L. Lancaster William Ivy W.J. Perdew H. Davis B. F. Stanley Poe Brothers	<b>Livery Stables</b> James Lyon Martin & Kirby	<b>Barbers</b> C. Stewart Dillard & Johnson
	<b>Physicians</b> William D. Allen C.H. Montgomery Paul Gargaro	<b>Meat Markets</b> John Greene & Co. J. H. Chappelle
	<b>Blacksmiths</b> Lipscomb & Snowden	

<sup>7</sup> "Wynne," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=873>; Goodspeed, 326; "Wynne, Arkansas" (Institute of Southern Jewish Life – ISJL) <http://www.isjl.org/history/archive/ar/wynne.htm>

<sup>8</sup> "Wynne," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*; Bill Earnry, *Arkansas Roadsides: A Guide for the State*, (Little Rock, AR: East Mountain Press/August House, 1987), 90; "Wynne, Arkansas," (ISJL); "Big Growth," *The Gazette* (1891), pg. 8/col. 4.

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Businesses that were identified and discussed in depth in an 1891 article include the following (included are excerpts from the article):

### Kennedy's & More Lock Stave Company

“This company was incorporated under the laws of Arkansas in January, 1889, and is one of the largest stave manufacturing concerns in the state. ...They manufacture bucked and sawed staves and make a specialty of whisky and oil staves. Their manufacturing capacity is 16,000 to 18,000 per day....***The office building is a neat structure, a convenient distance from the mills. It is 18x32 feet, with broad galleries around it and beautifully lighted and ventilated....***”

### Daltroff & Sparks (Building date: ca 1888)

“Are the pioneer merchants of Wynne. They began business in Wynne in 1886, having succeeded Block and Company, at Wittsburg. Their store was the first large mercantile establishment to open its doors for business in the new town....In 1887, they had the misfortune to get their entire stock burned, but they soon resumed ***business in a new brick, which is the property of the firm, consisting of two stores, one 24x65, and the other 21x80, each two stories.*** They carry an ongoing stock of \$15,000, consisting of general merchandise. ...”

### Smith, Graham & Jones (Building date: ca 1888)

“Constitutes one of the largest mercantile firms in this portion of the State....The firm consists of R. M. Smith, John Graham and W. A Jones. Three and a half years ago he (Smith) formed his present business connections and opened business in Wynne. ***They have two storerooms 50x90 feet, two stories high,*** and carry a stock that will, on average, invoice \$20,000. Their gross sales reach annually from \$85,000 to \$90,000. They carry a full line of general merchandise, and do an extensive plantation supply business, and keep everything the people need in the way of farm supplies.

### Samuel Goodman

“...Mr. Goodman has a neat storeroom, ***covering a lot 24x60 feet, next door to the Cross County Bank***....Mr. Goodman does strictly a cash business, and therefore has no credit prices. In fact he has but one price for everything, and that is always cheap for cash. He carries a full line of dry goods, clothing, boots, shoes, hats, caps, and gents' furnishing goods...”

### Minton & Duggan

“This firm consists of John S. Minton and W. H. Duncan, late of Harrisburg. They have one of the neatest drug stores in the State, and carry a full line of drugs, patent medicines, stationary, wall paper, cigars, toilet goods, oils and paints....***They were fortunate to securing the post office building in which to carry on their business*** and the number of customers who almost constantly engage their attention would indicate a prosperous business.”

### Cross County Bank (Building date: 1891)

“This bank, which will not open its doors for business until about the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, was organized the 29<sup>th</sup> of last May with a capital stock of \$30,000. ...In the organization of the bank, Mr. Bray was elected Cashier and I. Block, President... ***The building in which the bank is to conduct its business is just being completed,***

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*is built of brick, and was especially designed for the business of a bank. It has all the modern improvements, with time lock and burglar-proof safe and other essential equipments....”*

### Baker House & New Hotel (Hotel building date: 1891)

“The Baker House, kept by W. K. Baker, is a pleasant home for the traveling public. In order that Mr. Baker may increase his facilities for caring for his guests, *Mr. G. N. Sparks is building a large hotel which he has rented to Mr. Baker, and which will be occupied by the 10<sup>th</sup> of September. The new building is being constructed at a cost of \$5,000. It has sixteen large comfortable rooms, a dining hall 16x30, double parlors 18x20, office 16x16, two halls 8x40 and two 8x18. It has 212 feet of veranda with bathrooms and other conveniences.*”

### The Ripsaw (Established in 1888, by Lon D. Freeman as the town’s first newspaper)

“Wynne’s live newspaper, the *Ripsaw*, is published by Mr. B. F. Dallum, editor and proprietor. The *Ripsaw* makes the dust fly when she cuts through the opposition to Democracy, and never neglects an opportunity to show up the improvements and development of Wynne and Cross County.”

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, Wynne continued to grow and prosper. It is also noteworthy to mention that the initial growth of Wynne coincided with the large migration of Jews from Eastern Europe around the turn of the century. As a result, some of Wynne’s earliest business owners were part of this migration, including Isaac Block and Shields Daltroff. This trend of Jewish settlement in the vicinity continued after the turn of the century. During this time of growth, Wynne also made technological advancements, including constructing buildings out of sturdy building materials such as brick. In 1897, the first Telephone Company opened in Wynne. In 1904, T. A. Bedford, the owner of the Telephone Exchange in Wynne, published a brochure, advertising the advantages to settling in Wynne and promoting the sale of lots owned by himself; the brochure describes Wynne at the turn of the Century.<sup>9</sup>

### 1900-1920s

The U.S Census for Wynne in 1900 shows the town’s population as being 1,629, double the size of the 1890 census (565 people). Although, schools had been scattered throughout the county since 1886, in 1902, the city built a two-story brick schoolhouse to serve all grades, thus enhancing the educational opportunities in Wynne. In 1903, Cross County citizens voted to move the county seat from Vanndale to Wynne. The first county documents were kept in an opera house on Front Street until the courthouse was built in 1915. Since 1903, Wynne has served as the political hub for the county, as well as its commercial center.<sup>10</sup> T. A. Bedford’s 1904 Brochure (promotional literature) describes Wynne’s enterprises as follows:

One large tight-barrel stave factory, one furniture factory; one large spoke factory; one large hoop factory; two saw mills; one planning mill [sic]; one Blacksmith shop; two lumber dealers, carrying a large and assorted line of the best grades of rough and dressed lumber for all kinds of building purposes; one whole sale hardwood lumber company; one bottling factory; three cotton gins-two square bale gins and one round bale gin; two brick hotels, and three other hotels; one wholesale grocery store; forty-five retail business houses, embracing all branches of trade. Wynne has two

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<sup>9</sup>“Wynne, Arkansas,” Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture; “Wynne, Arkansas,” ISJL.

<sup>10</sup>“Wynne, Arkansas,” Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture.

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newspapers, and a third one will be running within two months. ...The town owns and operates this system (electric lights and water works), and lights and water are probably cheaper here than any where else in the State, being sold to its subscribers at cost.<sup>11</sup>

Not only was there a lot of commercial development going on at the turn of the century but numerous residential lots were being developed and sold in the 1890s such as Oliver's addition (ca. 1891), 93 acres on the eastern edge of town divided into lots and the 750 lots sold by T. A. Bedford in 1904.<sup>12</sup> Due to the promise and possibility that Wynne offered, it is understandable why many Jewish immigrants were drawn to this area. In 1910, Mike Drexler opened a general merchandise store. Beginning in 1915, Drexler who was religiously devout and well versed in Jewish law led the Orthodox congregation Ahavah Achim. Services were held on the second floor of his store for approximately thirty families. In 1915, the Jews established the A B'nai B'rith lodge that hosted picnics and events that attracted participants from around the region. Hymen Steinburg, another Jewish immigrant relocated to Wynne in 1920. Steinburg, worked closely with farmers to provide equipment and market their crops. He helped found the Merchants and Farmers Gin Company and financed a variety of local business ventures. The building located at the southwest corner of Union Avenue and Wilson Street bears the name "Steinburg, est. 1920, blt. 1935" and the park located across the street from the store is named in his honor on land donated by the family. Other nationalities also found Wynne an excellent place to locate their families and businesses as evidenced by family names such as Baus, Hamrick, Daltroff, Badinelli and others. One of the longest family-owned and operated businesses in Wynne is Graham Hardware, which opened their store in 1917 and continues to serve the public today.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century Wynne exhibited a steady growth pattern: 1900-1910, 724 new people; 1910-1920, 583 people; and 1920-1930, 572 people. The presence of the train and the arrival of the automobile made Wynne and the surrounding area accessible to other markets. The arrival of the automobile also shaped the commercial area. By 1919, Sanborn Maps show automobile-related business in the downtown area. An article printed in the *Wynne Progress*, in 1917, states "This city almost lost itself in dust several days last week and housewives almost lost their minds. Both evils were averted, however, by application of the long expected oil on streets, and the residents now enjoy dustless days." Eight years later, the town would serve as a safe-haven for those escaping the Flood of 1927. As flood victims arrived in boxcars, the railroad set up tent cities in Wynne where flood victims were fed and cared for by local citizens. Some refugees stayed in Wynne while other refugees left by train to other locations for help. The presence of the train in Wynne continued to be an important factor in the city's success, especially since much of the county was farmland producing products that needed to be transported around the state and to surrounding areas.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup>One of the businesses referenced in the pamphlet was "one bottling factory" which bottled drinks such as Coca-Cola during its first years, later Royal Crown products and Dr. Pepper. In its later years the company began bottling for Nehi-Royal cola and became one of the top bottling companies serving northeast Arkansas. "Wynne, Arkansas", [Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture](#).

<sup>12</sup>"Big Growth," 1891; and T. A. Bedford. "An Opportunity of a Lifetime: In all The World There Is None Like This," 1904 (Pamphlet at the Arkansas History Commission, PAM 544).

<sup>13</sup>"Wynne, Arkansas," ISJL.

<sup>14</sup>"Wynne, Arkansas," [Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture](#).

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Despite, Wynne's commercial development, the majority of the county is and has always been farmland. An article published in the Democrat on 16 October 1926 states: "...On the other side of this (Crowley's Ridge) is a gentle valley of most fertile and alluvial land, ideal for every kind of farming or stock, [word not legible], and hog-raising. The principal crops are corn, oats, strawberries, potatoes, cotton, fruit, rice, wheat, peanuts, sweet potatoes, hay...." It was these farmers with whom merchants such as Hymen Steinburg and Mr. Graham did business.

### 1930-1940s

Like every other small town in America, Wynne felt the effects of the Stock Market Crash of 1929, the Great Depression, and WWII. From 1930 to 1940 there was a population increase of only 128 people. Wynne benefited from many of the federal programs initiated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. One of the most tangible and long-lasting legacies from the federal projects was the program that paid artist to travel and place section murals in local post offices. These murals depicted the environment and the area. In 1938, Colorado artist, Ethel Magafan, and her twin sister Jenne, painted the mural "Cottonpickers" in the Wynne Post Office (NR Listed 1998). The painting was made from a sketch that Ethel had made while observing the work being done in the fields. The Works Progress Administration completed many projects in Wynne, including the Women's Progressive Club (NR Listed 1990).<sup>15</sup> During this time of economic hardship, a Nebraskan, Herbert South, came to St. Francis and Cross County to plant Peach Orchards along Crowley's Ridge. These orchards were known as Summer Sweet Orchards and at the time were advertised as the largest orchard in the United States with 500 acres of Elberta Peaches at one time. During the 1930s and 40s a packing shed was located in Wynne, on Front Street, across from the Cross County Bank building. The following paragraph summarizes Wynne during the height of the peach harvest in the 1930s.

For about a month each summer Wynne almost forgets cotton in the rush of harvesting and shipping the Crowley's Ridge peach crop. ...Pickers and packers crowd the streets, and restaurants feature peaches. The Summersweet Orchards Packing shed, on the railroad track in the middle of town, is at center of peach-shipping activity. Lines of trucks piled high with bulging baskets pull up to the west side of the shed and unload. The fruit is dumped into a hopper, and on a series of rollers passes the alert eyes of women who pick out the damaged peaches. The sound fruit rolls on to a conveyor belt along which other women are posted at 10-foot intervals. These workers select the most handsome peaches for use as "facers," which are placed in packets atop orchard-run fruit. Ornamental curls of green serpentine are dropped on the top layer just before the lids are wired to the baskets. The containers are then stacked for loading into refrigerator cars.... Girls and their grandmothers, high school boys and elderly men, find work at the shed during the season, and such of the townspeople as are not employed gather to watch the packing.<sup>16</sup>

A promotional booklet, published in 1939, titled *A Message to the Homeseeker*, promoted the settlement of parts of eastern Arkansas, including Wynne. This booklet also referenced the fruit orchards in and around Wynne, including the largest, Summersweet Orchards, and the second largest Charles F. Warren. This booklet also highlighted successful businesses in Wynne in 1939. Many of the businesses were established during the 1920s and 1930s, a testament to the

<sup>15</sup>"Wynne, Arkansas," *Arkansas Encyclopedia of History & Culture*.

<sup>16</sup>WPA, Guide to Arkansas, 240-241; "Bassham Remembers Summer Sweet: A History of the Cross County Peach Business," *Cross County ERA*, Vol. 3, No. 4.

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tenacity of Wynne's citizens during economically depressed times. Some of those business mentioned are described below:

### **Wynne Grocery (1935)**

Located on Front Street, opening for business in 1935. A reliable headquarters for the supply of stable and fancy groceries, ice cream, fruits, vegetables, flour, etc., owned by Mrs. J. E. Farr.

### **Western Auto Associate Store (1937)**

A local enterprise owned and operated by J. F. Moore, B. L. Crow. This store handles practically everything needed by the motorists as well as other lines. Some of the many items carried are the celebrated Davis De Luxe tires, Wizard batteries, washing machines, Truetone Radios, bicycles, replacement parts and automobile accessories, fishing tackle, lawn mowers, campers' supplies, sporting goods, etc.

### **Hamrick Brothers, Hardware (1916)**

Hamrick Brothers located on Merriman Street. This business has been in operation since 1916. It consists of hardware, farm and plantation supplies, plow tools, electric refrigerators, stoves, ranges, household necessities, cutlery, farm and carpenters' tools, sporting goods, guns, ammunition, fishing tackle, crockery and glassware, kitchen utensils, field and garden seeds, etc. The gentleman who compose this firm are D. M. and A. L. Hamrick, the first named being the manager.

### **Baus Grocery and Market (1923)**

This store is located on Union Avenue. It is stocked with pure food groceries, fruits, vegetables, produce, flour, feed, fresh and cured meats, etc., with prices as low as may be offered anywhere. It was established in 1923, however, Mr. Baus' father was connected with the business life of Wynne from 1908, until two years ago, the Baus family having been in business probably longer than any other concern in this city.

### **Steinberg's (1920)**

Steinberg's located on Union Avenue. Starting in business in 1920, this firm has developed into one of the outstanding retail enterprises of Eastern Arkansas and built up an enviable reputation for selling the best goods obtainable at a moderate price. They occupy two spacious salesrooms, one being given over to dry goods, clothing and shoes and the other to groceries, flour and feed. The business is operated by H. Steinberg who is assisted in the operation of the business by his three sons, I. M. Steinberg, J. Steinberg and M. D. Steinberg.

### **Proctor Brothers, Groceries (1914)**

This store is located in a spacious quarters on Union Avenue. It has been established since way back in 1914, being one of the best-known and most reliable retail houses in the city. It is ably managed by John Proctor. Proctor Brothers sell the best pure food groceries, fruits, vegetables, produce, flour and fresh and cured meats.

### **Cochran Lumber Co.**

The firm has equipment in keeping with the best in much larger cities and is the only electrically operated lumber manufacturing plant in this section. The manufacture all kinds of hardwood lumber and dimension stock and ship by both rail and trucks to all sections of the country and are also prepared to take care of export business. This industry is

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located on the Missouri Pacific tracks, in the Western section of the city. The active head of the concern is C. F. Cochran, who has had charge about two years.

### **Wynne Feed and Produce Company (1939)**

Founded March 15, 1939, it is located on Front Street. They are prominent dealers in Purina and other high grade feeds for dairy cows, livestock, hogs and poultry; dairy and poultry supplies, high grade flour and meal; Baby Chicks of the most healthy and hardy type also buyers and shippers of poultry and eggs, farm produce, cream, etc. This business is owned by O. G. Killion.

### **David's Café (ca. 1929)**

It has been established about 10 or 11 years (ca. 1929) and is a favorite with both local and traveling public. They serve the best of everything good to eat, including regular meals, lunches, short orders, spring chicken, tender juicy steaks, sandwiches, cold drinks, beer and the best coffee in the city. It is modernly equipped with fixtures of the most modern type; is air conditioned and absolutely sanitary in every particular. It is owned by David Drexler, a gentleman of extensive experience in catering to the public.

### **Phillip E. Proctor (1914)**

Located at 104 Front Street. Owned by Phillip E. Proctor, who has been in business here since 1914. Mr. Proctor is a prominent dealer in staple and fancy groceries, fruits, vegetables, produce, fresh and cured meats of the highest possible class, flour, feed and all kinds of field and garden seeds.

### **Cross County Bank (1891)**

Located at the corner of Front Street and Union Avenue, this bank was founded in 1891. The Cross County Bank transacts a general banking business; makes loans on approved collateral, pays interest on certificates of time deposits, rents safety deposit boxes and issues local and foreign exchanges. It solicits accounts with the assurance of the ability to render courteous and satisfactory service of all times.

### **Murray Chevrolet Company (ca. 1927, Corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Wilson Street)**

This business is located in a modern brick building, which contains dimensions of something like 50X90 feet. This structure is finely adapted for the purpose it was intended and is used and is equipped with every known convenience for the rapid handling of business in this line. This business has been in operation for 12 or 13 years and is one of the largest and most complete automobile sales and service firms in Eastern Arkansas. They handle the world-famous Chevrolet and Oldsmobile. The active head of this business is T. B. Murray.

### **Dixie Finance Corporation (1937, Located in Murray Chevrolet Company Building)**

This firm is engaged in financing automobile sales in Wynne and the surrounding country. It is incorporated with an ample capital and has for its officers: C. A. Forbes, President; Albert Horner, Vice-President, and T. B. Murray, Secretary and Treasurer.

### **Rolfe Implement Company (1939)**

Located on Levesque Street, is a comparatively new firm, having opened their doors for business in the early part of 1939, although they have already assumed a commanding position among the outstanding leaders in the implement and tractor business in Eastern Arkansas. They handle the famous J. L. Case line of farm machinery, implements,

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tractors and parts also maintain a service department equal to the best to be found anywhere in much larger cities. The members of this firm are Elliott A. and F. D. Rolfe.

### **Wynne Tin Shop (ca. 1922)**

Located on Front Street, this firm can take care of any and everything in the way of tin and sheet metal work, a specialty being made of products used in building construction and repair work, such as skylight, cornices, valleys, ridge roll, cresting, drain pipe, etc., and they do air conditioning and heating, being experts in all that pertains to this highly important line. This business has been established about 17 years (ca. 1922) and is owned by Russell Clemons.

### **Brown's Food Palace (ca. 1924)**

Located on Front Street, the mission of this business is to provide for the wants and needs of hungry people. It was established some 15 or 18 years ago (ca. 1924). It is owned and managed by Mrs. J. E. Brown. It has long been a standard headquarters for the obtaining of anything in pure food groceries, fancy table delicacies, fruits, vegetables, produce and fresh and cured meats at the lowest possible prices. It is a thoroughly modern, sanitary and efficiently conducted food market.

### **Murray Tire and Electric Company (1937)**

Located on Wilson Street this company began business on 1 November 1937. That date marked a new epoch in the commercial life of Wynne as it gave this city one of the most complete wholesale automotive supply houses in Eastern Arkansas. It handles practically everything in automobile replacement part, tires, tubes, accessories, batteries, electrical and home appliances, etc. The members of this firm are Tom Murray, J. H. Harris, and O.J. Murray, Manager.

### **Wilks' Handy Store (ca. 1919)**

Located on Front Street. Founded approximately 20 years ago (ca. 1919) this store is among the oldest, best known and most reliable independent food markets in the city. The active head of Wilks' Handy Store is Mrs. J. J. Wilks. The store is a favorite headquarters for obtaining anything in groceries, grocery sundries, meats, flour and feed and is popular with all classes who appreciate honest merchandise at honest prices.

### **Stutts Drug Company (1935)**

One of the best stocked, most modernly equipped and efficiently conducted drug stores in Eastern Arkansas. It is modern in every detail of equipment, being provided with specially designed fixtures together with a modern soda fountain and serving tables, and is completely stocked with everything in the drug line. The business was founded 1 January 1935 by the late Arthur L. Stutts and was operated by him until he passed away and now it is operated by Mrs. Stutts.

### **H. K. Barwick, Jr. Ford Sales and Service (1919)**

Operated by H. K. Barwick, Jr. The business is located in a modern brick building, which is finely adapted for his needs and contains floor dimensions of 90x150 feet. In addition to selling Ford V Eight, Ford Mercury, and Lincoln cars, this firm carries a big stock of genuine Ford parts, accessories, Firestone tires, Sinclair gasoline, motor oils, lubricants, etc. This business was established in 1919.

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### **Wynne Implement Company (1937)**

Located at 304 South Front Street, this business deals in the world-famous John Deere Quality Farm Implements, farm machinery, tractors, repair parts and the celebrated "Super-Fex" refrigerators; the best that money can buy, although sold at economical prices. It has been in operation since 1937 and is owned by W. C. Daniel, Jr., and W. C. "Bill" Daniel, III.

### **Wynne Hotel**

Located on Front Street opposite of the Depot; the hotel ranks among the best in Eastern Arkansas. It is a substantial and attractive two-story stuccoed structure, containing 34 guest rooms. This is an old established, but modern hotel. The rooms are spacious and well ventilated and contain hot and cold running water, steam heat and all up-to-date conveniences and a number have private or connecting baths. It is operated by G. S. Davis.

### **A.P. Teague, Jeweler (1925, Mariana Avenue)**

Mr. Teague carries a complete line of both high and medium grades of pocket and wrist watches, gift goods, diamonds, jewelry, jewelry novelties, clocks, silverware, etc. Mr. Teague has been in business here since 1 September 1925. His store is provided with the latest fixtures and presents a neat appearance.

### **Teddy's Market (ca. 1939)**

Owned by Mr. T. Grant who dismantled the old building and erected for his use a new modern structure, especially adapted to his needs. He has gone to considerable expense and labor in equipping his new place with the latest café fixtures that money can buy and shown great faith in the future of Wynne. The café serves regular meals, plate lunches, short orders, tender steaks, spring chicken, fish, and oysters in season, sandwiches, excellent coffee and the leading brands of beer and cold drinks.

### **Odus McElroys Modern Market (1938, located near the depot)**

Opening in the fall of 1938, the business has gained an enviable reputation for handling the best in fresh and cured meats, staple and fancy groceries, fruits, vegetables and produce. It is provided with fixtures of a modern and attractive type, including a large refrigerator counter display case which enables them to keep meats and other perishable goods in the most perfect condition, summer or winter. It is owned by Otis McElroy.

Wynne's establishment and growth was due largely to the railroad, which continued to play an important role in Wynne's history throughout WWII. Trains took many of the town's young residents off to the front lines and other trains brought them home again once the fighting ended. At the height of activity, an estimated 12 troop trains passed through the town every thirty minutes. Members of the Missouri Pacific Women's Booster Club and residents provided food and provisions for the soldiers and collected their correspondence to be mailed. During this time many of the farmers suffered from a worker shortage. In 1944, local citizens agreed to accept German prisoners of war to help alleviate the worker shortage crisis. A camp was established and housed as many as 2,000 prisoners who worked on local farms, The POWs helped build the sewer and water systems located west of Wynne; worked on the Gibbs-Harris rice dryer (the first in Cross County); and they worked other jobs throughout the region.

Despite the War, and the struggles faced by the agricultural community, the city of Wynne continued to grow. From 1940 to 1950, Wynne's population increased by 508 citizens, and Wynne's Jewish community grew from an estimated 60 people in 1927 to 132 people in 1948. Despite some of the economic, political, and infrastructure advances made

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during the 1930s and 1940s, like the rest of the nation, their social advances were lacking as Cross County's school districts still remained segregated. During the 1940s, Wynne's five school districts consolidated: Rolfe, McElroy, Hamlin, and New Hope became the Wynne School District in 1944. Yet, despite this consolidation, the school system still remained racially segregated with African American children attending their own school at the Childress Elementary and High schools.<sup>17</sup>

### 1950s to the Present

The last half of the twentieth century was a time of progress, diversification and desegregation for much of the state including Wynne. On 28 August 1965, the last passenger trains came through Wynne, signaling the decline of the railroad era and the rise of improved highways for the transportation of people and freight. Today, freight trains still travel the railroad shipping goods to other parts of the country. Highway 1 is the major thoroughfare running north to south through town; while Highway 64, Business Route 64 and Highway 284 are the roads running primarily east to west through town. Historically, the downtown area of Wynne was the commercial epicenter of the town; however, much of the new commercial development today, in the way of nationwide chain stores and restaurants are occurring north of town along the northern end of Highway 1 and along Highway 64. Despite this sprawl, however, several prominent businesses still anchor the historic downtown and surrounding area.

After the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Wynne Public Schools adopted a "Freedom of Choice" policy allowing students to decide where they wanted to attend schools, seven years later in 1971, Wynne schools and Childress schools were desegregated and combined. Today, one elementary school, intermediate school, junior high school, and high school provide a good education for the children and teens of Wynne.

During the last fifty years (documented up to the 2000 Census) Wynne has experienced a continued steady increase in population with the greatest period of growth being from 1960 through 1980 when the population increased by 3,005 people. One of the major attractions in the surrounding area is Village Creek State Park, one of the largest in Arkansas (located approximately six-miles south of Wynne). The park encompasses 7,000 acres along Crowley's Ridge, preserving the unique natural features of the area as well as the rich history of the region's early settlers, including a portion of the 1820 Military Road that once linked Memphis to Little Rock. The dedication of the park took place on 27 June 1976. The park has created an economic boost for the surrounding areas, including Wynne. Also located approximately 15 miles east of Wynne is another popular tourist attraction, Parkin Archeological State Park that was established in 1967 to preserve and interpret 17-acres of the Native American Village that was occupied from A.D. 1300 to 1500. The site is instrumental in understanding the history and prehistory of northeast Arkansas.<sup>18</sup>

Wynne continues to have a very diversified economy; however, agriculture still plays an important role in the town and county's economy as it has since the mid- to late-1800s including cotton farming, Agave production, potato farming, rice farming, wheat farming, corn farming, soybean, dry pea and bean farming. Wynne is situated in the vicinity of two distinct land forms in Arkansas: Crowley's Ridge and the Arkansas Delta. It is a town defined by

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<sup>17</sup>Bette Green, an author of children's books and a granddaughter of Hyman Steinberg, recorded her childhood memories of the German prisoners in her novel *Summer of My German Soldier*. In 1978, her book inspired a critically acclaimed movie of the same name. "Wynne, AR," ISJL; "Wynne, Arkansas," *Arkansas Encyclopedia of History and Culture*.

<sup>18</sup>Village Creek State Park, *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*; Parkin Archeological State Park, [www.cast.uark.edu/parkin/parkinpg1.html](http://www.cast.uark.edu/parkin/parkinpg1.html).

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geography as well as its history. The collection of buildings that comprise the Wynne Commercial Historic District best reflect the growth of the town as the commercial center of Cross County in the late 1800s and through the mid 1900s.<sup>19</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

The Wynne Commercial Historic District, located in Wynne, Arkansas, is being nominated with **local significance** for inclusion in the **National Register of Historic Places** under **Criterion A** for the events that have occurred within the town's first commercial center that contribute to a better understanding of local history as well as regional history as it relates to broader patterns of national history. The historic built environment of this district retains its architectural integrity and contributes to the district's period of significance that spans 1891 - 1959. With 1891 being the oldest extant building in the district and 1959 being the cut-off date implemented by the National Park Service that deems a property historic. Throughout the years, Wynne has been an important commercial, political, social, and economic center for Cross County and the surrounding area and its collection of commercial buildings along Front Street give tangible evidence of this fact.

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<sup>19</sup>Wynne, AR, [www.allbusiness.com](http://www.allbusiness.com)

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The first full paragraph on page 11 of Section 8 should read as follows:

“Not only was there a lot of commercial development going on at the turn of the century but numerous residential lots were being developed and sold in the 1890s such as Oliver’s addition (ca. 1891), 93 acres on the eastern edge of town divided into lots and the 750 lots sold by T. A. Bedford in 1904.<sup>1</sup> Due to the promise and possibility that Wynne offered, it is understandable why many Jewish immigrants were drawn to this area. In 1910, Mike Drexler opened a general merchandise store. Beginning in 1915, Drexler who was religiously devout and well versed in Jewish law led the Orthodox congregation Ahavah Achim. Services were held on the second floor of his store for approximately thirty families. In 1915, the Jews established the A B’nai B’rith lodge that hosted picnics and events that attracted participants from around the region. Hymen Steinberg, another Jewish immigrant, relocated to Wynne in 1920. Steinberg worked closely with farmers to provide equipment and market their crops. He helped found the Merchants and Farmers Gin Company and financed a variety of local business ventures. The building located at the southwest corner of Union Avenue and Wilson Street bears the name “Steinberg, est. 1920, blt. 1935” and the park located across the street from the store is named in his honor on land donated by the family. Other nationalities also found Wynne an excellent place to locate their families and businesses as evidenced by family names such as Baus, Hamrick, Daltroff, Badinelli and others. One of the longest family-owned and operated businesses in Wynne is Graham Hardware, which opened their store in 1917 and continues to serve the public today.<sup>2</sup>”

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<sup>1</sup>“Big Growth,” 1891; and T. A. Bedford. “An Opportunity of a Lifetime: In all The World There Is None Like This,” 1904 (Pamphlet at the Arkansas History Commission, PAM 544).

<sup>2</sup>“Wynne, Arkansas,” ISJL.