

NR LISTED

SEP 07 1995

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

AHPP

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Lee County Courthouse

other name/site number: N/A

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2. Location

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street & number: 15 E. Chestnut Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Marianna

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Lee code: AR 077 zip code: 72360

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Public-local

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>3</u> | <u>0</u> | buildings |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | sites |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | structures |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | objects |
| <u>3</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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 3 Page 1

Lee County Courthouse - Marianna, Lee County, Arkansas

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cathryn A. Slater
Signature of certifying official/Title

August 15, 1995
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

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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.

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

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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

=====

6. Function or Use

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Historic:

GOVERNMENT

Sub: Courthouse

Current :

GOVERNMENT

Sub: Courthouse

=====

7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

Classical Revival

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation Brick/concrete roof Asphalt
walls Brick/limestone other Brick chimney

Describe present and historic physical appearance. ____ See continuation sheet.

Summary

The Lee County Courthouse is a two-story, yellow brick, limestone and concrete public building designed in a restrained interpretation of the Classical Revival style the massing of which reflects the growing influence of the Art Deco (a style that was frequently the idiom of choice for Depression-era county courthouse construction throughout the state). Such features as the three entrance arches, the pair of Ionic in antis columns above, and the pilasters on the second story are all typical of the Classical Revival.

Elaboration

The Lee County Courthouse is a two-story, yellow brick, limestone and concrete public building designed in a restrained interpretation of the Classical Revival style though its massing reflects the growing influence of the Art Deco (a style that was frequently the idiom of choice for Depression-era county courthouse construction throughout the state). The front section of the building (the part constructed in 1936) is rectangular in plan, though two modern (1965), single-story brick additions project from each end of the rear of the 1936 building, and the eastern of which connects the main building with the two-story yellow brick jail, also built in 1936. A single brick chimney abuts the rear elevation near its western end and rises well above the roof line. The brick and concrete foundation and the brick and limestone walls support the flat, built-up tar roof and raised brick parapet.

The southern or front elevation is dominated by the slightly-projecting central bay that contains the recessed entrance on the first story and the in antis portico on the second. The recessed entrance is accessed via three segmental arches set into the limestone and flanked by a single small six-over-six sash window on each side. The recessed balcony above is covered by a flat roof that is supported by two large Ionic columns. The balcony appears to be primarily decorative, as the wall behind is punctuated by three windows only. The flat walls to either side of the balcony are each fenestrated with a single six-over-six window surmounted by a three pane transom. The panelled parapet above is ornamented only by small projecting blank paterae. The walls to either side of the projecting central bay are

divided into two bays each and symmetrically-fenestrated on each of the two storys with eight-over-eight sash windows. The second story windows are set between Classical pilasters, while the first story wall is formed by a continuous limestone surface. Smaller three-over-three windows light the basement level below.

The eastern and western elevations are identical and feature the same wall decoration as that seen on the front. Each story contains a total of two eight-over-eight windows placed symmetrically within the wall.

The northern elevation is composed of the 1936 walls to either side of center, and a mid-1960's metal wall in the center covering the former location of the front wall of the earlier 1890 courthouse to which the 1936 courthouse was originally attached (the 1890 courthouse building was removed in 1965 when much of the other construction was completed). The single-story, flat roof modern brick sections extend northward from either end, and the eastern brick section connects the 1936 building with the two story jail of the same date.

Significant exterior details include such features as the three entrance arches, the pair of Ionic in antis columns above, and the pilasters on the second story.

The interior is relatively simple. Large oak doors, painted plaster walls and decorative metal staircase balustrades provide the principle detail.

The 1936 building has suffered relatively few alterations. The loss of the 1890 courthouse to which the later building was attached is certainly significant, but it does not severely impact the integrity of the Depression-era building.

Also included in the nomination are the afore-mentioned 1936 flat-roofed, two-story brick jail building (now attached) and the 1890 hipped roof, two-story jail building located at the northeast corner of the courthouse square lot. Though it has suffered some significant alterations over time, it is the only extant structure on the site that survives from the 1890 period of construction. Both are contributing.

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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: 1890-1936

Significant Dates: 1890-1936

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Mahan, George
Woods, Everett
Jennings and Samuel

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
___ See continuation sheet.

Summary

Criterion C, local significance

Constructed in 1939 and located at 15 E. Chestnut Street (at the end of Court Street, where it intersects with Chestnut Street), the Lee County Courthouse is locally significant by virtue of its being the most intact and high-style example of Classical Revival design in the city of Marianna. The restraint imposed upon the overall composition by the less ornamental Art Deco influence does not obscure such signature elements as the Classical columns and pilasters, the arched entry, and the entablature that forms the cornice.

Elaboration

Marianna, the county seat of Lee County (the eastern edge of which abuts the western bank of Mississippi River), is centrally located therein and has historically been surrounded by some of the richest agricultural land in Arkansas's Delta region. Unlike many other county seats throughout the state that owe virtually their entire existence as a discernible community to the arrival of the railroad, Marianna was a fairly active and prosperous town before the first railroad's arrival in 1879 (the narrow-gauge Iron Mountain and Helena Railroad, running the twenty-seven miles between Marianna and Helena). Though the original townsite of Marianna was located on the western bank of the L'Anguille River approximately three miles north of the current site, the town was relocated in 1869 when new land was purchased along the nearest navigable section of the river, approximately ten miles north of its confluence with the St. Francis River (which then flows directly into the Mississippi River).

The new site allowed Marianna to become a regional agricultural shipping hub for the abundant cotton crop being produced by the surrounding farms. However the arrival of the Iron Mountain and Helena Railroad (which by 1881 had converted to standardized rails) -- later incorporated into the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad system -- signalled the town's greatest spurt of growth. Marianna grew into an important regional commercial and transportation hub for agricultural products, complete with a substantial commercial downtown, a growing and impressive residential neighborhood, several churches, and two busy hotels. Marianna remained an active and prosperous county seat well into the twentieth century.

By the mid-1930s the county decided to add onto the earlier 1890 red brick courthouse, largely due to a growing need for office space. The county judge, J. O. Foreman, and the building committee (consisting of Max D. Miller, Sr., Chairman, J. F. Hunter, Sr., Secretary, and John L. Daggett) oversaw the process of selecting an architect, raising funds, and reviewing design proposals. However, unlike several other Depression-era courthouse

expansions throughout the state, the new "addition" consisted not of a smaller, diminutive extension attached to the rear or side of the existing building but an entirely new building attached to the front of the earlier building and rendered visually separate through both style and materials. Designed by the architects George Mahan and Everett Woods and constructed by the contractors Jennings and Samuel, the new Lee County Courthouse effectively updated the public image of the county's government through the employment of the Classical Revival style, an architectural idiom considered more fashionable and more appropriate to the county's ambitions.

The new county courthouse building was also a public works project, with partial financing provided through the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (Project Number 1136-R). However, unlike other Depression-era public works projects constructed in Arkansas, the federal involvement here consisted solely of financial assistance, and none of the well-known public works labor agencies (such as the Works Progress Administration or the Civilian Conservation Corps) were involved in the actual construction.

The Lee County Courthouse remains an exceptionally fine example of the Classical Revival style, and particularly considering its relatively late date (the Classical Revival as a nationally-popular style largely went out of fashion by 1920). The handsome yet restrained Classical detailing on the building's exterior combines with the sheer, imposing aspect of the overall composition to render this building surprisingly impressive given its small size. Ultimately, in spite of the Depression, the county clearly achieved its goal of establishing a modern and impressive presence on the courthouse square. It stands as the finest extant example of this style in Marianna and all of Lee County.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Dew, Lee A., and Louis Koeppe, "Narrow-Gauge Railroads in Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXI, No. 3, pp. 276-293.

Gill, John Purifoy, and Marjem Jackson Gill, *On The Courthouse Square in Arkansas*, (1980).

Information provided by Jim Keasler, Lee County Judge, May, 1995.

Rives, Eugenia, "Marianna's First 100 Years," *Marianna Centennial, 1870-1970*, Crawford Printing Co., 1970.

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

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

X State historic preservation office
_ Other state agency
_ Federal agency
_ Local government
_ University
_ Other -- Specify Repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: Approximately 2.5

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---------------|----------------|---|-----------|-------|-------|
| A | <u>15</u> | <u>705260</u> | <u>3850140</u> | B | <u>15</u> | _____ | _____ |
| C | <u>15</u> | _____ | _____ | D | <u>15</u> | _____ | _____ |

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ____ See continuation sheet.

Beginning at the point where the north side of E. Chestnut Street intersects with the eastern side of N. Cedar Street, proceed northerly along said edge to its intersection with the southern side of Henry Street; thence proceed easterly along said edge to its intersection with the western side of Cemetery Avenue; thence proceed southerly along said edge to its intersection with the northern side of E. Chestnut Street; thence proceed westerly along said edge to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification: ____ See continuation sheet.

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

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11. Form Prepared By

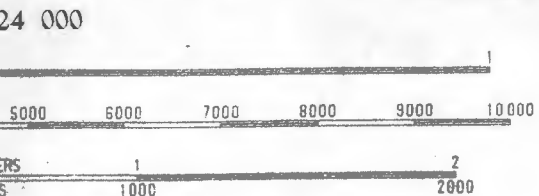
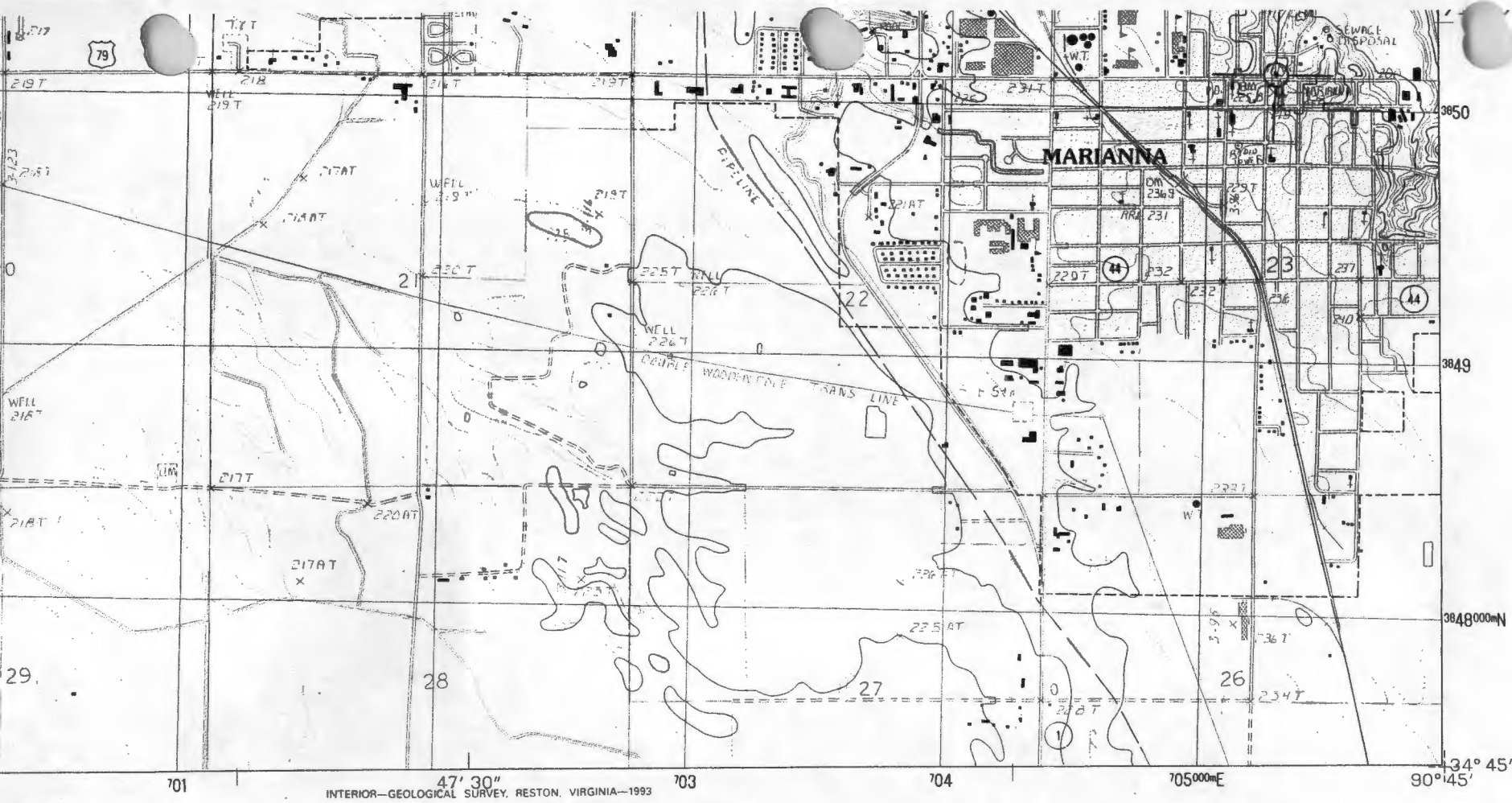
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Name/Title: Ken Story, NR/Survey Coordinator

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: August 3, 1995

Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg., 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

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



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|---|---|---|-------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 Palestine |
| | | | 2 Haynes |
| | | | 3 Dansby |
| 4 | | 5 | 4 Moro |
| | | | 5 Soudan |
| | | | 6 Aubrey |
| | | | 7 Rondo |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 8 La Grange |

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

ROAD LEGEND

- Improved Road
 Unimproved Road
 Trail
 Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

MARIANNA, ARKANSAS
PROVISIONAL EDITION 1984
 MINOR REVISION 1992
 34090-G7-TF-024

VAL 5 FEET
 TO THE NEAREST 0.1 FOOT
 TO THE NEAREST FOOT
 multiply by .3048
 multiply by 3.2808
 MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
 MISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72204

