

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 Walnut Ridge Commercial Historic District
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by East and West Main, North and South Front Streets, West Vine, and Southwest Third Streets not for publication N/A
city or town Walnut Ridge vicinity N/A
stat Arkansas code AR county Lawrence code 075 zip code 72476
e _____

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:

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

Walnut Ridge Commercial Historic District
Name of Property

Lawrence County, Arkansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
30	23	buildings
0	3	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
30	29	Total

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

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

2

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/city hall
COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution
COMMERCE/TRADE/business
DOMESTIC/single dwelling
SOCIAL/meeting hall
COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant
RELIGION/religious facility
GOVERNMENT/courthouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/city hall
COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution
COMMERCE/TRADE/business
DOMESTIC/single dwelling
SOCIAL/meeting hall
COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant
RELIGION/religious facility
GOVERNMENT/courthouse
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style, Craftsman
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival
LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE, BRICK
walls BRICK, CONCRETE, STUCCO, WOOD, METAL
roof ASPHALT, METAL
other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- [x] 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.
[x] 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 N/A

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

Property is:

- [] A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
[] B removed from its original location.
[] C moved from its original location.
[] 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
COMMERCE

Period of Significance

Ca. 1875-1960

Significant Dates

1875
1893
1935

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Louis A. Simon, architect
unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- [] 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

Primary location of additional data:

- [x] State Historic Preservation Office
[] Other State Agency
[] Federal Agency
[] Local Government
[] University
[] Other

Name of repository:

Walnut Ridge Commercial Historic District
Name of Property

Lawrence County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx. 20 acres

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A 15 0684218 3993372
Zone Easting Northing
B 15 0684153 3993321

C 15 0684108 3993419
Zone Easting Northing
D 15 0683933 3993295

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Andra Kowalczyk Martens,
organization Thomason and Associates date November 2009
street & number 1907 21st Avenue South telephone 615-385-4960
city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37212

Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name Multiple
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing 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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Walnut Ridge Commercial Historic District
Walnut Ridge, Lawrence County, Arkansas

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DESCRIPTION

Walnut Ridge Commercial Historic District resources

#	Resource #	Physical location	Owner	Owner address	C/NC
1	LW0114	104 West Main Street	JR Rogers	102 West Main	NC
2	LW0115	116 West Main Street	Corbett Farms, Inc.	215 hwy. 67N Alicia, AR 72410	C
3	LW0116	120-122 West Main Street	Gracie Meeks	7997 hwy 90 Delaplaine, AR 72425	NC
4	LW0117	124 West Main Street	Lawrence Agency	124 West Main	NC
5	LW0118	107 West Main Street	R & R Sales		C
6	LW0119	109-113 West Main Street	John Sain	602 E. 1 st , Medrid, IA 50156	C
7	LW0120	117 West Main Street	Valley View Church of Christ	3501 Kellens Chapel Jonesboro 72404	C
8	LW0121	119 West Main Street	JR Rogers	102 West Main	NC
9	LW0122	121 West Main Street	JR Rogers	101 NW Front	C
10	LW0123	123 West Main Street	Theodore & Shirley Suhl	1033 Old Burr Rd. Warm Springs 72478	C
11	LW0124	206 West Main Street	First National Bank	206 West Main	NC
12	LW0125	208 West Main Street	C&C Investments	PO Box 83	C
13	LW0126	212 West Main Street	Phil & Victoria Clark	PO Box 83	C
14	LW0127	214-216 West Main Street	Stanley Sluder & Dennis Michael	662 hwy 412	NC
15	LW0128	218 West Main Street	Robert Rainwater	419 NW 2nd	NC
16	LW0129	220 West Main Street	Dick & Jane Jarboe	410 Ridgecrest	NC
17	LW0130	222 West Main Street	Lauraetta Diles	Rt. 1, Box 19 Poughkeepsie 72569	NC
18	LW0131	201 West Main Street	Alvis J. Meyers	2129 W. New Haven West Melbourne, FL 32904	C
19	LW0132	205 West Main Street	Benjamin & Leigh Ann Tinsley	2607 Hidden Hill Cir. Jonesboro 72404	C
20	LW0133	207 West Main Street	Benjamin & Leigh Ann Tinsley	2607 Hidden Hill Cir. Jonesboro 72404	C
21	LW0134	209 West Main Street	Tom & Annette Hilburn	PO Box 350	C
22	LW0135	211 West Main Elm Street	C/o Dick Jarboe	410 Ridgecrest	C
23	LW0136	213 West Main Street	Dick Jarboe	410 Ridgecrest	NC
24	LW0137	223 West Main Street	Dick Jarboe	222 West Main	NC
25	LW0067	225 West Main Street	Times Dispatch	PO Box 389	IL
26	LW0138	315 West Main Street	Lawrence County	315 West Main	NC
27	LW0139	124 Southwest Front Str.	Ronald & Glenda Jones	420 NW Lawrence Hoxie 72433	NC
28	LW0140	112 West Elm Street	Ronald & Glenda Jones	420 NW Lawrence Hoxie 72433	NC
29	LW0141	116 West Elm Street	Arkansas DWS	116 West Elm	NC

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30	LW0142	120 West Elm Street	JR & Michelle Rogers	102 West Main	C
31	LW0143	115-119 SW 2nd Street	Larry&Janet Steele	115 SW 2nd	C
32	LW0144	121-123 SW 2 nd Street	JR Rogers	102 West Main	C
33	LW0145	115-119 West Elm Street	Raylon & Wanda Powers	115 West Elm	C
34	LW0146	201 SW 2 nd Street	JR Rogers	102 West Main	C
35	LW0147	200 SW 2nd Street	Diane Vaughn	200 SW 2nd	NC
36	LW0148	118 SW 2 nd Street	JR Rogers	102 West main	C
37	LW0149	215 West Elm Street	James & Rebecca Stallcup	1409 Azalea	NC
38	LW0150	W. Elm X SW 3 rd Streets	James & Rebecca Stallcup	1409 Azalea	NC
39	LW0151	121 SW 3 rd Street	Pocahontas Federal Savings	PO Box 427 Pocahontas 72455	NC
40	LW0152	1-story on SW 3 rd Street	James & Rebecca Stallcup	1409 Azalea	NC
41	LW0153	2-story on SW 3 rd Street	James & Rebecca Stallcup	1409 Azalea	NC
42	LW0154	213 SW 3 rd Street	Geraldine Stallcup	1409 Azalea	C
43	LW0155	215 SW 3rd Street	Greg Funeral Home, Inc.	PO Box 166	NC
44	LW0156	214 SW 2 nd Street	First United Methodist Church	214 SW 2 nd Street	C
45	LW0157	116 West Vine Street	Truman & Bonnie Trust	PO Box 387	C
46	LW0158	221 SW 2 nd Street	Robert & Karen Shackelford	PO Box 591	C
47	LW0159	215 SW 2nd Street	Robert & Karen Shackelford	215 SW 2nd	C
48	LW0160	213 SW 2 nd Street	Christopher & Sarah Harper	310 NE 4th	NC
49	LW0161	209-211 SW 2 nd Street			C
50	LW0036	110 NE Front Street			C
51	LW0162	108 NE Front Street	JR Rogers	102 West Main	C
52	LW0163	106 NE Front Street	James & Rebecca Singleton	PO Box 270	C
53	LW0164	109 East Main Street	Steve & Melissa Ditto	PO Box 202	NC
54	LW0165	113 East Main Street	Cavanaugh Properties LLC	PO Box 429	C
55	LW0037	SW Front Street	MO Pacific RR	1700 Farnam Street Omaha, NE 68102	IL
56	LW0175	Lot to W. of 104 W. Main			NC
57	LW0176	Lot to W. of 200 SW 2nd			NC
58	LW0177	Lot to N. of 124 SW Front			NC

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Summary

Located in delta lowlands just east of the rise of the Ozarks in northeastern Arkansas, Walnut Ridge is a town with a population of 4,664 in July 2008. It is the county seat of Lawrence County, which came into being in 1815. Walnut Ridge's Main Street is U.S. Highway 412, running through town. The district includes buildings on four blocks of Main Street, on both the north and south sides, and one to two blocks to the south of Main on Front, West Second and West Third streets. Most of the town's nineteenth-century architecture faced the railroad, and very little remains. As the town grew, the commercial district expanded along Main, Elm, and Vine streets. This is the area circumscribed by the proposed boundaries of the Walnut Ridge Commercial District. This contiguous collection of buildings represents Walnut Ridge's prosperous economy as a railroad town beginning in the late nineteenth century.

The district is the historic town center; buildings there housed mainly commercial businesses such as dry goods stores, grocery stores, hardware stores, movie theatres, and filling stations. Many of these buildings are extant, including two-story commercial buildings, garages, an auto showroom and service garage, and former hotel and bank buildings. Thirty of the buildings in the district (51.7%) are contributing resources due to their age, architectural and historic significance, and integrity. Twenty-three buildings plus three sites (vacant lots, sites of former commercial buildings) (44.8%) are non-contributing. Two buildings (3.5%), the old post office and the train depot, are individually listed.

In form and styling, the buildings reflect their historic functions. Most of the buildings of the district exemplify the one- or two-part commercial block form of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries commonly found in small towns of the period. These buildings have standard storefronts, with display windows on bulkheads, upper facades with some degree of decorative brickwork, and flat roofs. Today, these storefronts have a mix of original and replacement elements. Generally, stylistic elements are traditional and restrained, and include elements like brick corbelling, soldier courses, arched windows, or storefront columns or pilasters. Styles represented within the district include Italianate, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman. The district's buildings and landscape are reflective of Walnut Ridge's status as a commercial and governmental center of Lawrence County in northeast Arkansas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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Inventory with Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Resource Numbers

1. LW0114, 104 West Main Street, Commercial Building

Two-story, ca. 1895, brick, two-part commercial block building facing Northwest Front Street has ca. 1970 display windows, some of which are missing, as the building appears to be undergoing renovation. The roof is flat, and at the cornice on the façade and the Main Street elevation there are decorative, narrow insets with brick corbelling. A ca. 1970 wrought iron balcony has been added to the façade on the second floor. The main entrance is in a chamfered corner, supported by a chamfered post. Original interior iron support posts are visible. (NC)

2. LW0115, 116 West Main Street, Republican Party Office

One-story, ca. 1904, brick building with a flat roof and storefront with original brick bulkheads and copper and glass display windows, ca. 1980 metal and glass doors, and a transom enclosed with aluminum, ca. 1950. (C)

3. LW0116, 120 West Main Street, Gracie's Creative Cuts

One-story, ca. 1904, brick building with a flat roof and rebuilt ca. 1970 façade of new brick veneer, multi-light windows, and a shake roof awning. (NC)

4. LW0117, 124 West Main Street, Lawrence Agency

One-story, ca. 1904, brick building with a flat roof and a façade rebuilt ca. 1970 with random-course stone veneer and mansard aluminum siding on the upper façade. (NC)

5. LW0118, 107 West Main Street, R & R Sales

One-story, ca. 1945, brick building with a flat roof and original storefront with aluminum and glass display windows, brick bulkheads, and aluminum awning that wraps around the corner of the building. There is metal coping at the roofline. (C)

6. LW0119, 109-113 West Main Street, Commercial Building

One-story, three-bay, ca. 1915, brick building with a flat roof and storefront with ca. 1945 aluminum and glass display windows, four recessed entrances, three with original, single-light doors. Each storefront has a ca. 1945 metal awning. Each bay in the upper façade has recessed brick panels with two metal grilles. (C)

7. LW0120, 117 West Main Street, Former Drug Store

Two-story, ca. 1910, brick building with a flat roof and storefront with ca. 1960 aluminum and glass display windows and added Roman brick veneer. The entrance is recessed. Aluminum covers the transom. The upper façade has four one-over-one windows. Above the windows there is one recessed brick panel with two metal grilles. The side elevation is on an alley and has arched window openings on the second floor. The building has been stuccoed. (C)

8. LW0121, 119 West Main Street, J.R. Rogers Rep. Office

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One-story, ca. 1910, building with a flat roof and storefront and upper facade remodeled ca. 1960 with replacement glass and metal display windows, Roman brick veneer, and metal covering the upper facade. There is no historic fabric visible. (NC)

9. LW0122, 121 West Main Street, Commercial Building

One-story, ca. 1915, brick building with a flat roof and two (mirrored) storefronts. A wide, square post divides the 2-bay building; this and the bulkheads are covered with small square tile, ca. 1960. Replacement display windows date to the same time. To each side of the dividing post are entrances with triple glass and metal doors, ca. 1980. The upper facade has an original brick exterior with two rectangular insets. (C)

10. LW0123, 123 West Main Street, Allied Tang Soo Do Karate

One-story, ca. 1920, brick building with a flat roof and a two-bay storefront with original bulkheads, with stucco veneer, ca. 1960 glass and metal doors, and original display windows. The entrances are recessed. Above the storefront is a flat metal awning. The upper facade two rectangular insets with corbelled rows. (C)

11. LW0124, 206 West Main Street, First National Bank Building

Three-story, 1975, concrete and glass building with a flat roof. The facade and rear elevations are 6-bay; the side elevation is 8-bay. Bays consist of fixed glass windows divided by concrete pilasters that flare at the roofline canopy that extends beyond the building. (NC)

12. LW0125, 208 West Main Street, Downing's Tax Service

Two-story, ca. 1915 brick building with a flat roof and two bays. Storefronts were altered ca. 1960-1970 with added brick bulkheads, doors, and display windows. Entrances are recessed. There is a ca. 1960 replacement door between the storefronts. One-over-one windows on the second floor have concrete lintels and sills. There is a corbelled brick cornice at the roofline. (C)

13. LW0126, 212 West Main Street, Clark Agency

Two-story, ca 1925, brick building with a flat roof and a ca. 1970 rebuilt storefront with tile bulkheads, aluminum and glass display windows and doors. One-over-one windows on the second floor have concrete lintels and sills. (C)

14. LW0127, 214-216 West Main Street, Pet Palace

One-story, ca. 1935, brick building with a flat roof and a storefront with two bays. The entrances are recessed. The storefronts were rebuilt ca. 1970 with random-course stone veneer, aluminum and glass display windows, and mansard roof awning. (NC)

15. LW0128, 218 West Main Street, Sexton Pharmacy

One-story, ca. 1925, brick building with a flat roof and a storefront remodeled ca. 1975 with new brick veneer and copper mansard roof and rebuilt storefront. (NC)

16. LW0129, 220 West Main Street, Commercial Building

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One-story, ca. 1935, brick building with a flat roof. The storefront was rebuilt ca. 1980 with wood and glass display windows and vinyl siding. The upper façade has added windows and vinyl siding. Below the roofline a recessed brick panel is the only visible historic fabric remaining. (NC)

17. LW0130, 222 West Main Street, Swan Theatre

One-story, 1924, brick building with a flat roof. The exterior has been covered with synthetic stucco post-1984. The façade retains original doors with curved glass lights. Ionic pilasters have been added on the main façade and stuccoed. The ticket booth was a ca. 1990 addition. (NC)

18. LW0131, 201 West Main Street, Church of God

One-story, ca. 1935, brick building with a flat roof and two storefronts, one with a recessed entrance. The storefronts have original brick bulkheads, one with aluminum and glass display windows and doors, the other with ca. 1980 display windows and door. An original metal and neon sign is intact over one of the storefronts. The upper façade there are two rectangular designs marked by soldier-course surrounds. The side street elevation has multiple, original storefronts. (C)

19. LW0132, 205 West Main Street, Commercial Building

Two-story, ca. 1915, brick building with a flat roof and a storefront remodeled ca. 1960 with brick bulkheads, aluminum and glass display windows and stucco veneer. An original, 5-panel wood door encloses the stairwell to the second floor. There are one-over-one wood sash windows on the second floor. The upper façade has a rectangular, brick inset with header courses and corbelling. (C)

20. LW0133, 207 West Main Street, former vulcanizing shop

One-story, ca. 1915, brick building with a flat roof and a storefront remodeled ca. 1960 with brick bulkheads, aluminum and glass display windows and stucco veneer. The upper façade has three metal grilles. (C)

21. LW0134, 209 West Main Street, Adam Staples Agency

One-story, ca. 1925 building, with a flat roof and a storefront remodeled ca. 1940 with Carrera glass application and structural block glass installation. The off-set entrance has ca. 1970 glass and metal double doors. (C)

22. LW0135, 211 West Main Street, Commercial Building

One-story, ca. 1925, stone brick building with a flat roof and original storefront including single-light, wood double doors. The entrance is recessed. The upper façade has a rectangular inset with a soldier-course surround. (C)

23. LW0136, 213 West Main Street, Ponder & Jarboe

One-story, ca. 1970 brick building with a flat roof and a façade with three vinyl sash windows and a multi-light door with an applied Colonial Revival surround. The upper façade has an added wood-shingle awning. At one end, there is a wrought iron security gate enclosing an open walkway to the rear of the lot. (NC)

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24. LW0137, 223 West Main Street, Commercial Building

One-story, ca. 1925, brick building with a flat roof and a storefront remodeled ca. 1985 with vinyl siding, fixed windows with faux muntins, and metal door with nine lights. The upper façade retains its original rectangular, brick inset defined by a soldier-course surround. (NC)

25. LW0067, 225 West Main Street, Walnut Ridge Post Office/ Times Dispatch

One-story, 1935 brick building with gable roof with asphalt shingles. The Colonial Revival-style of the building was typical for public buildings of the period, seen in the central entrance with a broken pedimented surround with dentils and flanking pilasters. This is flanked by pairs of nine-over-nine wood sash windows. Gable end elevations have large arched window openings. The brick exterior is five-course American bond. There is also a chimney. (IL)

26. LW0138, 315 West Main Street, Lawrence County Courthouse

One-story, 1965, brick building with a flat roof and irregular plan. The building replaced a 1900 courthouse at this site, constructed in response to voter approval to center political activities at Walnut Ridge, disposing with a shared system with the town of Powhatan in the western district. The main entrance is a central bay of fixed glass windows with an over-hanging flat canopy. This is flanked by side wings of brick walls perforated regularly by fixed window insets, from roofline to foundation. (NC)

27. LW0139, 124 Southwest Front Street

One-story, ca. 1940 building of reinforced concrete construction with a flat roof, two garage bays with ca. 1960, 12-light, over-head garage doors, a corner office storefront with ca. 1990 anodized aluminum door and display windows. The building has an added metal awning. (NC)

28. LW0140, 112 West Elm Street, Cole Furniture

This is a one-story, ca. 1995, pre-fabricated Butler Building with sheet metal siding and a storefront with brick veneer posts surround display windows. (NC)

29. LW0141, 116 West Elm Street, Department of Work Force Services

One-story, ca. 1980 brick building with a flat roof and an off-set, recessed entrance. Fixed windows surround a projecting bay on the façade. (NC)

30. LW0142, 120 West Elm Street, Thomas Hotel

Three-story, ca. 1915, brick building with a flat roof and two-bay storefront rebuilt ca. 1970 with plexiglass windows and stucco and plywood infill. An original single-light door remains. Window openings on the second and third floors have segmental arches, all are missing their windows, some are boarded, others are open to the elements. Brick corbelling at the cornice has some damage. (C)

31. LW0143, 115-119 Southwest Second Street, Lane Hotel

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Two-story, three-bay, ca. 1912 brick building with a flat roof. The 115 storefront was rebuilt ca. 1970 but retains its original single-light glass door to the second floor. The 117-119 storefront has ca. 1980 brick bulkheads, an enclosed transom, and one-over-one windows with segmental arches on the second floor. There is one-story addition behind the building creating a "U" plan. (C)

32. LW0144, 121-123 Southwest Second Street, Lane Hotel

Two-story, ca. 1912 building with a flat roof and two storefronts, each with a single-light wood door. Bulkheads have ca. 1970 brick added. The upper façade has segmental arch windows and three grille vents. The rear elevation of the building has a large hole in the exterior wall on the second floor. (C)

33. LW0145, 115-119 West Elm Street, Moni's Grill

One-story, ca. 1945, reinforced concrete building with a flat roof and a storefront with original brick bulkheads and display windows. Doors are ca. 1970 aluminum and glass. A metal awning has been added. (C)

34. LW0146, 201 Southwest Second Street, former bank building

Two-story, ca. 1920 brick building with a flat roof and a chamfered corner entrance with a metal column. This is flanked on each street elevation by ca. 1970 remodeled storefronts. Their transoms are covered with octagonal plywood cut-outs. The Elm Street elevation has three rectangular insets in the upper façade. This is repeated over the Southwest Second storefront. Bulkheads have ca. 1980 brick veneer. Second floor windows are one-over-one wood sash with their transoms covered with octagonal plywood cut-outs. An original bank vault remains within the building. (C)

35. LW0147, 200 Southwest Second Street, dwelling

This is a one-and-one-half-story, frame dwelling with a side gable roof with asphalt shingles and two gable dormers. The façade has a central entrance with a modest Colonial Revival entrance with Tuscan columns, flanked by six-over-six wood sash windows. The entrance has a ca. 1960 replacement door. The rear elevation has projecting and recessed elevations. Overall this appears to be from ca. 1940, though Sanborn maps indicate that a nineteenth-century dwelling may remain intact under 20th century remodeling and additions. (NC)

36. LW0148, 118 Southwest Second Street, Adriana's

One-story, ca. 1935, brick building with a flat roof and a three-bay storefront remodeled ca. 1970 with some infilling and fixed windows. The upper façade is unaltered. (C)

37. LW0149, 215 West Elm Street, Four Seasons Cleaners

One-story, ca. 1929, brick building with two-storefront altered ca. 1990 with T-111 infill and fixed windows. Two-thirds of the roof is covered with ca. 1990 shed roof of metal, likely to cover the remaining first floor following the removal of a second story. (NC)

38. LW0150, Corner of West Elm and Southwest Third Streets, Scott Williams Insurance

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One-story, ca. 1980 frame building a flat roof and metal siding, large fixed glass windows, two doors. (NC)

39. LW0151, 121 Southwest Third Street, Iberia Bank

One-story, 1978, reinforced concrete building with fixed windows, a drive-through bay, and metal siding on the upper façade. (NC)

40. LW0152, 200 block Southwest Third Street, Commercial Building

This one-story, ca. 1945, brick building with a flat roof and a three-bay façade with ca. 1980 infill of T-111 and an overhead track garage door. Upper façade remains unaltered. (NC)

41. LW0153, 200 block Southwest Third Street, Telephone Exchange

Two-story, ca. 1925, brick building with a flat roof. The façade has a ca. 1985 garage door covering what appears to be an original opening, as an undertaker occupied the first floor. The upper façade has three insets, each with a one-over-one window. The interior retains its original pressed tin ceiling. (NC)

42. LW0154, 213 Southwest Third Street, Dwelling

One-story, ca. 1955, brick dwelling with a façade having an asymmetrical projecting bay with a hip roof covering, recessed entrance, and side carport. The entrance has an original three-square-light door. (C)

43. LW0155, 215 Southwest Third Street, House-Greg Funeral Home

One-story, ca. 1955, brick building of an irregular plan with a flat roof and gable roof that has parapets. Elevations have projections. Windows are fixed, multi-light. The brick matches that of the dwelling at 213, suggesting similar construction date. Interior doors have similar three-square-light doors. (NC)

44. LW0156, 214 Southwest Second Street, First Methodist Episcopal Church

Two-story, 1921, brick church building with a 1955, two-story, brick educational building. The roof of the church is flat with parapets. The church's main façade has three-bays, originally with recessed entrances. These have been filled in with stained glass and a stucco surround, maintaining the original three-bay scheme. (C)

45. LW0157, 116 West Vine Street, dwelling

This is a one-and-one-half-story, frame dwelling with a side gable roof with asphalt shingles and a large shed dormer on the façade and rear elevations. The exterior has been stuccoed. The façade has two off-set entrances with Craftsman style doors. The windows have Craftsman upper lights. The full-width porch has tapered, wood posts on brick piers. Overall, this appears to be from ca. 1920, though Sanborn maps indicate that a nineteenth-century dwelling may remain intact under the 1920s remodeling and additions. (C)

46. LW0158, 221 Southwest Second Street, Rogers Pharmacy

One-story, ca. 1955, brick building with a flat roof and a ca. 1970 remodeled storefront with aluminum and glass display windows and enclosed transom. The upper façade has original, arched, two-over-two, wood sash windows, two vents with pierced brick panels, and a corbelled brick cornice. (C)

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47. LW0159, 215 Southwest Second Street, Commercial Building

One-story, ca. 1945, brick building with a flat roof and a storefront with original brick bulkheads, a single-light door, and aluminum and glass display windows. There is an added metal awning. (C)

48. LW0160, 213 Southwest Second Street, Commercial Building

One-story, ca. 1945, concrete building with a flat roof and a storefront altered ca. 1980 with vertical board siding and added door and windows. The upper façade is covered with stucco. (NC)

49. LW0161, 209-211 Southwest Second Street, Bargain Connection

One-story, ca. 1925, brick building with a flat roof and a storefront with original brick bulkheads, single-light doors, and eight-light transoms. There are added metal awnings over the storefronts. (C)

50. LW0036, 110 Northwest Front Street, Masonic Lodge

Two-story, 1893, brick building with a stuccoed façade, a flat roof, and a storefront with original frame bulkheads, original display windows, five-light transom and cast iron pilasters. The name Herman Arndt, 1893, is inscribed in the cast iron threshold. There is an added metal awning. The upper façade has original two-over-two, wood sash, elongated windows, of an Italianate influence, and there is a corbelled brick cornice. Historic photos indicate more extensive decorative brickwork has been removed, such as an arched parapet and crenellation. (C)

51. LW0162, 108 Northeast Front Street, Baker Electric

Two-story, ca. 1890, brick building with a flat roof and storefront remodeled ca. 1950 with structural glass blocks and aluminum and glass doors. Original, decorative cast iron remains, bearing the name Pullis Brothers of St. Louis. The façade has been stuccoed. The second floor has one-over-one windows with octagonal plywood cut-outs applied. At the roofline is a corbelled brick cornice. The second floor on the rear elevation has a large hole. (C)

52. LW0163, 106 Northwest Front Street, Burrow's

One-story, ca. 1945, brick building with a flat roof and a storefront with original brick bulkheads, double doors of single-light design, glass and wood display windows. The entrance is recessed and has a single-light transom. (C)

53. LW0164, 109 East Main Street, Carson's Meat Market

One-story, ca. 1935 brick building with a flat roof that has been altered with ca. 1970 stucco and plywood on the entire exterior and added single-light door and windows. (NC)

54. LW0165, 113 East Main Street, Snapp Motor Company

One-story, ca. 1925 building of irregular form that has a flat roof and is split into two main sections. The brick storefront on the parts department was remodeled ca. 1970 with aluminum and glass display windows

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and doors. The drive-through bay has original stuccoed posts on brick piers. This section has a hipped roof.
(C)

55. LW0037 Iron Mountain Railroad Depot

One-story, brick depot building constructed in 1909 that has original two-over-two windows with concrete sills, transoms, and some doors. There is decorative half-timbering in the gable fields with stucco. Chimney caps resemble stacked beehives. The roof is complex, double hipped with asphalt shingles. The station is in use for Amtrack passenger service (IL)

56. LW0175, Lot, West Main Street, behind #104.

Site of previous commercial building. (NC)

57. LW0176, Lot, on West Elm Street, behind 200 Southwest Second Street.

Site of previous commercial building. (NC)

58. LW0177, Lot, on Southwest Front Street, north of #124

Site of previous commercial building. (NC)

The Walnut Ridge Commercial Historic District contains a concentrated collection of extant historic commercial properties in downtown Walnut Ridge. As a railroad town, Walnut Ridge's earliest buildings faced the rail line; a few of these nineteenth-century examples remain. As the town grew, the commercial district expanded along Main, Elm, and Vine streets, and many twentieth century buildings in these blocks are extant. Though several buildings within the district boundaries have undergone varying degrees of alteration, the district as a whole possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and feeling, conveying significance for the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century period during which time Walnut Ridge prospered as a commercial and cultural center of Lawrence County.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Walnut Ridge Commercial Historic District in Lawrence County, Arkansas, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its local significance in commerce and Criterion C for local significance in architecture.

Criterion A: Commerce

Located in northeast Arkansas approximately 125 miles northeast of Little Rock, Arkansas, Walnut Ridge developed as a commercial and cultural center of Lawrence County beginning in the late nineteenth century. Lawrence County, established in 1815, has been called the “Mother of Counties” in this region, as it spawned thirty-one new counties over time. Geographically, present-day Lawrence County represents the gradual rise of Ozark Plateau from the delta. Historically, the area was farmed for cotton, and then timber, once the Iron Mountain Railroad came through Walnut Ridge. This town became a leading trading center of agricultural products. The laying of a rail line through Walnut Ridge bolstered a population boom that was repeated again during the early years of World War II, when the Army built an airfield outside Walnut Ridge city limits.

Criterion C: Architecture

The buildings within the Walnut Ridge Commercial Historic District represent architectural significance on the local level. The importance of the railroad is evident in early construction of commercial buildings facing the rail line. One- and two-part commercial block buildings are modest examples of these common late-nineteenth and early-20th-century forms. Many of these buildings are extant and represent a period of growth at the turn of the twentieth century. Sanborn maps indicate that some examples of nineteenth-century architecture remain extant in Walnut Ridge, on Front Street, along the east and west sides of the railroad tracks. Historic photos reveal far more intricate decorative elements than can be found today, though a few buildings retain brick corbelling and original cast iron architectural features. As the town grew, the commercial district expanded along west Main and Elm Streets. This development included the presence of an electric streetcar and then automobiles, evidenced by several auto-oriented buildings. Though some storefronts of these commercial buildings have been altered, the district still possesses integrity of location, setting, and materials of an early 20th-century downtown commercial district.

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Walnut Ridge, Lawrence County, Arkansas**SUMMARY**

Located in the Mississippi Alluvial Plain between Crowley's Ridge and the Ozark Mountains, Walnut Ridge is a town with a population of 4,925 in 2000. It is the county seat of Lawrence County, which originally encompassed the majority of Northern Arkansas. Topographically, Walnut Ridge is located in delta lowlands between Crowley's Ridge to the east and the Ozark Mountains to the west. Walnut Ridge's altitude is 270 feet, compared with the 450-550 elevation of Crowley's Ridge and the Ozarks, reaching 2600 feet. This landscape has allowed successful farming in the bottomlands and timber harvesting of area forests. Walnut Ridge, the county seat, was established in the 1870s, in concert with the laying of rail lines through the area. As a rail town, Walnut Ridge's future was secured as a commercial center for shipping agricultural products. Walnut Ridge's economy and population were greatly influenced by the Iron Mountain Railroad in the late nineteenth century and by the installation of an Army Flying School in the early 1940s.

ELABORATION

Between 900 and 1600 A.D., the area of present day Lawrence County served as a bountiful hunting ground for the Mississippian culture. European exploration occurred throughout Arkansas beginning in the sixteenth century. French documents of the late-seventeenth century described four Indian villages - three Quapaw and one Michigamea - in northeast Arkansas. The Michigamea acted as trade liaisons between the French and the Quapaw prior to the 1673 arrival of Pere` Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet.¹ In 1803 the United States acquired the vast lands west of the Mississippi River in the Louisiana Purchase. In 1811, the U.S. government opened the so-called military road from Missouri to Louisiana in the southwest, passing through northeast Arkansas. The first circuit court in Lawrence County was held at the house of Solomon Hewit on the Spring River, creating the county.² Davidsonville was named the first seat of justice. Located on the west bank of the Black River, it was less than ten miles northwest from present-day Walnut Ridge. Davidsonville was the site of Arkansas's first courthouse and post office. The importance of the military road is evidenced in the moving of the Lawrence County seat from Davidsonville in 1829.³ This relocation of the county seat coincided with late 1820s improvement to the military road, also called the Southwest Trail. Congressional funding allowed the U.S. Army to re-route the road out of swampy wetlands, and the new town of Jackson, which sprang to life in 1829, became the seat of Lawrence County.⁴

By 1830, the population of the territory was 30,000, and Lawrence County, still a large landmass, was home to 2,806 residents. In 1837, the Lawrence County seat was again re-located, when prosperous Davidsonville-

¹ Joan Gould, "Pocahontas National Register nomination form," Section 8, page 1, 2008.

² Goodspeed, 765.

³ Jerry D. Gibbens, "Lawrence County History," *Mother of Counties: Lawrence County, Arkansas, 1815-2001, History and Families* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 2001), 10.

⁴ Ibid.; Staff of the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, "Old Davidsonville State Park," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture* at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/>

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and Jackson-businessman Robert Smith donated money to the county.⁵ The new county seat, Smithville, was named in his honor. The admission of Arkansas to the United States the year before marked the beginning of rapid population growth. As more European-American settlers moved in, new counties were spawned from Lawrence, such as Greene County to the east in 1833 and Randolph County to the north in 1835.⁶ This subdivision of the “Mother County” resulted in population growth numbers that belie the true expansion of the region. Officially, Lawrence County grew by only nineteen citizens between 1830 and 1840, from 2,806 to 2,835, as new boundaries divested Lawrence County of residents and new settlers.⁷

The influx of these settlers prompted the removal of Native Americans. By 1824, the Quapaw had already sold thousands of acres of what would become fertile cotton-growing tracts. The 1830s saw the forced removal of Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole peoples from ancestral lands of the Southeast. Every route of the Trail of Tears traversed the state of Arkansas. One route ran through Lawrence County, specifically the newest county seat at Smithville. A letter originating in Smithville, dated December 13, 1838, reported that about 1,200 Indians had passed through town the previous day. The writer noted that measles and whooping cough were claiming on average four lives per day on the march westward. A letter by G.W. Morris of Batesville remarked on the destitute appearance of the migrating Indians, many of whom had no shoes or appropriate attire to meet the inclement weather conditions. Morris wrote that fifty individuals had died since the group departed in October from Gunter’s Landing, near Huntsville, Alabama.⁸

In the 1840s, Arkansas’s role as a border state became significant with the outbreak of the Mexican-American War. In Lawrence County, at the seat in Smithville, Company C, Arkansas Battalion of Infantry and Mounted Rifles was organized in 1846. Sixty-nine men and four officers enlisted. Led by Captain J.S. Ficklin, the group journeyed to Fort Smith, where the men were officially accepted into service. Though these volunteer soldiers did not fight the Mexican Army, they represented Lawrence County in military service.⁹

The growth of Lawrence County is more accurately reflected between 1840 and 1860, when there was an extended period without the subdivision of new counties. The population grew from 2,835 in 1840 to 5,274 in 1850 to 9,372 in 1860.¹⁰ In that last year, the county still included land that would later become Sharp County. With the approach of the Civil War, Lawrence County citizens generally opposed secession. However, when Arkansas seceded from the Union, many residents turned their sympathies towards the

⁵ Gibbens, 10.

⁶ Gould, Section 8, page3; Mack Hamblen, “Greene County,” Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/>.

⁷ John G. Jacobsen, “Lawrence County,” Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/>

⁸ Jay Brent Tipton, “Historical highlights,” *Mother of Counties: Lawrence County, Arkansas, 1815-2001, History and Families* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 2001), 15.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Jacobsen, at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/>

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Confederacy. Regardless, the county saw no more than minor skirmishing, though seventeen companies were organized in Lawrence to serve the southern cause. The recurring presence of Union and Confederate troops depleted the area of food and supplies, though no extensive destruction of property occurred.¹¹ Most of the companies from Lawrence County served in Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana, though some were sent east, fighting at Shiloh, Chickamauga, Nashville, and Atlanta.¹²

Reconstruction brought about many changes to area politics. In 1868, Sharp County was created from Lawrence County, resulting in a drop in population of the latter to 5,981 in 1870. Former Arkansas Senator Samuel Robinson, a colonel in the Confederate Army, swayed the relocation of Lawrence County seat from Smithville to Clover Bend, where he had bought thousands of acres on the Black River from the U.S. Government in 1840. This location persisted only briefly; when Democrats regained political control, Lawrence County's seat was moved to Powhatan.¹³

The western section of Lawrence County was more populated than the eastern section due to the presence of the Black River, on which steamboats transported passengers and carried products to market. Smithville and Powhatan were well established in this section. The area of present-day Walnut Ridge was first settled around 1860, in a community now called Old Walnut Ridge. However, even by 1870, the eastern part of Lawrence County remained largely unsettled. Civil War veteran Willis Miles Ponder came from Missouri to Old Walnut Ridge in 1867. He operated a sawmill and farmed there. He owned land in present-day Walnut Ridge, and when plans were announced for a rail line through the area, he cleared away timber for a depot site. In that year, 1873, the population gravitated away from Old Walnut Ridge towards the rail line. Ponder established Walnut Ridge in 1875, becoming its first mayor.¹⁴

Walnut Ridge was founded by virtue of the announcement of railroad plans through this portion of Lawrence County. The relatively flat lowlands would have been the topography most conducive to rail installation. The Iron Mountain Railroad, from St. Louis, entered Lawrence County on the northeast side, traversing for twenty-three miles in a southwestern direction through Walnut Ridge, Hoxie, and Minturn. A second railroad, from Kansas City, entered Lawrence County in the northwest corner and intersected the Iron Mountain line at Hoxie, on its path to Memphis.¹⁵ Hoxie was actually created, one and one-half miles south of Walnut Ridge, when leaders of the subject town could not agree on the alignment of the Kansas City rail with the Iron Mountain line.¹⁶

¹¹ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, (Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1889), 766-767.

¹² Tipton, 16.

¹³ "Communities," *Mother of Counties: Lawrence County, Arkansas, 1815-2001, History and Families* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 2001), 27; Gibbens, 11.

¹⁴ Gibbens, 11; Jacobsen at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/>

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Gibbens, 11.

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The two rail companies had hired separate surveyors, whose calculations repeatedly did not match. Neither company would conform to the other's plans, accounting for the crooks at Main Street in the town's north-south streets.¹⁷ Walnut Ridge's Main Street was plotted between the two rail lines, which crossed at Hoxie.

The population of Lawrence County in 1870 was 5,981, including 246 African Americans.¹⁸ County residents gravitated to the new town of Walnut Ridge, as the railroad replaced the river as the principal means of transporting goods to market. Timber and crops formed the basis of Lawrence County's economy in the late nineteenth century. East of Walnut Ridge, oak forests were abundant, though there was great diversity across the county, and cypress, walnut, sweet gum, hickory, and sycamore were also harvested. The county contained a wide variety of soils but the county was productive as a whole, growing corn, wheat, oats, grasses, vegetables and fruit, especially peaches. Cotton was most typically grown in the alluvial plains around Walnut Ridge.¹⁹ The new town of Walnut Ridge was quick to establish itself as a center of commerce and of communication, as well. After the Lawrence County seat moved to Powhatan in 1869, J.P. Shotwell founded the newspaper "The Times" there. The paper was then acquired by George Thornburg, who relocated it to Walnut Ridge in the 1870s, renaming it "The Telephone," which was then acquired by G.W. Anderson.²⁰

Census records from 1880 indicate that Lawrence County's population had grown to 8,782 residents, including 467 African Americans. At this time, there were 301 citizens in Walnut Ridge.²¹ That year, there were 1,250 farms with 46,803 acres of improved land. Corn (522,720 bushels) and cotton (6,480 bales) led in agricultural production, followed by oats (40,851 bushels), wheat (18,662 bushels), potatoes (3,809 bushels), sweet potatoes (3,145 bushels), and hay (414 tons). Additionally, watermelons were extensively raised here for shipment to northern markets. In Lawrence County at this time, there were twenty-five cotton gins, though few grist mills.²²

Livestock at the time of the 1880 census in Lawrence County numbered 2,574 horses, 1,068 mules, 9,670 head of cattle, 4,336 sheep, and 30,515 hogs. Figures for 1888 indicate expected increases in transportation animals such as horses (to 2,860) and mules (to 1,395) and food livestock such as cattle (to 14,113). However, sheep remained relatively constant (4,396), while there was a marked decrease in hogs (to 18,131).²³

¹⁷ "You Are There! Walnut Ridge, Arkansas," *Lawrence County Historical Quarterly*, Spring 2006, 18-19.

¹⁸ Goodspeed, 765.

¹⁹ Goodspeed, 764-65.

²⁰ Gibbens, 12.

²¹ Danyelle McNeil Fletcher, "Walnut Ridge (Lawrence County)," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture* at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/>; Jacobsen.

²² Goodspeed, 764.

²³ *Ibid.*

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Walnut Ridge received agricultural products to be shipped to market from its depot. As the county seat, Walnut Ridge prospered as a rail town, distributing the county's abundant resources to points north and south. The county's real estate assessment increased from \$631,079 in 1880 to \$1,671,839, including the railroads, in 1888. Personal property during the same period increased from \$442,577 to \$948,628, indicating the growth of individual prosperity among residents.²⁴ This was a period of growth of consumerism, as the railroad began to make factory-manufactured products accessible. For example, while ox-wagon teams were still common in 1900, horses pulling factory made wagons had already begun to appear in Walnut Ridge during the last years of the nineteenth century. Household appliances, such as sewing machines and cooking stoves, and farming equipment, such as factory manufactured plows and mowers, were introduced, simplifying daily life for urban and rural residents. Other amenities, such as screen doors and windows and pipe wells, greatly enhanced the comfort and hygiene of residents.²⁵

For Lawrence County, this prosperity translated into increased revenue, as taxes charged increased from \$20,141.00 to \$41,478.62 between 1880 and 1888. As the county seat, Walnut Ridge applied some of this revenue to the appearance and stability of the town through new public buildings and the retirement of debt. Before this time, the circuit court alternated between Walnut Ridge in March and September and Powhatan in March and August of each year. The county court, since the adoption of an 1874 constitution, consisted of a single judge, who convened during the months of January, April, July, and October, in the western district at Powhatan on the second Mondays of those months, and in the eastern district at Walnut Ridge on the third Mondays on each of those months.²⁶ In 1887, legislation was passed to create two judicial districts, western and eastern, divided by the Black River. Powhatan remained the center of the western district, while Walnut Ridge became the center of the eastern district. In Walnut Ridge, a two-story frame courthouse was constructed. No longer extant, it had the clerk's office and two jury rooms on the main floor and the courtroom on the second floor.²⁷

In 1888, at the time of Goodspeed's survey of Lawrence County and its towns, Walnut Ridge had outgrown its county-seat counterpart, Powhatan. While Walnut Ridge boasted seven general stores, three hotels, two livery stables, and four groceries, Powhatan contained only four general stores, two hotels, one livery stable, and one grocery. Walnut Ridge offered employment opportunities via the railroad and also at a grist-mill and cotton gin, while Powhatan had a spoke factory. Each town had two churches, a schoolhouse, and courthouse. Additionally, Walnut Ridge had a bakery, meat market, and a weekly newspaper.²⁸ Sexton Drugs was established in 1886 on Northwest Front Street, then First Street, in Walnut Ridge.²⁹ It remains the oldest existing business in the town and is now located in the building at 216 West Main Street (LW0128).

²⁴ Ibid, 764-765.

²⁵ Gibbens, 12.

²⁶ Goodspeed, 764-765.

²⁷ Ibid., 768.

²⁸ Ibid., 770-771.

²⁹ *A Look at Times Past: History of Walnut Ridge*

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By 1890, Walnut Ridge's population had reached 457, growing to 845 by 1900.³⁰ Lawrence County continued to attract new residents: the population grew from 12,984 in 1890 to 16,491 in 1900.³¹

The continued growth and prosperity experienced in Walnut Ridge by the turn of the twentieth century is illustrated by the 1900 construction of a new Lawrence County courthouse. With an impressive corner tower and repeated arches, the Romanesque-influenced building replaced the frame courthouse from the 1880s. The grander scale and high style of the new courthouse embodied the prosperity of the town, symbolizing Walnut Ridge's role as a commercial and cultural center of the county. (The 1900 courthouse is no longer extant, being replaced on the same site in 1965 by the County's current courthouse building, LW0138.)

In the early twentieth century, Walnut Ridge's prosperity was evidenced by the introduction of electricity and telephones. The telephone had first arrived in Walnut Ridge in the early 1890s. George W. Anderson, one of the county's first newspaper editors, built the first telephone exchange. Anderson sold stock in the Lawrence County Telephone Company to T.J. Sharum and F. W. Tucker. Initially there were forty customers. Anderson served not only as the manager of the company, but also as its only lineman. In 1912, Anderson's company was acquired by the Southwestern Telephone and Telegraph Company, predecessor of Southwestern Bell. In 1925, modern communication equipment was installed to bring to Walnut Ridge standards on par with large cities. Sanborn maps indicate a new telephone exchange building was constructed during this time.³² This building on Southwest Third Street (LW0153) remains extant within the district.

Before electricity came to Walnut Ridge, residents and businesses relied on ice to keep foods from spoiling. An ice wagon picked up written instructions at individual households, and ice was cut to order from 200 pound blocks manufactured at a plant south of town.³³ At this time, horses and mules were the literal horsepower of transportation. Mules pulled 10-person carriages between Walnut Ridge and Hoxie, less than two miles to the southwest. There were also tracks down Main Street. In 1903, the Iron Mountain Rail Company constructed a roundhouse at Hoxie, employing workers from Walnut Ridge, who rode the mule cars to work. Walnut Ridge and surrounding communities banded together to build a generating plant some time in the 1920s. Mule cars were retired, and new electric streetcars followed the same tracks already in place. The main business for the streetcars was from the passenger depot, as the train was still the only means of long-distance transportation into and through Walnut Ridge.³⁴

³⁰ Fletcher at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/>

³¹ Jacobsen, at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/>

³² "County's First Newspaper Editor Built First Phone Exchange in Walnut Ridge," *Lawrence County Historical Quarterly*, Fall 1981, 10-11.

³³ The Times Dispatch, "Founder's Grandson Tells How Walnut Ridge Came to Be," *Lawrence County Historical Quarterly*, Summer 1991, 9-10.

³⁴ Melanie Cullum, "Hoxie and Walnut Ridge Transportation Evolution Reflects 20th Century Changes," *Lawrence County Historical Quarterly*, Summer 1991, 13-15.

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Agriculture continued to dominate Walnut Ridge's economy in the early twentieth century. Much of the town was still open pasture where people raised livestock for food and cotton remained an important cash crop. Lawrence County continued its rapid growth during this period, reaching a population of 20,001 in 1910.³⁵ At that time, Walnut Ridge residents numbered 1,798, representing a growth of more than 100% over the previous decade. This population boom resulted from the community's rise as a commercial and governmental center. During this decade numerous new businesses opened and construction of one- to three-story brick buildings occurred along Main Street, Elm Street and facing the railroad on Front Street. Most of these buildings were built in designs typical of the period with storefronts supported by cast iron columns and upper facades displaying rectangular and arched windows and corbelled brick and sheet metal cornices.

The opening of the Lane Hotel, facing Southwest Second Street, occurred around 1912 and speaks to the continued growth of Walnut Ridge as a railroad town. The row of commercial buildings between West Main Street and West Elm Street also illustrates the continued expansion west of the railroad. The two-story building (LW0143 and LW0144) housed commercial enterprises on the first floor, such as a restaurant, bakery, and grocery. The second floor housed the hotel rooms. By 1919, a three-story office was constructed on its rear elevation, facing West Elm Street. This section (LW0142) and a one-story side wing (no longer extant) became the main lobby and dining room, respectively, by 1929, when the hotel was renamed Thomas. Directly across Elm Street from the lobby building was a dwelling, next to a free-standing bank building at the southeast corner of Southwest Second and West Elm Streets. On the Sanborn map from 1919, this building was depicted "from plans." The building (LW0146) was a bank through the 1940 Sanborn map. These buildings are in various degrees of use and condition today. These streets, one block from the railroad were becoming filled quickly during this period. By 1920, downtown Walnut Ridge was a busy center of commerce with several contiguous blocks of brick commercial buildings.

When automobiles came to Walnut Ridge, local roads were only dirt surfaces. Summertime was really the only season that allowed for their use, until autumn rains made streets impassable. In the spring, street repair occurred. Walnut Ridge residents within the city limits were required to pay four dollars annually for street maintenance, or volunteer labor for two days. Workers filled large mud holes with coal cinders from train engines. As the number of automobiles increased, streetcars were fading into the past and streets were graveled.³⁶ By ca. 1925, a small filling station was located at the corner of West Elm and Southwest Front street, facing the railroad. While this building is not extant, its successor, on the same lot, remains. Brand Auto Sales (LW0139) appears on the 1940 Sanborn map.

During the 1920s, Lawrence County and Walnut Ridge continued to grow. In 1920, the county population reached 22,098, with Walnut Ridge accounting for greater than 10% of that number (2,226).³⁷ Many of the

³⁵ Jacobsen at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/>

³⁶ Cullum, 15-16.

³⁷ Fletcher and Jacobsen, at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/>

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district's extant historic resources date to the 1920s or earlier. One prominent building from the 1920s is the Methodist Church at Southwest Second and Vine Streets. The history of Methodism in Lawrence County originated with the Spring River Circuit in the western part of the county in 1815, when the county seat was at the Black River. After Walnut Ridge became the county seat, a revival was held east of town in 1885, and the first Methodist Episcopal Church was organized under Reverend S.D. Evans. The congregation held Sunday afternoon services in the Presbyterian Church building until a small frame structure was built near the corner of East Walnut and Fourth Streets. The Methodists then held services in the ca. 1900 County courthouse on West Main Street, while an impressive brick church building was under construction. This church is still extant and is located within the district. The cornerstone was laid in 1921, and the church (LW0156) was completed at a cost of \$60,000. The church's debt was retired in 1941. In 1952, an educational building was begun. A residential lot adjacent to the church was purchased for \$11,000, and in 1955 the education building was completed for \$75,000.³⁸ This two-story building and the church remain in active use today.

A major booster of the eastern district of the county during this period was Swan C. Dowell. Prior to the laying of the rail line, most development during the nineteenth century occurred in the western part of county. Dowell originally located his family at Clover Bend before moving to Walnut Ridge. With extensive land holdings, he was the Lawrence County agent for the Iron Mountain Railroad Company. He also introduced rice as a competitive agricultural crop in this region to compete with cotton.³⁹

Dowell's enthusiasm for the prosperity of Walnut Ridge extended to commercial buildings, specifically entertainment. In the early twentieth century, moving pictures came to Walnut Ridge with traveling carnivals. The first theater for motion pictures in Walnut Ridge was located in a row of commercial buildings on Southeast Front Street (then called First Street) facing the train depot. Dowell opened the Swan Theatre (LW0130) on West Main Street in 1924. In 1927, the Swan Theatre was equipped to show sound pictures. The Depression curtailed the public's enjoyment of luxury activities in Walnut Ridge, and patronage at the Swan Theatre diminished. A fire damaged the building, but businessman T.J. White was able to operate a furniture store there, until Jimmy Jeff Sharum restored the theatre in 1940. As the Sharum Theatre, the building showed movies into the 1970s.⁴⁰ The building is within the district, but its exterior was covered in stucco veneer some time after 1984.

The growth of Walnut Ridge's prosperity and population declined slightly due to the Depression. While Lawrence County grew slightly, to 21,663 by 1930 and 22,651 by 1940, Walnut Ridge's population stagnated during the same period.⁴¹ Before 1940, 80% of Arkansas's population was in rural areas. As an

³⁸ Mrs. Roy Johnson, "History of Methodism in Lawrence County," *Lawrence County Historical Quarterly*, Summer 1982, 21-23.

³⁹ History of Lawrence County, 54

⁴⁰ L.R. Warner, "Movies Provided Entertainment in First Half of Century," *Lawrence County Historical Quarterly*, Fall 1981, 22-24.

⁴¹ Fletcher and Jacobsen at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/>

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agricultural state, Arkansas endured devastating climatic and economic setbacks. Years of cotton growing had negatively impacted farmland, depleting the soil of natural minerals. The flood of 1927 directly affected the lives of nearly 800,000 people, destroyed thousands of acres of crops, drowned livestock, and left farmers without a crop to take to market. This was followed by the 1929 stock market crash and a devastating drought in the summer of 1930.⁴² As the Depression deepened, Walnut Ridge's downtown business declined and for a period, seventeen buildings on Main Street were vacant.⁴³

New Deal programs and other projects helped to improve the lives of Lawrence County residents, via school construction, road improvements, and the Rural Electrification Act. In Walnut Ridge, during the 1930s, a new post office was built (LW0067). This 1935 Colonial Revival building is individually listed on the National Register and served as the Walnut Ridge post office until 1977, when the local newspaper, *The Times Dispatch* acquired it for its offices.⁴⁴ The WPA provided for improvements to the courthouse block in Walnut Ridge, installing new sidewalks and landscaping. In 1936, the federal government developed a 5,000+-acre "resettlement" community for destitute farmers at Clover Bend in Lawrence County.⁴⁵

One of the most significant events to alter life in twentieth century Walnut Ridge was the U.S Army's decision to build an airfield outside town, as the nation entered World War II. Officials from Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama, scouted the area near Walnut Ridge in 1942. The Havens and Emerson Construction Company of Cleveland, Ohio, was the Architect-Engineer selected to oversee the many smaller contractors involved in construction of the air base.⁴⁶ Approximately 1,800 acres of cotton fields and timberland was selected a short distance from Walnut Ridge, and land owners were paid an average of \$110.00 per acre. The project caused a flood of workers to stream into town, seeking lodging. The resulting housing shortage caused real estate values to sky-rocket; room rentals jumped from \$15.00-35.00 to \$100.00-150.00 per month.⁴⁷

Plans called for 5,000-foot runways, in an "A" formation, and streets, apartments, houses, a hospital, and a water and sewer system to accommodate a community of 5,000 people. The air base would ultimately be home to 3,000 military personnel and 2,000 civilian service personnel.⁴⁸ Construction, begun on June 20, 1942, progressed at a rapid pace. The Walnut Ridge Army Air Field was completed and activated on August

⁴² Gibbens, 12.

⁴³ Bill Hackworth, "A Brief Concerning the History of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield," *Lawrence County Historical Quarterly*, Fall, 1985, 21.

⁴⁴ Patrick Zollner, "Old Walnut Ridge Post Office National Register nomination form," Section 8, page 1, 1994.

⁴⁵ Hackworth, 20.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 21-22.

⁴⁷ Dr. H.E. Williams, "A Brief History of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield," *Mother of Counties: Lawrence County, Arkansas, 1815-2001, History and Families* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 2001), 20.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

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15, 1942. Aircraft arrived October 3rd, Vultee BT-13 trainers, a week later, followed two days later by the first class of aviation cadets.⁴⁹

Walnut Ridge and Lawrence County benefited tremendously from the presence of the army airfield, which employed civilians in every job except military training. Walnut Ridge residents became army mechanics, custodians, laundresses, warehouse managers, and telephone operators. Local businesses profited from the swell of servicemen, who purchased everything from gold watches to Christmas cards in Walnut Ridge. A secondary benefit to locals was the exposure to the world outside the previously remote rural landscape and culture. When Walnut Ridge families invited airmen from across the nation into their rental rooms and to their Thanksgiving tables, they learned something about religions, dialects, and customs beyond Lawrence County.⁵⁰

From 1940 to 1950, Walnut Ridge's population increased to 3,106 residents.⁵¹ The Army Air Force had ceased operations at the base in 1944, when it became the Walnut Ridge Marine Air Facility. Then, Marines were trained on Corsair planes before being sent to the Pacific Theater during the final month of the war. When the war was over, the base was deemed surplus but was soon transformed into a salvage depot for military aircraft. Thousands of military planes, some new, were shipped there from all over the world. B-29 bombers, B-32 bombers, fighter planes, transports, all came to the Walnut Ridge Airfield as a kind of plane graveyard. They covered the 1,800-acre site, stacked front to back on nose ends, awaiting resale or melting. After the planes were removed, a deed for the majority of the property was issued to Walnut Ridge, which developed the site as a municipal airport.⁵²

While population numbers for Lawrence County began a gradual decline beginning in 1940, the opposite was true for Walnut Ridge, which reached 3,547 residents by 1960 and continued to grow. By 1960, voters approved the removal of political authority from Powhatan, making Walnut Ridge the sole county seat.⁵³

Continued growth in Walnut Ridge brought typical challenges of the late twentieth century: taxes to support local infrastructure, transformation of agriculture under corporate farming, the need for new and different

⁴⁹ Hackworth, 22-23.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 23-24.

⁵¹ Fletcher and Jacobsen at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/>

⁵² Williams, 21.

⁵³ Gibbens, 13.

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jobs, and the fading away of locally owned businesses. As national chains open retail stores in larger towns, such as Jonesboro, smaller towns like Walnut Ridge experienced the closing of local businesses, leaving some buildings vacant. Post-1950 architecture has replaced historic stock along Front Street and around the courthouse square. The historic courthouse itself was replaced in 1965, and the block to its southeast, once filled by the two-story Burrows building, now has a 1970s bank building. A three-story bank building, also from the 1970s, replaced three historic commercial buildings at West Main and Northeast Second Street.

Additionally, road construction has encouraged movement away from Walnut Ridge business. Highway 67 was widened to three-lanes, and a bypass was constructed in the 1990s, diverting traffic away from passing through Walnut Ridge. Many buildings in the Walnut Ridge commercial district, however, do benefit from occupation by businesses such as restaurants, financial and legal offices, and retail stores. While some storefronts have been altered, the form and styling of the buildings reflect their historic functions. Storefronts have a mix of original and replacement elements. Many stylistic elements are intact, such as brick corbelling and soldier courses and cast iron pilasters. Downtown Walnut Ridge retains a concentrated collection of buildings that collectively demonstrate historic and architectural integrity through elements of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Due to Walnut Ridge's local historic and architectural significance and its existing integrity, the Walnut Ridge Commercial Historic District meets the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A & C with local significance.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the Walnut Ridge Commercial Historic District encompass the buildings on lots 1-12 on blocks 4, 11, and 18 between Main Street and Elm Street; lots 7-12 of block 12, lots 4-8 of block 17, lots 2-7 of block 26 on Main Street; lots 1-12 of block 10 between Elm and Vine streets; and lots 1-6 of block 19 between Elm and Vine streets.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The Walnut Ridge Commercial Historic District boundary is drawn to encompass the concentrated collection of extant historic commercial properties in downtown Walnut Ridge. Most of the town's nineteenth-century architecture faced the railroad, and very little of that remains. As the town grew, the commercial district expanded along Main, Elm, and Vine Streets. This contiguous collection of buildings represents Walnut Ridge's prosperous economy as a railroad town beginning in the late nineteenth century and during the first half of the twentieth century, when the town was boosted by the presence of an Army airfield outside the city limits.

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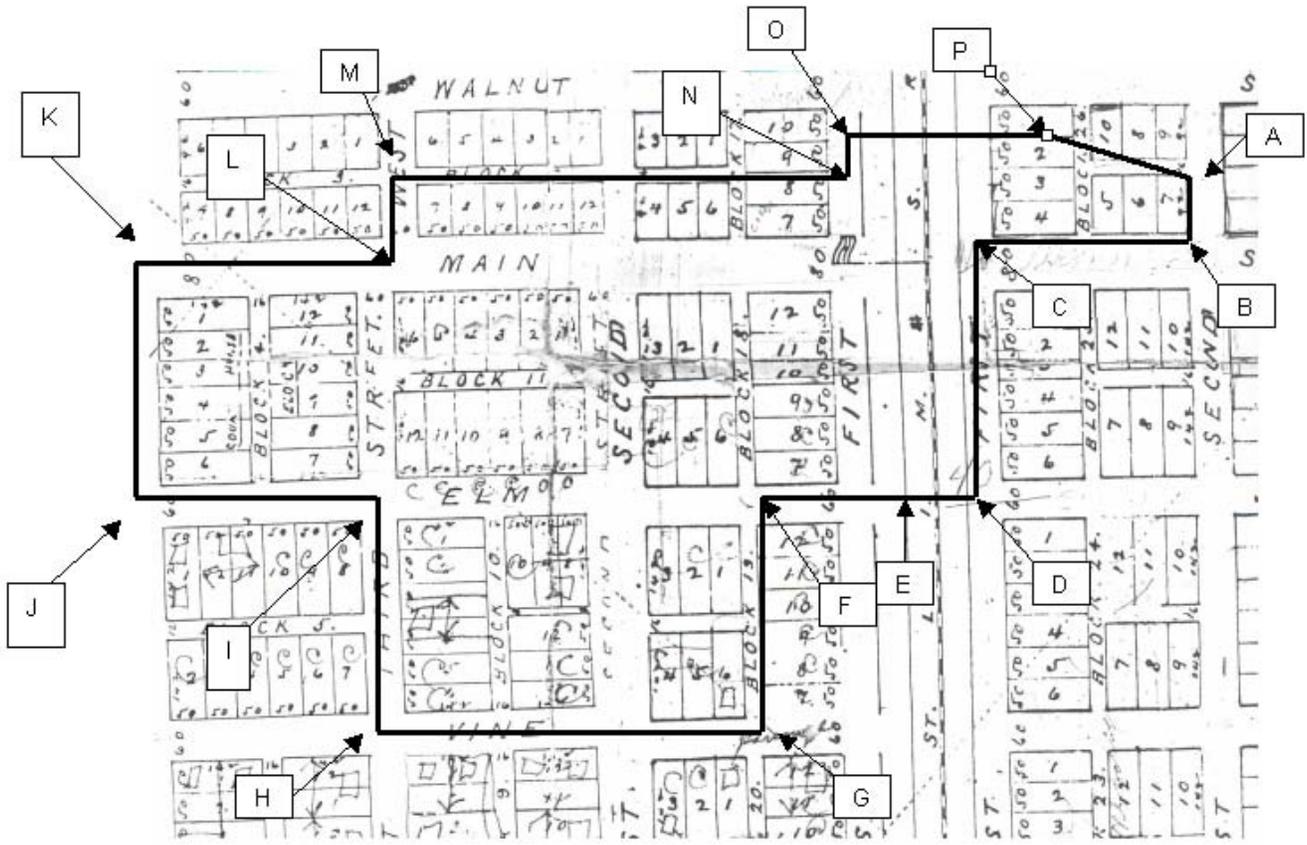
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H. 15 0683766E 3993471N	
I. 15 0683862E 3993581N	
J. 15 0683802E 3993650N	
K. 15 0683844E 3993699N	
L. 15 0683930E 3993616N	
M. 15 0683965E 3993645N	

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Map of UTM points

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Walnut Ridge Commercial Historic District
Walnut Ridge, Lawrence, Arkansas

Photos by: Thomason and Associates

Date: November 2008

Location of Negatives: Arkansas SHPO, Little Rock

- Photo No. 1: Northeast Front Street, 100 block, looking E
- Photo No. 2: West Main Street, 100 block, looking SE
- Photo No. 3: Walnut Ridge Post Office, 225 West Main Street, looking SW
- Photo No. 4: Southwest Second Street, 200 block, looking NE
- Photo No. 5: West Elm Street, 100 block, looking NE
- Photo No. 6: Southwest Second Street, looking SW from Main Street
- Photo No. 7: West Main Street, 100 to 200 blocks, looking N
- Photo No. 8: West Main Street, 200 block, looking SW
- Photo No. 9: SW 2nd Street, 200 to 100 blocks, looking N
- Photo No. 10: 110 Northeast Front Street, looking E
- Photo No. 11: Iron Mountain Depot, looking SW
- Photo No. 12: M.E. Church, looking NW
- Photo No. 13: 201 Southwest Second Street, looking NE

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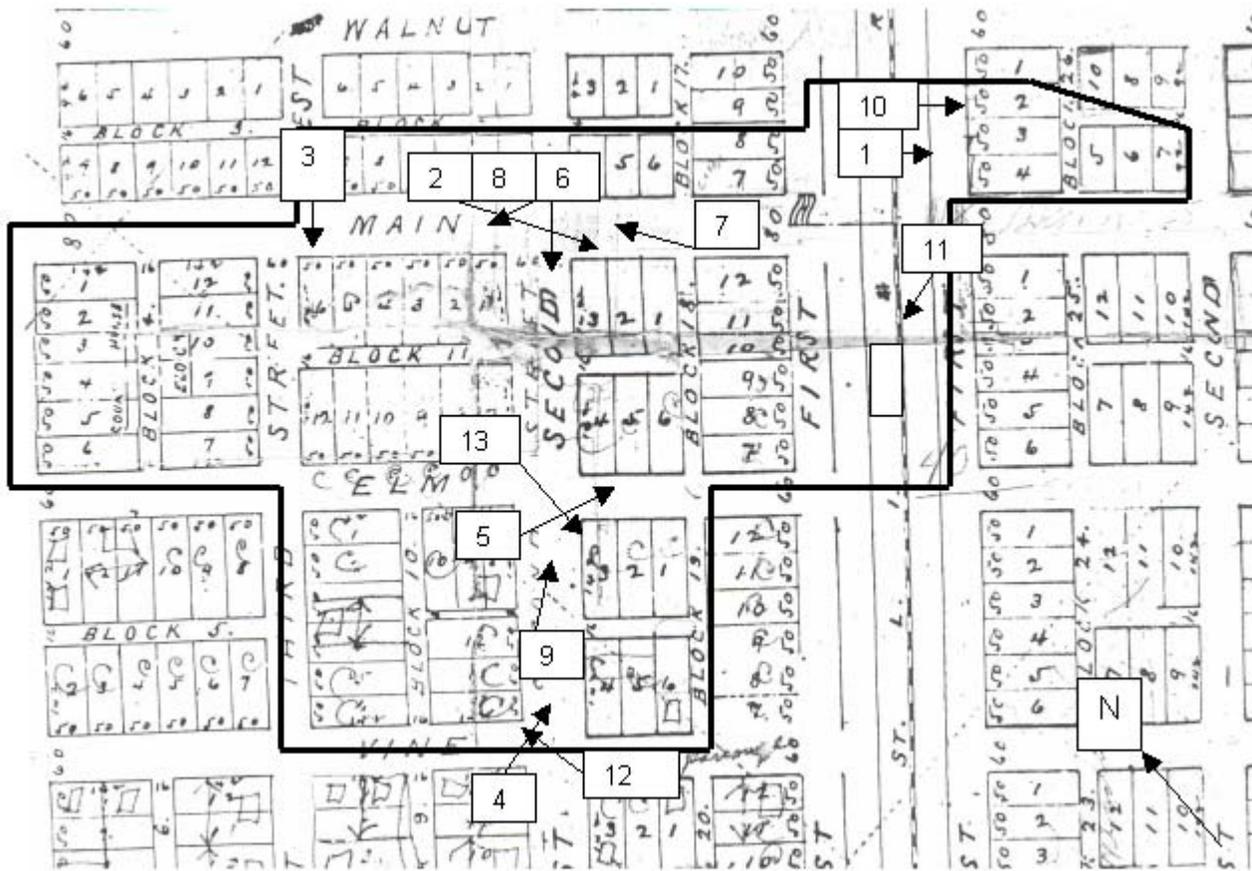


Photo key map

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Historic photos



ca. 1890 Main Street, looking west from Railroad tracks



Same intersection, 1918 (tower of 1900 courthouse center background)

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Mule car to Hoxie, ca. 1900



Pre-auto street scene



Electric streetcar, 1924 (First two buildings of left are LW0126 and LW0125)

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ca. 1920, 100 block NE Front Street (Masonic Lodge at far left)



Ca. 1940

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Construction of Army Air Field, 1942



B-17 in 1945



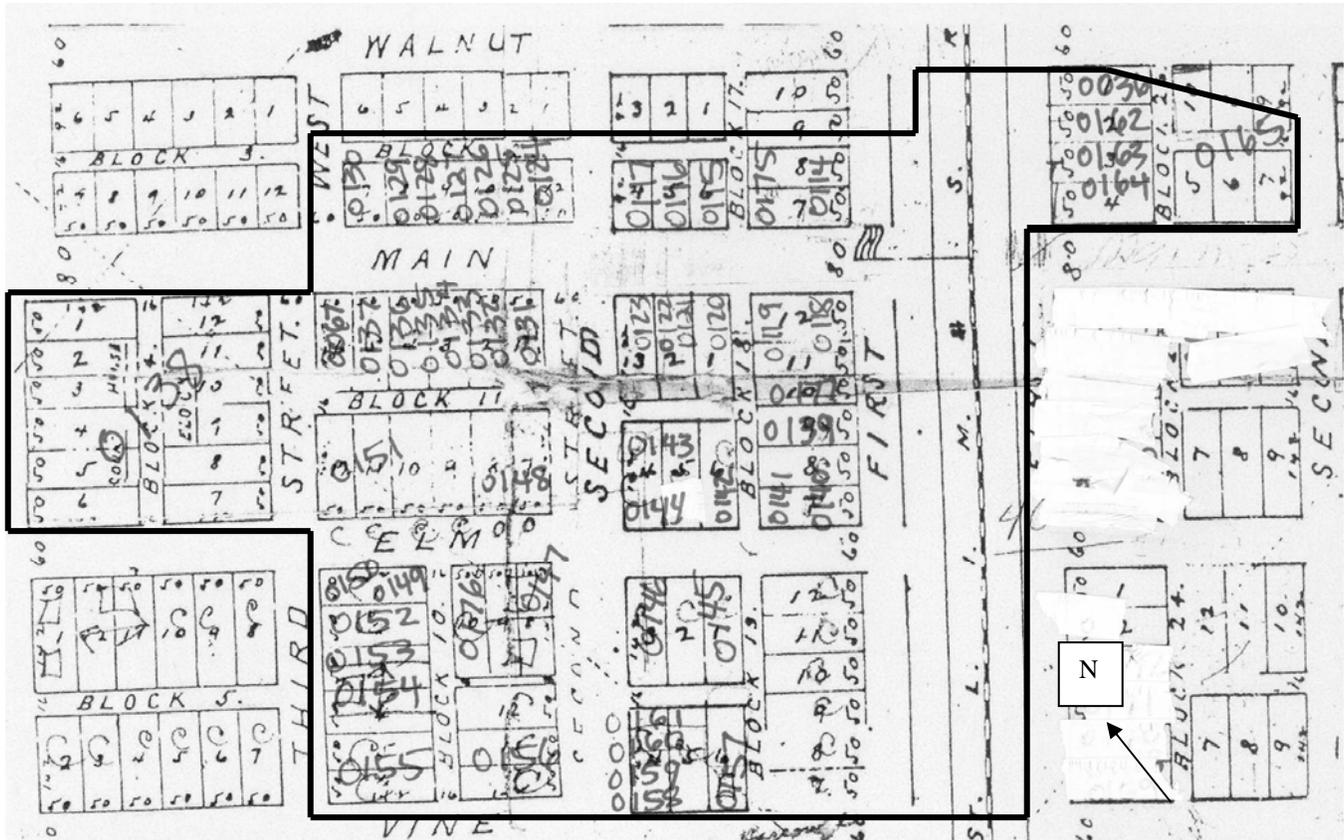
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Map of Walnut Ridge resource numbers