

NR Listed
9-28-9

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 Harrisburg Commercial Historic District

other names/site number PO0001, PO0002, PO0108-PO0138

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Jackson Street (AR 14) on the north, Water Street on the east, South Street on the south, and Gould Street on the west not for publication

city or town Harrisburg vicinity

state Arkansas code AR County Poinsett code 111 zip code 71953

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.)

Catherine Marshall 7/13/09
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Harrisburg Commercial Historic District

Poinsett County, Arkansas

Name of Property

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

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

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

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

2

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store, business, professional, and restaurant
GOVERNMENT/courthouse, post office
RECREATION AND CULTURE/theatre
HEALTH CARE/medical business

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store, business, professional, department store
GOVERNMENT/city hall, library, courthouse
HEALTH CARE/hospital
SOCIAL/meeting hall
HEALTH CARE/clinic, medical business
LANDSCAPE/park

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVMENTS: Commercial Style
LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate
OTHER: No Style
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE, BRICK
walls STUCCO, CUT STONE, BRICK, VINYL/SYNTHETIC, METAL SIDING
roof ASPHALT, METAL, TAR
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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1888-1959

Significant Dates

1888-1959

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Mitchell Selligman, J.E. Hollingsworth, L.D. Freeman, Sr., Stuck, Frier, Lane & Scott, Inc., Stump Construction Co., McAnich & Anderson, Linebarger & Traser

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):

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, etc.

Primary location of additional data:

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State Agency, etc.

Name of repository:

Harrisburg Commercial Historic
District
Name of Property

Poinsett County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 8.80 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>706849</u>	<u>3938022</u>	3	<u>15</u>	<u>706924</u>	<u>3937979</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>15</u>	<u>706918</u>	<u>3937998</u>	4	<u>15</u>	<u>706996</u>	<u>3937950</u>

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 Angie Clifton/ Architectural Historian
organization Panamerican Consultants, Inc. date April 2, 2009
street & number 91 Tillman St. telephone (901) 454-4733
city or town Memphis state TN zip code 38111

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 _____
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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Harrisburg Commercial Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** for its association with early commercial development in Harrisburg. The district is being nominated with **local significance**. The Harrisburg Commercial Historic District exemplifies the growth of the town through its height in the 1950s. The period of significance extends from 1888-1959.

ELABORATION

Harrisburg is the county seat of Poinsett County, Arkansas, and located in the northeast part of the state. Poinsett County is located in eastern Arkansas, and is in the heart of the "Delta" region of east-central Arkansas. Harrisburg is located on the west flank of Crowley's Ridge, an important upland area within of the otherwise low and level Mississippi Alluvial Valley. Geologically, Crowley's Ridge is considered an erosional remnant of unconsolidated Eocene clay, silt, sand, and lignite, capped by Pliocene sand and gravel, and middle to late Pleistocene loess.

Poinsett County was named after Arkansas Congressmen Archibald Yell's friend Joel Roberts Poinsett from South Carolina, who served as Secretary of War during Van Buren's presidency. The county formed February 28, 1838, as the 37th county in Arkansas,¹ and it formed from territory taken from Green and St. Francis counties. When the county was formed there were no towns, only scattered settlers. In 1859, a large portion of the north section of the county was taken to form Craighead County. Part of the southern section of the county was taken to form Cross County in 1862, but land to the east was added to Poinsett County at this time. This added section included the "sunk lands." The New Madrid earthquake occurred December 16, 1811, and lasted for several months. The area known as the "sunken lands" formed during the earthquake when a large area of land sunk beneath the level surface.²

The first known permanent settlers were Charles and Rebekah Shaver and their family, who arrived in the fall of 1824. Settlers slowly migrated into the county. It is recorded that a few Indian villages still existed, and even buffalo still roamed the prairies.³ The first county seat was the town of Bolivar, and its first courthouse was built in 1839. In 1856 an election was held where county citizens voted to move the county seat somewhere between townships 9 and 10 in the center of the county. Benjamin Harris, Sr., donated land three miles south of Bolivar for the new county seat. Harrisburg was named in his honor and laid out in 1856.⁴ The First United Methodist Church in Harrisburg is older than the town having been organized in

¹ Siler, Andrea. "Poinsett County: Rich in History." *The Modern News, Tri-City Tribune, and the Trumann Democrat*. Thursday, May 14, 1992.

² Poinsett County Historical Society. *Poinsett County, Arkansas: History and Families*. Turner Publishing Company: Paducah, Kentucky, 1998, 11-12.

³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴ Herndon, Dallas T. *Centennial History of Arkansas*. Vol. 1. Little Rock, Arkansas: S.J. Clark Publishing Company, 1922.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

the oldest weekly papers to be operated by the same family in the entire nation. The ca. 1890 Harrisburg State Bank Building (PO0117, contributing) located at 100 North Main Street is the oldest recorded bank in Harrisburg. The two-story brick building has arched windows and doors with soldier courses at the roofline giving it an Italianate influence. The ca. 1900 W.C. Landers Grocery (PO0120, contributing) is located at 401 Court Street. The two-story brick building with four crescent windows along the east elevation. The buildings from this time period are scattered throughout the district, although the oldest buildings are along North Main Street on the north and south sides of the courthouse. The 1917 Poinsett County Courthouse (NR listed 11-10-89) was erected in the court square. It replaced a more modest courthouse that burned the previous year. The present courthouse exhibits a grand, formal Classical Revival style with Corinthian columns and full-height, pedimented porticos on the east and west elevations. Harrisburg saw a huge growth during this phase of development that followed the St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Southern Railroad's arrival in 1883. By the time the new courthouse was built the town had a population of over 2,000. The town had two banks, two large cotton gins, a stave mill, several restaurants, two hotels, several dry good stores, grocery stores, a weekly newspaper, and three saw mills. The buildings constructed during this phase of development represent 48% of the district. This phase of construction reflects a time of prosperity and growth in Harrisburg, which is exemplified with the high style architecture shown by its courthouse and the many buildings with an Italianate style influence.

1920-1939

The buildings from Harrisburg dating from the second period in its construction reflect a period of decline with crop prices falling and the Great Depression. Both the banks in Harrisburg and several businesses closed, although 7 buildings were constructed during this time representing 22% of the entire district. These buildings vary between one and two stories and are standard twentieth century commercial structures. The ca. 1925 R.A. Ford Grocery (PO0134, contributing) located at 411 East South Street was the second location for this grocery store. Another grocery store that opened was the ca. 1920 Lamb Grocery Store (PO0126, contributing) located at 100 South East Street. The one-story brick building has kept its original front façade and brick. The two service stations that opened during this phase of development were the ca. 1930 Building at 101-103 South East Street (PO0125, non-contributing) and the ca. 1925 Graddy's Esso Station (PO0108, contributing). The ca. 1930 Old Bank of Harrisburg (PO0109, contributing) located at 211 North Main Street is a one-story brick structure that served as the bank until 1955.

1940-1959

There were only five buildings constructed in the boundaries of the Harrisburg Commercial Historic District in the years between 1940 and 1959. Three of the buildings are brick and one-story, standard twentieth century commercial architecture. The ca. 1955 Bank of Harrisburg (PO0123, contributing) located at 413 Court Street was built as the second location for the bank but later became First National Bank before becoming office space. The Bank of Harrisburg is nearly identical to the ca. 1940 Old Collier and Jennings Law Office (PO0122, contributing) located at 411 Court Street with the high stepped parapets on their front facades. The Bank of Harrisburg has blond brick on the front façade and the Old Collier and Jennings Law

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Office has red brick. Both buildings appear to have been built to match the other buildings in downtown Harrisburg. The ca. 1945 Agricultural Stabilization and Control Service Building (PO0131, non-contributing) located at 635 South East Street is a one-story brick structure with a front gable and board and batten siding above blond brick. The five buildings constructed in this phase of development represent 15% of the district.

1959-Present

Only five total structures (including four buildings and a public park) have been constructed within the boundaries of this district in the last fifty years. These five structures represent 15% of the overall district. The 1967 Municipal Building and Library (PO0130, non-contributing) located at 202 South East Street in the former location of the Hotel Vandiver was designed by Stuck, Frier, Lane & Scott, Inc., and built by Stump Construction Company. Originally an L-shaped brick building, it now has a metal-sided addition in the rear making it U-shaped. The 1976 Harrisburg Bicentennial Park (PO0124, non-contributing) located at the northeast corner of Court and South East Streets was given to the City of Harrisburg by Mr. and Mrs. Maddox. The brick flower beds and posts appear to have been built with recycled brick, possibly from a former standing structure in Harrisburg's downtown. The ca. 1985 Independence Federal Savings and Loan (PO0112, non-contributing) located at 201 North Main Street now functions as the City of Harrisburg's Water and Gas Department. This building is a one-story brick structure with Colonial Revival features, such as recessed molding around doors and windows, dental molding around roofline, and a gable with parapet roof. The construction of this building closed Center Street on the east side of the town square. Everything constructed in the past fifty years is infill where older buildings were lost by fire or deterioration. The 1976 Harrisburg Bicentennial Park and the 1967 Municipal Building and Library could both become contributing once they meet the fifty year criteria, but the other buildings interrupt the continuity of the district and exemplify how much city planning has changed over the past century.

INTEGRITY

With 63.6% of the resources contributing to the integrity of Harrisburg Commercial Historic District, it has a strong visual connection to its period of significance. Interruptions in this district are related to a couple of factors. Like many downtowns, Harrisburg has seen a shift away from the district as the town's commercial center. Most of the businesses have left the district and moved to AR 14 and AR 1. Also, Harrisburg is 20 miles south of Jonesboro, which makes it easy for citizens to drive to shopping centers and restaurants. In many ways, this has helped increase the population, because employees can now commute from Jonesboro back and forth to their homes in Harrisburg. The Harrisburg Commercial Historic District still has several active businesses, as well as an active courthouse and Municipal Building. Twelve or 36% of the buildings are currently vacant. Only two of the vacant buildings are non-contributing, and only three buildings have suffered considerable neglect. Many of the buildings, both contributing and non-contributing, have boarded windows and doors. The alterations on the facades of the majority of the buildings in the district occurred between 1950 and 1960, and only the storefronts were changed leaving the original brick above them. The lack of alterations of the structures in the Harrisburg Commercial Historic District has tremendously helped retain the architectural integrity and continuity of the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

1936, local farmers trying to improve agriculture and rural life formed the Poinsett County Farm Bureau. The first president of the organization and one of the co-founders was G.C. Jernigan. This organization has been important to the community and has produced several leaders who have sought to resolve local issues that will improve the lives of farmers and citizens in the area. Another important entity is the Farmers Supply Association, which formed in 1955 as the Poinsett Farmers Association. It was founded on the principle of "serving the farm community." Today it has grown into a company with sales being over \$30 million and having six stores throughout the region with Harrisburg as its home.¹⁴

The Poinsett County Fair Association organized in the early 1900s and was located in Harrisburg. During World War II, the fairgrounds were used to house German Prisoners-of-war. The POWs worked on local farms and had a hand in rebuilding the local economy.¹⁵

Harrisburg remains a farming community with a population of a little more than 2,000 people. Today it has a grocery store, a few dollar stores, several banks, insurance agencies, several restaurants, a doctor's office, a dentist's office, and agricultural cooperatives. One of the largest attractions in the area is the abundant wildlife and hunting, as well as the Lake Poinsett State Park only 3 miles south of town. Harrisburg is located only 20 miles from Jonesboro, which makes it a great location for citizens to have access to shopping and other industries.¹⁶

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Harrisburg Commercial Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** for its association with early commercial development in Harrisburg. The district is being nominated with **local significance**. The Harrisburg Commercial Historic District exemplifies the growth of the town through its height in the 1950s. The period of significance extends from 1888-1959.

¹⁴ Poinsett County Historical Society. *Poinsett County, Arkansas: History and Families*. Turner Publishing Company: Paducah, Kentucky, 1998, 56.

¹⁵ Harrisburg (Poinsett County). Found at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net>

¹⁶ Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Resource	Address	Current Occupant	Map ID#	C/NC
PO0108	303 North Main Street	Vacant	1	C
PO0109	211 North Main Street	Larry R. Graves/ATC Services	2	C
PO0110	207-209 North Main Street	American Legion/Collier & Jennings Attorney at Law	3	C
PO0111	205 North Main Street	Vacant	4	C
PO0112	201 North Main Street	Water and Gas	5	NC
PO0113	119 North Main Street	Poinsett County Health Clinic	6	NC
PO0114	117 North Main Street	Vacant	7	C
PO0115	113-115 North Main Street	Clyde Ford Insurance/Bonnie's Beauty Salon	8	C
PO0116	210 North Main Street	Vacant	9	C
PO0117	100 North Main Street	Abstracts of Poinsett County	10	C
PO0118	102 North Main Street	Abstracts of Poinsett County	11	C
PO0119	104 North Main Street	Vacant	12	NC
PO0120	401 Court Street	Vacant	13	C
PO0121	403-405 Court Street	Murray's City Barber Shop	14	C
PO0122	411 Court Street	Poinsett County Abstract	15	C
PO0123	413 Court Street	Smith Brothers Construction	16	C
PO0124	Northwest corner of intersection of Court Street and South East Street	Harrisburg Bicentennial Park	17	NC
PO0125	101-103 South East Street	Karaoke Club/Vanausdall Law Firm	18	NC
PO0126	100 South East Street	Vacant	19	C
PO0127	102 South East Street	Vacant	20	C
PO0128	104-106 South East Street	Vacant	21	C
PO0129	108 South East Street	Senior Life Center	22	NC
PO0130	202 South East Street	Municipal Building and Library	23	NC
PO0131	635 South East Street	Vacant	24	NC
PO0132	404 East South Street	Vacant	25	NC
PO0133	401 East South Street	Playschool Daycare	26	NC
PO0134	411 East South Street	Vacant	27	C
PO0135	408 Market Street	Full Gospel Church	28	C

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

PO0136	406 Market Street	Poinsett County Emergency Management and Veteran Services	29	C
PO0137	404 Market Street	Dr. Michelle Imboden Dentist	30	C
PO0138	402 Market Street	Crowley's Ridge Development Council	31	C
PO0001	216 North Main Street	Modern News Building	32	IL
PO0002	Court Square bounded by Main, Court, Market, and East Streets	Poinsett County Courthouse	33	IL

Chart Key:

C = Contributing
NC = Non-Contributing
IL = Individual Listing

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Harrisburg Commercial Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** for its association with early development in Harrisburg and county government activities and **Criterion C** for its variety and quality of 19th and 20th century commercial buildings. The district is being nominated with **local significance**. The Harrisburg Commercial Historic District exemplifies the growth of the town through its height in the 1950s. The period of significance extends from 1888-1959.

ELABORATION

Harrisburg is the county seat of Poinsett County, Arkansas, and located in the northeast part of the state. Poinsett County is located in eastern Arkansas, and is in the heart of the "Delta" region of east-central Arkansas. Harrisburg is located on the west flank of Crowley's Ridge, an important upland area within of the otherwise low and level Mississippi Alluvial Valley. Geologically, Crowley's Ridge is considered an erosional remnant of unconsolidated Eocene clay, silt, sand, and lignite, capped by Pliocene sand and gravel, and middle to late Pleistocene loess.

Poinsett County was named after Arkansas Congressmen Archibald Yell's friend Joel Roberts Poinsett from South Carolina, who served as Secretary of War during Van Buren's presidency. The county formed February 28, 1838, as the 37th county in Arkansas,¹ and it formed from territory taken from Green and St. Francis counties. When the county was formed there were no towns, only scattered settlers. In 1859, a large portion of the north section of the county was taken to form Craighead County. Part of the southern section of the county was taken to form Cross County in 1862, but land to the east was added to Poinsett County at this time. This added section included the "sunk lands." The New Madrid earthquake occurred December 16, 1811, and lasted for several months. The area known as the "sunken lands" formed during the earthquake when a large area of land sunk beneath the level surface.²

The first known permanent settlers were Charles and Rebekah Shaver and their family, who arrived in the fall of 1824. Settlers slowly migrated into the county. It is recorded that a few Indian villages still existed, and even buffalo still roamed the prairies.³ The first county seat was the town of Bolivar, and its first courthouse was built in 1839. In 1856 an election was held where county citizens voted to move the county seat somewhere between townships 9 and 10 in the center of the county. Benjamin Harris, Sr., donated land three miles south of Bolivar for the new county seat. Harrisburg was named in his honor and laid out in 1856.⁴ The First United Methodist Church in Harrisburg is older than the town having been organized in

¹ Siler, Andrea. "Poinsett County: Rich in History." *The Modern News, Tri-City Tribune, and the Trumann Democrat*. Thursday, May 14, 1992.

² Poinsett County Historical Society. *Poinsett County, Arkansas: History and Families*. Turner Publishing Company: Paducah, Kentucky, 1998, 11-12.

³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴ Herndon, Dallas T. *Centennial History of Arkansas*. Vol. 1. Little Rock, Arkansas: S.J. Clark Publishing Company, 1922.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

1845 by Reverend J. M. Steele. The first courthouse in Harrisburg was a log house built in 1857 at the southeast corner of East and South Streets, but in 1859 a brick courthouse was erected at the same location of the present-day courthouse. A man named Alexander Hamilton built the brick courthouse at a cost of \$8,800. William Thrower became Harrisburg's first postmaster and built a log cabin that functioned as a post office and hotel. Harrisburg began to prosper as doctors, lawyers, merchants, and other professionals began to make it their home. James Davidson and Joab Hall opened the first store in 1857. Timber and agriculture were the basis of Harrisburg's economy during this time, and the town had several cotton gins and gristmills.⁵

By the time the Civil War began, it is estimated that there were only 40 slaves living in the county. This might explain one of the reasons why Poinsett County delegation voted against seceding from the Union during the first convention in Little Rock, but during the second convention in Little Rock they voted to secede from the Union. Union troops burned most of the buildings in Harrisburg's town square during the Civil War. The Civil War and its aftermath devastated Harrisburg's economy as young men left to fight and businesses closed.⁶

The economy began to turn around once the railroads arrived in Poinsett County in the early 1880s. This helped the economy tremendously by allowing citizens to get their products to market. The first railroad, called the Texas & St. Louis Railroad, arrived in 1881 and went through the towns of Weiner and Fisher. The St. Louis & Iron Mountain Railway arrived in 1882 and went through White Hall, Harrisburg, and Greenfield. The Kansas City, Fort Scott and Memphis Railway ran along the east side of the county and came through Tyronza and Marked Tree in 1883. The railroads allowed access to large industrial centers. Soon after, Poinsett County began to see considerable growth. Saw mills sprang up all over the county as the hardwood timber in the area began to be harvested. Harrisburg was officially incorporated on February 24, 1883.⁷

A fire burned the interior of the courthouse destroying the county records on September 6, 1873. It took 12 years to finish restoring the building. The courthouse was completely consumed by fire April 1917, but luckily a fireproof vault had been put in the courthouse to keep the records safe. A new courthouse was completed the very next year. The new Poinsett County Courthouse (PO0002, individually listed) was built from Bedford stone and cost \$200,000.⁸

⁵ Siler, Andrea. "Poinsett County: Rich in History." *The Modern News, Tri-City Tribune, and the Trumann Democrat*. Thursday, May 14, 1992.

⁶ Harrisburg (Poinsett County). Found at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net>

⁷ Poinsett County Historical Society. *Poinsett County, Arkansas: History and Families*. Turner Publishing Company: Paducah, Kentucky, 1998, 11-12.

⁸ Siler, Andrea. "Poinsett County: Rich in History." *The Modern News, Tri-City Tribune, and the Trumann Democrat*. Thursday, May 14, 1992.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Many newspapers have published papers in Harrisburg since 1870, but *The Modern News* has been in operation continuously since 1888 making it the oldest weekly newspaper in the United States. L.D. Freeman, Sr., built the Modern News Building (PO0001, individually listed) on North Main Street where the paper is still published and run by the same family today.⁹

Although the Harrisburg school system was established in 1868, Harrisburg did not build a permanent school structure until 1897 when a two-story brick building was constructed on Brooks Street. This building served as a grammar school for grades one through nine until a larger building was erected on South Street in 1918. A new high school was built in 1962, and in 1972 the 1918 Harrisburg School was demolished to make room for a new middle school.¹⁰

When the St. Louis & Iron Mountain Railroad arrived in 1882, Harrisburg's economy began to prosper. By the time the railroad arrived, the Wade and Rook Hotels, four merchandising stores operated by the Gant Brothers, and Simmons Drug Store had opened in downtown Harrisburg. A thirteen-year old girl named Violet Blossom wrote an account in March 1899 stating, "There are now three large hotels here doing well, several restaurants and lunch stands, one meat market which is crowded with orders at all times, one livery stable, four groceries, two drug stores, one bank, with capital of \$25,000, four mammoth dry goods and two millinery establishments, one saloon..."¹¹ In the late nineteenth century, the Kennedy-Morelock Stave Factory made its home in Harrisburg. The Harrisburg Canning Factory opened in 1892 just north of Jackson Avenue. By the turn of the century they had gone out of business, and the building was used as a sawmill. Harrisburg Roller Mill Company, a flourmill, opened late in the nineteenth century, but it burned in 1911. J. B. Huey and T.B. Steele established the first telephone exchange in Harrisburg in 1899. George I. Dill & Son patented a machine that could cut rice in the mud in 1913. They moved their operation to Harrisburg in 1914 and were located in the northwest section of the town. In the late 1910s, Harrisburg had two soft drink bottling works, the Ross Bottling Works and "Bob and Ida Pop."¹²

In the early twentieth century Harrisburg's economy was based on agriculture. Cotton and rice were the two main crops in the area, and the town had several cotton gins and rice mills. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, crop prices declined, several natural disasters occurred, and the Great Depression hit. Both of Harrisburg's banks were dependent on farming and closed in 1932, as well as many businesses.¹³ The Bank of Harrisburg first opened at 211 North Main Street in 1930 during this economic hardship. In

⁹ Poinsett County Historical Society. *Poinsett County, Arkansas: History and Families*. Turner Publishing Company: Paducah, Kentucky, 1998, 42.

¹⁰ Harrisburg (Poinsett County). Found at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net>

¹¹ Siler, Andrea. "Poinsett County: Rich in History." *The Modern News, Tri-City Tribune, and the Trumann Democrat*. Thursday, May 14, 1992.

¹² Poinsett County Historical Society. *Poinsett County, Arkansas: History and Families*. Turner Publishing Company: Paducah, Kentucky, 1998, 34-35.

¹³ Harrisburg (Poinsett County). Found at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net>

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

1936, local farmers trying to improve agriculture and rural life formed the Poinsett County Farm Bureau. The first president of the organization and one of the co-founders was G.C. Jernigan. This organization has been important to the community and has produced several leaders who have sought to resolve local issues that will improve the lives of farmers and citizens in the area. Another important entity is the Farmers Supply Association, which formed in 1955 as the Poinsett Farmers Association. It was founded on the principle of "serving the farm community." Today it has grown into a company with sales being over \$30 million and having six stores throughout the region with Harrisburg as its home.¹⁴

The Poinsett County Fair Association organized in the early 1900s and was located in Harrisburg. During World War II, the fairgrounds were used to house German Prisoners-of-war. The POWs worked on local farms and had a hand in rebuilding the local economy.¹⁵

Harrisburg remains a farming community with a population of a little more than 2,000 people. Today it has a grocery store, a few dollar stores, several banks, insurance agencies, several restaurants, a doctor's office, a dentist's office, and agricultural cooperatives. One of the largest attractions in the area is the abundant wildlife and hunting, as well as the Lake Poinsett State Park only 3 miles south of town. Harrisburg is located only 20 miles from Jonesboro, which makes it a great location for citizens to have access to shopping and other industries.¹⁶

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Harrisburg Commercial Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** for its association with early development in Harrisburg and county government activities and **Criterion C** for its variety and quality of 19th and 20th century commercial buildings. The district is being nominated with **local significance**. The Harrisburg Commercial Historic District exemplifies the growth of the town through its height in the 1950s. The period of significance extends from 1888-1959.

¹⁴ Poinsett County Historical Society. *Poinsett County, Arkansas: History and Families*. Turner Publishing Company: Paducah, Kentucky, 1998, 56.

¹⁵ Harrisburg (Poinsett County). Found at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net>

¹⁶ Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ford, Clyde. Interview. Harrisburg, Arkansas. March 20, 2009.

Harrisburg (Poinsett County). Found at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net>

Herndon, Dallas T. *Centennial History of Arkansas*. Vol. 1. Little Rock, Arkansas: S.J. Clark Publishing Company, 1922.

Longstreth, Richard. *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*. AltaMira Press: Walnut Creek, California, 1987.

Poinsett County Historical Society. *Poinsett County, Arkansas: History and Families*. Turner Publishing Company: Paducah, Kentucky, 1998.

Siler, Andrea. "Poinsett County: Rich in History." *The Modern News, Tri-City Tribune, and the Trumann Democrat*. Thursday, May 14, 1992

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

ADDITIONAL UTMS:

5. 15 706944E 3937788N
6. 15 706903E 3937816N
7. 15 706877E 3937777N
8. 15 706811E 3937782N
9. 15 706851E 3937886N
10. 15 706790E 3937895N
11. 15 706822E 3937998N
12. 15 706843E 3937998N

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning on AR 14 (formerly Jackson St.) at the west end of Graddy's Esso Station (PO0108), proceed east on AR 14 to the east end of Waddle's Drug Store (PO0116), thence proceed south to the parking lot directly east of the middle of the Chicago Store Building (PO0135), thence proceed east past South East St. to the parking lot behind the Agricultural Stabilization and Control Service (PO0131), thence proceed due south to East South Street, thence proceed west to the northeast corner of East South and South East Streets, thence proceed south on South East to the parking lot behind R.A. Ford Grocery Store (PO0134), thence proceed west to North Main St., proceed north to the middle of the west elevation on W. C. Landers Grocery (PO0120), thence proceed west to Gould St., thence proceed north on Gould St. to the end of Old Bank of Harrisburg (PO0109), thence proceed north to AR 14, which is the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

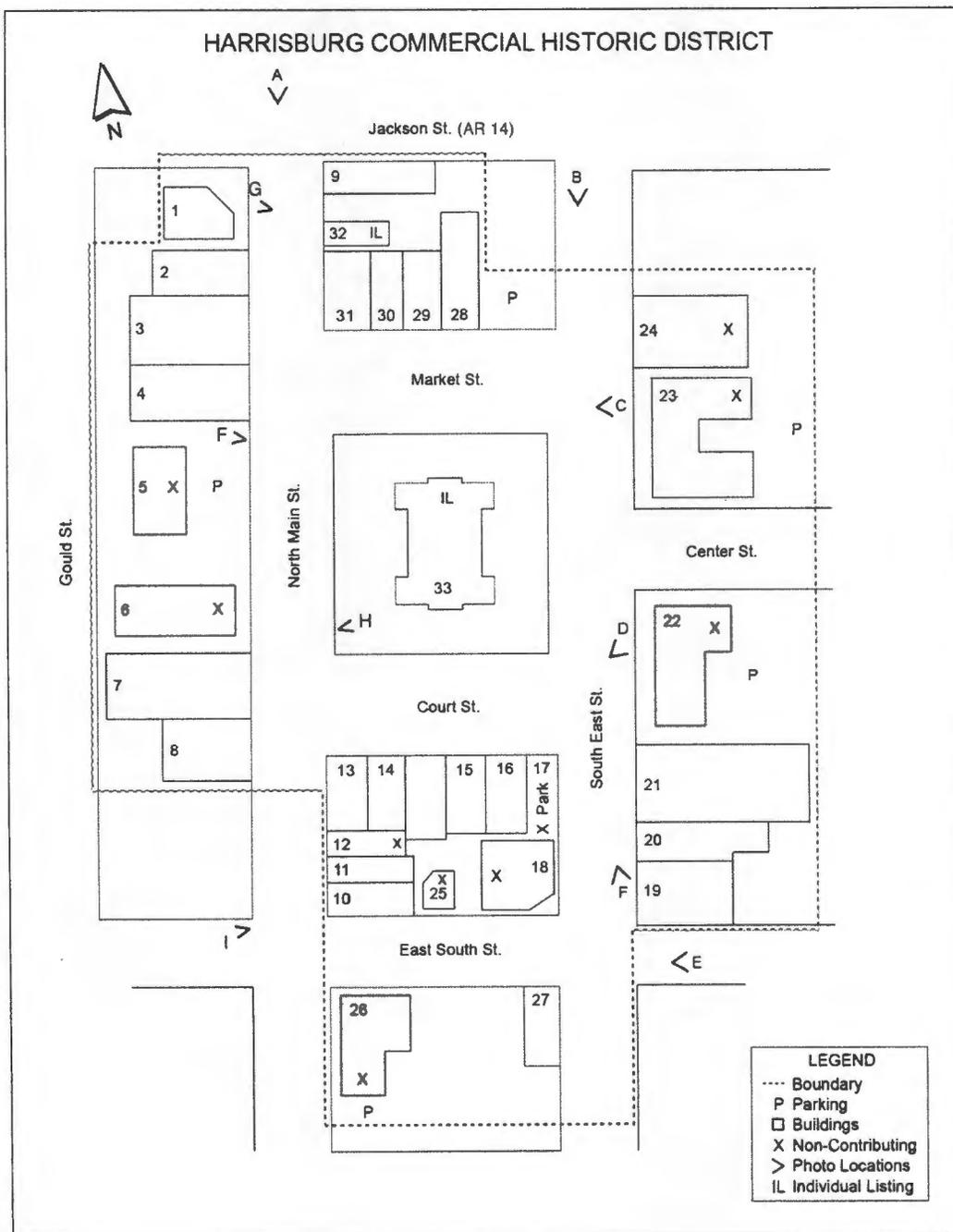
This boundary was drawn to include properties in the Harrisburg Commercial Historic District with the greatest density of structures maintaining a high level of integrity.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 1 Map Page 1

SKETCH MAP



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Historic Page 1
 Photos

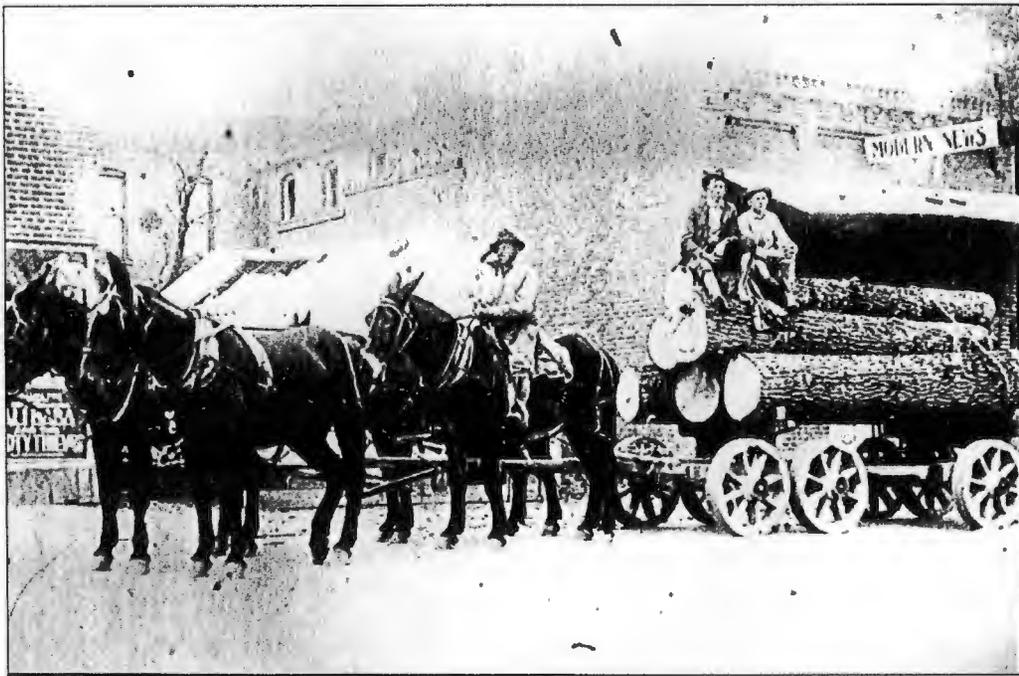


Figure 1. North Main Street viewing southwest at the Modern News Building (NR listed 06-18-76), ca. 1905. [Courtesy of Poinsett County Historical Society. *Poinsett County, Arkansas: History and Families*. Turner Publishing Company: Paducah, Kentucky, 1998.]

Harrisburg Commercial Historic
District

Name of Property

Poinsett County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Historic Page 2
 Photos

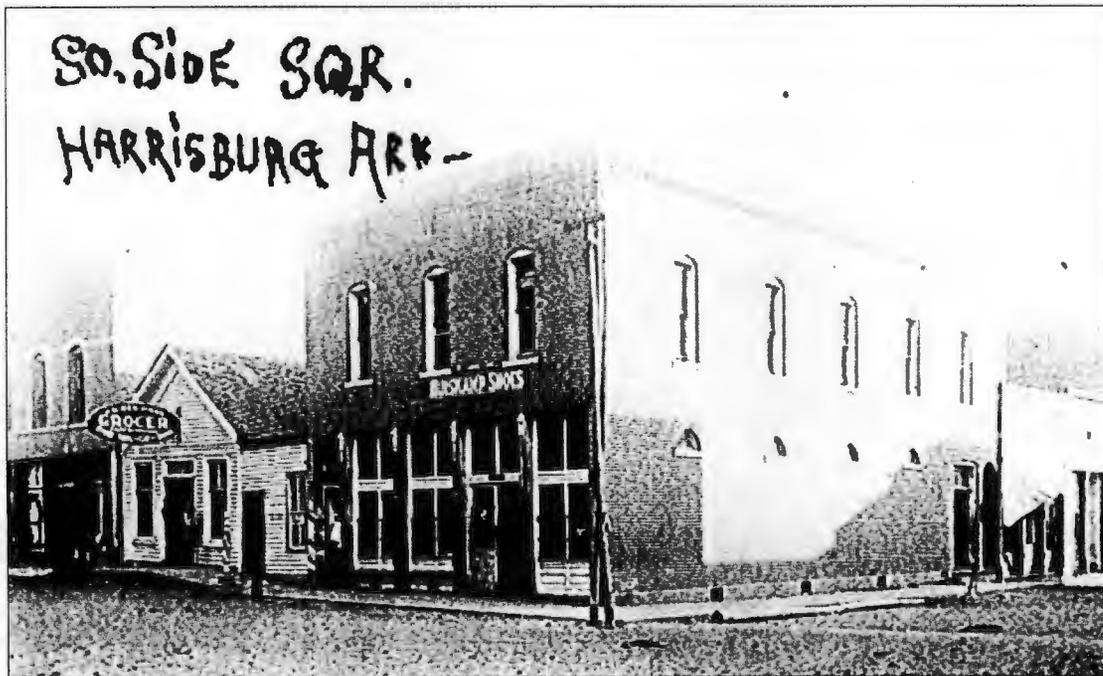


Figure 2. North Main and Court Streets viewing southeast at W.C. Landers Grocery (PO0120, contributing), ca. 1905. [Courtesy of Poinsett County Historical Society. *Poinsett County, Arkansas: History and Families*. Turner Publishing Company: Paducah, Kentucky, 1998.]

Harrisburg Commercial Historic
District

Name of Property

Poinsett County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Historic Page 3
 Photos



Figure 3. North Main Street viewing North, ca. 1960. [Courtesy of Poinsett County Historical Society. *Poinsett County, Arkansas: History and Families*. Turner Publishing Company: Paducah, Kentucky, 1998.]

Harrisburg Commercial Historic
District

Name of Property

Poinsett County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Historic Page 4
 Photos



Figure 4. Intersection of North Main and Market Streets viewing northwest, Fall 1911. [Courtesy of Poinsett County Historical Society. *Poinsett County, Arkansas: History and Families*. Turner Publishing Company: Paducah, Kentucky, 1998.]

Harrisburg Commercial Historic
District
Name of Property

Poinsett County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Historic Page 5
 Photos



Figure 5. East side of Market Street viewing northeast, ca. 1910. [Courtesy of Poinsett County Historical Society. *Poinsett County, Arkansas: History and Families*. Turner Publishing Company: Paducah, Kentucky, 1998.]

Harrisburg Commercial Historic
District

Name of Property

Poinsett County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Historic Page 6
 Photos



Figure 6. North side of the Poinsett County Courthouse (NR listed 11-10-89) view to the South. [Courtesy of Poinsett County Historical Society. *Poinsett County, Arkansas: History and Families*. Turner Publishing Company: Paducah, Kentucky, 1998.]

