

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NR 6-25-09

**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 Pocahontas Commercial Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Rice, Thomasville, Jordan, & McDonald Streets ☐ not for publication N/A

city or town Pocahontas ☐ vicinity N/A

state Arkansas code AR county Randolph code 121 zip code 72455

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.)

Cathie Mather
Signature of certifying official/Title

6/8/09
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

Name of Property

County and State

 Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
43	28	buildings
0	2 (vacant lots)	sites
0	0	structures
0	1	objects
43	31	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

3

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/city hall

COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

GOVERNMENT/post office

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility

HEALTH CARE/ clinic

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/city hall

COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

SOCIAL/meeting hall

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility

EDUCATION/library

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate, Romanesque

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Classical RevivalLATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style

MODERN MOVEMENT/Moderne, Art Deco

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE, BRICK, STONE

walls BRICK, METAL, STONE, WOOD

roof ASPHALT

other bronze

 Descriptive Description

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

Name of Property

County and State

Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

Criteria Considerations 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. 1875-1959

Significant Dates

1875 Old Courthouse

1914 fire along Broadway

1940 New Courthouse

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Henry Lesmeister, architect

Spinnenweber & Peters; John A. McKay; T. Jarvis & Co.;
National Youth Administration, builders.**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:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Pocahontas Commercial Historic

District

Name of Property

Randolph County,

Arkansas

County and State

Geographical DataAcreage of Property 13.75**UTM References**

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>682293</u>	<u>4014817</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>15</u>	<u>682228</u>	<u>4014720</u>

3	<u>15</u>	<u>682194</u>	<u>4014742</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<u>15</u>	<u>682254</u>	<u>4014862</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 Byname/title Joan Gould & Andra Kowalczyk Martens, edited by Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coord.organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date October 2008street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9787city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201**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 locationA **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 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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Continuation Sheet

Pocahontas Commercial Historic District
Pocahontas, Randolph County, Arkansas

Section number 7 Page 1

DESCRIPTION

Pocahontas Commercial Historic District resources

#	Property	address	Owner name	Owner address	Resource number	C/ NC
1	102 N. Bettis	102 N. Bettis	Marilyn Hotze	Box 361, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0063	C
2	St. Charles Hotel	104-106 N. Bettis	Mary Rapert	2805 Killdeer, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0062	C
3	The Villager	108 N. Bettis	Byron & Frances Futrell	3866 Hwy. 90 W., Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0061	NC
4	Merle Norman Studio	110 N. Bettis	Donald & Rebecca Wilson	110 N. Bettis, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0060	C
5	RVI Realtors	112 N. Bettis	McNabb Properties, LLC	Box 733, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0059	C
6	Lewallen Hotel	114-120 N. Bettis	McNabb Properties, LLC	Box 733, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0058	NC
7	207 N. Bettis	207 N. Bettis	Brian Hayes	530 English Hulse Rd., 1401 Hwy. 304E, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0140	C
8	Randolph County Bank /Western Auto Futrell Hardware	102 South Bettis	Byron Futrell	3866 Highway 90 W., Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0074	NC
9	Old Randolph County Courthouse	City Square	Randolph County	201 S. Marr, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0020	IL
	New courthouse	East Broadway x N. Marr	Randolph County	201 S. Marr, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0039	IL
10A	Veterans memorial	Broadway x Van Bibber	Randolph Co.	201 S. Marr, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0039 A	NC

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11	Bank of Pocahontas	101 East Broadway	Bank of Pocahontas	101 E. Broadway, Randolph County Bank	RA0075	NC
12	Presley's Dry Goods Store	104 East Broadway			RA0073	C
13	DeClerk LP Gas	105 East Broadway	Robert A. DeClerk	906 N. Oak, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0070	NC
14	DeClerk LP Gas	109 East Broadway	David, William, & Sharon DeClerk	Box 400, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0071	NC
15	Futrell Pharmacy	115 East Broadway	Mark & Elizabeth Futrell	115 E. Broadway, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0069	C
16	Enclosed Alley	B/W RA0073 & RA0068	J.R. Jackson	Box 467, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0072	C
17	Old City Hall	211-213 East Broadway	James & Amanda Tinker	213 E. Broadway, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0068	C
18	Western Auto storage	212 Broadway	Byron & Frances Futrell	3866 Hwy. 90 W., Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0064	NC
19	Little Flower Health Clinic	108-112 W. Broadway	M.A. & Mary Louise Baltz	C/o Rita Dust, 1410 Paul St., Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0040	C
20	The Broadway Place Building	202 W. Broadway	Broadway Place Inc. c/o Jim King	202 Broadway, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0115	NC
21	Martin Agency	210 W. Broadway	Martin Agency Inc. c/o Robert Olvey	Box 50, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0116	NC
	Million Motors Ford	Broadway x Thomasville Rd.	Elwood Smith Trust	607 Thomasville Rd., Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0117	NC
23	Turner's Saloon	102 East Everett	Fred Brown	102 East Everett,	RA0049	C

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				Pocahontas, AR 72455		
24	Spinnenweber & Peters Grocery	104 East Everett	Wendell & Marilyn Hogan	452 Lake Dr., Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0050	C
25	Spinnenweber & Peters Mercantile	106 East Everett	Five Rivers Historic Preservation	Box 896, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0051	C
26	Jansen Butcher Shop	110-112 East Everett	Five Rivers Historic Preservation	Box 896, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0052	C
27	Pocahontas State Bank	114 East Everett	Joe & Summer Grider	Box 249, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0053	NC
	Voohers Lumber Co.	200 East Everett	James Throgmorton	Box 546, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0054	NC
29	M.M.Carter's Livery Stable	208-210 East Everett	Leslie & David Throesch	Box 463, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0055	NC
30	Hamill Block	102 West Everett	Kenneth or Jan Ziegler trustees	271 Marigold, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0048	C
31	Palace Rexall	104-106 West Everett	Rey Family Trust	349 Middlebrook Rd., Maynard, AR 72444	RA0047	C
32	Sturdy Outdoor Furniture	108 West Everett	David & Leslie Throesch	210 E. Everett, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0110	NC
33	Peters Variety Store	110 W. Everett	David & Leslie Throesch	3722 Pyburn Ext., Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0111	NC
34	Ben Franklin 10 cent	109 W. Everett	Salvation Army	Box 608, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0112	NC
	Van Adkins Clothing	111 W. Everett	Randolph County	107 W. Broadway, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0113	NC
36	Star Herald	314 West Everett	Burklyn Company	1033 Old Burr Rd., Warm	RA0114	C

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Pocahontas Commercial Historic District
Pocahontas, Randolph County, Arkansas

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				Springs, AR 72478		
37	Lewallen House	319 W. Everett	Lewallen Family Living Trust	406 Olive, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0118	NC
38	Pocahontas Police & Fire Station	109 Highway 67 S.	John A. DeClerk	Box 443, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0067	C
39	Concrete Clearwell Building	Next to RA0067	John A. DeClerk	Box 443, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0065	NC
40	Lewallen's carpet & installation	161 Highway 67 S.	Allen Thielemier	289 Mallard Ln., Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0057	C
	State Bank Building	101 N. Marr	Carlton & Madeline Throesch	3674 Engleberg, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0041	C
42	Black River Homestead Co.	103 N. Marr	Wilma & Jimmy Dunlap	Box 764, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0042	C
43	Sanitary Barber Shop	105 N. Marr	Hugh & Joan Hightower	902 W. Church, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0043	C
44	Schneibaum's dry goods	107 N. Marr	Ricky & Crystal Kellet	189 Kellet Rd., Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0044	C
45	Hoxie's	109 N. Marr	Rick Kellet	189 Kellet Rd., Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0045	C
46	Spinnenweber & Peters Wagons & Buggies	111 N. Marr	Wendell & Marilyn Hogan	452 Lake Dr., Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0046	C
47	Enclosed alley	South of 208 N. Marr	Tom Rackley	302 N. Marr, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0130	C
	One-stop Recreation	208-212 N. Marr	Tom & Lugene Rackley	405 Everett, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0131	C
49	Rosie & Joe's Canteen	211 N. Marr	Robert Hick	3265 Country Club Rd., Pocahontas,	RA0129	C

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				AR 72455		
50	Ella Mae's Creative Gallery	214 N. Marr	Ella & William Kincaide	214 N. Marr, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0132	C
51	Raven's Rest	215 N. Marr	Robert & Siobahn Welch	1943 Rapert St., Maynard, AR 72444	RA0128	NC
52	Tom's Family barber Shop	300 N. Marr	Studio for the Arts	1401 Hwy. 304E, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0139	C
53	Imperial Theater	302 N. Marr	Studio for the Arts	1401 Hwy. 304E, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0138	C
54	Camera Corner Portraits	306 N. Marr	James Throgmorton	Box 546, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0137	NC
55	Riverside Petroleum Products	106 McDonald	Riverside Petroleum	Box 106, Box 400, 1401 Hwy. 304E, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0144	C
56	Warehouse	306 McDonald	DeClerk LP Gas	Box 400, 1401 Hwy. 304E, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0142	C
57	Egg Dehydration Plant	306 McDonald	DeClerk LP Gas	Box 400, 1401 Hwy. 304E, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0143	C
58	Pocahontas-Frisco Depot	McDonald	Eugenia Parker	1111 Bowers St., Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0023	C
59	106 Pyburn	106 Pyburn	George Randall Guntharp	3216 Hwy. 115, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0133	NC
60	107 Pyburn	107 Pyburn	Rainer & Sue DeClerk Trustees	1411 Convent, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0127	C
61	Randolph County Deputy	109 Pyburn	Richard	Box 643,	RA0126	NC

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Pocahontas, Randolph County, Arkansas

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	Prosecutor		Castleman	Pocahontas, AR 72455		
62	Shepherd's bookkeeping	112 Pyburn	Mary Ann & Jimmy Shepherd	1150 Harper Cemetery Rd., Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0134	C
63	113 West Pyburn	113 West Pyburn	Adam Byrd	1201 W. Pine, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0125	NC
64	DeClerk-Throesch Engineering	114 Pyburn	Bernard De Clerk & Terry Throesch	114 Pyburn, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0135	NC
	Kajun Konnection Seafood Mkt.	205 Pyburn	Gisele Anita Barlow	2080 Sierra Loop, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0124	NC
66	Opera House Jewelry	207 Pyburn	Gary Leo King	207 W. Pyburn, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0123	C
67	Farmers insurance	209 Pyburn	James DeClerk	505 W. Everett, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0122	C
68	Computer Corner	211 Pyburn	John & Wilma DeClerk	Box 443, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0121	C
69	Pyburn at corner of Vance	Pyburn at corner of Vance	Steve Shults c/o Black River Technical College	1410 Hwy. 304E, 1401 Hwy. 304E, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0141	C
70	Pocahontas post office	109 Van Bibber	Thelma & J.V. Rockwell	Box 85, Corning, AR 72422	RA0018	IL
71	Ostaco	201 N. Van Bibber	Bobbie Bennett	2010 Bryant, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0119	C
	Don R. Brown att.	207 N. Van Bibber	Patrick W. Carroll	301 County Club Rd. #A, Pocahontas, AR 72455	RA0120	NC
73	310 Van Bibber	310 Van Bibber	Alyssa Sotak	3619 Spring Meadow	RA0136	C

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Pocahontas Commercial Historic District
Pocahontas, Randolph County, Arkansas

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				Ln., Lewisville, TX 75028		
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Pocahontas Commercial Historic District
Pocahontas, Randolph County, Arkansas

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Summary

Pocahontas is a small town in Randolph County, Arkansas, with a population in 2000 of 6,518 residents. The town is located along Highway 67 west of the Black River in northeast Arkansas. Pocahontas is approximately 140 miles southwest of Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and approximately 140 miles northeast of Little Rock. The majority of the 73 commercial and institutional buildings that constitute the Pocahontas Commercial Historic District lie to the west of Highway 67; a few are located between the highway and the river. The focal point of the district is the 1875 Randolph County Courthouse, and the buildings on each side of the square date from ca. 1900.

The district is the historic town center; buildings there housed mainly commercial businesses such as dry goods stores, grocery stores, and hardware stores. Included in the district are two courthouses, a former garage, a theater, a former auto showroom and service garage, a WPA post office, and the former City Hall fire and police department buildings. Forty-three of the buildings (56.6%) are contributing district resources due to their age, architectural and historic significance, and integrity. Twenty-eight buildings, two vacant lots, and one object (39.5%) are non-contributing. In addition, three resources (3.9%) are individually listed.

In form and styling, the buildings reflect their historic functions. Most of the buildings of the district demonstrate the popular one- or two-part commercial block form. These buildings have standard storefronts and flat roofs. Storefronts have a mix of original and replacement elements. Generally, stylistic elements are traditional and restrained, and include elements like parapets, brick corbelling, soldier courses, decorative brickwork, and the occasional arched window or door or storefront columns or pilasters. Styles represented within the district include Italianate, Classical Revival, Art Deco, and Art Moderne. The district's buildings and landscape are reflective of its use as a commercial and social center in late nineteenth and early 20th century Pocahontas.

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Pocahontas Commercial Historic District
Pocahontas, Randolph County, Arkansas

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Inventory with Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Resource Numbers

1. 102 North Bettis, RA0063

This is a two-story, ca. 1925, brick commercial building with a flat roof, ca. 1960 metal display windows, single-light glass and wood door, metal casement windows on the side elevation, and a curved, canvas awning. (C)

2. 104-106 North Bettis, RA0062

This is a two-story, mid-to-late nineteenth century, Italianate-influenced, commercial building with a flat roof, brick exterior with corbelled cornice, six segmental arched window openings with two-over-two windows, ca. 1970 remodeled storefront with a full-width, wood shingle awning. (C)

3. 108 North Bettis, RA0061

This is a one-story, early twentieth century building that has been extensively altered ca. 1975. A shed roof with two gable dormers has been applied to the façade to extend over projecting window bays. The roof itself is flat; an original, three-over-one wood sash window is still present on a side elevation that extends past that of the adjacent building. (NC)

4. 110 North Bettis, RA0060

This is a one-story, early twentieth century commercial building whose storefront has been altered with ca. 1960 metal display windows and light-colored brick veneer to original bulkheads. Above the storefront is applied sheet metal. The rear elevation shows common bond, red brick. (C)

5. 112 North Bettis, RA0059

This is a two-story, early twentieth century commercial building with a brick exterior, flat roof, and a turned beltcourse at the roofline of the facade. The storefront has ca. 1955 display windows and an added shed roof awning. (C)

6. 114-120 North Bettis, RA0058

This is a two-story, ca. 1940 commercial building with a brick exterior, flat, parapet roof, and four oriole-type bay windows on the upper façade. The storefront has been altered with vinyl siding and metal windows. Below the roofline is an original, metal and neon hotel sign. (NC)

7. 207 North Bettis, RA0140

This is ca. 1920, one-story garage/warehouse building. The façade has four bays, each with a gable front roof of asphalt shingles and an entrance. The outer two (garage) bays have side-hinged, wood board, double door entrances. The inner two bays have pedestrian entrances. These two bays have been infilled with ca. 1970 wood siding. (C)

8. 102 South Bettis, RA0074

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This is a two-story early twentieth century commercial building from 1908. It has a flat roof, original display windows and bulkheads, an original nine-light, three-panel glass and wood door, a brick exterior, three-light casement windows on the side elevation, a chamfered entrance with a single column supporting a wrap-around porch awning. Across the cornice is brick corbelling. (NC)

9. Broadway at town square, Old Randolph County Courthouse, RA0020

This is a two-story, Italianate courthouse constructed in 1875. It is of brick construction and has a hipped roof of V-crimp metal and original, elongated two-over-two arched, wood sash windows with brick hoods and concrete sills. The eaves have double brackets and dentils. The north and south elevations each have a two-story, projecting entrance bay with a gabled roof. There are brick quoins on the corners of these bays and the main building. Arched entrances have original two-light-and-one-panel glass and wood doors and a two-light transom. The roof has a cupola with paired pilasters flanking a louvered arch, on each elevation. (IL)

Broadway x North Marr Street, New Randolph County Courthouse, RA0039 & RA0039A (memorial)
This Art Deco style, 1940, brick Courthouse has three stories, a flat roof, and a projecting entrance bay with a smooth concrete exterior, four fluted, square columns, and inverted dentils at the cornice. The double-door entry is recessed. Windows are multi-light, fixed and glazed. Site features include two war veteran memorials, a flagpole, and a meteor that landed in the Black River in 1859. (IL)

At the northwest corner of the new courthouse lawn (corner of East Broadway and Van Bibber Street) is a 2006 veterans memorial. It features three life-size, bronze soldiers on rock-faced, square pedestals, arranged as points of a triangle. The figures represent veterans of World War II and the Vietnam and Korean Wars. At the base of the triangular arrangement is a marble triptych engraved with the four branches of military service. (NC)

11. 101 East Broadway, RA0075

This is a one-story, early twentieth century commercial building from ca. 1925 and remodeled ca. 1960 and again ca. 1995. It has a flat roof, fixed, single-light adonized windows and stretcher bond brick veneer on the façade, and six-course American bond brick side walls with segmental arched window openings. (NC)

12. 104 East Broadway, RA0073

This is a two-story early twentieth century commercial building from 1920. It has a flat roof, a storefront of single-light, fixed display windows and bulkheads, an original single-light glass and wood doors, a brick exterior with a corbelled cornice, and one-over-one windows on the second floor. (C)

13. 105 East Broadway, RA0070

This is a one-story, early twentieth century commercial building from ca. 1920 and remodeled ca. 1960. It has a flat roof, fixed, single-light replacement display windows and metal and glass doors, and a façade of brick and applied metal panels above the storefront. (NC)

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14. 109 East Broadway, RA0071

This is a one-story, early twentieth century commercial building from ca. 1920 and remodeled ca. 1960. It has a flat roof, fixed, single-light replacement display windows and metal and glass doors, and a façade of brick and applied metal panels above the storefront. There is also a flat, metal awning across the storefront. (NC)

15. 115 East Broadway, RA0069

This is a one-story, early twentieth century commercial building from ca. 1925 and remodeled ca. 1960 and again ca. 1995. It has a flat roof, fixed, single-light replacement display windows and metal and glass doors. The original brick exterior above the storefront has two rectangular insets, each with an arched vent, and a dentiled cornice above. There is also a curved, canvas awning across the storefront. (C)

16. East Broadway, Enclosed Alley between 104 and 211-213 East Broadway, RA0072

Enclosed in 1942 with brick and block glass and a flat roof. Originally it housed a restaurant. The façade has been boarded over and has a door applied to resemble an entrance. (C)

17. 211-213 East Broadway, RA0068

This is a 1939, two-story building with a stone-faced exterior, flat roof, refitted picture window and ca. 1960 metal and glass doors on the storefront. An entry at each end of the façade is flanked by two-story, brick pilasters. (C)

18. 212 East Broadway, RA0064

This is a ca. 1985, one-and-one-half-story, metal storage building with a gable-front roof of metal, double doors, and a flat awning over the entrance. (NC)

19. 108-112 West Broadway, RA0040

This is a ca. 1940, two-story commercial building with a light-colored brick exterior, flat roof, and original storefront windows, glass and metal doors, and metal awning. Upper floor windows are tree-light, metal casement windows. On the side elevation are two-over-two double-hung windows. (C)

20. 202 West Broadway, RA0115

This is a ca. 1930, one-story, irregularly shaped commercial building with ca. 1970 alterations. The rear elevation shows the original six-course American bond brick construction and flat roof with parapet. Located on a street corner, it has two street façades and a chamfered corner entrance. The two façades have stretcher and brick exteriors on the lower portion and diagonal wood board on the upper portion. Brick pilasters run full-height; windows are ca. 1970, one-light, fixed design. Square, brick columns support a ca. 1970, wrap-around awning cover with diagonal wood board applied. (NC)

21. 210 West Broadway, RA0116

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This is a ca. 1930, one-story commercial building with ca. 1980 alterations. The rear elevation shows the original six-course American bond brick construction. It has a flat roof with parapet. The facade has stretcher bond brick exterior, replacement picture windows, and an applied shed roof awning with wood shingles over a recessed entrance. The awning is supported by a rectangular post with brick veneer. (NC)

22. West Broadway x Thomasville Road, RA0117

This is a ca. 1945, one-story, Art Moderne style auto show room and service garage. It is irregularly shaped, is of brick construction, and has a flat roof. Located on a street corner, it has a curved corner entrance with original glass and metal doors flanked by block glass. Display windows on each street elevation are original, metal, fixed design. Other elevations have six-light casement windows. A side wing, containing four service bays, extends from the back portion of the building, creating an ell. In the ell is a paved lot encompassed by an open-air type metal beam structure with one large, brick support column. (NC)

102 East Everett, RA0049

This is a one-story, late nineteenth century commercial building with a flat roof and a brick exterior. It has an added flat awning over the storefront, which has ca. 1950 display windows with some siding. The upper façade has three vents and a corbelled brick course. (C)

24. 104 East Everett, RA0050

This is a one-story, late nineteenth century commercial building with a flat roof and a brick exterior. It has an added shed roof awning over the storefront, which has ca. 1950 display windows. (C)

25. 106 East Everett, RA0051

This is a two-story, late nineteenth century commercial building of brick construction. It has an added shed roof awning over the storefront and four pairs of two-over-two windows in the upper façade. These have dentils and art glass above. Above each pair of windows is a rectangular inset with a central circular vent in each inset. Across the roofline is a corbelled cornice divided by brick pilasters. (C)

26. 110-112 East Everett, RA0052

This is a one-story, late nineteenth century commercial building of brick construction. The façade has been stuccoed and has ca. 1960 metal display windows. (C)

27. 114 East Everett, RA0053

This is a one-story, early twentieth century bank building in the Classical revival style. It is of brick construction and has cut, smooth stone on the exterior. The three-bay façade is divided by four pilasters. The central bay contains the entrance, and the outer two bays have been infilled with block glass surrounding a picture window. On the rear elevation are original metal casement windows. (NC)

28. 200 East Everett, RA0054

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This is a one-story, ca. 1900 commercial building of brick stone and brick construction. The storefront has been extensively altered with ca. 1960 materials. (NC)

29. 208-210 East Everett, RA0055

This is a one-story, late nineteenth century commercial building that has been extensively altered ca. 1975. The storefront has applied field stone, ca. 1907 solid doors, and a shed awning with asphalt shingles. On the rear is a frame addition on concrete piers and has metal siding and vinyl windows. (NC)

30. 102 West Everett, RA0048

This is a two-story, late nineteenth century commercial building with a flat roof and a brick exterior. It has a flat roof awning over the wrap-around storefront, which has ca. 1950, metal display windows and doors. The side elevation has stucco added. The corner is chamfered. (C)

31. 108 West Everett, RA0047

This is a one-story, ca. 1945 commercial building with a flat roof, brick exterior, and original display windows and doors. There are four entrances on the façade. (C)

32. Building west of 108 West Everett, RA0110

This ca. 1940, one-story commercial building has a flat roof, recessed entrance, and brick exterior. It has original storefront components of metal display windows, bulkheads with carrara glass, glass and metal doors, and an aluminum, flat awning. (NC)

33. West Everett x Van Bibber, RA0111

This is a ca. 1915, brick, one-and-one-half-story commercial building with a metal gable roof applied on top of the original flat roof. The storefront has original components of wooden bulkheads, display windows, single-light glass and wood double doors. It has a recessed entrance and a shed roof awning of V-crimped metal. In the upper façade are three rectangular insets; the central one has a concrete block engraved with the name "Peters." At the roofline is a turned brick course. (NC)

34. 109 West Everett, RA0112

This is a ca. 1930, one-story, brick commercial building with a flat roof with parapet and ca. 1960 storefront components of metal display windows, doors and bulkheads. The entrance is recessed under a flat awning-like cover. There is metal siding above. (NC)

35. 111 West Everett, RA0113

This is a ca. 1930, one-story, brick commercial building with a flat roof and ca. 1960 storefront components of metal display windows, doors, and bulkheads. The entrance is recessed under a flat awning-like cover over a tiled floor. On the side elevation are original, three-light, metal casement windows and a side entrance to the basement. This secondary entrance is also recessed. (NC)

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36. 314 West Everett, RA0114

This is a ca. 1930, one-story commercial building of six-course American bond brick construction. The façade has brick veneer, ca. 1950 metal windows and metal awnings. The roof is flat with parapet. (C)

37. 319 West Everett, RA0118

This is a ca. 1920, one-and-one-half-story bungalow dwelling with a gable roof of asphalt shingles, stucco exterior, shed roof dormers, and two interior brick chimneys. Two elevations have been completely refitted with multiple twelve-light metal casement windows from floor to ceiling. This section has a flat roof. On the opposite side of the dwelling there is a small projecting bay with an entrance and a gable roof. Other windows are original three-over-one, double-hung wood sash design. (NC)

38. 109 Highway 67 South, RA0067

This is a two-story building from ca. 1939 with a stone-faced exterior, flat roof, fixed picture windows and a refitted/infilled entrance from ca. 1980 covered by a shed roof canopy. (C)

39. Highway 67 South, Building adjacent to 109 Highway 67, RA0065

This is a one-story storage building from ca. 1940 with a flat roof, solid door, and shed roof canopy. (NC)

40. 161 Highway 67 South, RA0057

This is a two-story, ca. 1940 commercial building with a brick exterior, flat, parapet roof, and one-over-one windows on the upper façade. The storefront has multiple entrances, including a bay door. (C)

41. 101 North Marr, RA0041

This is a late nineteenth century, two-story commercial (bank) building in the Romanesque Revival style. Its first story has a large, central, rounded arch with original single-light doors and sidelights. The upper floor has four one-over-one windows with rounded arched masonry above. The roofline has corbelling and is divided by four brick pilasters. A ca. 1995 deck and stairs have been added to the rear elevation. The side elevation has an original two-light, two-panel glass and wood door and an opening that has been infilled with a picture window and shiplap siding. (C)

42. 103 North Marr, RA0042

This is a one-and-one-half-story, late nineteenth century commercial building of brick construction. It has a flat roof with corbelling at the roofline and within three rectangular insets in the upper façade, which is divided by four brick pilasters. Each inset has an arched vent. An added shed awning is below and covers the storefront with ca. 1950 metal display windows and bulkheads. (C)

43. 105 North Marr, RA0043

This is a late nineteenth century, one story, one-bay commercial building with a single segmental arch continuing the style from adjacent 107 North Marr. The storefront consists of a ca. 1960 metal and glass door with sidelights, flanked by brick pilasters. (C)

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44. 107 North Marr, RA0044

This is a one-and-one-half-story, late nineteenth century commercial building of brick construction. It has a flat roof with detailed corbelling at the roofline. The upper façade has five arched vents, divided by six brick pilasters. Below each vent is a segmental arch with stucco infill. An added shed awning is below and covers a ca. 1980 altered storefront. (C)

45. 109 North Marr, RA0045

This alley once housed a small, frame building used as a tavern/bar. The front of the alley was enclosed with brick ca. 1920. (C)

46. 111 North Marr, RA0046

This is a one-story ca. 1900 commercial building of brick construction. It has a flat roof and a recessed entrance. The storefront has ca. 1950 metal display windows and a shed roof awning. (C)

47. North Marr, Alley between 102 East Everett and 208 North Marr, RA0130

This is a one-story enclosed alley that originally housed a small, ca. 1900 building only one-third the depth of adjacent buildings. Its upper façade matches that of 208 North Marr with light-colored brick exterior and a rectangular inset and corbelling at the roofline. The lower façade has a ca. 1980 door and plywood covering. (C)

48. 208-212 North Marr, RA0131

This is ca. 1900, one-story commercial building of brick construction. It has a flat roof and an interior end, brick chimney. The storefront has been altered ca. 1960 with metal display windows and metal paneling above the aluminum, flat awning. Of the two entrances, one is recessed. The upper façade retains original center and outer pilasters of brick, four vents, and detailed brickcourses. On the rear elevation are two recessed, arched entrances. (C)

49. 211 North Marr, RA0129

This is a ca. 1922, one-story commercial building of brick construction. It has a flat roof. Its façade has been altered ca. 1960 with its storefront infilled with plywood siding. The upper façade retains original brick insets. (C)

50. 214 North Marr, RA0132

This is a ca. 1900, one-story commercial building of five-course American bond brick construction with a stone foundation. The façade has Roman brick veneer and ca. 1960 storefront metal windows. Half of the storefront is recessed on a diagonal with the entrance in the deepest portion. On the rear there is a central entrance, and segmental arched openings have been filled with concrete block. (C)

51. 215 North Marr, RA0128

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This is ca. 1900, one-story, corner-lot commercial building with extensive ca. 1950 alterations including an off-center, recessed entrance bay with glass and metal door and metal windows, picture windows, and an applied surround of carrara glass. Ca. 1980 alterations include an added shed roof to the original flat roof, with T-111 siding in the upper portion on the façade. (NC)

52. 300 North Marr, RA0139

This is a ca. 1940, one-story commercial building of brick construction with a flat roof. The façade has ca. 1990 paired metal display windows, sidelights and transom and glazed brick veneer. The side elevations have plain brick. Other windows are three-light casement design. (C)

53. 302 North Marr, RA0138

This is a two-story, ca. 1940, Art Deco-style theater of brick construction. It has a flat roof with a stepped parapet. On the façade is a central box office. To each side is a recessed entrance with a pair of original, one-light glass and wood doors. On the upper façade is a central bay that projects slightly from the surface; within it is a central bank of block glass flanked by upright-rectangular vents. The outer two bays have a brick veneer a shade lighter in color with rectangular insets of the darker brick. The brick on the façade is all glazed. (C) (Behind the theater is a ca. 1990, one-story, gable roof, metal shed.)

54. 306 North Marr, RA0137

At this location is a ca. 1920 dwelling converted into a shop. It is one-story, has a gable front roof of asphalt shingles, vinyl siding that covers much of the original fenestration, and a foundation that is partially stone and concrete piers. The façade has a central entrance and picture window. There is an original one-over-one wood sash window on a side elevation. (NC)

55. 106 McDonald, RA0144

This is a ca. 1900, one-story warehouse type building of frame construction and metal siding. It has a gable roof of metal and fixed, single-light windows. The façade has a bay door and a pedestrian entrance. On the rear elevation is a partial-width, shed roof addition. In front of the building is a pumping island; to the side are five above-ground, metal fuel tanks. (C)

56. 306 McDonald, RA0142

This is a ca. 1920, one-and-one-half-story warehouse of five-course American bond brick construction. It has a gambrel roof covered in V-crimp metal with a brick parapet at the rear elevation. The main entrance has a ca. 1980 door; the rear entrance has an original, five-panel, wood door. Windows are one-over-one, two-over-two, and three-over-one, double-hung, wood sash. On the front and side elevation are concrete loading docks. At the rear is a concrete foundation of a removed portion or other building. (C)

57. 306 McDonald, RA0143

This is ca. 1925, two-story warehouse originally used as an egg dehydration plant. It is of six-course American bond brick construction with a flat roof with parapet. At the rear is a wing addition with vinyl

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siding and a shed roof of asphalt shingles. The façade has fixed single-light windows and a small, frame, entrance porch with a shed roof. (C)

58. McDonald Street, Pocahontas-Frisco Railroad Depot, RA0023

This is a ca. 1920, one-story, frame depot building. It has diagonal wood board siding and a hipped roof of asphalt shingles. Windows are double-hung, wood sash four-over-four and single-light, fixed. It has multiple entrances including a bay door. The rear elevation has a small projecting bay. (C)

59. 106 Pyburn, RA0133

This is a ca. 1925, one-story commercial building of six-course American bond brick construction. On the façade, the storefront has been infilled with T-111 siding flanking the central entrance. A full-width, metal, shed roof awning spans the façade. The upper façade retains the original brick exterior, three vents, and two dentil rows. The cornice is covered in a metal strip. (NC)

60. 107 Pyburn, RA0127

This is a ca. 1920, one-story commercial building of brick construction. On the façade it has a recessed, central entrance with an original single-light glass and wood door, ca. 1965 brick bulkheads and metal display windows, wood paneling covering the transom portion of the storefront, and corbelling at the roofline. (C)

61. 109 Pyburn, RA0126

This is a ca. 1925, one-story commercial building. It has a flat roof, Roman brick veneer on the lower façade, and added metal siding on the upper façade. The façade also has ca. 1950 metal windows, glass and metal door, and flat, aluminum awning. (NC)

62. 112 Pyburn, RA0134

This is a ca. 1930, one-story commercial building of brick construction with a flat roof and metal, 20-light casement windows. The central entrance has an original, single-light glass and wood door in a recessed alcove and a ca. 1960 replacement glass and metal door. Both entrances and a ca. 1960, multi-light picture windows have individual awnings. (C)

63. 113 Pyburn, RA0125

This is a two-story, ca. 1900 warehouse building of brick construction. It has been altered ca. 1975 with metal windows and door, a panel garage door and ca. 1990 corrugated, synthetic paneling on the upper façade. (NC)

64. 114 Pyburn, RA0135

This is a ca. 1940, one-story commercial building of brick construction with a flat roof with parapet. On the façade is a glazed brick veneer, a recessed entrance with a ca. 1960 three-square-light wood door, multi-plate glass windows with wood surround, and sheet metal across the upper façade. (NC)

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65. 205 Pyburn, RA0124

This is a ca. 1945, one-story, irregularly shaped, Art Moderne style garage of concrete block construction. It has a stucco exterior and a flat roof. The building comprises an office bay with a chamfered corner, original, metal picture windows atop original bulkheads, and a small alcove for restrooms, concealed by a small privacy wall, and a garage service bay. The latter is obscured behind a ca. 1985 projecting addition of frame and sheet metal construction with a gable front roof of sheet metal. (NC)

66. 207 Pyburn, RA0123

This is a ca. 1920, two-story commercial building of six-course American bond brick construction. It has a flat roof with parapet. On the façade are wood, square, fluted, two-story pilasters with a mantel across the cornice and between stories. The same treatment surrounds the central entrance, which is flanked by ca. 1970 single-light picture windows. Two second floor windows are covered with plywood. Above each window is a flat roof. There is a side shed roof addition and a shed roof garage added to the rear elevation. (C)

67. 209 Pyburn, RA0122

This is a ca. 1920, one-story commercial building of six-course American bond brick construction. It has a flat roof. On the façade the central entrance is flanked by paired five-light casement windows with wood shutters. The entrance has a wood door within a retro-fitted wood-panel infill. Above the entrance is a flat canopy with knee-brace brackets and decorative engaged posts. Above the windows and entrance is a nearly full-width, rectangular, brick inset with dentils and two vents. Below the roofline is decorative brickwork. A rear entrance has a shed roof awning. (C)

68. 211 Pyburn, RA0121

This is a ca. 1920, one-story commercial building of six-course American bond brick construction. It has a flat roof with parapet. On the façade are a ca. 1980 picture window and entrance. These are covered by a hipped roof, metal clad awning with decorative engaged posts. A rear entrance has a shed roof awning. (C)

69. Pyburn, west of Vance intersection, RA0141

This is a ca. 1930, one-story dwelling, now vacant. It is of frame construction and has aluminum siding and a gable roof of metal. Windows are four-over-four wood sash, double-hung design. The façade has double doors and a transom. (C)

70. 109 Van Bibber, RA0018

This is an Art Deco style original post office building constructed in 1936 with a loading dock added to the rear in 1965. It is one-story, of brick construction, and has a flat roof with parapet. On the façade is a central entrance with concrete steps leading to double doors. Windows are double-hung, wood sash, one-over-one, three-over-three, and six-over-six. On the rear elevation is a brick chimney. (IL)

71. 201 North Van Bibber, RA0119

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This is a ca. 1920, one-story commercial building of six-course American bond brick construction with a flat roof with parapet and interior, brick chimney. On the façade are ca. 1950, aluminum, fixed, single-light windows, replacement doors, and brick veneer and T-111 siding added. (C)

72. 207 North Van Bibber, RA0120

This is a ca. 1970, one-story office building with stretched bond brick, a flat roof, and original, fixed, single-light windows. On the façade is a nearly full-width projecting bay comprised of three bays and cover with a shed roof awning. The central bay is inset with an entrance. On the rear elevation there is added T-111 siding. (NC)

73. 310 Van Bibber, RA0136

This is a ca. 1920, one-story commercial building of six-course American bond brick construction. The storefront on the façade has been altered ca. 1970 with a refitted entrance of a paneled wood door and wood pilasters with paneling above. Flanking the entrance are four-light casement windows that resemble two-over-two, wood sash, double-hung windows. Across the storefront is a shed roof, metal awning. At the cornice is a turned brick course. (C)

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Pocahontas Commercial Historic District in Randolph 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 equidistant from Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and Little Rock, Arkansas, Pocahontas developed as an important commercial and cultural center of the county and surrounding area. Nineteenth-century settlers mainly from Kentucky and Tennessee established the county seat there in 1836. Steamboat traffic on the Black River enabled the transportation of products as diverse as cotton and pearl buttons. The town's economy grew as Pocahontas became a leading trading center of the region during the mid-nineteenth century. Agricultural products continued to fuel the town's prosperity following the Civil War.

Criterion C: Architecture

The buildings within the Pocahontas Commercial Historic District represent architectural significance on the local level. One- and two-part commercial block buildings around the town square are modest examples of these common early-20th-century forms. A fire on the south block of the square eliminated that row of nineteenth century buildings in 1914; however, many of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings on the other three sides of other square are extant and represent a period of growth that included the influx of German immigrants who were directly responsible for the town's architecture. The construction of many of these buildings possess a unified appearance, as they were designed, built, and constructed of brick from the same German architect, builders, and brick maker, respectively. Buildings from the 1920s-1930s, one block north of the square, illustrate the town's continued growth into the twentieth century. Though some storefronts 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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SUMMARY

Pocahontas, established in 1836 as the Seat of Justice for Randolph County, is located on the banks of the Black River in northeast Arkansas. Geographically the county is bisected on the diagonal with the Ozark foothills to the north and west joining the Delta lowlands to the east and south. The town overlays centuries of earlier occupation and was mapped in the 1670s by the Marquette and Jolliet Expedition. The earliest Anglo Americans and African Americans arrived in the area two centuries ago as part of the first wave of immigrants to the Trans-Mississippi West creating one of the earliest settled areas in what became the state of Arkansas; many descendants of these founding families continuing to reside in the area today. Pocahontas has served the county as seat of justice since 1836 with the 1875 brick Italianate Courthouse (listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973) continuing to dominate the court square amidst historically significant commercial structures. The majority of the circa 1900 structures comprising the historic downtown commercial district were designed by architect Henry Lesmeister and built of brick from local kilns using the clays from the surrounding hillsides – the same clays found in the areas' ancient artifacts produced by past cultures.

ELABORATION

The geography of the area that encompasses present-day Randolph County has fostered human occupation for centuries. Within its boundaries five rivers, the Black, Current, Eleven Point, Fourche, and Spring, with their numerous smaller tributaries and plentiful springs have supported use of the area since the last Ice Age, 18,000 – 14,000 years ago. Specifically, current occupation of the modern-day town of Pocahontas on the banks of the Black River over-lays numerous preceding cultures.

During this latest Ice Age period the ancestral Mississippi River, a large braided stream system, carried melted glacial waters and gravel through the western lowlands of Arkansas. By 14,000 years ago this ancient river broke through the north end of what has become known as Crowley's Ridge to the east of Randolph County, joined the Ohio River, and became the meandering river the Mississippi is today. About 13,000 years ago Paleo-Indian hunters from Asia first colonized the central-Mississippi valley. From Dalton Culture hunters 10,000 years ago to farmers of the Mississippian Period, 1,200 to 500 years ago, numerous pre-historic cultures have lived, hunted, fished, farmed, built homes, and buried their dead on the shores of the Black River¹

Ethno historical and archeological research was combined in the 1980s to locate a seventeenth century Michigamea village on the east bank of the Black River at Pocahontas. French documents of the late-seventeenth century, including a 1673 map by Pere` Jacques Marquette, described four Indian villages - three Quapaw and one Michigamea - in northeast Arkansas. The Michigamea helped initiate the colonial period in

¹ J. E. Morrow, "Schaeffer's Eddy Access and Archeological Site." Site signage: Pocahontas, Randolph County, Arkansas.

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Arkansas when they were serving as trade intermediaries between the French and the Quapaw and, possibly, lower Arkansas River tribes before the arrival of Marquette and Louis Jolliet. The Michigamea site was almost exactly halfway between Kaskaskia [Illinois] and the 1673 – 1690 Kappa site [the major Quapaw village on the western side of the Mississippi River] by the Natchitoches Trace. Present-day Pocahontas encompasses, in part, the late-1600s Michigamea village, supporting the claim that it has been a strategic trading site for centuries.²

The Michigamea were but one of numerous Indian tribes that used what became known as the Natchitoches Trace, or Southwest Trail as it's more frequently called in Arkansas, which extended from Vincennes, Indiana, to Natchitoches, Louisiana. It was this trail that initiated the first permanent settlement in the region. A diverse mix of French, Spanish, Cherokee, Shawnee, and numerous other Indian tribes resided on the western shores of the Mississippi, including the region of what became Randolph County, during the vernances of what was commonly known as Spanish Louisiana in the late- 1700s. American settlement west of the Mississippi River began in earnest from 1795 – 1803.

The 1795 Treaty of San Lorenzo del Escorial, or Pinckney's Treaty, between Spain and the United States was the major turning point for the immigration to Spanish Louisiana. It defined the Spanish-American boundaries and opened the Mississippi to American trade without cargo duties at Spanish New Orleans. To publicize the attractiveness of their lands and new policies on trade, the Spanish commandants circulated English-language pamphlets and placed newspaper advertisements in Kentucky, knowing there was much dissatisfaction for Kentuckians over land transactions. The promotions worked and the much desired aspect of Spanish Louisiana's overall plan began - to build up a population barrier of Americans against British encroachment from Canada.³

Word spread quickly, and John Reynolds, living in the Holston River Valley of Tennessee recorded the reactions in his homeland. He relates that the Byrd (Bird) and Murphy families, respectable families with numerous connections, went to Spanish Louisiana to inspect the land. They came back to east Tennessee and "put the people on fire to move." He states his father caught the mania and joined the multitudes heading for what was then the "Far-West."⁴

Of the hundreds of Holston River Valley families and their African American slaves who would open Americanization of this "Far-West", some settled initially in the very earliest years of the 1800s in what became Randolph County. It was ca. 1803 that Tennessean middle-aged William Hix with his adult children settled on the Current River and established the first regional ferry where the Natchitoches Trace crossed the

² Walthall and Emerson, editors, *Calumet Fleur-De-Lys: Archeology of Indian and French Contact in the Midcontinent*. Washington D. C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1992, 55-61.

³ Walter A. Schroeder, *Opening the Ozarks: A Historical Geography of Missouri's Ste. Genevieve District 1760 – 1830*. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2002, 415.

⁴ John Reynolds, *The Pioneer History of Illinois*, 2nd Edition. Chicago: Fergus Printing Company, 1887, 298.

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Current; several other Holston Valley families with their African American slaves were among the areas' circa 1800 settlers. Later, numerous Holston Valley families who had settled in what became Missouri moved further south, settling permanently or semi-permanently prior to the creation of Arkansas Territory. Today the majority of Randolph County, Arkansas, residents, Anglo American and African American, descend from ancestors of the Holston Valley in Tennessee, including some from the same Byrd family who initiated the mania to move west (William Byrd probate) This inter-connectedness has contributed significantly to an exceptional settlement history for both the state and region.

It was on May 4, 1803, that the United States acquired the vast lands west of the Mississippi with the future Randolph County a part of what was referred to as the Louisiana Purchase. Following several governmental changes, Randolph's parent – the vast landmass of Lawrence County - was created in 1815 as part of Missouri Territory with the seat of justice located at Davidsonville, epicenter of its populated area. The site Davidsonville on the Black River is only a few miles south of Pocahontas in present-day Randolph County. This, thereby, provided the early residents of the area with the services of the first regional post office (1817), subscription school (circa 1815 – 1818), and organization of the Baptist Church (1818). These organizations took place under the governance of Missouri Territory and were enhanced by the benefit of the Natchitoches Trace, or Southwest Trail, connecting residents to outside markets of the day.⁵

The area had been settled for nearly two decades and had fallen under the governance of the District of Louisiana, District of New Madrid, New Madrid County, Missouri Territory, Lawrence County, Missouri Territory, Wayne County, Missouri Territory before Lawrence County, Arkansas Territory, was created on July 4, 1819.⁶ In 1831 the section of the Southwest Trail that ran diagonally across future Randolph County became the first road in the nation west of the Mississippi to receive federal support for improvement, after which it was known as the Military Road and became the territory's first leg of an extended mail route.⁷ These advantages, plus rich farmlands and abundant natural resources, prompted the early families of the area to put down permanent roots.

This relatively stable population growth of the early 1800s gave rise to the creation of Randolph County on October 29, 1835, by the Arkansas Territorial legislature. It is named for John Randolph, a Unites States Senator from Virginia who was influential in obtaining congressional approval of the Louisiana Purchase of which Randolph County is a part. Created out of its parent county, Lawrence, it originally encompassed the area west of the Cache River that now comprises Clay County. Establishment of the seat of justice was the first act of the county government in 1836, the same year the state of Arkansas was chartered. County commissioners were appointed to select two communities that would be suitable for the location of the seat of justice. Selected were Columbia, located along the ancient trail that had been the trade route for centuries

⁵ Carter, Clarence Edwin, *Territorial Papers of the United States, Volume XV, Louisiana – Missouri Territory 1815 – 1821*. Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1936, n.p.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

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and the other, Bettis' Bluff, established prior to 1830 on land owned by Ransom Bettis and his son-in-law Thomas Drew and located on the western bank of the Black River near the old Michigamea village. According to Goodspeed's history:

*The larger portion of the settlers had gathered (located) in the northern part of the county, and felt confident that the people would select the place at the springs (Columbia) for the seat of justice. Messrs. Drew and Bettis gave a free barbeque at the site of Pocahontas (Bettis Bluff), and, as men could then vote at anywhere in the county, the barbeque proved a sufficient inducement to draw voters enough to secure a small majority in favor of locating the seat of justice at the latter place. Here it was accordingly placed, and has since remained.*⁸

It was the river site that won the majority vote of the residents, due partly to the barbeque but perhaps also to yard thinking. The first steamboat, the seventy-five foot long *Laurell*, had made stops at Black River towns including then Bettis' Bluff in 1829 creating great excitement. The steamboat industry was changing settlement and trade patterns across the state and region. By the 1830s numerous steamboats were plying the Black River giving good reason for a new seat of justice to prosper as a river port.⁹

The newly created seat of justice for Randolph County was named Pocahontas. A post office was soon established and Thomas O. Marr was the postmaster. On July 27, 1837, Thomas Drew, destined to become the third governor of the state of Arkansas, donated a significant amount of property to the commissioners of the county for the purpose of building a courthouse and other public buildings. Ransom Bettis, and Thomas O. Marr, brother-in-law of Bettis, donated additional land. Streets were named for these and other local leaders.¹⁰

The first two-story courthouse was, according to Goodspeed, made of brick and measured forty-foot square. It was constructed by Thomas Marr between 1837 and 1839 for \$2,400. The first courthouse stood until about 1870 when improper construction caused the structure to begin falling.¹¹ The building was offered as a \$1,000 credit to the contractor building the second courthouse.¹²

Dr. Michael Beshoar, former state representative and county judge for Randolph County, noted in 1860s diary entries that this first courthouse in "Poca" had floors of quarter-sawn pine and a large fireplace on each

⁸ *The Goodspeed Bibliographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeastern Arkansas*. Chicago, Nashville, and Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1889, 365.

⁹ S.W. Stockard, *the History of Lawrence, Jackson, Independence, and Stone Counties of the third Judicial District*. Little Rock: Arkansas Democrat Company, 1904, 112.

¹⁰ Lawrence Dalton, *History of Randolph County*. Little Rock: Democrat Printing and Lithographing Company, 1946, 59.

¹¹ Goodspeed, p. 365.

¹² Dalton, 10.

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of its two floors. The court room where he had presided as judge in the 1850s was located on the first floor with county offices above. Beshoar had arrived in Randolph County in the early 1850s following graduation from the University of Michigan's medical school.¹³

The *Arkansas Gazette*, the state's leading newspaper of the time, presented a glowing report of Pocahontas in its December 26, 1838, issue:

The new town of Pocahontas, county seat of Randolph county is said to have become, within eighteen months of its existence, one of the most flourishing places within the state. Lots in the town had increased in value from 100 to 500 per cent. The farm lands in the county, which had lately sold for \$1.25 per acre, was now much in demand at 520. Transportation in and out of the town and county is principally by steamboats on Black river and business of every kind is lively with the people saying little about hard times.

From its location at what was the approximate head of navigation on the Black River, Pocahontas had become the leading trading and distribution point in Northeast Arkansas and parts of Southeast Missouri by 1840. It reached its highest success in 1850 – 1860 and immediately before the Civil War its commercial business was indeed extensive.¹⁴

Little is documented about the architecture of "flourishing" ante-bellum Pocahontas but a single May 20, 1859 extant issue of the *Pocahontas Weekly Advertiser* documents no fewer than four steamboats with merchandise arriving from as far away as Cincinnati and New Orleans had docked in recent days. Daily stages were advertised for connecting with the Iron Mountain Railroad and the railroad to St. Louis. Two saloons and three law firms advertised as did three physicians but only one dentist. A "house, sign, and ornamental painter" also had photography rooms where his eight years' of experience as an artist assured his customers a perfect ambrotype, regardless of the weather. Merchant Louis Hanauer boasted that he had been in business in Randolph County for 20 years and he had just returned with new merchandise from eastern cities. He also advertised a female slave and her three sons for sale. Among the numerous local Pocahontas advertisements there was a variety from neighboring towns and states as well as New Orleans, Memphis, Cincinnati, Louisville, and Philadelphia.¹⁵

On January 18, 1861, the Arkansas General Assembly altered the boundaries of Randolph County adding twenty-five square miles from the northern section of Lawrence County. The creation of Clay County on the northeast boundary again changed the boundaries this time reducing its size.

¹³ Barron B. Beshoar, *Hippocrates in a Red Vest: The Biography of a Frontier Doctor*. Palo Alto, California: American West Publishing Company, 1973, 22.

¹⁴ Goodspeed, p. 371.

¹⁵ Arkansas History Commission – Miscellaneous newspaper file.

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At the beginning of the Civil War in 1861 a majority of the people of Randolph County were in sympathy with Arkansas's secession from the United States and support of the Confederacy. From 1,000 – 1,200 troops from Randolph County joined the Confederate Army.¹⁶ With the Military Road coming out of Missouri, bisecting the county, and continuing as the direct route to the Arkansas capitol at Little Rock, Randolph County and Pocahontas became strategic sites for military involvement throughout the course of the war. Literally thousands of Confederate and Union troops – both black and white – were seen on the streets of Pocahontas and the surrounding countryside from 1861 – 1865.

Approximately ten thousand Confederate troops were mustered into service at Camp Shaver (named for Colonel Robert G. Shaver of the Seventh Arkansas Regiment, First Brigade) located south of Pocahontas. In 1861 Confederate General William J. Hardee established headquarters at Pocahontas with troops camped at several sites along the Black River and a training camp at the Current River ferry site (owned by Erasmus D. man in the 1860s). From February - March 1862 Confederate General Earl Van Dorn, commander of all of Missouri, Arkansas, Indian Territory, and a portion of Louisiana, established headquarters in Pocahontas with an army of more than 16,000 troops. Federal General Frederick Steele occupied Pocahontas for a short time toward the end of the war.¹⁷

Extant personal accounts of Pocahontas during the Civil War focus around the regionally renowned St. Charles Hotel. About 1853 William Allaire, a millwright, purchased the entire east block of the court square and constructed a two-story commercial building about 200 feet in length that housed eight little shops as well as the St. Charles Hotel. Allaire is noted to have brought in carpenters, bricklayers, and plasterers for constructing the building. A large slab of steel hung in the vestibule and was struck three times a day – 6:00 AM, 12:00 Noon, and 6:00 PM - becoming an institution as it could be heard more than a half-mile away. For nearly half a century the St. Charles commercial building was a significant part of the nineteenth century economic success in Pocahontas. Prior to the war Allaire's widow married William Evans, the war-time proprietor of the St. Charles, who had advertised in the 1859 *Pocahontas Weekly Advertiser* that the hotel had "lately been enlarged and refitted." Evans served as an enrolling officer for the Federal Army. He was shot and killed in the hotel as retaliation for the killing of a Confederate recruiting officer.¹⁸

Brigadier General M. Jeff Thompson, nicknamed "The Swamp Fox," headquartered in the St. Charles where he was captured on August 22, 1863, by men of General John Davidson's Federal troops. The account of General Thompson's capture was documented in Dr. Michael Beshoar's diary. The doctor was serving as a

¹⁶ Goodspeed, 368.

¹⁷ Summary – Civil War history in summary of *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*; *The Goodspeed Bibliographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeastern Arkansas*; Beshoar, Barron B., *Hippocrates in a Red Vest: The Biography of a Frontier Doctor*; Dalton, Lawrence, *History of Randolph County*.

¹⁸ Dalton, 223; Steve Shults and Joe Martin, *Randolph County, Arkansas: A Pictorial History*. Morley, MO: Acclaim Press, 2006, 33.

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Confederate surgeon with Shaver's troops and was residing at the St. Charles at the time of Thompson's capture. Beshoar was also the co-owner of a drug store, Beshoar and Putnam, located on the south side of the square. The night of August 22nd the Federal troops looted the drug store and set fire to an undetermined number of businesses including *The Advertiser and Herald*, Beshoar's newspaper he co-owned with James Martin.¹⁹

In spite of several other engagements fought in Pocahontas during 1862 - 1864, the courthouse, the St. Charles Hotel, and at least several other pre-1860s buildings on the south side of the square escaped damage as documented in two extant historic photographs. The buildings on the south side of the square, though no longer extant due to a 1914 fire, reflect similar design details in common with the 1850s St. Charles, providing a glimpse of the architecture of Pocahontas' antebellum commercial district. The photograph of the buildings on the south side of the square was taken sometime between 1885 and 1895 according to the businesses ownership advertised on the buildings. [See Figures 1 and 2.]

Beshoar returned to visit "Poca" in 1894 and visited the St. Charles which he "found pretty much the same" and noted only the new courthouse in the square. He drove throughout the surrounding countryside visiting familiar places of his early residence in Randolph County without mentioning wartime destruction. Local historian Dalton points out that "very little damage was done in this section."²⁰ [See Figure 1.]

As early as 1865 the deteriorating condition of the first courthouse was noted in court records. County offices were relocated to a series of establishments until the second courthouse was completed. The new two-story Italianate courthouse was constructed of locally-made brick with a fire-roof vault for records attached. In April, 1875 court records show that new furniture and fixtures were installed, and offices were ordered to move into the new building. The contractor, embroiled in years of conflict with county officials, was John A. McKay of Helena and the construction cost was approximately \$40,000.²¹ This courthouse is the oldest of the extant structures making up the present historic commercial district of Pocahontas. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on 4/24/1973 with a construction date of 1875. [See Figure 3.]

Alvin Aaron Sago, an accomplished builder and brick layer of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century is known to have been one of the craftsmen who worked on the 1875 Italianate Randolph County Courthouse. His known projects extended to at least 1917.²²

Construction of the imposing Italianate courthouse did not symbolize an associated economic recovery for Pocahontas following the Civil War. Commercial business picked up after the war until 1872 - 73 when

¹⁹ Beshoar, 13, 22, 36.

²⁰ Dalton, 88.

²¹ Goodspeed, 365.

²² Shults, 5.

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railways bypassed the town.²³ The Iron Mountain Railroad bypassed Pocahontas and clipped Randolph County only in the very southeast corner. Another line, the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad and commonly called the Frisco, was built west along the Spring River rather than the Black. Trade naturally turned to the railroads. Steamboat transportation was on the decline, and the county had no good roads. Dalton states, "(t)his caused Pocahontas to enter a passive state which she did not awaken from until around 1900."²⁴

The Goodspeed history documents the 1880s commercial atmosphere of Pocahontas. With a population of approximately 500, the town supported:

county buildings, post office, five general stores, three groceries, two drug stores, two saloons, one livery stable, three hotels, two newspapers, a sawmill, three cotton gins, a number of shops, three churches – Methodist, African Methodist, and Roman Catholic – a public school house, a Roman Catholic Institute, a compliment of professional men and agents, two Masonic lodges – white and colored – a lodge of Odd Fellows, and two lodges of Knights of Honor, one being composed of Catholics only.

According to the 1880 census Randolph County and its 1,476 farms produced corn, wheat, oats, hay, Irish potatoes, and sweet potatoes in sufficient quantities to export – especially the six thousand bales of cotton. The county's 13,000 pounds of tobacco ranked it as the tenth highest producer of this crop in the state. Raw materials were processed in area grist-mills and cotton gins and then exported to broader markets from Pocahontas. Land owners received a large income from the varied timber species in the county contributing significantly to individual wealth as well as those conducting river exportation. Tax records from 1880 and 1888 revealed that in that course of time the taxable wealth of the county had more than doubled and that taxes had decreased.²⁵

This economic success set the stage for construction of many of the extant commercial buildings in the Pocahontas historic district today. The town was further awakened from her economic slumber in the late 1890s when a St. Louis and San Francisco (Frisco) Rail Road branch line was completed from nearby Hoxie to Pocahontas. A further upturn came in 1902 - 1903 with an extension of the same line to Cape Girardeau located on the Mississippi River in Missouri. Not only did this open easy connection with the broader trade markets, it made an impact on the local markets as well. The rail line to Cape Girardeau included a railroad bridge across the Black connecting Pocahontas with the eastern portion of the county that had previously been almost totally isolated from the town. According to Dalton, since that date there was "a steady improvement."²⁶

²³ Goodspeed, 371.

²⁴ Dalton, 227.

²⁵ Goodspeed, 371.

²⁶ Dalton, 189, 227.

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Joseph "Joe" Schmidt, an immigrant from Bavaria arriving in Pocahontas in 1885, was one of several hundred Europeans mainly from German states who settled in Pocahontas and Randolph County from 1880 to 1910. Many of these immigrants contributed significantly to the local economy as skilled craftsmen of various types. Mr. Schmidt's craft was brick making. Using the abundant sand from local river banks and the red clay from the hills, he began making bricks in Pocahontas in 1887 after setting up large brick kilns (a later generation of which still stands today) on what was then the western edge of the town.²⁷ [See Figure 4.]

Among the European immigrants were Ferdinand Spinnenweber and Hubert Peters who created the city's major construction company in 1885. Peters' brother-in-law, Henry Lesmeister, was an artist and an architect. He designed most of the buildings in the proposed historic district. These buildings were then, in turn, constructed by Spinnenweber and Peters. Lesmeister later designed many of the buildings in the Jonesboro, Arkansas, downtown district. Several of the Henry Lesmeister relatives continued to reside in Jonesboro through the 1950s.

The majority of Lesmeister's designs were typically brick structures with a faux second floor facade and featuring various brick patterns and ornate iron grillwork. Spinnenweber and Peters constructed all the buildings on the west and north side of the square along with some of those on the east and south sides as well. They also constructed the structures in the 200 blocks of W. Everett and N. Marr Streets, the buildings along W. Pyburn, and the Imperial Theater. All of the structures built by Spinnenweber and Peters used bricks from Joe Schmidt's Brick Company. Bricks from Schmidt's works were also used in construction of the buildings along W. Broadway and N. Van Bibber streets downtown.

Schmidt and his descendents continued operating his brick kilns into the 1960s. His bricks were used by Spinnenweber to construct a number of extant brick homes in the late 1800s and early 1900s in the Spinnenweber Addition of Pocahontas. In the 1950s, Mr. Schmidt's descendents built several distinctive brick homes that still stand in the neighborhood of the brickworks.²⁸

The historic photograph showing the antebellum St. Charles Hotel [See Figure 1] also reveals a two-story brick building at Bettis and Broadway Streets on the east side of the square. Prior to 1905 the two-story brick Randolph County Bank had also been constructed on the opposite corner of Bettis Street and Broadway Street. The Martin and Wells Insurance Agency, established in 1905, was initially housed in this structure. The Martin Insurance Agency continues to the present day, owned by the same Martin family, and located two blocks west on Broadway. The extant Randolph County Bank building is little changed today and houses Futrell Hardware. [See Figure 5.]

²⁷ Bill Carroll, *Historic Pocahontas*. Unpublished research; n.p.

²⁸ Ibid.

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Dalton records that an electrical power plant was built in Pocahontas in 1911 and in that same year electrical lights were turned on for the first time. In 1915 the water system was installed, putting the local water hauler out of business. Those living in Pocahontas without wells or cisterns prior to this date had untreated water delivered to them from the Black River spreading illness for many years.²⁹

A historic photograph of the commercial district prior to installation of electricity and prior to construction of the buildings on the north half of the east side of the courthouse square (where the St. Charles Hotel had been located) emphasizes the dominance of the 1875 Italianate Courthouse. While construction of the entire complex of new brick commercial buildings was incomplete and streets were still unpaved, there was obviously a growing commercial transition emerging in Pocahontas in the first decades of the twentieth century. At the corner of Marr and Everett three new brick buildings replaced the huge frame Hamil merchandise store that had burned – one being the first three-story structure in Pocahontas. The clipped corner orientation of the new Hamil building prominently advertised a construction date of 1894. The Brooks building on the west side displayed a date of 1895. At least two buildings on the west end of the north side of the square, both extant today, had been completed by the time the photograph was taken – all were of brick construction. In the foreground of the photograph is the first circa 1903 Frisco Depot as well as a number of railroad cars owned by the Frisco Railroad. The photograph is considered to have been taken from the railroad bridge across the Black River.³⁰ [See Figure 6.]

Long past the introduction of electricity in 1911, Pocahontas streets were filled with a mix of cultural transitions. Yokes of oxen pulling wagons and carts, horses and mules, livery stables and blacksmith shops, steamboats, steam engines, railroads, steel bridges, and the first automobiles created juxtapositions of old with new. A large two-story frame hotel featuring two-story porches facing the railroad tracks had been constructed prior to 1880. The hotel complex included a livery stable – one of several in Pocahontas into the first decades of the twentieth century. The hotel was owned by Eli Heavener in 1880 when the first group of European immigrants arrived in Pocahontas. The immigrants resided in the hotel until they became established in the town.³¹ Just as numerous descendants of the first Anglo American and African American families with ties to the Holston River Valley continue to reside in Randolph County so do many families of the 1880s influx of immigrants – all have created a stable population for the town to the present. Heavener sold the hotel to B. F. Bigger in 1882. With the economic awaking of Pocahontas centered on industry and travel inspired by the railroad, Bigger Hotel became known throughout the region for its fine hospitality and food with long porches serving as community gathering places for watching the trains come and go. The hotel and livery stable were destroyed by fire in December 1921. [See Figure 6.]

Like other communities of the time, fires have destroyed numerous Pocahontas businesses. The Sanborn Map Company of New York City produced plat maps of Pocahontas in 1910 and 1922 for the purpose of

²⁹ Dalton, 228.

³⁰ Carroll, n.p.

³¹ Dalton, 224-25.

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assessing fire insurance liability. These maps have been preserved locally by the Martin Insurance Agency that was established in 1905. The maps detail important information such as streets, schools, churches, indexes of businesses, and, of course, the fire liability at the time. The 1910 Sanborn map indicates that Pocahontas had no water works (not installed until 1915 as pointed out by Dalton), no fire protection, no public lights, and streets were unpaved.

By 1922 Pocahontas had a 75,000-gallon gravity and direct pressure water facility and two Smith-Vaile fire pumps to pump water from the Black River. The system had been installed in 1918. The volunteer fire department had one 1000-foot hand reel. There were electric lights for the streets but the streets were still unpaved.

The 1922 Sanborn map lists the following businesses in the commercial area between the courthouse square and Black River: Baltz Flour and Grist Mill; East St. Louis Cotton Oil Company cotton gin; Grafton Stave Company; Pocahontas Lumber Company sawmill; Roberts Cotton Oil Company gin; Sallee Brothers Handle Factory and Ice Manufacturing; Speice Hoop Mill, hoop manufacture; Standard Oil Company, oil house; and the St. Louis and San Francisco (Frisco) Railroad Depot. There were also four churches, one public and one parochial school, and a county jail in addition to the courthouse. The rail connections with the Mississippi River markets and international shipping destinations had produced investment from firms outside Randolph County as noted by the St. Louis-owned cotton gin. Access to markets plus technological advances in agricultural equipment generated increased cotton production in the county. Pocahontas became the main hub for not only incoming freight and merchandise but for outbound agricultural and timber products in the county.

Twelve years earlier the 1910 Sanborn Map had listed some of the same businesses listed in 1922 – Speice Brothers Hoop factory, Roberts Cotton Oil gin, and the Sallee Brothers Handle Factory. All were located in the industrial area along the river. The Sallee Brothers Handle Factory, established in Pocahontas in 1909, was one of the leading industries of Pocahontas for nearly three-quarters of a century; its history reflects the international marketing growth experienced by several Randolph County businesses. Using quality hickory from Arkansas and surrounding states, the factory manufactured handles for hammers, axes, hoes, and push brooms that were sold all over the United States, England, New Zealand, and the West Indies. They also produced baseball bats that were used throughout the United States. The sawdust was shipped to New Mexico and used for smoking turkeys and to Missouri to smoke hams. In the early years the mill owned its own paddle wheel boats whose familiar whistles could be heard all over the town.³²

The 1910 Sanborn map also listed a much smaller but equally important business in the minds of the people of Pocahontas. One of Lesmeister's designs, this extant long, narrow structure is located near the middle of the west side of the courthouse square. Since its construction ca. 1900, the structure has always housed a barber shop. Historic photographs of the time show the entrance to the barber shop marked by a barber pole

³² Shults, 57.

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sign. The Sanitary Barber Shop continues operation in the same location today continuing its claim as the longest operating barber shop in the state of Arkansas. Other barber shops existed in Pocahontas as well. They supported one of the best known and highly respected business men in Pocahontas in the early twentieth century, Mabel Johnson. Mabel, an African American descendant of former Randolph County slaves, proudly used his first name given by his family who were hoping for a girl when he was born. He carried on his successful shoe shining business at the town's various barber shops for nearly half a century.³³ [See Figures 7, and 8.]

Another historic photograph of Everett Street in the 1930s reveals the then City Hall location, the 1920s classical style Dudley Building along with Lesmeister's buildings to the west of it. [See Figure 9.] A fire in 1968 caused alterations in the Dudley Building and old City Hall structure but the Lesmeister-designed structures on Everett Street remain intact with minor alterations.

Increased use of motorcars and trucks in the 1920s brought changes again to the commercial enterprises and architecture of Pocahontas just as in the rest of the country. In the late 1920s and early 1930s U. S. Highways 67 and 62 were constructed into Pocahontas. Trademark signs mounted to the new forms of architecture – the automotive service station - became part of the architectural landscape with some like ESSO and DX no longer in existence. Coca-Cola with their trademark signs painted on stores around the courthouse square were also part of the landscape changes. A few of these signs remain as ghostly figures on present-day historic downtown buildings.

The first automobiles had to traverse roads that were not much better than early wagon trails. U. S. Highway 67 came into Pocahontas along Bettis Street directly to the square. In the late 1920s area towns all along the highway petitioned to have the highway, slated for improvements, to be relocated along the railroad lines. This change did occur but the roadway was not paved until a number of years later. A Missouri Trailways Bus stopped on the square in Pocahontas in the 1930s, taking some of the passage traffic away from the railroads. Motor courts catering to auto traffic also began to appear along the highway route.³⁴

Prior to the 1920s a three-story opera house was constructed just off the courthouse square at the corner of Pyburn and Marr Streets. No longer in existence, it nevertheless is a part of the cultural and economic history of Pocahontas. In the early 1920s, the Opera House hosted many African American orchestras passing through from Chicago and St. Louis on their way down to Dallas and Houston as well as W. C. Handy from Memphis. The legendary Half Pint Jackson Band, a very influential orchestra in Memphis during the time,  as a local favorite in the 1920 - 30s for parties and events at the Opera House. Jackson is said to have loved the moonshine made in Randolph County, and it wasn't hard to get him and his band members to take

³³ Shults, 46.³⁴ Carroll, n.p.

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a train to Pocahontas to play. Distilled spirits, legal and non-legal, have played a part in much of Randolph County history.³⁵

Numerous individuals from Pocahontas have played important roles in the town's entertainment and economic history. One was the legendary Hillbilly singer and musician 'Slim' Rhodes, who along with his brothers and sisters, grew up picking cotton in Randolph County. When Slim and siblings were kids in the 1930's, they played every Saturday on the steps of the 1875 court house in Pocahontas on guitars they made from cigar boxes and fishing line. They always gathered a large crowd that pitched money in a cardboard box. They claimed they could make more money playing music on a Saturday than chopping cotton an entire week. 'Slim' eventually went to Memphis and hosted his own television show during the 1950s and '60s. It was one of the most popular local TV shows in Arkansas, Tennessee, and Mississippi for many years. Everyone, including legendary rock musician Elvis Presley, wanted to be on the Slim Rhodes TV Show. In 1959, Rhodes performed at the Randolph County fairgrounds and 10,000 people attended.

Just as the entire United States was affected by the great Depression of the 1920s – 30s, Randolph County was no exception. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA), federal government programs designed to ease nationwide unemployment, aided the residents of Randolph County during these economically depressed years. Three CCC camps were built in the county. Their improvement projects and WPA construction projects benefited the downtown commercial area of Pocahontas with paved highways, waterworks, hospital, post office, and a new county courthouse. Within the present historic commercial area of Pocahontas two of the WPA buildings have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places – the 1936 - 1937 Post Office (listed 5/6/2002) and the 1940 Courthouse (listed 8/22/ 1996). They join the 1875 Italianate Courthouse that was placed on the National Register on April 24, 1973.

Construction of the Post Office began in 1936 and was completed in 1937 with a construction cost of approximately \$52,000 under contractor T. Jarvis and Company of St. Louis, Missouri. The National Register Statement of Significance notes that the "Pocahontas Post Office clearly demonstrates the simplified Art Deco design that was popular in U. S. Treasury Department design during the Great Depression." It goes on to point out that, like other Arkansas post offices constructed during this time period, the Pocahontas Post Office was selected to receive a mural through the Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture. Renowned artist H. Louis Freund, himself an Arkansan, won the competition for the Pocahontas mural. He visited Pocahontas to gather historical information and his composite of scenes was entitled "Early Days of Pocahontas," even though he depicted scenes from sites on the Black, Eleven Point, and Current Rivers at a variety of time periods. For a correlation with post office history he included a depiction of the log building that was known to have served as a post office at Davidsonville in 1817 when the area was Lawrence County, Missouri Territory. For Pocahontas he depicted the locally renowned steamboat the 'Milt Harry' and the Bigger Hotel. Hufstедler Mill, a mid-nineteenth century mill on the Eleven Point River, was included as was

³⁵ Gary Gazaway, Personal interview on the music history of Pocahontas, 2008.

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the late-nineteenth century Scott Ferry on the Current River. The Scott Ferry was owned by Coleman Scott, a highly successful African American businessman and educator at Biggers. Freund's artistic license paid homage to a broad period of the area's history and its rich diverse ethnic background. This important work of art commissioned for Pocahontas was removed from the post office wall due to deterioration and is presently stored at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, Arkansas.³⁶ [See Figures 9 and 10.]

Another Depression Era construction project for Pocahontas was conducted in 1939 by the National Youth Administration (NYA) of the WPA. The NYA existed from 1935 – 1943, and the average age of the workers was approximately forty years. Two extant adjacent buildings on Broadway Street and part of the nominated historic commercial district were constructed of rock in 1939 to serve as offices for the city government. The largest of the two buildings contained the City Hall with the jail downstairs and the fire department upstairs. The smaller building located to the east had the police department upstairs and the fire trucks were kept downstairs.³⁷

In February 1940, following a supporting vote of the residents, a \$130,000 construction project for a new county courthouse was begun. Financing included a \$49,250 grant from the WPA. The project was completed by December 1940. The National Register Statement of Significance notes "the structure is a buff brick and concrete structure reflects the Art Deco style in overall massing and composition, as well as through its restrained employment of the typical Classically-inspired ornamentation. It has been described as one of the finest and most substantial county courthouse in the state and remains one of the most intact to this day." Local residents state that the sunken garden that fronts the structure resulted from a mistake by the contractor when excavating for the foundation. Once the mistake was corrected and the structure's foundation relocated to the present site, the earlier excavation was left in place and landscaping for the garden/plaza was incorporated into the over-all design for the courthouse grounds. *On the Courthouse Square in Arkansas* by John and Margem Gill notes that the Moderne-style courthouse and sunken garden "dramatizes the view of the hill on which the (1875) courthouse still stands."³⁸ [See Figure 11.]

In the 1950s the historic court square still formed the commercial nucleus of the town, and it bustled with the cultural activities that changed with the decades, but all keeping the commercial district viable. When early rock and roll was birthed out of a mix of Blues and Hillbilly music in the early 1950s, many of the noted early musicians performed on a regular basis at clubs and venues along U. S. Highway 67 from the Missouri line and south. Pocahontas had two important sites on the north and south side of town where Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison, Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis and many others performed. Legendary Sun recording artist Billy Riley was born in Pocahontas in the 1930s and later grew up in Osceola. He is considered to be one of the most important pioneers of Rock and Roll and was the artist Elvis Presley and other rock and rollers most imitated. Elvis stopped at KPOC radio station in Pocahontas with his manager in the spring of 1955 where he

³⁶Shults, 73, 218.

³⁷Carroll, n.p.

³⁸John Purifoy Gill, and Margem Jackson Gill, *On the Courthouse Square*. Private publication, 1980. 97.

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promoted his then current record and played live on the air. Country music's most award-winning songwriter Bill Rice was born north of Pocahontas, and performed at many talent shows and fairs in Pocahontas. His first song released was recorded by Elvis on RCA.³⁹

The first and non-extant Frisco Depot was a frame structure located to the south of the present extant Frisco Depot building. The extant depot was used by the railroad until 1970 when it was donated to the town even though trains continued to serve Pocahontas until 1985 when the last tracks were abandoned. Now vacant, several businesses have been located in the building since it was donated to the city. Elmer "Smokey" James, originally a resident of Biggers, moved to Pocahontas in 1971 and opened his used car business in the old Frisco Depot that year. Mr. James was a well known local African American businessman, having operated several enterprises in Biggers throughout his life. He continued operation of the used car business in that location through 1983, the year of his death. The depot is part of the historic commercial district
nination.⁴⁰

In 1986 the African American community became concerned about the deteriorating state of the historic building that now houses the Eddie Mae Herron Center. It served as the Pocahontas Colored School in days prior to the integration of the Pocahontas School District in the 1960s. Both African American and Anglo American community leaders worked together to restore the 1918 Plain-Traditional-style school building that now serves as a community hub, named for a beloved and influential teacher, and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on 8/5/2002.

No history of Pocahontas could be complete without looking at the impact of the Black River. With major rivers that rise high in the Ozark highlands feeding into it, flooding has been an ever-present issue. Fishing, logging, and button manufacturing from the mussel shells from the river have added to the economy of Pocahontas over the decades. During the earliest days of Pocahontas the Black River was the highway for keelboats, flatboats, rafts, and steamboats. In 1907 a Missouri lumber company constructed a steamboat named in honor of the town. The "little steamer Pocahontas.....was a familiar sight running up and down the rivers, towing logs, hauling lumber products or otherwise serving the people along the river." First ferries, then railroads, and now hard-surfaced highways have all had to solve the issue of crossing the river in order to keep the economy of the area alive and growing. Additionally, the Black, along with the other rivers in Randolph County today, provides recreational opportunities that feed the economy.

The Black River bridges have added significantly to the built landscape of Pocahontas for more than three-quarters of a century and enabled expansion on the east side of the river. The first railroad bridge was abandoned for rail traffic in 1912 but continued to serve as a "wagon bridge" serving the public until the 1934 Highway 67 Bridge was opened. The "new" 1912 railroad bridge served until the railroads ceased operation in 1985. The 1934 highway bridge was a swing bridge that allowed for river vessels to pass; in

³⁹ Gazaway.⁴⁰ Carroll, n.p.

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spite of being listed on the National Register of Historic Places on 4/9/1990, the bridge has been demolished. The 1934 open-spandrel concrete arch bridge crossing Marr's Creek on Highway 67 was listed on the National Register on 1/24/2008.⁴¹

The population of Pocahontas has grown steadily since the approximately 500 population recorded by Goodspeed in 1888 and the 1890 U. S. Census. In the decade of 1930 to 1940 the population growth increased from 1,896 to 3,028 due undoubtedly in part to the financial support and new construction taking place with governmental WPA projects. In 2000 the population was 6,518.⁴²

Fires and deterioration continued to take their toll on historic buildings on the courthouse square and the surrounding commercial district. By the 1950s replacement windows were often metal in place of replication or restoration of the originals. Today some of these alterations have themselves become part of historic period alterations. Other rehabilitation efforts have caused some structures to lose their architectural and historic significance.

In the 1990s state and federal grants funds supported installation of improved handicapped-accessibility for sidewalks with wrought iron fencing that coordinates with the replicated fencing that once surrounded the court square. Fortunately, a majority of the original ca. 1900s Lesmeister-designed structures remain sufficiently intact to usher in a new era for the historic commercial district of Pocahontas. With the 1875 Italianate Courthouse, restored under an Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Courthouse Restoration Grant, still dominating the courthouse square and anchoring the historic commercial district, Pocahontas is revitalizing its downtown with a heritage tourism focus.

⁴¹ Shults, AHPP.

⁴² Gary L. Buxton. "Pocahontas." Encyclopedia of Arkansas. <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net>

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Pocahontas, Randolph County, Arkansas

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the Pocahontas Commercial Historic District encompass the town square, which includes buildings facing Bettis Street on the east, Broadway on the south, Marr Street on the west, and Everett Street on the north); one block east of Bettis to Highway 67; across highway 67, north of the city park and west of the river; one block south of Broadway to include the new County Courthouse; two blocks west of Marr Street to include two blocks of Van Bibber Street; one block west of Van Bibber Street to Thomasville Road; and one block north of Everett to include buildings facing Pyburn Street between Van Bibber and Vance Streets. The district includes the following blocks on Pocahontas's plat map: 2-4, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, 30-35, 47-49; and the north half of blocks 11 and 20.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The Pocahontas Commercial Historic District boundary is drawn to encompass the concentrated collection of extant historic commercial properties in downtown Pocahontas. The district includes the buildings at the center of public life for Pocahontas's residents during the late nineteenth century and first half of the 20th century.

UTM REFERENCES CONTINUED

- 5.15 682147E 4014937N
- 6. 15 682175E 4014988N
- 7. 15 682222E 4014960N
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Pocahontas Commercial Historic District
Pocahontas, Randolph County, Arkansas

Pocahontas Commercial Historic District
Pocahontas, Woodruff County, Arkansas

Photos by: Thomason and Associates

Date: August 2008

Location of Negatives: Arkansas SHPO, Little Rock

Photo No. 1: 100 Block East Everett Street, view to northeast

Photo No. 2: 100 Block Bettis Street, view to southeast

Photo No. 3: Southeast corner of Broadway and Bettis, view to southeast

Photo No. 4: 100 Block North Marr Street, view to northwest

Photo No. 5: Old Randolph County Courthouse, view to southeast

Photo No. 6: 100 Block West Everett Street, view to north-northwest

Photo No. 7: WPA Post Office, Van Bibber Street, view to north-northwest

Photo No. 8: New Randolph County Courthouse, Broadway, view to south

Photo No. 9: 100 block of Broadway, view to southwest

Photo No. 10: 100 block Pyburn Street, view to northeast

Photo No. 11: 200 block Pyburn Street, view to southwest

Photo No. 12: Pocahontas-Frisco Depot, McDonald Street, view to southwest

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Figures:

Figure 1: Looking southeast – In this ca. 1900 photograph the Pocahontas Concert Band plays at the east side of the 1875 Courthouse with the 1850s St. Charles Hotel located on Bettis Street in the background.



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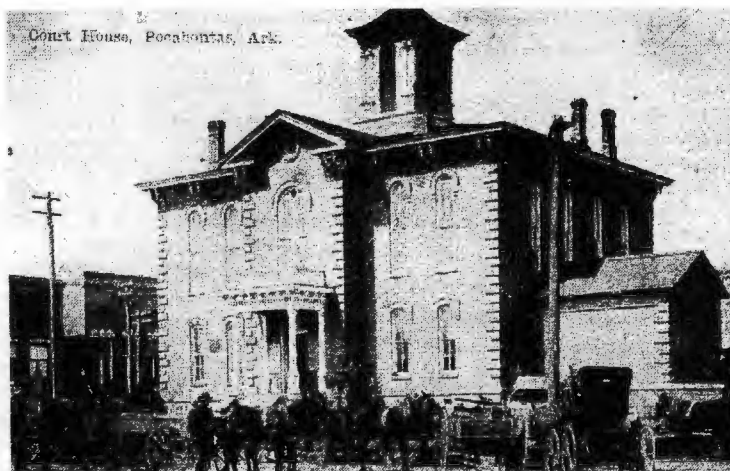
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Figure 2: Looking south – Broadway Street, south side of the courthouse square ca. 1875, providing a glimpse of the antebellum commercial district of Pocahontas.



Figure 3: Looking northwest - 1875 brick Italianate Randolph County Courthouse with original vault on right.



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Figure 4: The Joseph Schmidt and Company brick kiln was established in Pocahontas in 1889. Most of the extant historic commercial buildings in Pocahontas were constructed of brick from this kiln.



Figure 5: Looking south – A circa 1900 Randolph County Bank Building on the corner of Broadway and Bettis.



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Figure 6: Looking west – A circa 1905 photograph of Pocahontas showing the dominance of the 1875 Italianate Courthouse, several of the extant commercial buildings, newly installed Frisco railroad and its non-extant first depot and Bigger Hotel, two-story white structure on the left.



Figure 7 Looking northwest – This circa 1915 view of the west side of the Pocahontas court square shows commercial brick structures with a faux second floor facade and featuring various brick patterns and ornate iron grillwork. Designed by architect Henry Lesmeister, craftsmen Spinnenweber and Peters constructed all the buildings on the west and north side of the square along with some of those on the east and south sides as well. The Sanitary Barber Shop is marked by a barber pole.



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Figure 8: Interior of the Sanitary Barber Shop in the late 1920s.



Figure 9: Looking west – 1930s view of Everett Street, north side of the court square.



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Figure 10. Looking northwest - the 1937 U. S. Post Office Building constructed by the WPA as it was nearing completion. Presently it houses the *Star Herald* newspaper offices. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

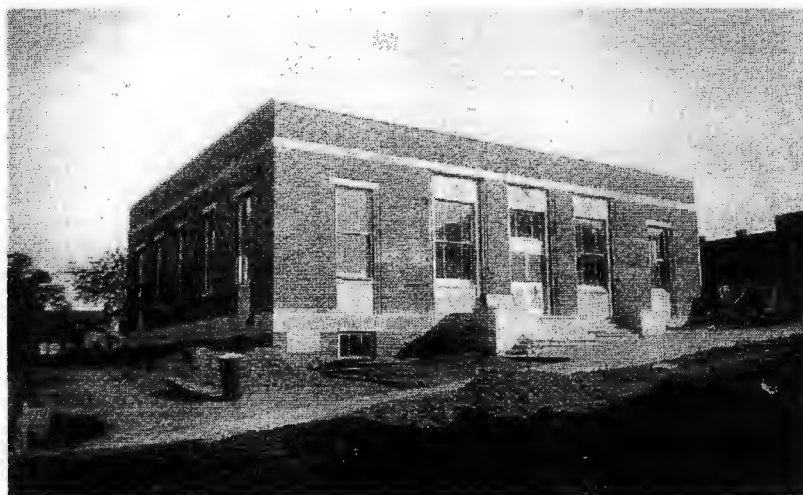
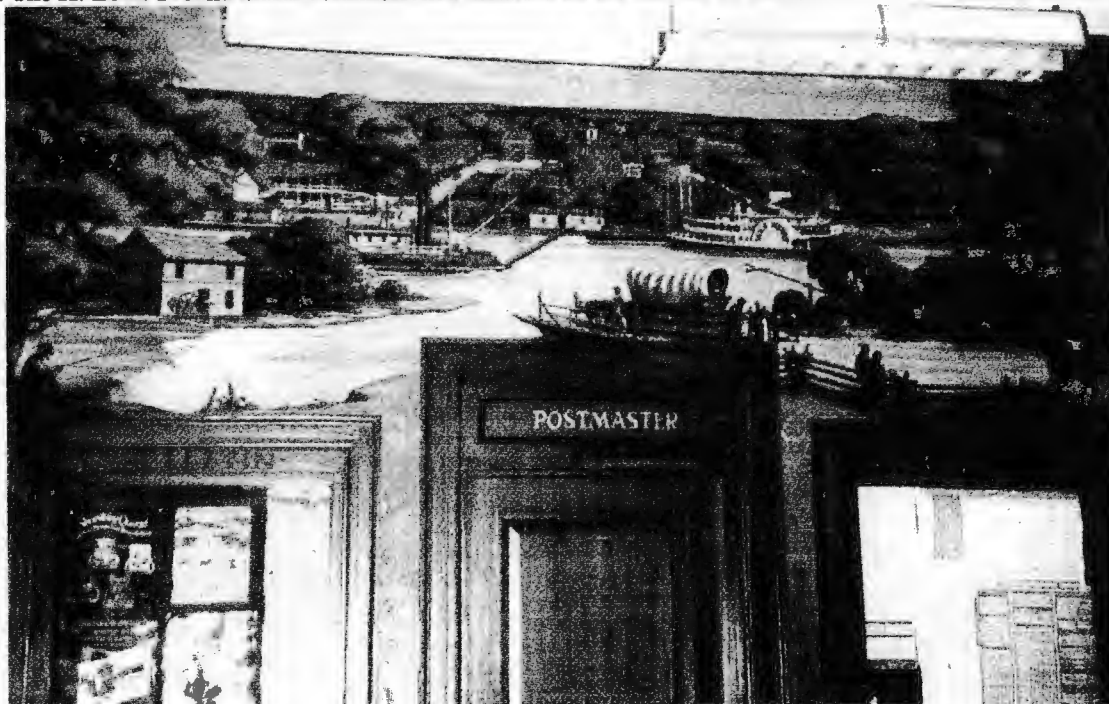


Figure 11: The H. Louis Freund mural commissioned installed on the interior of the 1937 U. S. Post Office Building.



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Figure 12: 1940 Art Deco – Moderne style Randolph County Courthouse at Broadway and N. Marr Streets. This historic photograph shows the state seal of Arkansas located above the main entrance. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996.















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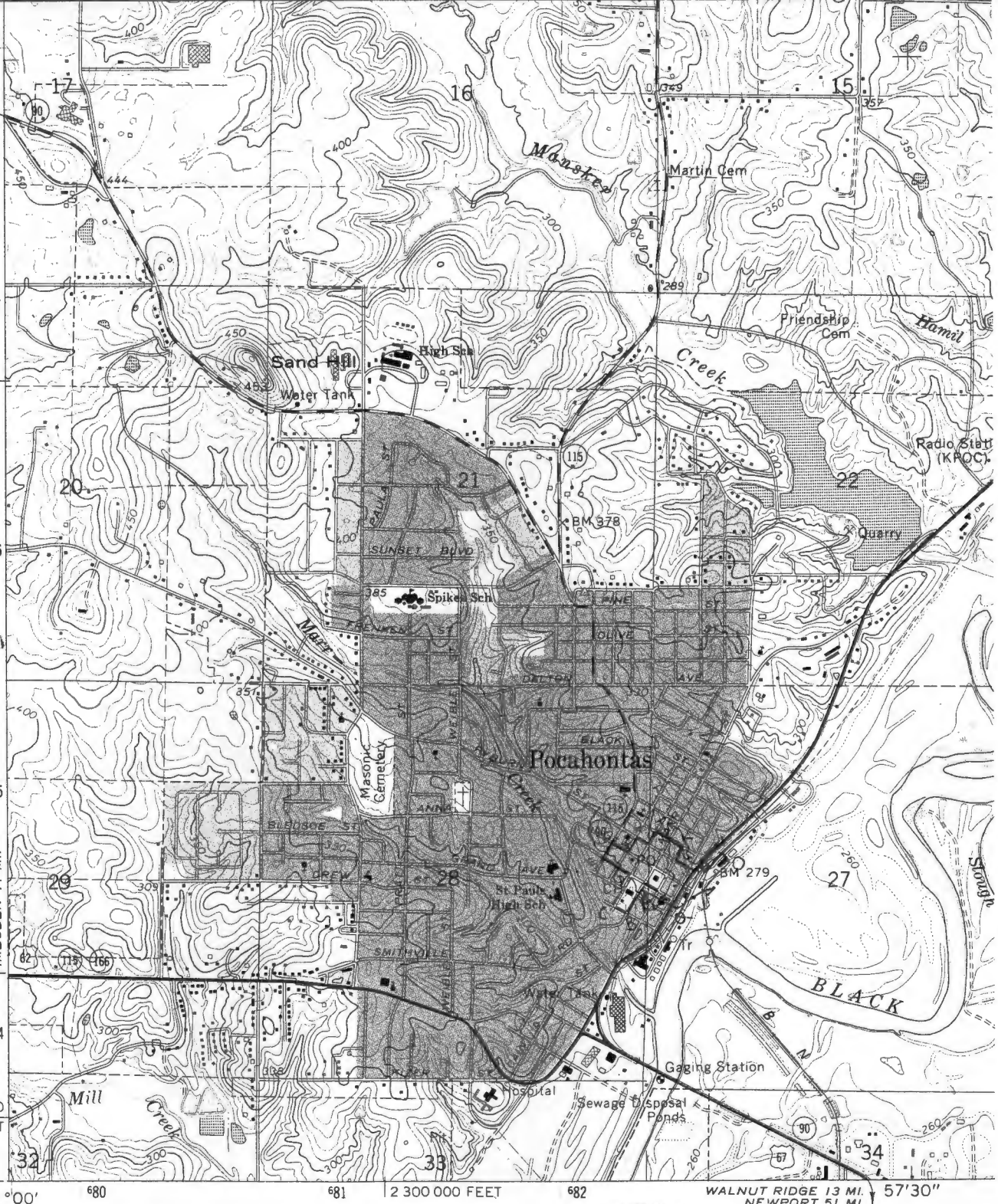
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Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1965 and planetable surveys 1966

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Arkansas coordinate system, north zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 15, shown in blue

Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 4 meters south and
11 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken
1980. Map edited 1981. This information not field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban area

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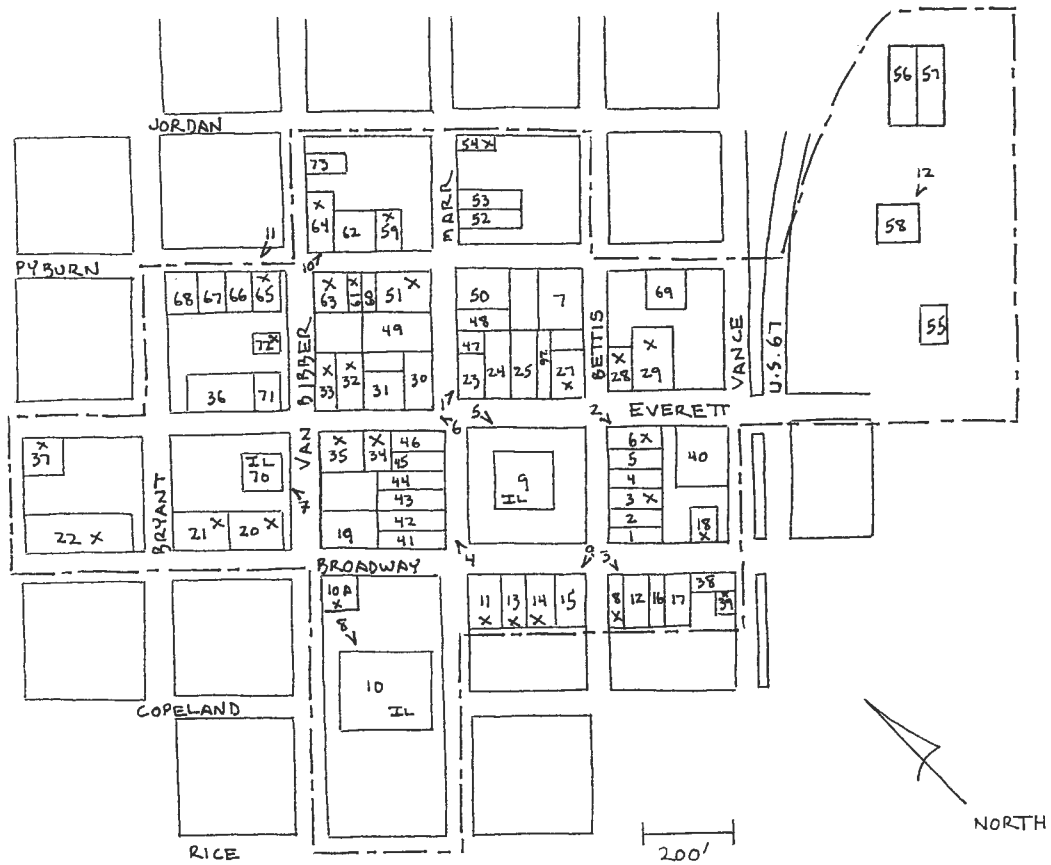


UTM GRID AND 1981 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

FOR

POCAHONTAS COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

POCAHONTAS, RANDOLPH COUNTY, ARKANSAS



--- = BOUNDARY

IL = INDIVIDUALLY LISTED

X = NON-CONTRIBUTING

> = PHOTO LOCATION