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# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines* for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

(Form 10-900a). Type all entries.				<u> </u>		Latin August 2	
1. Name of Property		- Herri					
historic name The Whee		10000					
other names/site number B	atesville Help	and Hop	oe				
2. Location				Sr - Le ga indiayê	tg phothir	one mese	g early
street & number Corner o	f River and Br	oad Stre	eets		not fo	r publicatio	n N/A
city, town Batesville				1. 1	vicinit	ty	N/A
state Arkansas	code AR	county	Independence	code AR	063	zip code	72501
3. Classification					No.		
Ownership of Property	Category	of Property	CR 200 (1777 )	Number of Reso	ources wit	hin Property	
X private	X buildir			Contributing		ntributing	
public-local	distric			1		_ buildings	
public-State	site	•				sites	
public-Federal	structu	Iro				structures	
public-i cuciui	object			-	-	_ objects	
	object			1		_ objects Total	
Name of related multiple property	erty listing:			Number of contr		sources pre	
N/A	The Art of the Control	_		listed in the Nat	ional Reg	ister	
4. State/Federal Agency (	Certification						
Signature of certifying official Arkansas Historic	Preservation P	d			Date	11-1-8	8
State or Federal agency and b							
In my opinion, the property	meets does	not meet th	ne National Registe	er criteria. L See	continuation	on sheet.	
Signature of commenting or ot	her official				Date		
State or Federal agency and b	ureau				url yan	no out	
5. National Park Service (	Certification			16			
I, hereby, certify that this prop							
entered in the National Re	1 1 2 2	Selone	Byun	Entered in National Re	the	121	18/88
determined eligible for the				ge ov our o'sattonia did C	2101 917		
Register. See continuation					12		
determined not eligible for National Register.	the	is .					
removed from the National	Register.			9			TY
other, (explain:)							
			Signature of the k	Ceener		Date of	Action

6. Function or Use			
Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions) Social/Meeting Hall	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions) Commerce/Department Store		
Commerce/Organizational	The second secon		
Commerce/Department Store			
LAYION AM			
7. Description RETERBER			
Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)		
	foundation stone/sandstone		
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	walls stone/sandstone		
Other: Vernacular Commercial	#1.3 % 1 m		
	roof asphalt		
	other		

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

#### Summary

The Wheel Store is a simple, unornamented, two-story masonry structure of rectangular plan. Its bare simplicity belies its importance as a store and meeting place for one of the most socially and politically active agrarian reform societies in Arkansas in the late nineteenth century.

#### Elaboration

The Wheel Store is a rectangular, two-story ashlar-faced sandstone commercial structure, originally built to house the store and meeting hall of The Agricultural Wheel, an agrarian reform organization. It is built upon a sandstone foundation, and covered with a single plane asphalt shingle roof that slopes from west to east, ending in a boxed wooden cornice projecting over the eastern elevation. The northern or front facade has two wooden one-over-one double-hung sash windows placed symmetrically over the central, first story entrance. To either side of the entrance are two storefront window openings, now partially filled, each of which originally contained a single rectangular window above with a larger rectangular window below. The western elevation has three windows on the second floor, a two-over-one sash to the north, and two oneover-one sash windows irregularly-spaced to the south. The first story is relieved only by an entry, originally composed of a single-pane transom and doorway, and now altered into a transom and pair of short windows below. The chimney, set back slightly upon the roof, is also visible from this elevation. The southern elevation reveals the slanted roof, a single central attic vent, two evenly-spaced windows on the second story (one of two-over-two double hung sash, the other of one-over-one), and a first story with a freight door to the west, now filled and converted to an entry with a triple-pane transom above, and a grouped pair of small rectangular windows to the east. The eastern elevation features two entries on the second floor, now connected by a common fire escape but which originally provided external access to the second floor meeting room, with a single central one-over-one wood sash window. All original wall openings are constructed with smooth-faced stone sills and lintels, and the front parapet roof is finished with a thin course of stone coping. The entire building has been painted white.

Though the interior spaces have been altered and several of the windows replaced or filled, the exterior has not been altered significantly.

8. Statement of Significance	
Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in nationally $X$ state	
Applicable National Register Criteria XA B C I	
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	)
Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions) Social History Agriculture	Period of Significance Significant Dates 1887–1894
Economics	, X
Politics/Government	The state of the s
	Cultural Affiliation N/A
Significant Person	Architect/Builder
N/A	Independence County Wheel Cooperative Association
	ASSOCIACION
State significance of property and justify criteria criteria considera	tions and areas and periods of significance noted above

9. Major Bibliographical References	Statement of Standionnes
Bertrand, Alvin, ed., <u>Rural Sociology</u> , An Analy (New York, 1958).	ysis of Contemporary Rural Life,
Davis, Granville Daniel, "The Granger Movement Gilded Age, 1874-1900 Waddy William Moore	
Elkins, F. Clark. "Arkansas Farmers Organize and Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XIII (Autum	for Action, 1882-1884", nn, 1954), 231-248. pp. 14-28.
Elkins, F. Clark. "The Agricultural Wheel: Co 1884-1885", <u>Arkansas Historical Quarterly</u>	ounty Politics and Consolidation, , XXIX (Summer, 1970), 152-175. pp. 44-58.
Farmers' and Laborers' Union Journal, Batesvill	le, Arkansas, August 1, 1890.
	X See continuation sheet
Previous documentation on file (NPS):  preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested previously listed in the National Register previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	Primary location of additional data:  X State historic preservation office Other State agency Federal agency Local government University Other Specify repository:
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of property Less than one acre	
UTM References  A 1 5 6 2 2 0 4 0 3 9 5 8 8 0 0 B  Zone Easting Northing  C 1 D	Zone Easting Northing
	See continuation sheet
Verbal Boundary Description  Lot 1 of block 10, Maxfield's Southern Addition,	, Batesville, Arkansas.
	See continuation sheet
Boundary Justification	
This lot includes all property historically asso	ociated with this resource.
	See continuation sheet
11. Form Prepared By	
name/title Kenneth Story, Architectural Historian organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program	date September 6, 1988
street & number 225 East Markham, Suite 200	telephone (501) 371-2763
city or townLittle Rock	state AR zip code 72201

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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THE WHEEL STORE

#### Significance

The Wheel Store was built on land bought by the county cooperative arm of the Agricultural Wheel, a post-Civil War agrarian reform organization composed of farmers, sharecroppers and ordinary lower-class laborers from many trades. Built by this organization's local chapter, it originally housed a cooperative store on the first floor and a meeting hall above. It stands as a monument to the most active and significant farmer movement originating in Arkansas.

#### Elaboration

The Wheel Store's simple, unornamented aspect belies its original function as an important local gathering place, where it served as both a farmer's cooperative store and organizational center. However, even such an appreciation fails to consider fully the impact of the Agricultural Wheel on the history of agrarian reform in Arkansas.

The Agricultural Wheel--the name came from both Biblical references and French physiocratic philosophy that declared agriculture the great controlling wheel of the world economy--was one of several farmers' alliances that arose in response to a number of economic and political conditions particular to the post-Civil War South. Though the circumstances at the root of his condition were far more complex than he realized, the average farmer perceived himself as the victim of a number of predatory forces that sought to exploit his toil. He received prices for his crops that were, at best, variable and unpredictable and, at worst, below his costs. He required modern tools, equipment and farm supplies to compete in an economy made national by railroad expansion but was required to pay at rates that were excessive relative to his income. When he tried to borrow cash, there were few, if any, local banks to lend it to him, and when he attempted to trade with merchants on credit, he was either charged exorbitant interest or forced to grant the merchant a lien on the expected crop. In the meantime, he watched a national government openly aid various business monopolies --especially the railroads--in obtaining generous financing through the new national banks and cheap prices on vast tracts of government owned land--the same railroad monopolies that overcharged him for shipping his crops. On the local level, he saw no improvement in his condition after the end of Reconstruction, when the Democratic Party regained control from the Republicans in the South. Powerful politicians manipulated the system for the gain of a few, corruption was common and no one seemed to have the farmer's interests at heart. Various taxes were levied on crops, farm property was widely confiscated for non-payment of taxes, and no legislation offered any relief. Naturally, the Southern farmers' own ignorance of sound husbandry techniques and the wisdom of diversified crop production amidst fluctuating prices for cotton; their racism, which made them averse to performing work previously associated with slaves; and the ultimate fallacy, stubbornly embraced, that the raw materials they exported could ever command prices sufficient to pay for the finished products they imported for their life and work contributed heavily to their constant debt and despair. Yet they sought their solutions elsewhere.

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THE WHEEL STORE

The first such farmers' organization was the Patrons of Husbandry, later known as the Grange. This group grew out of the interest of President Andrew Jackson, who in 1867 sent a clerk from the Agricultural Bureau, Oliver Hudson Kelley, to visit the South and return with suggestions on how to help its almost exclusively agrarian economy recover from the devastation of the Civil War. Kelley proposed the organization of an educational and social organization that would promote the sharing of efficient farming techniques and the brotherhood of shared purpose. The Grange was quite popular at first, built around a nationwide network of local chapters and boasting a large membership by the early 1870s. By the panic of 1873, however, its emphasis on non-political cooperation and the creation of a rural farmer's network for humanitarian and social purposes seemed timid and unrealistic to farmers who saw crop prices plummet amid continued industrial growth and who, therefore, demanded strong political activity to further their more ambitious goals. The Grange did become more politically involved but failed to win any significant victories on the state or local level and farmer involvement dwindled by 1875.

Yet the Grange had awakened the Southern farmer to the fact that economic legislation was of use to the common man, and not only "soulless" corporations. Between 1875 and 1882 other agrarian and labor reform groups such as the Greenbackers proposed various economic platforms and pursued political alternatives for relief. Most of these movements were ephemeral, however, and after only a few years either joined forces with another group of shared interests or faded out altogether.

By 1882 the conditions which had encouraged the growth of such organizations had not abated and had even worsened. Consequently, farmer dissatisfaction remained and a few farmers in eastern Arkansas responded by founding the Agricultural Wheel. Its humble beginnings occurred on the night of February 15, 1882, in a log schoolhouse eight miles southwest of Des Arc, Arkansas (Prairie County), and with but nine prospective members in attendance. Here they formed what they called the Wattensas Farmers Club, later to be renamed the Agricultural Wheel. But without any experience at organizing or administering such a group, these local farmers possessed not even an agenda nor any plans for how to go about solving their common problems. So they simply elected officers and agreed to meet again.

The fact that such men were able to expand the membership from seven to 500 in a single year attests to the degree to which their fellow Arkansas farmers shared their concerns. It was by this time that, of necessity, a more formal organization began to develop and a state-level administration was established, known as the State Wheel. This provided for an annual meeting of all the subordinate (local) chapters and for a slate of officers that provided statewide leadership. At the State Wheel meeting of the following year, there was developed a resolution to prohibit the organization of local Wheels within the limits of any incorporated town, a measure adopted in part from the lessons learned during the rise and fall of the Grange. The Grange had been undiscriminating in its membership policies, hence allowing many of contrary interests

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THE WHEEL STORE

to subvert its energy and goals. The Wheel leadership wanted to restrict membership to the lower-class rural farmer and laborer so as to continue to represent their interests. And until 1888, when they were assisted in assembling their own separate Wheel, blacks were also excluded from membership.

Among those that the Wheel membership sought to exclude were the editors of a press that was known to be strongly allied with the state's Democratic Party, the very party that was seen as at least partially responsible for the farmers' condition. The Wheelers instead established their own newspapers, such as the Clarksville Laborer's Herald and the Cabot Wheel, or endorsed existing papers that were sympathetic to their cause. This gave the local Wheel membership an unbiased community voice, a forum for exchanging news and opinions, and an opportunity to advertise their own rapidly growing enterprises.

The year of 1884 saw the first attempts by Wheelers to take control of their farming costs through the establishment of Wheel cooperative stores and direct purchasing agreements with manufacturers. Such enterprises also provided a means to secure greater control over the marketing of their own products. Early cooperative stores are known to have existed in both Van Buren and Corning, Arkansas. The Wheel Store in Batesville was established in 1887, and by 1888 these efforts had resulted in state business exchanges, cooperative stores, tobacco warehouses and various marketing associations.

One of the least well-known attempts on the part of the Wheel to take direct control of their economic circumstances occurred in 1889, when those members involved in tobacco production advocated the establishment of a tobacco "trust." This was to take the form of a central facility where all harvested tobacco would be stored, an arrangement which would allow the farmers to control storage conditions, quality and measurement and to collectively borrow money against the value of the stored tobacco. Furthermore, the tobacco farmers sought to control tobacco prices by encouraging all tobacco farmers to abstain from planting tobacco in 1889, an event which, had it occurred, would have greatly driven up the price on the tobacco stored in the trust. Toward this end, they attempted to organize all tobacco growing Wheel members throughout the region (the Wheel had expanded into several Southern states by this time). No record remains as to why this effort never materialized, but it indicates an ambitious if somewhat contradictory effort to turn a segment of the economy in their favor through the establishment of one of the very monopolies they detested.

In the meantime, the Wheel continued the practice started by the Grange of sponsoring a variety of recreational, social and educational programs for the purpose of raising the consciousness of the heretofore isolated and provincial farmer adding "moral" lectures and social events to the typical husbandry news and advice. Through such events the Wheel provided relief from the monotonous routine of toil and allowed its members to form friendships and to share experiences.

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

#### **United States Department of the Interior** National Park Service

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THE WHEEL STORE

Between 1884 and 1885 the Wheel began the phenomenal growth that would continue until 1888. By 1885, the Wheel had grown to approximately 10,000 members, the largest portion of which coming from Arkansas, but now also including members who belonged to Wheels in Tennessee, Mississippi and Missouri. The membership would continue to grow in Arkansas and beyond, reaching a total membership of over 500,000 across the South and 75,000 in Arkansas by 1888. However, a particularly significant addition to the membership occurred in 1885, when another farmer's group, centered in northwestern Arkansas and called the Brothers of Freedom, joined with the Wheel, adding 40,000 members to its ranks. The Brothers of Freedom had formed at the same time as the Agricultural Wheel but had adopted a more activist platform, one less based upon a romantic dream of returning to a pure agrarian idyll than on coping successfully with the exigencies of an industrial economy. They had also realized early on that the logical extension of their philosophy of self-help was political participation, which meant vigilant monitoring of local and state Democratic candidates and the nomination of their own candidates if the Democrats were unsatisfactory. The political activism of the Brothers of Freedom infused the Wheel with a political consciousness and dedication to political solutions that it had not possessed previously.

This is not to say that the Arkansas Wheel membership had been completely oblivious to politics before 1885. In fact, a considerable furor arose before the elections of 1884 (which was also a presidential election year) due to the alarm felt by state Democrats when the Republicans attempted unsuccessfully to forge an alliance with the State Wheel during its annual summer meeting. The Republicans had approached the Wheel members in the first place, however, because they knew that the Wheelers were considering entering candidates of their own into several county elections around the state, which they did. The Democratic party and Democrat-influenced press railed against direct political involvement by any farmer's groups, alleging Republican subterfuge to impugn their sincerity, and rural ignorance to impugn their ability. After the election, when the Wheel candidates achieved only moderate success the Democrats quickly became more supportive. Yet, it was inevitable that this coalition with the Brothers of Freedom would reinforce and encourage this trend toward nominating their own candidates for public office rather than waiting for the Democratic party to address the farmers' concerns.

The Wheel's finest hour came during the election of 1888. Though the Union Labor Party was the official name of the political group that sought to challenge the Democrats in the local, state and national elections, several influential Wheelers were active in its leadership. The Union Labor Party nominated C.M. Norwood, a former Confederate soldier and state senator, for governor. The Republicans met next and agreed not to nominate a candidate of their own, endorsing Norwood instead. This decision lent 50,000 more votes to the Union Labor Party candidate. The Democrats nominated a planter from Lonoke, James P. Eagle, as their candidate for governor. The Democrats accused the Republicans of trying to use the dissatisfaction of the Wheelers, most of whom had traditionally been Democrats, to further their own political agenda. The Wheelers themselves were faced with the difficult choice of

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backing the Democrats, who they distrusted, or the Republican-endorsed Union Labor Party candidate, who the Democrats did their best to associate with Reconstruction and Republican blacks. Amidst allegations of rampant election fraud, the Democratic candidate won by approximately 15,000 votes, a small amount considering the tremendous voter turnout. Several Union Labor Party candidates were elected to the State legislature, however, and two were eventually seated in Congress (after investigations of election fraud reversed the original vote counts). Regardless of the results, the political clout of the Agricultural Wheel had been established, as evidenced by the attempts of the Democratic Party to court it, and never again would the Democrats ignore the farmers' grievances as long as they continued to voice them. The farmers who were elected to the state legislature made their own presence felt through such victories as the repeal of mortgage legislation that had vexed the farmers for years and for which they had long sought relief.

In 1888, the Wheel merged with another Southern reform organization, the National Farmers' Alliance and Cooperative Union, later on to become the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union (NFA&IU), and its membership continued to exert influence through that organization. The NFA&IU was absorbed by the national Populist Party in the 1890s. The Populists represented the most organized and effective incarnation of the various earlier reform movements until that time. They reached their zenith during the 1896 elections, where they gained several local, state and Congressional seats around the nation but lost a close presidential election that devastated an already factious party.

Despite its naivete and limited success, the Agricultural Wheel remains Arkansas' most significant contribution to the agrarian and labor reform movements that swept across the country during the last quarter of the 19th century.

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Section number 9 Page 1

- Henningson, Berton Edmund, Jr., "Northwest Arkansas and the Brothers of Freedom: The Roots of a Farmer Movement," <u>Arkansas in the Gilded Age, 1874-1900</u>
  Waddy William Moore, ed., (Little Rock, 1976).
- Independence County, Arkansas. Deed Records, especially p-2, 518 and Y-2, 186.
- Independence County, Arkansas. Incorporation Record, 1886-1896, 22-32.
- McGinnis, A. C. "Extremism in 1890", <u>Independence County Chronicle</u>, VI (January, 1965), 20-23.
- [McGinnis, A. C.] "The Batesville Wheel", <u>Independence County Chronicle</u>, VI (October, 1964), 18-20.
- Paisley, Clifton. "The Political Wheelers and Arkansas' Election of 1888", Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XXV (Spring, 1966), 3-21. pp. 59-74.
- Saloutas, Theodore. Farmer Movements in the South, 1865-1933, (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1960).
- Saloutas, Theodore. "The Agricultural Wheel in Arkansas", <u>Arkansas Historical</u> <u>Quarterly</u>, II (March, 1943), 127-140.
- Sanborn Map Company. Batesville, Arkansas.

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION		
PROPERTY Wheel Store, The NAME:		
MULTIPLE NAME:		
STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Inde	pendence	
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/08/88 DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:	DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1	.2/23/88
REFERENCE NUMBER: 88002822		
REASONS FOR REVIEW:		
OTHER: N PDIL: N PH	NDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROV R DRAFT: N	
COMMENT WAIVER: N ACCEPTRETURNRE	SJECT /2/8/88 DATE Nati	ered in the
ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:		

RECOM./CRITERIA	
REVIEWER	1,651
DISCIPLINE	297.07
DATE	

CLASSIFICATION TO THE	
countresource type	
STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION	
FUNCTION MOTERATION TO THOU A CEN	
historiccurrentsupre lead Y	
DESCRIPTION	
architectural classificationmaterialsdescriptive text	
SIGNIFICANCE MADE AND ADDRESS OF THE STREET	
Period Areas of SignificanceCheck and justify below	
Specific dates  Builder/Architect Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)	
summary paragraphcompletenessclarityapplicable criteriajustification of areas checkedrelating significance to the resourcecontextrelationship of integrity to significancejustification of exception	
otherother	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA	
acreageverbal boundary descriptionboundary justification	
ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION	
sketch mapsUSGS mapsphotographspresentation	
OTHER COMMENTS	
Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to	
Phone	
Signed Date	



WHEEL STORE
Batesville, Independence Co.
Photographed by T. Jones
March, 1988
Negatives on file at AHPP.



WHEEL STORE
Batesville, Independence Co.
Photographed by T. Jones
March 1988
Negatives on file at AHPP



WHEEL STORE Batesville, Independence Co. Photographed by T. Jones March 1988 Negatives on file at AHPP



**ARKANSAS** HISTORIC PRESERVATION **PROGRAM** 

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> NATIONAL REGISTER

November 3, 1988

Carol D. Shull Chief of Registration United States Department of the Interior National Register of Historic Places National Park Service 1100 "L" Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20240

> RE: The Wheel Store

> > Batesville, Independence County

Dear Carol:

We are enclosing for your review the nomination for The Wheel Store. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Cathy Buford

State Historic Preservation Officer

CB/KS/bjm

**Enclosures** 





Suite 200 • Heritage Center • 225 East Markham • Little Rock, Arkansas 72201 • Phone (501) 371-2763