

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAR 31 1976

DATE ENTERED

JUL 13 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Desha County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Robert S. Moore Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Arkansas City

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

CODE
05

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
FourthCOUNTY
DeshaCODE
041**3 CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY**☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT**OWNERSHIP**☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS**☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE**☐ YES: RESTRICTED☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO**PRESENT USE**☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☒ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Desha County (Bonnie Zook, County Judge)

STREET & NUMBER

Post Office Box 218 Desha County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Arkansas City

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Circuit Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Desha County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Arkansas City

STATE

Arkansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT ☐ DETERIORATED
☒ GOOD ☐ RUINS
☐ FAIR ☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Desha County Courthouse in Arkansas City, Arkansas, is a good example of the type of county government buildings constructed in Arkansas at the turn of the century. Designed by architect Rome Harding of Little Rock, the structure displays some characteristics of the Romanesque Revival style.

This two and one-half storey brick building rests on a solid brick foundation made from forty freight-car loads of bricks. Five chimneys and a four storey clock tower extend above the irregular roof line. The angular lines of the roof are in contrast to the rounded arches of window and door openings around the building.

The square clock tower, located at the south corner of the building, has a clock face on each side of its fourth storey. Double rectangular windows at the ground floor, single arched windows at the second floor, and round arched openings at the third floor make each storey distinctive. A pyramid shaped roof with finial tops the clock tower.

The facade is five bays wide with the three center bays projecting from the mass of the building. The facade features a decorative star patterned band at the second storey level, and brickwork corbelling below the roofline. Ornamental brackets decorate the cornice. The one storey box-like entry protrudes from the facade and has a delicate iron grille around the top. A similar entry is located on the southwest elevation.

The main entry and three center windows on the second storey facade have arched heads, while the ground floor windows have plain lintel heads. A dormer with round arched window projects at the third storey line.

Exterior alterations to the courthouse have been slight, and consist mainly of a two-storey addition at the rear of the building. In 1943 this box-like addition was made to house vaults for the County Clerk's and Circuit and Chancery Clerk's Offices. In the early 1950's a small one storey storage wing was added to the southwest side of the earlier addition.

The original central hallway on the interior of the building was enclosed for offices in 1943. The most impressive room is the second floor court room with its twenty-three foot ceilings.

The Desha County Courthouse rests on a shady corner lot in the center of Arkansas City. Still surrounded by a decorative iron fence, the building appears much the same as when constructed in 1900.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1900

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Rome Harding

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1838 Desha County was formed from Arkansas County in the new state of Arkansas. The first county seat was at Napoleon, a river port located at the conflux of the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers. Because Napoleon was frequently flooded, the site was abandoned in the 1870's. The county seat was first moved to Chicot City in 1873, and in 1877 was moved to its current location in Arkansas City.

The present Desha County Courthouse is located on the same tract of land as was the first courthouse which was constructed in 1880 and destroyed near the end of the century. In 1879 Mr. and Mrs. John W. Dickerson donated the land on which both the original and present courthouses were built.

In October, 1899, the Desha County Quorum Court voted to build a new brick courthouse at Arkansas City. It was to cost not less than \$10,000 and to be as nearly fire proof as possible. A three member commission was appointed to supervise construction of the courthouse. The commissioners consisted of: County Judge J. S. Ross, a major in the Federal army during the Civil War; Henry Thane, a wealthy businessman who owned several banks in southeast Arkansas; and G. E. Sweet, one of the largest contractors in southeast Arkansas.

Little Rock architect Rome Harding designed the courthouse with some elements of the Romanesque Revival style of architecture. The two and one-half storey brick structure features a four storey clock tower at the southwest corner, round arches and decorative patterns worked in brick.

On January 2, 1900, a contract for construction of the courthouse was signed by the Desha County Courthouse Committee and the W. D. Holtzman Company of Little Rock. Ten months later the courthouse was completed at a cost of \$23,369.44.

The Desha County Courthouse has long been a source of pride to the residents of the county. Though Desha County was one of the first parts of Arkansas to be settled, almost all of the early structures have fallen victim to the numerous floods which have plagued the county. As one of the most

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Dreidel, E. M. "Desha County Courthouse at Arkansas City." 1974 Programs, Desha County Historical Society, Vol.1, No. 2.
- Stroud, Mrs. J. H. "Present Desha County Courthouse, Arkansas City, Arkansas." Manuscript on file with Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, Arkansas.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3.28 acre less than one SRR

UTM REFERENCES

A | 1 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 |
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
D | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Dianna Kirk, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

DATE

June 10, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

300 West Markham

TELEPHONE

501 / 371-1639

CITY OR TOWN

Little Rock

STATE

Arkansas

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ☐

STATE ☐

LOCAL ☒

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE Anne Bartley

Anne Bartley

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE March 9, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 7/12/96

ATTEST:

DATE 6-25-96

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

RBR for WJM 7/8/76

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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JUL 12 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE one

architecturally significant structures in Desha County, the courthouse is also an important historic landmark in the Arkansas City area.

Property Desha County Courthouse

State Ark Working Number 3.31.76.2904

74000403

TECHNICAL

Photos 3
Maps 1

CONTROL

OK CM
4.6.76

HISTORIAN

Accept
Ruttenbaum
6/16/76

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

TWO UNFORTUNATE ADDITIONS TO REAR.
ARK.
THESE COURTHOUSE NOMINATIONS ALL HAVE THE SAME
RATHER VAGUE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Accept
VERBOVICH
6.21.76

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____
Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
Cole
6.22.76

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

Heurington
6.25.76

National Register Write-up _____ Send-back _____
Federal Register Entry 8-3-76 Re-submit _____

Entered JUL 12 1976

INT:2106-74



Desha County Courthouse
Desha County, Arkansas

1. southeast + southwest elevations, viewed from the south

- 1) Desha County Courthouse
- 2) Arkansas City, Arkansas
- 3) Dianna Kirk
- 4) 1975
- 5) Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
- 6) Viewed from the south
- 7) 1 of 3

JUL 12 1976

MAR 31 1976

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Desha Co. Courthouse

Desha Co., Arkansas

2

2. southeast & northeast elevations, showing rear addition

- 1) Desha County Courthouse
- 2) Arkansas City, Arkansas
- 3) Dianna Kirk
- 4) 1975
- 5) Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
- 6) Viewed from the east
- 7) 2 43

JUL 12 1976

MAR 31 1976

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Desha County Courthouse

Desha Co., Arkansas

3. second storey courtroom

- 1) Desha County Courthouse
- 2) Arkansas City, Arkansas
- 3) Dianna Kirk
- 4) 1975
- 5) Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
- 6) Second storey courtroom
- 7) 3 of 3

MAR 31 1976

JUL 12 1976

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

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JUL 12 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Desha County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Arkansas City

____ VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Desha

STATE

Arkansas

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE USGS, Arkansas City Quadrangle

SCALE 1:24,000

DATE 1972

4 REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

ARKANSAS CITY QUADRANGLE
MISSISSIPPI-ARKANSAS
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SW 1/4 LAMONT 15' QUADRANGLE

Desha County Courthouse
Desha County, Arkansas

UTM Reference
15 / 666 780 / 3720 090

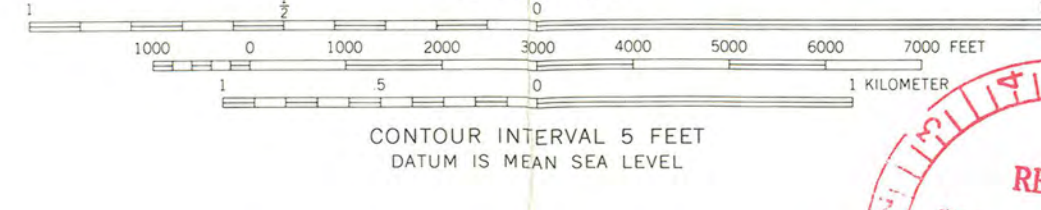
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1971. Field checked 1972

Projection: Mississippi coordinate system, west zone
(transverse Mercator)
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Mississippi coordinate system,
west zone and Arkansas coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 15, shown in blue. 1927 North American datum

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

UTM GRID AND 1972 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 20192
AND BY THE ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface ——— Light-duty road, hard or improved surface ———
Secondary highway, hard surface ——— Unimproved road ———
Interstate Route ——— U.S. Route ——— State Route ———

ARKANSAS CITY, MISS.—ARK.

SW 1/4 LAMONT 15' QUADRANGLE
N3330—W9107.5/7.5

1972
AMS 2751 II SW—SERIES V843

TELEPHONE REPORT

DATE 6/16/76
TIME OF CALL 9:30 AM PM

1. CALL ☒ TO; ☐ FROM (Name)

Dianna Kirk

2. ADDRESS (Tel. No. if needed)

Arkansas State Staff

3. SUBJECT, PROJECT NO., ETC.

Desha County Courthouse nomination

4. DETAILS OF DISCUSSION

Dianna chose to reduce the acreage from 3.28 to less than one because the county jail is also situated on the larger parcel & is not included in the nomination. At a later date, the jail may be nominated. It's a red brick, one story, small scale building constructed in the 1890's. It's compatible with the courthouse in its architectural style.

NAME OF PERSON PLACING/RECEIVING CALL

Steve Rittenbaum

TITLE

Historian

OFFICE

Nat. Reg.

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE **ARKANSAS**

Date Entered **JUL 12 1976**

Name

Location

Desha County Courthouse

**Arkansas City
Desha County**

Cleburne County Courthouse

**Heber Springs
Cleburne County**

Also Notified

**Hon. John L. McClellan
Hon. Dale Bumpers
Hon. Ray Thornton
Hon. Wilbur D. Mills
Regional Director, Southwest
Region**

**State Historic Preservation Officer
Ms. Anne Bartley
Acting Director
Department of Natural and
Cultural Heritage
The Old State House
300 West Markham
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201**

PR MMott/row 7/16/76

✓ Brick, 2 stories, cross shaped, hipped and gabled roof sections with some cresting, decorative chimneys; main block with projecting front entrance vestibule, attic gable, flanking recessed 2-story wing, and flanking 4-story clocktower; rectangular and round- and segmental-arched windows, corbeled cornices, decorative brickwork articulating front bays. Eclecti~~x~~^s. Good examp~~e~~^l of state's turn-of-the-century county government buildings.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:

architect/²m. builder: Rome Harding

landscape/garden designer:

interior decorator:

engineer:

artist/artisan:

builder/contractor:

ETHNIC GROUP:

NAMES:

personal

(label role
&
appropriate date)

events

institutional

DATES:

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (Specific date or 1/4 of century): 1900

DATE(S) OF "MAJOR" ALTERATIONS: 1943

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DATE(S):

SOURCE:

(OF NOMINATION)

PRIVATE

STATE

LOCAL GOV'T

MUNICIPAL

COUNTY

OTHER

FEDERAL AGENCY:

ACREAGE:

(to nearest tenth of an acre)

~~3.28~~ less than one

COMMENTS: (include architectural information here)

BRICK, 2 1/2 STORY, ¹⁶⁵ CROSS SHAPED, ~~RETRACTING~~ HIPPED AND GABLED ROOF, ^{sections with some} 4 STORY
CORNER TOWER WITH PYRAMID ROOF, GORGES AND ROUND OPENINGS AND
CORNER PROTECTIONS
FLAT LIMES ON FRONT FIRST FLOOR, SEGMENTED AND ARCHED ON
2ND FLOOR
BRICK DECORATIONS SUCH CORNICE, CORBELLING, AND PANELLING
^{FLAT ROOFED}
ONE STORY ENTRANCE PROTECTION WITH METAL CRESTING

cresting, decorative chimneys; main block with projecting front entrance vestibule, and attic gable, flanking
recessed 2-story wing; flanking 4-story clock tower; rectangular and round and segmental-arched
windows, corbelled cornices, decorative brickwork articulating front bay. Eclectic.

SIGNIFICANCE: (maximum two sentences)

Arkansas' turn-of-the-century county
of county government bldgs. constructed in Ark. at the
turn of the century. One of the most architecturally
significant structures in the County.

NR Data Sheet

DATE: 6/16/76
 Reviewer INITIALS: SRR
 (NR) DOE JUL 12 1976

NAME AS IT APPEARS IN FEDERAL REGISTER: Desha County Courthouse

OTHER NAMES:

LOCATION:

STREET & NUMBER

Robert S. Moore Ave.

CITY, TOWN

Arkansas City

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4

STATE

Ark.

05

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Desha

code

041

OWNER OF PROPERTY:

(Circle)

PRIVATE

STATE

LOCAL GOV'T

MUNICIPAL

COUNTY

OTHER

ADMINISTRATOR (underline)

FEDERAL (AGENCY NAME):

NPS REGION: (CIRCLE)

N. ATLANTIC

MID ATLANTIC

SOUTHEAST

MIDWEST

SOUTHWEST

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

WEST

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

FEATURES:

INTERIOR

Substantially intact-1
 unknown - 4
 not applicable - 7

EXTERIOR

Substantially intact-2
 unknown - 5
 not applicable - 8

ENVIRONS

Substantially intact-3
 unknown - 6
 Not applicable-9

Interior, exterior, environs not intact-0

CONDITION -

EXCELLENT

GOOD

FAIR

DETERIORATED

RUINS

UNEXPOSED

Unexcavated

UNALTERED

ALTERED

Reconstructed

Excavated

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED

Unknown

ACCESS -

Yes-restricted

Yes-unrestricted

No access

Unknown

historic district?

YES

NO

WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT?

YES

NO

IF YES, NAME:

WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK?

YES

NO

IF YES, NAME:

ADAPTIVE USE:

YES

NO

Saved?

YES

NO

FUNCTION(S): (use vocabulary words)

then- Courthouse

now- Courthouse

SIGNIFICANCE:

ARCHAEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC

ARCHAEOLOGY-HISTORIC

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE - 4

ART

COMMERCE

COMMUNICATIONS

CONSERVATION

ECONOMICS

EDUCATION

ENGINEERING

EXPLORATION

INDUSTRY

INVENTION

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

LAW/Gov't/politics

LITERATURE

MILITARY

MUSIC

PHILOSOPHY

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT - 21

RELIGION

SCIENCE

SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER (SPECIFY)

entertainment

health

recreation

settlement

socio/cultural

urban & commun

planning

Claims

"first?"

YES

NO

"oldest?"

YES

NO

"only?"

YES

NO

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:

architect/²m. builder: *Rome Harding*

landscape/garden designer:

interior decorator:

engineer:

artist/artisan:

builder/contractor:

ETHNIC GROUP:

NAMES:

personal

(label role
&
appropriate date)

events

institutional

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less than one

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Brick, 2 stories, cross shaped, hipped and gabled roof sections with some cresting, decorative chimneys; main block with projecting front entrance vestibule, attic gable, flanking recessed 2-story wing, and flanking 4-story clocktower; rectangular and round- and segmental-arched windows, corbeled cornices, decorative brickwork articulating front bays. Eclecti^x. Good example of state's turn-of-the-century county government buildings.

turn of the century. One of the most architecturally significant structures in the County.