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Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. 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. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

Historic and Architectural Resources of Searcy County, Arkansas

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

- I. The Early History of Searcy County, 1790-1865: Settlement, Growth, & Civil War
- II. Searcy County History, 1865-1910: Reconstruction, Railroads and renewal
- III. Searcy County in the World War Era, 1910-1945: Economic Realignment, The Great Depression and World War

**C. Geographical Data**

The legal boundaries of Searcy County, Arkansas

☐ See continuation sheet

**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

Cathryn Byford Slater  
Signature of certifying official

6-14-93  
Date

State Historic Preservation Program  
State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Patrick Andrews  
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

8/18/93  
Date

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**I. The Early History of Searcy County, 1790-1865: Settlement, Growth and Civil War****A. *Earliest Settlement*****1. Prehistoric settlement**

Searcy County is in the southcentral part of the Ozark Mountains, with the Buffalo River and the Middle Fork of the Little Red River being major streams running through the county. It was an ideal area for hunters-gatherers, and there is evidence of occupation by Native Americans from at least Early Archaic times (7,000-8,000 BC), up to and including historic Indians and early Euro-American home sites. There are (as of March 1993) 312 archeological sites on record in Searcy County, ranging from small scatters of stone tools and debris, to villages along the major streams, and to major bluff shelters which have several feet of accumulated cultural debris. Some of the bluff shelters along the Buffalo River were investigated in the early 1930s, and normally perishable material, such as cane basketry and leather objects, as well as stone and bone tools and pottery, was discovered. It is felt that these material date to occupation in the Mississippi period, perhaps A.D. 1200-1400. Few extensive excavations have taken place in any sites, but the potential for information, particularly in the Archaic and Woodland periods is great.

**2. Earliest European contact**

European contact in Arkansas began in 1541, when De Soto and the remnants of his army crossed the Mississippi River into what is now northeast Arkansas. Current research indicates that De Soto may have reached the Batesville area on the White River in Independence County just to the east of Searcy County, but the expedition does not seem to have penetrated further west into the heart of the Ozarks. After a space of 130 years when there was no European contact, Arkansas Post was founded in the lower Arkansas River in 1686 and, although documentation is scant, French trappers and traders began to fan out from the Post looking for furs and bear oil to sell through the Government factory at the Post. Although no archeological evidence of this activity has yet been discovered in Searcy County, it is likely that the Buffalo River was a main transportation highway through and into western Ozarks.

At the time of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, all of northern Arkansas was claimed as hunting territory by the Osage Indians, whose main villages were in southwest Missouri. No camps or villages identified with this tribe have yet been located in northern Arkansas. In 1808 the Osage sold their claim to northern Arkansas to the United States government, and nine years later a large portion of northwest and north central Arkansas, including Searcy County, was set aside

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as a reservation for the Cherokee Indians.

*B. Historic Native American Settlement in Searcy County*

A 1793 Spanish land grant had deeded a tract of land to Captain Don Joseph Valliere, extending roughly twenty miles on each side of the White River, beginning at the mouths of the Buffalo and Big North Fork rivers and extending to the source of the White. Valliere never settled or surveyed his grant, although the maps and records do indicate that the Spanish, and presumably the French before them, were at least somewhat familiar with the general topography and features of the area, perhaps through the accounts of Indians and French trappers. As result of the creation of the Cherokee Reservation in 1817, the central Ozark region was closed to white settlement and remained largely unknown and unexplored.<sup>1</sup> In 1819, the British explorer and anthropologist Henry Schoolcraft visited Arkansas and described the lower portions of the Buffalo River where it encounters the White:

"...This (the Buffalo River) is a large stream, also entering on the south side of the (White) river. It originates near the north banks of the Arkansas, and is about 180 miles in length. Its banks afford some rich alluvium, and it is a region much resorted to by hunters on account of the abundance of game it affords."<sup>2</sup>

Despite the sale of their hunting grounds to the federal government, the Osage had retained certain buffalo and wild game hunting privileges in north-central Arkansas; with the arrival of the Cherokee, these hunting rights became a source of contention between the two tribes. The Cherokee, based in the fertile Arkansas River bottoms at Dwight Mission near modern-day Russellville, enlisted the support of other Indian groups in the early 1820's - Shawnees, Delawares, and others - that were being forced west by increasing American pressures. Despite the concern of the territorial government in Little Rock, these newcomers were allowed to settle in the northern portion of the Cherokee land grant, which included modern Searcy County, as a buffer to the Osage. Nevertheless, tensions remained high between the Cherokee and the Osage and scattered raiding soon escalated to outright war.<sup>3</sup>

In 1824, Edward DuVal, the federal government's Cherokee Agent at Dardanelle, reported "...there are settled on and near the small Bayou which empties into White River above the Buffaloe (sic) Fork [Crooked Creek] something like 200 families of Shawnee and Delaware Indians..." and five years later, after the Cherokee had been forced further west into what would become Indian Territory, U.S. government surveyors establishing base lines in the Ozarks reported a band of Shawnees living on Bear Creek, near the modern day community of Canaan. The Shawnee village, as reported by the surveyors, was a community of cedar cabins in a cane

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brake located in what is today Bear Creek township on the "Buffaloe fork of the White River."

Arkansas's central Ozarks were open to American settlement by the late 1820's and early 1830's, although no land in what is today Searcy County would be surveyed and available for sale for another ten years. Robert Adams, whose sister Mary Adams was married to Peter Cornstalk of the Searcy County Shawnee, is believed to have been the first white settler in Searcy County, establishing a farmstead sometime after 1825 near where modern-day Arkansas Highway 27 crosses Holsted Creek.<sup>1</sup> According to family lore, the Shawnee used eleven horses to bring the Adams' family to Bear Creek, where Robert built a log cabin and planned to make a crop; it would be eight years before any neighbors came; Gibson Parks, a Mr. Cummings, and Lemuel Holsted, who traded a gun and a goat for Holsted Hollow near Robert Adams' homestead.<sup>4</sup>

As white settlers began to arrive, discrimination and harassment of the Indian settlers became more common. John Owl, a prosperous Miami and Delaware Indian half-breed with a homestead on Owl's Fork at the mouth of the Middle Fork of the Little Red River, is reported to have been forced from his land by white neighbors. Friends of Owl's, including Jacob Wolf<sup>1</sup> and two of Robert Adams' brothers wrote Arkansas's territorial governor John Pope on Owl's behalf in 1830 protesting this treatment and asking for government intervention. It is not likely that Owl's land was returned, and he apparently moved on up the Middle Fork to settle at Owl's Cove.<sup>5</sup>

A number of landmarks and place names remain in Searcy County to commemorate its' Native American legacy. Wiley's Cove (later Leslie) was named for Chief Wiley, a Cherokee resident of Searcy County who lived near George Blair's spring and is buried in the northern portion of the town of Leslie, near Begley's Creek. Stephenson Spring, known as the "medicine water" to the Cherokee, is reported to have been three miles from the present-day community of Leslie, and a Cherokee village is reputed to have been located on the site of Old Lebanon.<sup>6</sup>

C. *White Settlement in Searcy County*

As the Cherokee were being moved west beginning in 1828, government surveyors swarmed into the central Ozarks to establish base lines and plot the township and range lines in what would become Searcy County. Conditions were difficult in the rugged territory, and often the surveyors

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<sup>1</sup>A Shawnee Indian cemetery is said to be located on the Robert Adams farm.

<sup>1</sup>The Jacob Wolf House, in nearby Baxter County, is considered to be the oldest standing structure in Arkansas and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

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were forced to rely on aid and provisions from the Cherokee they were displacing or else embark on the eleven day round trip to Batesville for supplies. In time, conditions alleviated somewhat as white settlers moved into the area. Surveying the rocky and mountainous terrain was hazardous, and good help was difficult to come by for the two survey crews at work in 1834. In addition to these difficulties, it was three years before one of the surveyors was paid. In 1834, the first township was subdivided, but it was five years before a survey map was made and, presumably, the land could be sold, although a number of settlers were already living in the area.<sup>7</sup> A surveyor's note dated September 11, 1834 made mention of a number of the area's residents:

"...15 families live in this (15N, Range 18 West) township, mostly on Richland creek viz: Widow Martin, William Cavinaw, Widow Davis, William Martin, I. G. Strickland, I.S. Thompson, William Hale, Joseph Ray, Alexander Hamilton, Josiah Young, J.B. Robertson, Vincent Robertson, Widow Graves, William Stewart, and most of the above named persons are anxious to purchase the places which they have improved. High mountains border this township on both the eastern and western boundaries and good land lies in the low valley of Richland creek in the middle."<sup>8</sup>

Arkansas's population grew steadily through the 1820's and 1830's, largely through immigration from the southeastern United States. By 1835, there were enough people in north central Arkansas to warrant the establishment of a new county, and the residents began to petition the territorial legislature in Little Rock. On November 3, 1835, the Arkansas Territorial Legislature passed an act establishing Searcy County out of Izard County, with the following boundaries:

"That all of that portion of the county of Izard, beginning at a point on the State line of Missouri between ranges thirteen and fourteen, thence south with said range line to White river, thence up the Buffalo Fork to the mouth of Big Creek, thence up Big Creek to where the same forks, some miles above what is called the Rock house, thence south to the Van Buren county line, so as to include Wiley's Cove in the county of Searcy, thence westwardly to the south-east corner of Carroll county, thence north with said line to the State line of Missouri, thence east to the place of beginning, be, and the same is hereby erected into a separate and distinct county, to be called the county of Searcy...the temporary seat of justice of said county of Searcy, shall be held at the house of Thomas Adams, in said county of Searcy."<sup>9</sup>

Searcy County was named in honor of Richard Searcy, an important pioneer figure in Arkansas's

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territorial history. A Tennessean by birth, Searcy had settled in Davidsonville in the 1810's before moving to Batesville in 1820 to practice law. He soon acquired a reputation as one of the territory's finest attorneys and in 1823 Searcy was appointed a territorial judge for the Batesville district. Despite his reputation however, Searcy failed in two attempts to win election to Congress from the Arkansas Territory, and died in the early 1830's.<sup>10</sup> Searcy County was named in honor of Searcy's achievements, but the following year the new county was renamed Marion County, with the county seat at Yellville (formerly Shawneetown). Once the population of the renamed county had increased sufficiently, the Arkansas State Legislature separated the southern portion of Marion County and established yet another Searcy County in 1838:

"That all that portion of the present county of Marion, included in the following boundaries, to wit: Beginning on the eastern boundary line of Marion county; thence west to the line dividing Marion and Carroll counties; thence south, with said line, to the Van Buren county line; thence east, with said line, to the eastern line of Marion; thence north, with said line, to the place of beginning, so as to include nine hundred square miles...The temporary seat of justice shall be at the present residence of James Eagan, in said county of Searcy, until otherwise provided for by law..."<sup>11</sup>

The new Searcy County was bounded on the north by Boone and Marion counties; on the east by Stone County; on the south by Van Buren and Pope counties, and on the west by Newton County. The new county was located in the north-central portion of the state, in the rugged Boston Mountains of the Ozark Plateau, with its highest elevation at Point Peter, 2,021 feet above sea level. Topographically, Searcy County was broken into numerous hollows with swiftly flowing streams, while the Buffalo River, fed on its course by a myriad of mountain streams, bisected the new county as it wound its way northeast through rugged mountains, high plateaus, broad valleys and sloping hillsides toward the White River. North of the Buffalo, the Tomahawk Mountains define the more rugged portion of the county, while the southern third of the county was dominated by the middle fork of the Little Red River and by Cove Creek, both tributaries of the Little Red. Cedars and oaks dominated the Buffalo River country, while oak, walnut, and other hardwoods were more common in the southern reaches of the county.<sup>12</sup>

On June 15, 1836, Arkansas itself was admitted to the Union by President Andrew Jackson as a slave state. Slave ownership in Searcy County was minimal due to the region's unsuitability for plantation agriculture and there was tremendous resentment for many years against the inflated political influence of the slave-holding planters of the more populous, rural, and agrarian southeastern portion of the state. Political divisions developed as well; the dominant planter classes of the Delta and southern Arkansas were predominantly Whigs, while the Ozarks leaned

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strongly toward the Jacksonian Democrats. In March, 1836, Charles R. Saunders, who represented the central Ozarks in the territorial legislature, pressed for the establishment of a mail route from the Searcy Court House and Bear Creek through Clinton to Little Rock and to have himself named postmaster at the soon-to-be-established Bear Creek post office. Saunders's attempts were unsuccessful however, and the proposed post office was established in Yellville instead. To receive mail, early residents of what is now Searcy County were forced to travel either to Yellville or Clinton in neighboring counties.<sup>13</sup>

A number of families that would figure prominently in Searcy County's history in the years to come arrived in the area in the mid-1830's, including the Jamesons, the Morris's, the Murphys, the Ruffs, the McDaniels, the Loves, the Leslie's (for whom the town of Leslie was named), the Brattons, the Roses, and the Masseys, among others. Middle Tennessee along the Tennessee River and the state of Missouri seemed to furnish a disproportionate number of Searcy County's settlers prior to 1855. Henry Begley and his brothers settled on Begley's Creek near Wiley's Cove in the 1850's, approximately one mile north of modern-day Leslie. Jack Hensley and his brother Mark, originally from Wayne County in Tennessee, claimed to have brought the first wagons across Clinton Mountain and to have spent two weeks hunting and cutting a road in order to bring their families into the region; Mark and his wife Sally eventually established a farm two and a half miles west of the present site of Marshall.<sup>14</sup> In the southeastern portion of the county, the community of Campbell was established in 1836 by settlers from Batesville. At its zenith, the little town included a post office, general store, a grist mill, and a blacksmith shop, although by the turn of the century most of the original inhabitants had departed.<sup>15</sup>

The area was rich in game - "bears, panthers, wolves, deer, turkeys, coon, fox, wildcat, 'possum, skunks, squirrels" - as well as copious supplies of wild honey that the yeoman farmers could make use of to supplement their diets. In 1919, James Bratton, Sr. recalled his father killing eighty bears and deer in one month.<sup>16</sup> The Biography of John W. Morris, recounting the life of an early settler of Searcy County, describes the Buffalo river valley country that these newcomers found on their arrival in 1839:

"...its rich valley land that could be had for the taking, where wild game was so plentiful, and wild honey was in abundance...After a long, wearisome journey, they reached Richland, to find acres of rich land in the valley, a few settlers, and plenty of wild game. There were no schools or churches; the nearest post office was at Yellville, twenty-eight miles away..."<sup>17</sup>

The 1840 census recorded 936 white citizens in Searcy County, one hundred-fifty of whom were males subject to the poll tax, as well as three slaves. The county also boasted one distillery

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owned by John S. Ezell, one pleasure carriage owned by L. D. Jenkins, one mule, 311 horses and mares, 498 neat cattle, and \$3,999 in merchandise capital. Land was finally offered for sale and the first three legitimate purchasers came forward in 1841: Lemuel Turney purchased 73 acres, Thomas R. Hill bought 80 acres, and John M. Hensley purchased 72 acres. The frontier county continued to grow at a respectable pace through the 1840's and survey maps of the period began to show that the county's traces had turned into bona fide roads.<sup>18</sup>

By 1850, the average citizen of Searcy County had 20 acres of improved land valued at \$200 that he farmed himself; owned between one and three horses, one to three milk cows, one to five other cattle, and about 50 swine; and grew roughly 300 bushels of corn a year. Five percent of the population owned land valued at over \$1,000; for example, John M. Hensley owned 102 acres of improved and 58 acres of unimproved land worth a total of \$2,500, and Nathan Slay owned 60 acres of improved and 100 acres of unimproved land worth a total of \$2,000, while Martin Dean, Zebediah Baker, and Bowman Turney each owned lands worth over \$1,400. Six and one-half percent of the population, on the other hand, owned no land whatsoever, and many owned no horses or cattle.<sup>19</sup>

Another settler from Tennessee, Benjamin Thomas, described the Searcy County he found on his arrival near the present site of Leslie in 1849:

"At that time the country was very thinly settled, men going six and seven miles to house raisings and log rollings. The nearest mill was on Big Creek, twelve or fifteen miles...Our only market (for agricultural goods) was Little Rock. All the surplus hogs were driven there, a trip of from 18 to 25 days. After hogs were driven down there and killed the man got 41-42 c[ents] came home with a pocket full of money. Our groceries were all purchased at Little Rock for the coming year.

"Where the town of Leslie now is was a solid pawpaw, dogwood, redbud and grapevine thicket. Game and varmints of all kinds were numerous..."<sup>20</sup>

By 1850, the Searcy County census recorded 1,950 whites and 27 slaves living in the county, for a total population of 1,977; eighteen percent of the total white population was illiterate. Campbell township in the southeastern portion of the county was the most heavily populated area of the county, with 672 whites and 12 blacks, while Wiley's Cove, where the town of Leslie was located, was next with 560 whites and four blacks. The county boasted six teachers in six schools, with a total of 120 pupils. There were three church buildings in the county, two Methodist and one Baptist; each could hold about fifty people and were valued at about fifty



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dollars apiece. Land valuation included 7,440 acres of improved farms and 1,812 acres of unimproved farms worth a total of \$85,201. County livestock included 757 horses, 48 asses and mules, 1,138 milk cows, 457 working oxen, 1,477 other cattle, 1,927 sheep, and 12,887 pigs, all worth a total of \$70,497. Corn was the predominant crop (124,000 bushels), followed by oats (14,000 bushels), wheat (4,900 bushels), sweet potatoes (3,900 bushels) and Irish potatoes (1,700 bushels). Also produced were 7,900 pounds of tobacco, 5,300 pounds of wool, 33,500 pounds of butter, 2,300 pounds of beeswax and honey, as well as marginal amounts of rye, peas, beans cheese, and maple sugar. As compared to the 1840 census, the number of horses had increased by twenty percent, while the number of cattle had decreased by 40 percent, perhaps reflecting the impact of the large cattle drives from Arkansas to the California gold fields in the late 1840's.<sup>21</sup>

Prior to the Civil War, virtually every citizen of Searcy County engaged in some form of agriculture. In addition to the 378 farmers, Searcy County had one carpenter, nine blacksmiths, one millwright, two schoolteachers, nine preachers (six of whom were Baptists of some kind), three wagon makers, two merchants and one each of clerk, peddler, medical doctor and gunsmith. None could be considered overly prosperous, even by Arkansas's limited standards of the day. Most were yeoman farmers, raising crops mainly for their own use and heavily supplementing their diets with wild game. About one-third of the population grew tobacco for barter or personal use, more than six percent produced butter and almost ten percent made beeswax. Corn was the predominant row crop, with little or none of the county's land in cotton or rice.<sup>22</sup>

*D. Antebellum Development in Searcy County*

Antebellum architecture in Searcy County tended toward the functional and utilitarian. "I never saw a roof nailed on until I was nearly grown," Basil Brown Thomas, an early resident, remembered. Houses were built and topped off with "rib poles," with the boards laid upon them, then were weighted with "weight poles." Chimneys were of split logs with rock backs and jambs at the base, while stems were of wood and mud. Floorboards consisted of split logs, and house logs were rarely hewn.<sup>23</sup>

Schools in antebellum Searcy County were equally as primitive. Basil Brown Thomas described his first school, one of two in Wiley's Cove at that time, as "...a pole contraption with a dirt floor...(that) would not be called a respectable hog pen now." Classes lasted "all day from early in the morning until we would be dark getting home..." The two- to three-month school term was by subscription only at one dollar per student per month, and the children of Searcy County attended sporadically if at all during these years. Arkansas wouldn't establish a fully-functional

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public school system until early in the twentieth century.<sup>24</sup>

Searcy County's first post office was established in Wiley's Cove in 1842 with Benjamin Hull appointed as the first postmaster. Locust Grove followed in 1846 with Robert Cagle as postmaster, and Joseph Rea was appointed postmaster of the new Point Peter post office in 1848. The mail line ran the circuit between Yellville and Clinton and back again once a week, along the one bona fide road through Searcy County:

"...[T]he Clinton road...was easier found by travel than by work done on the road. There was not much danger of getting lost, as there was the one road."<sup>25</sup>

The first courthouse was established in the late 1840's at old Lebanon, a hamlet on a small tributary of the Buffalo called Bear Creek, five miles west of present-day Marshall. The first county officers included William Wood as county judge and William Kavanaugh as county clerk, while E. M. Hale served as the county's first sheriff. Lebanon at that time included one dwelling house, a little store, a saloon, and the courthouse itself. The courthouse was constructed of round logs with the cracks "large enough that a common dog could be taken by the tail and thrown through them." The judge's bench was made of split boards, while the floor was of split logs. John Campbell, a farmer originally from Tennessee, represented the young county for many years in the Arkansas Legislature in Little Rock.<sup>26</sup>

Surveying continued throughout the county through the 1840's, concentrating in those townships with the most valuable land to be sold. Meanwhile, immigration continued:

"Peter (Reeves)...settled...on Buffalo River, taking a government patent on the land along the north side of the river where U.S. Highway 65 now bridges Buffalo...Asa Reeves settled on Silver Hill, John Reeves patented the lands along Bear Creek known as the Dan Peek place. Two Reeves sisters married Bakers. Zebediah Baker settled in Baker Hollow on Bear Creek, near the old county seat, Lebanon."<sup>27</sup>

Because of the paucity of churches and the widely scattered population, circuit riding preachers were a necessity in order to attend to the spiritual needs of the community:

"The first preacher I (Benjamin Thomas) ever heard preach was old Uncle Jesse Griffin who was a circuit rider and blacksmith by trade. His circuit included Wiley's Cove, Bear Creek, Calf Creek, Richland, Boston Mountain and Archey's Fork. It took him three weeks to make his round and preach every day. His pay

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was principally corn, meat, jeans cloth and socks, probably some money. As long as he could go from home and back in a day he did so and his good old woman would hold a torch light at night until he could lay and sharpen all the plows the neighbors brought in while he was out preaching. When not preaching he was plowing... "28

Timber was an important industry in the early history of the fledgling county. The single saw mill in the county employed a two-man whip saw, a cross-cut saw with a cuff attached to each end with a long handle running through the cuff. Sawed lumber was considered a luxury at the time, and was used primarily in coffins. A water saw mill was later established on the Red River by Benjamin Potter and Nelson Hatchett, lowering prices and making sawed lumber more affordable for use in construction. Jimmy Shaw<sup>1</sup> is reported to have established the first mercantile operation in Searcy County, in Lebanon with George Shaw as his clerk; Bill Hayes later sold goods in the original county seat. George Norman was the first to build and settle in the vicinity of Burrowsville, later to become the county seat of Marshall.<sup>29</sup>

The discovery of gold in northern California in 1849 had a profound effect on Searcy County and the nation as a whole. A number of Searcy County residents headed west to claim their fortunes; those that were successful often returned to Arkansas via the Panama Canal and the Gulf of Mexico. Harry Love left for California in an ox-drawn wagon with his father and one of his brothers. Arriving on the west coast six months later, Love found the gold fields to be an anarchic and violent locale, and nearly every successful miner was eventually robbed and often killed by brigands and bandits. In reaction, the miners organized themselves into vigilante companies in order to protect themselves; Love found himself elected as captain of one such group, and proved himself quite effective in killing or capturing several notorious outlaws. Robert Osborne headed for the gold fields soon after the rush began, leaving his wife behind in Searcy County to manage the homestead; Osborne finally returned to Arkansas fifteen years later, only to find that his wife had remarried. Wilse Stephenson of Searcy County is said to have struck it rich in California and to have returned to Arkansas via Panama carrying his gold in a satchel. Arriving in Sylamore by river boat, Stephenson is alleged to have stopped in town for breakfast, paid \$35 for it, then walked the rest of the way home.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Shaw, a prominent figure in Searcy County's early history, was closely aligned with the Everett faction in the Marion County War of 1849, and would later serve two terms as county treasurer (1842-44, 1858-60), as well as five years as state senator in the Arkansas General Assembly for Searcy and Marion counties.

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In 1856, Littleton Baker, J. W. Gray and Jack Marshall were appointed commissioners to select a more centrally located site for a new county seat. The location chosen, about five miles east of the original courthouse in Lebanon, was platted and initially named Burrowsville in honor of N. B. Burrow, a local citizen.<sup>31</sup> Eleven years later, Burrowsville would be renamed Marshall in honor of the former U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall; actual incorporation would come on January 13, 1884.<sup>32</sup>

In an incident with national repercussions, a wagon train of families from Searcy County and other northwest Arkansas counties left for California in 1857. At Mountain Meadow, Utah, south of Salt Lake City, the caravan was attacked by several hundred Indians, a number of whom were later alleged to have been Mormons in disguise. The wagon train surrendered to John Lee, a Mormon farmer and Indian agent who had assured the migrants of their safety. Having yielded their weapons, 140 people were summarily massacred. Lee later confessed and was executed for his role in the affair. Only seventeen children survived the carnage; the youngest survivor, Twittie Baker, returned to Searcy County and spent the rest of his life living in Leslie.<sup>33</sup>

*E. The Marion County War of 1849*

The Marion County War of the summer of 1849 arose out of the political rivalries of two prominent families in the county and neighboring Searcy County was inevitably drawn into the imbroglio. The Everetts and their Democrat allies had dominated Marion County politics since the county's establishment in 1835; Bart Everett served as Sheriff, while his brother Ewell held the office of County Judge. Conflict developed when Hamp Tutt, a Whig, established his grocery near Yellville in the late 1840's and began selling "fighting whiskey" to the locals, the only such outlet available in Marion County. Tutt's popularity waxed considerably as a result of his monopoly, and his family and allies began to seriously contest several offices in county elections. Over the years, the rivalry escalated to the point that "the whole male population of the county was classed as being friends of either one or the other of the parties." Armed conflict broke out in the summer of 1849 when an election gathering in Yellville degenerated into violence; three Everetts, one Tutt, and one King (allies of the Tutts) were killed and general mayhem ensued in the central Ozarks for months thereafter.<sup>34</sup>

Dave Sinclair of Searcy County was a prominent figure and one of the "leading fighters" of the Tutt faction. Sinclair, "considered a bad man," had killed Sam Everett, prompting a number of Everett supporters to form a posse and pursue Sinclair into Searcy County. The refugee was finally cornered one morning, asleep in a tree near one of his friend's houses. Awakened by his pursuers, Sinclair was unceremoniously shot as he attempted to escape. Eventually, Governor

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John Seldon Roane was forced to deploy the state militia under General Allan Wood to Marion County in order to quell the violence. The Everetts and their allies retreated to Searcy County in search of refuge, disappearing easily in the hills and hollows of the sparsely settled county. On September 27, 1849, Governor Roane ordered Searcy County Sheriff William Thornhill to arrest the Everetts and their allies for the murders of several members of the King family in Marion County.<sup>35</sup>

In pursuit of the Everetts, General Wood moved his militia from Yellville into Searcy County in early October, established his headquarters at Lebanon, and began rounding up the suspects and witnesses that would be necessary for a trial. Wood soon tracked the Everett clan to a Methodist camp meeting that was being held in Wiley's Cove, and ordered Captain Tilford Denton to lead a small force north on the Yellville Road and to deploy at the Tomahawk Creek crossing to intercept and arrest the Everetts should they flee Wiley's Cove. A similar force under the command of Captain W. C. Mitchell was ordered to raid the camp meeting and flush out the Everetts, on the assumption that the fugitives would then flee into Denton's ambush; Mitchell's initial foray was successful however, and the Everett party was captured at Wiley's Cove without incident.<sup>36</sup>

In his communique to Governor Roane after the capture of the Everetts, General Wood was of the opinion that a fair trial would be virtually impossible in the emotionally charged and polarized environments of Marion and Searcy counties. Headquartered once again at Yellville, Wood was forced to deploy a number of troops in Searcy County to counter the terroristic activities of armed parties of Everett partisans seeking revenge and retribution. The Everett faction, meanwhile, complained loudly and bitterly that they had been unjustly accused and could not be guaranteed a fair trial in Marion County. J. D. Shaw, the prominent Lebanon mercantilist and Everett sympathizer, intervened on his friends' behalf and approached the governor himself concerning the events in Searcy and Marion counties. Harshly critical of the militia's conduct in the affair, Shaw impressed upon the governor the injustices and atrocities that had been visited upon the undeserving and virtuous Everetts; State Representative Sam Leslie similarly lobbied the governor as to the Everetts' innocence. Faced with such pressures for the Everetts' acquittal, Roane changed his allegiance and saw that the charges were dropped. Nevertheless, the Marion County War provided the central Ozarks with a prelude and an indication of the conflict to come.<sup>37</sup>

*F. The Civil War in Searcy County*

By 1860, Searcy County was reasonably prosperous, though still sparsely populated. Most of the citizenry continued to make their living through farming or hunting, although a small number

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of doctors, lawyers, teachers, blacksmiths, and other skilled artisans were employed in the county. Although some corn and cotton were produced as cash crops and animal pelts were sold to garner what little cash might be needed to purchase salt, tea, coffee, and other items that could not be produced on the farmstead, a barter economy predominated. Trading posts were located in most communities, but most family farmsteads were fairly self-sufficient. Politically, the voters of Searcy County were primarily Jacksonian Democrats nationally and Whig supporters in local elections.<sup>38</sup>

As Arkansas and the nation struggled over the question of slavery in the years preceding the Civil War, it became clear that serious differences of opinion and loyalties had developed in Arkansas. In the decade preceding secession, the southern and eastern portions of the state experienced a surge in immigration from the lower South of settlers intending to own slaves and cultivate cotton. Only the northwestern and north-central regions of the state avoided this influx. Although slavery was accepted and some cotton (3,600 pounds in 1860) was raised in Searcy County,<sup>1</sup> the "peculiar institution" had never had the same cultural or economic impact in the Ozarks as it had in the Delta; in 1860, 82 percent of the state's slaves lived in the lowlands and just 18 percent of Arkansas's white population were slave owners.

Many in Searcy County were ambivalent about the war and how to react to it. For the most part, the subsistence farmers of Searcy County and the central Ozarks were economically and culturally isolated from the rest of the state, felt little compunction to defend an institution that was of benefit and interest only to the planter classes of southern and eastern Arkansas, and were more likely to favor national reconciliation and compromise over secession. Northern townships were more sympathetic to the Confederate cause than the more conservative townships of Cove and Calf Creek. Anti-secession sentiment was mostly concentrated in northern and western Arkansas, and despite the state's formal secession from the Union in May, 1861, loyalty to the federal government remained particularly strong in the Ozarks. In effect, Arkansas was as "divided against itself" as was the nation as a whole.<sup>39</sup>

Searcy County elected John Campbell to represent her interests at the Arkansas secession convention which convened in Little Rock in March of 1861. A popular referendum on the issue was scheduled for August. However, the firing on Fort Sumter in April and President Lincoln's subsequent call for volunteers from Arkansas forced the issue to the fore, and when the secession

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<sup>1</sup>What few slaveholders there were in Searcy County were located primarily in the bottomlands of Richland Creek, Calf Creek, Sellar Creek, and Bear Creek. In 1860, just 1.8% of the county's population were slaveholders, the second lowest percentage in the state.

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convention reconvened in May a number of Union sympathizers were beginning to change their minds. An ordinance for secession passed overwhelmingly, with Campbell one of only five delegates to vote against the measure. For the sake of unanimity, Campbell and three others allowed their votes to be changed to support Arkansas's secession, much to the dissatisfaction of many in Searcy County. Campbell, who never signed the secession ordinance and voted against the state's provisional constitution, later wrote "I did not wish to make Searcy County the pillage ground for the desperadoes [of] both North and South."<sup>40</sup> Despite a public letter of explanation and apology to his constituents published in the Arkansas Gazette, the people of Searcy County felt betrayed.

Far from any major transportation corridors or invasion routes, Searcy County was largely spared the devastating impacts of large-scale fighting or the movements of massive armies. As a largely non-slaveholding region of a border Confederate state, sentiments and loyalties were divided among neighbors and even families in the county. Soon after Arkansas's secession from the Union on May 6, 1861, both Confederate and Union companies were organized in Searcy County, including Captain James Harrison Love's Company K of the 14th Arkansas Infantry and Company C of the 7th Arkansas Cavalry (CSA), Captain John Lawrence's Company K of the 16th Arkansas Infantry (CSA), Captain Samuel Leslie's Company F of the 32nd Arkansas Infantry (CSA), and Ben Taylor's Company M of the 3rd Arkansas Cavalry (USA), known as the "Mountain Feds." A number of Union sympathizers fled the county to enlist in the Union army in Missouri. Searcy County troops are known to have fought at the battles of Shiloh, Pea Ridge, Pine Bluff, and Devil's Backbone. With so much of the adult male population absent, various and sundry bushwhackers, jayhawkers, outlaws, deserters, and loyalists of both sides devastated the county through looting and pillaging; by the end of the war, civil authority had broken down and the county had descended into complete lawlessness. Most citizens of the county were more concerned with protecting their homes and families than ensuring the survival of the Confederacy however, and desertion rates among Searcy County soldiers were abnormally high when these companies were ordered to the eastern theaters of the war. Searcy County soldiers exhibited strong aversions to leaving their native hill country and many of those ordered to serve far from home simply chose to return home and hide in the hills to await the conclusion of the war. Following the Battle of Pine Bluff, virtually the entire contingent of Love's Company C of the 7th Arkansas Cavalry deserted and returned to Searcy County, apparently with Love's approval and blessing.<sup>41</sup>

Resentment throughout the state grew as Confederate authorities in Little Rock learned of the able-bodied men in Searcy County that would not volunteer for service; the region developed a reputation statewide as a bastion of "Black Republicans" and "Abolitionists." The relatively high incidence of northern sympathizers, deserters and nonpartisans in Searcy County led to the

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formation early in the war of the Peace Organization Society (P.O.S.), a secret society dedicated to the protection of its members and their friends, family, and property. At its height, the secret movement had 1,700 total members concentrated mainly in Searcy, Marion, Carroll, Izard, Fulton, and Van Buren counties. When Confederate authorities learned of the treasonous society in late November, 1861, hastily-formed and legally-questionable posses began arresting and confining suspects. One of the first men to be arrested quickly disclosed all of the secret organization's secret symbols and passwords, and Searcy County authorities began to fear that an insurrection was imminent. Colonel Sam Leslie, commander of the 45th Arkansas Militia, called up several companies in late November to apprehend suspects and maintain order.<sup>42</sup>

When news of the unrest reached Little Rock, Governor Henry Rector ordered Colonel Leslie to arrest all Searcy Countians professing friendship for the Lincoln government and ship them to Little Rock to be tried as traitors. News of the discovered insurrection was telegraphed to President Jefferson Davis in Richmond. By December 9, at least 78 suspects were incarcerated in the overcrowded Burrowsville Court House jail, yet Colonel Leslie lamented that there were still many more "skulking about in the woods" awaiting arrest. Leslie noted:

"It seems as if the Whole Countrey (sic) have become ingaged (sic) in this matter to some Extent...Men who was considered to be amongst our best citizens has acknowledged themselves to be numbers (sic) of this secret order..."<sup>43</sup>

On December 9, the Searcy County prisoners were shackled together in two's with log chains around their necks and marched under armed guard along the 125 mile, six day trip to Little Rock. On arrival in the capital, the prisoners were presented to Governor Rector in the House of Representatives chamber of the capitol building (now the Old State House). Denounced as traitors and jayhawkers by the governor, the prisoners were offered the choice of volunteering to serve in the Confederate army or standing trial for treason. All but two chose to serve, with most enlisting in Captain John J. Dawson's Company I of the 18th Arkansas Infantry. Despite the disdain the regular Confederates had for the "damned Arkansas jayhawkers," Company I later transferred to Company A of the 3rd Confederate Infantry and saw combat at the Battle of Shiloh; a number of the Peace Organization Society "traitors" later drew Confederate pensions.<sup>44</sup>

The period of Confederate dominance in Searcy County was short-lived. In the early years of the war, the South's Bureau of Ordinance operated a number of saltpeter caves and niter works in Searcy County for the production of gunpowder. Saltpeter caves were located near the mouth of Short Creek, on the Buffalo near Cane Island, and on J.H. Love's farm on the south side of the Buffalo across from Salt Peter Cave Bluff. The niter works were possibly along Tomahawk



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Creek and Big Creek, while the Old Confederate Mine and Smelter was located on the western slope of Horn Mountain, near a high-grade lead mine. James Bratton, a Searcy Countian who had deserted from Camp Mazzard near Fort Smith, was later detailed to the niter works along the Buffalo, and later recalled that the gunpowder produced was finished and then shipped to Arkadelphia. However, as the war progressed and communication with Little Rock grew more tenuous, the Nitre and Mining Bureau withdrew from north Arkansas and relocated to the nitre caves of west Texas.<sup>45</sup>

The Union destruction of the Confederate depot at Yellville and Blunt's victory at Prairie Grove in December, 1862, effectively cleared northwest Arkansas of any organized Confederate resistance, and by the end of the year Little Rock no longer attempted to collect taxes in Searcy County. As civil authority crumbled, looting raids by bushwhackers and jayhawkers from Missouri, Union sympathizers motivated by revenge over the P.O.S. affair, and even outlaws from neighboring Newton and Izard counties became more frequent. The Richland Creek valley, known as the "breadbasket of the county," was often raided by partisans of both sides in search of provisions. With their husbands and fathers either away at war or in hiding, the responsibility for planting and harvesting crops and protecting the family farmstead often fell to the women and children of the county. Corn was planted in small hidden patches away from the house and corn cribs were hidden in the woods to protect the crops from looters, while animals were herded in the hollows of the mountainous region. Many Searcy County men hid in the hills to avoid conscription and subsisted on what their families produced.<sup>46</sup>

Searcy County saw little formal combat during the war. A skirmish broke out on New Year's Day, 1863, when a band of about one hundred federal irregulars fired upon a scouting party of Confederate soldiers under Brigadier General John S. Marmaduke near the Martha White ford of the Buffalo River. In the ensuing combat, federal casualties totaled 20 killed and 27 captured, while only one Confederate soldier was lost.<sup>47</sup> In December, 1863, the 1st Arkansas Cavalry under Captain John I. Worthington marched from Fayetteville to reconnoiter Carroll, Marion, and Searcy counties. The federals skirmished almost continuously along Richland Creek with independent Confederate troops under a Major Gunning and a Colonel Freeman, culminating in a major firefight on New Year's Eve that ended in a draw. During the fight, Merrit Cash's house was used as a Confederate hospital. The Confederates reported 25 dead, 33 wounded, while the federals lost six men, with less than ten reported wounded. As the fighting ended, the rebels fell back to Clapper's mill in Carroll County, while the 1st Arkansas returned to Fayetteville via Newton County. In May, 1864, a bushwhacker ambush on a Union forage train near Point Peter Mountain left 39 Union dead, the wagon train in flames, and over a hundred mules killed.<sup>48</sup>

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As the war continued and Southern prospects for victory diminished, many Searcy Countians chose to join local Union regiments operating in the Ozarks in order to provide more security for their families and property. Unfortunately for their commanders, Ozark troops tended to lose interest in fighting the farther removed they were from their homes; "when the army left their mountains, they left the army," was an epithet commonly applied to these "Mountain Feds."<sup>49</sup> In late 1863, the county was occupied by federal troops amid rumors that a raid into Missouri involving as many as 2,000 Confederate troops and bushwhackers was imminent. Over several months, the Union operation was ultimately successful in scattering the rebel forces and killing over 100 of the conspirators. The county courthouse in Burrowsville was burned, probably by its Union occupiers, in January, 1864, and with the withdrawal of the federals the following month, Searcy County descended into a morass of vendettas and lawlessness that was to last throughout the remainder of the war.<sup>50</sup>

Reconstruction brought little respite from the rampant chaos and lawlessness in Searcy County. Soldiers, deserters, and refugees returning home from the war often found their farmsteads destroyed and their fields overgrown. The divided loyalties and strong feelings over the war that had riven Searcy County would continue in the form of violence and vendettas between neighbors and families for decades to come. Although with the end of Congressional Reconstruction in 1872 the state returned to solid Democratic control, Searcy County maintained the ruggedly individualistic tack it had developed prior to the war, sending Republicans to the General Assembly and electing Union veterans to local offices through the turn of the century. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, Searcy County had developed a reputation as a fiercely pro-Union and Republican enclave within a state that had come to revere the memory of the "lost cause." In 1867, the county seat's name was changed from Burrowsville to Marshall, in part because the town's namesake, Napoleon P. Burrow, had served as a Confederate general.<sup>1</sup>

## II. Searcy County History, 1865-1910: Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal

### A. *Reconstruction and the Late Nineteenth Century in Searcy County*

As civil authority was restored, Searcy County began to rebuild and recover from the devastation

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<sup>1</sup>Curiously, the town of Wiley's Cove was renamed Leslie in 1887 in honor of the early settler Samuel Leslie, despite the fact that Leslie had served as a captain in the Confederate army.

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the war had left. Schools, churches, and community centers were erected in the county's few communities, and families worked to restore their farms and homes that had been neglected or destroyed during the hostilities. The cause of education seemed to provide a rallying point of cooperation and consensus for the war-weary and mistrustful Searcy Countians. The first public school district in the county was established in a log building near Leslie late in the century and was soon followed by a number of districts in Marshall, Witts Spring, Old Town St. Joe, and Canaan. In 1889, a new courthouse was built in Marshall of native stone quarried just outside of town; still in use today, the Searcy County courthouse is one of the oldest in the state. A new jail was constructed in 1902, and Marshall Academy, a two-story preparatory school with a belfry, was completed in Marshall in 1888.<sup>51</sup>

Yeoman agriculture continued to dominate the economy of Searcy County through the turn of the century, with cotton and corn as the primary agricultural products produced on the county's small family farms. In the late 1880's, the Farmer's Alliance, a national organization advocating farmers' and workers' economic rights, established several local organizations in Searcy County and began pressing for a number of Populist measures, including an increase in the money supply and the establishment of an eight-hour work day. As the agricultural economy diversified and transportation routes improved, some Searcy Countians began raising sheep and cultivating apple and peach orchards as cash crops. The rapid growth and expansion of the railroad industry both in Arkansas and throughout the trans-Mississippi West late in the century fostered a strong demand for cross ties and the prodigious timber resources of Searcy County became a valuable commodity. Sawmills were established throughout the county to produce cross ties, barrel staves, building lumber, hubs, and handles.<sup>52</sup>

A number of boomtowns sprang up during this period of rapid economic growth and expansion, only to disappear as fast as they emerged. Springtown, several miles northwest of Marshall on Still Spring, emerged as a major economic hub during this period, boasting a government distillery, a blacksmith shop, a steam-powered cotton gin, and several homes, none of which have survived. The community of Tomahawk, on Tomahawk Creek near Pilot Mountain, was reportedly one of the earliest settlements in the county. Beginning in 1838, a succession of grist mills were established on the creek, until the 1870's, when the most recent mill operator, Steve Stills, added a cotton gin and a blacksmith shop to his operation. By 1874, Calvin Lockheart had added a grocery store and saloon to the nascent community, then known as Needmore; only later, with the addition of a post office would the town be renamed Tomahawk. Witts Springs, said to be named for a carving of the name "Witts" on a stone at a spring east of the town, was sparsely settled in the antebellum period, but began to grow with the establishment of a post office in 1874. A series of businesses began to locate in the area through the 1870's and 1880's, including several merchants, a blacksmith's shop, a tanning yard, a grist mill, and a saw mill.

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During its heyday, Witts Springs boasted one drug store and six general stores serving the farming community.<sup>53</sup>

Two miles north of Snowball, on the banks of Calf Creek was the thriving community of Blanco, complete with a general store, livery barn, smithy, school, two practicing doctors, and a combination grist mill and flour mill. In 1887, the first flour mill in Searcy County was established by Billie Mays and Reden Baker in the village of Duff on Dry Creek; by 1898, the mill was processing 19,960 bushels of wheat and 5,227 bushels of corn per year. Duff was also home to a post office, a blacksmith shop, and several homes. Unfortunately for Duff, the Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad missed the community by just one-half mile, and most of Duff's citizenry subsequently moved to the junction of the railroad and the Buffalo River, where they established the new railroad town of Gilbert.<sup>54</sup>

On March 27, 1886, the Masonic Lodge of Calf Creek in the west central portion of the county purchased a parcel of land for the erection of a single building to serve as the lodge headquarters, the community school, and a church. C. T. Collins was awarded a building contract of \$329.25 for the construction of a two-story building. The new building was named Snow Hall in honor of the current county sheriff, Ben F. Snow, and a petition was filed with the U.S. Postal Service to change Calf Creek's name to Snow Hall. According to local folklore, the community's application mistakenly spelled Snow Hall as one word, "Snowhall," which a postal employee mistakenly read as "Snowball," resulting in the current name.<sup>55</sup>

Several newspapers were established to serve the county's many and thriving communities. The new century seemed to offer nothing but hope for Searcy County. The Leslie News began publication in 1903 with R. C. Walton as editor and Messrs. Barnett and Keener as publishers; with only a brief respite in 1920, the paper continued to publish through the 1920's. In 1909, the Leslie Banner was established, but soon folded, as did G. A. Ward's and E. B. Bedford's Leslieite in 1912. The W. N. Lucy Printing Company initiated The Trail Blazer in the 1910's, which later changed its name to the Leslie Herald. Marshall was home to a number of short-lived publications, including the New Era (1884-1885), the Dollar Times (1887), the Marshall Educator (1889-1902), the Mountain Echo (1891), and the Searcy County Enterprise (1912). The Mountain Wave was established in 1892 by C. P. Colbert and Cecero Brown, and two years later was sold to W. C. Plumlee, who would publish the paper for several years. The Marshall Republican was founded in 1890 with Ulysses Bratton as editor, and survived under a series of owners until 1945, when it merged with the Mountain Wave. During the brief resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan's popularity and political ascendancy in the 1920's, Frank Reeves published the anti-Klan Eagle in Marshall.<sup>56</sup>

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*B. Searcy County at the Turn of the Century*

Prior to its designation as the southern terminus of the Missouri & North Arkansas line, Leslie consisted of just four stores, a grist mill, a flour mill, a blacksmith shop, and a post office. Soon after its incorporation on June 19, 1902 and the arrival of the railroad the following year, Leslie quickly developed into a thriving community and the largest city in the county. In 1903, the Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad completed laying its track through Leslie, where an engine shed, shop buildings, and yard tracks were subsequently erected. Soon thereafter, the H. D. Williams Cooperage Company moved its barrel-making operations from Poplar Bluff, Missouri to Leslie, where it quickly grew into the largest cooperage company west of the Mississippi and the county's largest employer. At its peak, the Williams Company produced more than 3,000 wooden barrels a day and hundreds worked in the Williams' plants, railroad, and timber woods. Related industries were established in Leslie as well, including four large stave plants, a hub factory, other small timber mills, and flour and sawmills. Over 130,000 acres of timberland were purchased to the west and south of town, more than 500 Leslians were employed in the timber industry, and settlers began to pour into Searcy County from throughout the Ozarks. A nineteen-mile long, standard-gauge railroad, known affectionately as the Dinky Line, was constructed to facilitate the transport of timber from the white oak forests surrounding the Little Red River to the sawmills at Leslie.<sup>57</sup> In the 1910's, Ed Mays established the Mays Manufacturing Company in Leslie and began producing barrel staves; Mays was also responsible for the first electric lights in Leslie and the construction of the community's ice plant.<sup>58</sup>

As the timber industry gained prominence in southern Searcy County, zinc mining concerns proved increasingly profitable in the north-central regions surrounding the communities of Gilbert and St. Joe. The high grade Big Hurricane mine near the Newton County border was especially productive, and boasted an engine, a workshop, and two zinc mills. The mining industry in the Ozarks, historically underdeveloped, welcomed the arrival of the Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad as the opportunity to capitalize on the immense mineral resources of the central Ozarks. Meanwhile, travel brochures touted the county's beautiful scenery and abundant wildlife, and the central Ozarks became popular among hunters, fishermen, and tourists.<sup>59</sup>

The town of Leslie was the primary beneficiary of the economic benefits that the railroad brought to Searcy County. The Williams Company built a number of company houses in the town, and a number of hotels - the Smiley, the Lawrence, the Brannum, and the Williams Company hotel - were established to serve the region's many business travelers. As the railroad expanded beyond Leslie, several hundred men were employed in laying track on the route through Rumley to Shirley and beyond. Leslie's population exploded to several thousand

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virtually overnight and a number of new schools, stores, and churches, not to mention bars and gambling halls, were established to service the new citizenry. The Farmers Bank was incorporated in May, 1905 and was soon followed by the Searcy County Bank, the American Exchange Bank, and the Leslie State Bank. A sizable black community relocated to Leslie from Poplar Bluff, Missouri, to work in the burgeoning cooperage plants, and settled in "Dink Town," a collection of company-built houses across Spring Creek from the rest of the town. "Old Main," a large three-story brick school building, was erected in 1909 to serve the town's white children, while a separate school was established to educate the children of the black community.<sup>60</sup>

Marshall enjoyed a prosperity comparable to Leslie's during these years. A free grade school was established around the turn of the century and the white frame Marshall Academy building was replaced in 1909 with a new brick structure. The county's first telephone exchange was established in Marshall in 1902 by M. B. Storment, and its first bank, the Marshall Bank, was chartered in 1901. The Cincinnati Cooperage Company established Marshall's first stave mill in 1909. The community's first flour mill, owned and operated by Matt Sooter, J. E. Treece, and C. B. Cotton, was established around 1900, and later served as the first power house for the generation of electricity in Marshall. In 1918, Tom Matlock purchased Marshall's electrical franchise and built a new generating station one-half mile west of Marshall; in 1924, Matlock sold his interest to H. W. Wright, Sr., who operated Marshall's electrical franchise until 1949. A new school building, also known as "Old Main," was completed in 1910 by the Bain Brothers contractors. The county's first "all weather" road was constructed between Marshall and Harriet in 1916, despite the fact that a number of disgruntled farmers, incensed at the prospect of paying taxes so that the 12-mile long road could cut across their land, allegedly dynamited some of the road construction machinery and held the workers at bay with shotgun fire.<sup>61</sup>

An independent phone system was installed in Richland Valley in the western portion of the county during the first decade of the new century. Thomas T. Millard established yet another stave mill in the Canaan community six miles west of Marshall in 1910, with offices in Marshall. The railroad community of Pindall soon developed into a busy shipping center for the cross ties, bolts, staves, zinc ore and sheep that were produced in the northwestern portion of the county. Originally known as "Big Hurricane Switch", the community changed its name to "Kilburn" with the arrival of the railroad, then later to "Pindall" when some worried that "Kilburn" sounded too much like "Gilbert". At its height, Pindall's business community included six stores, a grist mill, a blacksmith shop, a school, and a hotel.<sup>62</sup>

Other communities also saw their fortunes rise and fall as a result of the coming of the railroad. The town of Baker, east of Marshall, was established with the arrival of the Missouri & North

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Arkansas in 1902 at a geographical landmark known locally as the "Gap of the Mountain." The United States Postal Service disapproved of the community's choice of the name "Saratoga," and substituted "Baker" instead. At its peak, the community boasted eight stores, a grist mill, a blacksmith shop, and a post office, and was the largest timber shipping point in the county next to Leslie. Gilbert was established soon after the railroad's arrival on the north bank of the Buffalo River and most of the nearby community of Duff relocated to take advantage of the opportunities available in the new railroad town. The new community quickly developed into a pleasant mountain village, complete with a post office, a blacksmith shop, and a hotel. The last operating saloon in Searcy County was located in Gilbert for many years until it was washed away by Buffalo River flooding in 1915. In 1917, Gilbert's population more than doubled with the arrival of hundreds of Illini to the community as a result of the mining boom in northern Searcy County. For a number of years thereafter, the "new comers" established and operated a short-lived newspaper, "The Kingdom Harbinger" under the editorial leadership of Ben Battenfield.<sup>63</sup>

The northern Searcy County community of St. Joe experienced similar tribulations as a result of the railroad. Originally settled in 1860, "Old Town" St. Joe was originally located on Mill Creek, one-half mile west of the current location of the community. The arrival of the railroad in 1903 bypassed the historic community of St. Joe, and as "Old Town" began its slow decline, a "New Town" St. Joe began to develop along the railroad line. From the turn of the century through the Missouri & North Arkansas's demise in 1946, St. Joe served as the shipping point for several of the zinc mines in the area and the St. Joe Lime & Crushed Rock Company exported throughout the region. With the coming of the railroad, the community of Zack, north of Marshall, developed into a shipping point for cross ties, bolts, staves, and lumber, as well as apples, strawberries and zinc ore; during its peak, as many as 100 wagons are said to have unloaded at the depot in Zack. Four stores, one blacksmiths shop, a post office, a canning factory, a grist mill, and a school served the community at one time. The Blowing Cave, a local landmark across the creek from the Zack depot, was developed as a storage facility for the area's apple orchards and a tramway was constructed from the cave's mouth to the railway siding so that the harvested apples could be loaded and shipped.<sup>64</sup>

Important social activities among Searcy Countians in the early 1900's included the travelling Chautauqua troupes that performed periodically in Marshall, the weekend horse races at the racetrack in Richland Valley, and the picnics, political speeches, music and dancing associated with the 4th of July celebrations held in communities throughout the county. Most communities had at least one church; by the turn of the century a number of relatively elaborate ecclesiastical buildings were being constructed, including stone Methodist and Baptist church buildings in Marshall.<sup>65</sup> Labor for Searcy County's expanding timber industry was readily available from

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the county's farm population, although wages remained generally low. Labor unions attempted to organize in Arkansas around 1900; although they were generally unpopular and unsuccessful in Arkansas, their efforts did result in a number of strikes and labor unrest both in Searcy County and elsewhere, most notably in the railroad and coal industries.<sup>66</sup>

### III. Searcy County in the World War Era, 1910-1945: Economic Realignment, The Great Depression and World War

#### A. *World War I and the Depression in Searcy County*

The relative prosperity that Searcy County enjoyed in the first decade of the twentieth century was not to last, however. In 1912, the Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad moved its machine shops and a number of railroad jobs from Leslie to Harrison. The Williams Cooperage Company was similarly beset by misfortune and adverse social trends. In late November, 1912, a fire engulfed much of the cooperage plant and only a portion of the facility was later rebuilt. Just five years later, the efforts of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and other prohibition groups were successful in convincing the General Assembly to outlaw the sale or production of alcohol in the state; the 18th Amendment, added to the U.S. Constitution in 1919, finished the job by prohibiting the manufacture of alcohol throughout the nation. Although the Williams Company continued to export a quantity of barrel staves to Europe, the prohibition movement severely curtailed the timber and cooperage industry in Searcy County, resulting in the loss of even more jobs.<sup>67</sup>

Although the increased demand for zinc and other metals by the armaments industry as a result of World War I benefitted Searcy County's mining industry, the war in Europe also contributed to the county's population decline, a trend that would continue throughout the century. When the United States entered the conflict in 1917, a number of Searcy Countians enlisted in what President Woodrow Wilson termed "the war to end all wars." For many, this was their first encounter with life beyond the mountains and some chose not to return when the fighting ended. The winter of 1918 brought record rains to the central Ozarks and many families were ruined when the Buffalo River left its banks and inundated thousands of acres of farmland and property. Many more lives were lost shortly thereafter when a serious flu epidemic swept through the region.<sup>68</sup>

The international recession that followed the war was exacerbated in Searcy County by a particularly violent railroad strike against the Missouri & North Arkansas in 1921, again pitting neighbor against neighbor in what quickly developed into one of the longest and most bitter



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periods of labor unrest in the nation's history. As union and non-union factions clashed throughout Searcy County, railroad tracks were greased, air lines were cut, and bridges and trestles were destroyed. When a number of alleged perpetrators were apprehended in Searcy County, Governor Thomas McRae received an anonymous letter in Little Rock demanding their release and threatening to "blow all the M&NA towns off the map." Although the state's railroad unions denied responsibility for the escalating violence, public resentment against the strikers grew, reaching a crescendo on January 15, 1923, with the lynching of a man arrested for allegedly possessing explosives. Citizens groups such as the Marshall Protection League were formed in Searcy County to protect railroad property from labor-related vandalism and destruction, and several union members and loyalists were forced to leave the county due to the unfriendly atmosphere.<sup>69</sup>

The Williams Cooperage Company never truly recovered from the effects of prohibition. By the time the 18th Amendment was overturned in 1933 the cooperage mills had virtually ceased production and the population of once-prosperous Leslie had fallen to less than 700. Canning factories were established in Marshall and surrounding areas throughout the 1920's and 1930's in which workers, primarily women, were paid to peel tomatoes by the bucketful. Agriculturally, strawberries had begun to replace apples and peaches as the county's primary cash crop and an increase in the popularity of cattle ranching encouraged landowners to clear their land for pasture.<sup>70</sup>

Although the stock market crash of 1929 plunged the nation into the worst depression in American history, the economic impacts of the downturn were slow in reaching Searcy County, which had been suffering economically since the end of the First World War. Most Searcy Countians, who numbered just over 11,000 in 1930, still made their livings from the land, largely as subsistence farmers. The county was still very rural, isolated and poor. The typical farm family had no electric lights, no indoor plumbing, and no telephone service. Arkansas was notorious for the poor conditions of its roads, despite accelerated construction and improvements during the 1920's. The effects of the depression in Arkansas were exacerbated by the fact that the region had experienced three years of successively bad weather in the form of heavy flooding in the late 1920's and drought during the early 1930's. Generations of poor cotton farming practices on marginal lands in Searcy County had resulted in serious sheet and gully erosion by the 1930's, so that simple subsistence became more and more difficult for the county's hill farmers. During the winter of 1930-31, more than a third of the population of Arkansas faced the possibility of starvation and many Searcy County families began to rely again on wild game for their diet, usually supplemented by turnips, herbs, roots, and nuts. Many Searcy County families, unable to make a living in Arkansas, joined the great western migration to the West Coast in search of employment in the vineyards and fruit orchards of northern California. Many

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never returned, even when the economy had recovered, contributing further to the county's loss in population through most of the twentieth century.<sup>71</sup>

The Depression was difficult for those that remained in Searcy County. By July, 1932, payrolls in Arkansas had fallen to just 55 percent of their 1929 levels and unemployment had skyrocketed from 24,144 in 1929 to 244,809 in 1933. Most workers saw their wages cut many times and Arkansas's standard of living, already well below the national average, fell still further; in 1933, Arkansas's per capita income was only \$152, less than half its 1929 level and 47th among the 48 states. As the economy crumbled and currency became more and more scarce, Searcy County and other areas experienced a return to a barter economy.<sup>72</sup>

In 1933, the Roosevelt Administration began to implement a host of New Deal programs, work relief initiatives designed to provide modest wages to able-bodied workers and to combat unemployment through local public work projects. Many young Searcy County men from needy families joined Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps in Jasper, Morrilton and Little Rock, where they were employed primarily in national forests grading and surfacing roads, planting trees, and constructing fire towers, cabins and other buildings. The National Youth Administration (NYA) provided job training in the county for young men and women between the ages of 18 and 25; while the women were trained as seamstresses, the men were employed in the development of a roadside park south of Leslie and in building a new gymnasium and improving the grounds of the public school in Witts Springs. The NYA, supervised by Archie Hudspeth, also constructed a new gymnasium in Marshall in 1936. The Resettlement Administration made loans to needy Searcy County farmers to enable them to purchase seed, feed and equipment. The Works Progress Administration (WPA), one of the most successful of Roosevelt's New Deal programs, employed a number of unemployed Searcy Countians in constructing Route 333 from the isolated community of Gilbert on the Buffalo River to the Clinton Road (now State Highway 65), as well as the modern road up Backbone Mountain; one WPA project even constructed outdoor privies for needy Searcy County families. Much of this WPA work is still in evidence in the impressive stonework in the extant bridges and public buildings erected through the program.<sup>73</sup>

The New Deal brought another revolution to much of Searcy County's populace. Although electricity had been available in the county's larger communities for many years, the region's rugged terrain had hindered the extension of power lines into the more isolated areas of the county. The Rural Electrification Administration, established by the Roosevelt Administration in 1935 brought electrical power to many isolated Searcy County homes and communities for the first time. Such modern luxuries as electrical lighting, washing machines and well pumps changed the way many families lived, while the addition of radios to most households brought

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the average Searcy Countian for the first time into the nascent information age. The county's historical isolation began to slip away.<sup>74</sup>

*B. World War II and the Post-War Period in Searcy County*

The U.S. entry into World War II led to yet another population exodus from Searcy County as the county's citizens were drawn away either to serve in the armed forces or to work in the urban factories producing war materiel; significantly, for the first time many of these industrial workers were women. Although many manufacturing plants producing clothing and other soft goods located in small towns in rural counties and actively recruited farm women for their labor forces, most industrial employment was in central and southern Arkansas or out of state. As in earlier waves of population loss, many former Searcy Countians chose not to return once the hostilities had ended; the county's population would not begin to grow again until the 1960's. The war's impact upon daily life was felt in Searcy County as elsewhere: common items such as coffee, tea, sugar, canned foods, rubber tires, and gasoline became subject to government rationing. Families in Marshall, Leslie, and other communities throughout Searcy County planted and harvested "victory" gardens, saved empty tin cans for reprocessing, and purchased war bonds. The war had a number of other social and economic impacts on the post-war development of the county. The Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad ceased operations in September, 1946, removing its rails from their beds and selling most of its rolling stock as scrap iron. Livestock raising and the timber industry continued to dominate Searcy County's economy into the late twentieth century, although the establishment of a number of small manufacturing concerns in the 1970's and 1980's helped to stem the population outflow. The county's scenic beauty and rugged grandeur were finally recognized in the 1960's with the federal government's acquisition of the lands surrounding the Buffalo River and its designation as a national river.<sup>75</sup>

Searcy County remains one of Arkansas's most individual and unique counties. The rugged terrain and the isolation that has characterized much of the Arkansas Ozarks is reflected in Searcy County's history and development since Arkansas's territorial years. As a region and a political unit, Searcy County has a long history of disassociating itself from the politically and socially dominant trends that prevailed elsewhere in the state and region. The county and its people have traditionally been suspicious of outsiders, and have evinced hostility to excessive central government control from Little Rock. Prior to and during the Civil War, Searcy Countians were largely ambivalent to the question over slavery and many were defiantly pro-Union despite Arkansas's secession. In the postbellum period, Searcy County remained an enclave of fiercely independent and egalitarian Republicanism in one of the nation's most staunchly Democratic states long after the end of the Reconstruction period. Even when the coming of the railroad brought Searcy County into the developing global economy, many

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resisted the encroachment of "new comers" and the emerging threats to long-standing traditions.  
The historic and architectural legacy of Searcy County is a fitting tribute to a fascinating people.

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in 1861.

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42. Johnston, Searcy County During the Civil War, 11-16.
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44. Johnston, 21-30. The two suspects that refused to enlist were released the following month for lack of evidence and never tried.
45. Johnston, 53.
46. Johnston, 46-47.
47. Clemons, 7.

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48. Johnston, 53-54.
49. Johnston, 47-48.
50. Clemons, 7.
51. Clemons, 7.
52. Clemons, 7.
53. McInturff, 130-132.
54. McInturff, 102-131. In addition to his role in developing Duff's flour mill, McInturff also reports that " "Uncle Billy" Mays also pulled teeth."
55. McInturff, 128.
56. Clemons, 8; McInturff, 109, 116.
57. Clemons, 7; McInturff, 107-108. In 1907, the Missouri & North Arkansas extended its line and its terminal to Helena.
58. McInturff, 107.
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67. Clemons, 8. Interestingly, this development demonstrates how, by the early twentieth century, Searcy County had been drawn into the nascent global economy. Prohibition's impact on Searcy County was not limited to the loss of jobs however. The production of moonshine whiskey, a time-honored tradition among Searcy Countians, was directly and favorably influenced by the passage of the 18th Amendment. Stories of moonshiners and revenuers are pervasive in the county's history; in one raid in the early 1920s, 2500 gallons of mash were confiscated by government revenuers from several Searcy County locations.
68. Clemons, 8.
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71. Clemons, 8.
72. Donald Holley, "Arkansas in the Great Depression," in Historical Report of the Secretary of State, Volume 2 (Little Rock, Arkansas: Winston Bryant, Secretary of State, 1978), 158-159.
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## OUTLINE OF ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

1. VERNACULAR DWELLINGS
  2. HIGH-STYLE DWELLINGS
  3. RELIGIOUS AND INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS
  4. COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS
  5. TRANSPORTATION-RELATED BUILDINGS
- 

### 1. VERNACULAR DWELLINGS

#### A. SETTLEMENT, GROWTH AND CIVIL WAR ERA VERNACULAR DWELLINGS

##### Description:

During the Settlement, Growth and Civil War Era (1790-1865) in Searcy County a variety of vernacular houses were constructed. They were also built out of a variety of materials. Surviving examples from this period, however, are very limited in their floorplan design and construction technique.

Surviving vernacular house types of this period include single-pen log dwellings and log dog-trots as well as one-story, single-pile-with-central-hall frame buildings and their two-story, I-House, counterparts. The other type of frame dwelling that survives from this period is built on a T-shaped floorplan. All of these frame dwellings usually had full-front porches, simple cornices, and cornerboards with simple capitals.

Construction materials and techniques used on these buildings are as varied as the buildings themselves. Although all of the log houses have gable roofs, this is where their similarity ends. The structures vary in height from one to one and-a-half stories, have either cut stone chimneys located on the exterior end or ones constructed of brick that protrude from the slope of the roofline, and either stone or brick pier foundations. At a later date, the gaps in this type of foundation could have been filled in up to the sill with either matching stone or brick. If there was a sleeping loft, the stairway to reach it was usually located in the corner of the building. Logs were generally half-hewn, with either half-dovetail or square notching, and if there was chinking between the logs it was usually either a combination of mud and diagonal pieces of wood or hand-rived horizontal board.

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All of the surviving frame buildings from the Settlement, Growth and Civil War Era also have gable roofs and brick chimneys; yet again, this is where the similarities end. These buildings range in height from one to two stories, and rest on either brick or stone piers. At a later time, the gaps in this type of foundation could have been filled in up to the sill with a matching type of material. While all of the chimneys on these houses are made of brick, they are found in a variety of locations on the building, including the exterior and interior ends. Other interior chimneys, which protrude from the slope of the gable roof, also exist on these houses.

Significance:

Vernacular houses from the Settlement, Growth and Civil War Era (1790-1865) are significant under either Criterion A and/or C. Under Criterion A, these houses reflect the era in which they were constructed as well as the role both they and their occupants played in the development of their respective surrounding communities. Vernacular houses are also significant in architecture under Criterion C because they embody the forms and methods of construction commonly used during this period.

Registration Requirements:

For a Settlement, Growth and Civil War Era vernacular house in Searcy County to be considered eligible for the National Register it must have been constructed between 1790 and 1865, still retain over fifty percent of its original integrity, and either be located on its original site or on one that is sympathetic to its original site. The building must also convey the sense that it was originally a single residence dwelling.

B. RECONSTRUCTION, RAILROADS AND RENEWAL ERA VERNACULAR DWELLINGSDescription:

During the Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era (1865-1910) in Searcy County a variety of vernacular houses were constructed out of a variety of materials. Surviving examples from this period exhibit numerous floorplan designs and construction techniques.

Log houses continued to be built in the Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era. Extant examples are one-story in height and their floorplans are either single-pen or double-pen with an enclosed or open central hall. Two-room plank wall buildings are also in evidence. However,

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the wood frame houses are the ones that display the most versatility in construction technique. Those built during this period range in height from one to two stories and their floorplans included hall and parlor; double-pen; dogtrot; single or double pile with central hall; gable entry; square, irregular, ell or T-shaped; double pile; cross-shaped; and the central hall or double-pen I-house. Box construction also became very popular during the Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era. Box houses built during this period ranged in height from one to one-and-a-half stories and floorplans were the simple hall and parlor, double-pen or T-shaped type. Load-bearing brick houses ranged from one to two stories in height and were irregularly shaped.

Each of these buildings exhibit a variety of roof types including gable, hipped, clipped gable, gable on hip, pyramid and bellcast. The chimneys on Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era vernacular houses were of either brick or stone construction and are found in several locations on the structure. Most of the buildings have either brick or stone foundations, though a small number are supported upon wood blocks.

**Significance:**

Vernacular houses from the Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era (1865-1910) are significant under either Criterion A, B and/or C. Under Criterion A or B, these houses reflect the era in which they were constructed as well as the role both they and their occupants played in the development of their respective surrounding communities. Vernacular houses are also significant in architecture under Criterion C because they embody the forms and methods of construction commonly used during this period.

**Registration Requirements:**

For a Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era vernacular house in Searcy County to be considered eligible for the National Register it must have been constructed between 1865 and 1910, still retain over fifty percent of its original integrity, and either be located on its original site or one that is sympathetic to its original site. The building must also convey the sense that it was originally a single residence dwelling.

**C. ECONOMIC REALIGNMENT, THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR ERA VERNACULAR DWELLINGS****Description:**

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During the Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era (1910-1945) in Searcy County a variety of vernacular houses were constructed. They were also built out of a variety of materials. Surviving examples from this period exhibit numerous floorplan designs and construction techniques.

Frame construction was one of the most popular and versatile construction techniques used during this period. Frame houses built during this era ranged in height from one to two and one-half stories and floorplans included double-pen, double-pile with central hall, irregular and double-pile. Box construction continued to be very popular during the Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era. Box houses built during this period were one story in height and floorplans were very simple such as double-pen, double-pile, saddlebag and single pile with a central enclosed hall. Load-bearing brick houses were one story in height and were irregularly shaped.

The above mentioned buildings had either gable or hipped roofs. Chimneys of Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era vernacular houses were of brick construction and are found in a variety of locations on the building. All buildings have either brick or stone foundations, though a small number are supported upon wood blocks.

### Significance:

Vernacular houses from the Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era (1910-1945) are significant under either Criterion A, B and/or C. Under Criterion A or B, these houses reflect the era in which they were constructed as well as the role both they and their occupants played in the development of their respective surrounding communities. Vernacular houses are also significant in architecture under Criterion C because they embody the forms and methods of construction commonly used during this period.

### Registration Requirements:

For a Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era vernacular house in Searcy County to be considered eligible for the National Register it must have been constructed between 1910 and 1945, still retain over fifty percent of its original integrity, and either be located on its original site or one that is sympathetic to its original site. The building must also convey the sense that it was originally a single residence dwelling.

## 2. HIGH-STYLE DWELLINGS

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A. RECONSTRUCTION, RAILROADS AND RENEWAL ERA BUILDINGSDescription:

The high-style residences constructed during the Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era (1865-1910) in Searcy County are those whose designs reflect the influence of a traditional architectural style pervading most of the aspects of their design -- although, as is always the case in discussing the architecture of a predominantly rural area that was crossed by a railroad, the line between high-style and vernacular or traditional design is necessarily vague. In spite of having lost a great deal of the historic built environment from the nineteenth century, the high-style residences of this era in Searcy County that remain reflect the impact of all the major national styles of the period, including the Greek Revival, Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Queen Anne Revival and Folk Victorian. Furthermore, various transitional designs also feature elements of two or more of these styles, or feature the adornment of more vernacular traditional building types (e.g., I-houses) with architectural details from one or more of the popular national styles.

Larger homes overall tend to predominate within this particular building type for this period; the elevations tend to be one-and-one-half to two stories in height. The floor plans of these buildings are typical both of these traditional architectural styles and of the vernacular building types being so embellished: they vary from the double-pile, central hall plan of the Greek Revival and Greek Revival/Italianate transitional designs to the more rambling, asymmetrical plans of the Romanesque Revival, Queen Anne Revival and Folk Victorian styles. The building materials employed in the construction of high-style dwellings from this period include most of the common building materials of the period: brick and stone masonry, and dimensional lumber used in wood frame construction.

Significance:

By definition, all of the high-style dwellings from the Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era will be eligible under Criterion C, either for the significance of their design, craftsmanship, or the construction techniques employed in their erection. As was the case throughout Arkansas, the railroad brought not only prosperity and increased contact with the outside world generally, but also an influx of traditional architectural styles that appealed to many of the more ambitious residents who desired to construct homes designed in a current architectural idiom. Thus these high-style dwellings are reflective of both the prosperity and broader national contact brought to the county by the railroad and the desire of many residents to proclaim their new architectural sophistication and acquire increased status thereby. These buildings remain the best and greatest

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testimony to what this period of growth and prosperity meant to many of the county's residents on a more personal level, and how strongly it influenced them.

Registration Requirements:

For a Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era high-style dwelling in Searcy County to be considered eligible for the National Register, it must have been constructed between 1865 and 1910; it must retain over fifty percent of its original integrity; it must be located either on its original site or a new one sympathetic to the original site (and only if the building was threatened on its original site); and the building must convey the impression that it was originally constructed as a dwelling.

B. ECONOMIC REALIGNMENT, THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR ERA BUILDINGS

Description:

The high-style dwellings from the Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era in Searcy County generally reflect the variety of national architectural styles that -- in some form -- permeated even the most rural recesses of the United States during this period. The styles include the Colonial Revival, the Craftsman (including the Bungalow), the English Revival, and various transitional interpretations, including transitional designs combining features from earlier styles (such as the Folk Victorian). As was common throughout the nation, the significant improvements in communications and transportation that began during the Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era -- and which only increased during the Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era -- aided the diffusion of these national styles into even relatively remote rural areas; and thus many of the high-style dwellings from this period are frequently surrounded by outbuildings of various function that are also designed in the same style. As often as not these outbuildings are non-agricultural in function (such as Delco houses, professional offices and automobile garages), though many agricultural outbuildings also share the style of the main residence.

These buildings tend to be smaller in scale, due largely to the fact that several of these styles lent themselves to low-cost, middle-class, single-family home construction. One- to one-and-one-half-story heights predominate, though two-story buildings are also found occasionally. The floor plans range from the relatively balanced and symmetrical arrangements of Colonial Revival designs to the asymmetrical and rambling plans of both the English Revival style and the various interpretations of the Craftsman idiom. However, this period witnessed an even greater range

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of variation in plans between the symmetrical and the asymmetrical, and a trend can even be distinguished within the Craftsman style of overall asymmetricality in the early years of the period giving way to regularity and symmetricality the further the building is designed from the initial vision that Gustav Stickley published in his *Craftsman Homes* books of the century's second decade. By the end of the 1930's, the plans of the Craftsman style dwellings became more contained and less picturesque overall. The building materials are chiefly wood frame construction covered with weatherboarding or novelty siding and brick or brick-veneer construction.

Significance:

By definition, all of the high-style dwellings from the Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era will be eligible under Criterion C, either for the significance of their design, craftsmanship, or the construction techniques employed in their erection. These buildings generally reflect the breadth of the influence of these early twentieth century styles and the extent of their permeation even into relatively remote areas. Overall, therefore, they are significant by virtue of both their individual design merit and the great extent to which they reveal the influence of these styles throughout the county.

Registration Requirements:

For a Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era high-style dwelling in Searcy County to be considered eligible for the National Register, it must have been constructed between 1910 and 1945; it must retain over fifty percent of its original integrity; it must be located either on its original site or a new one sympathetic to the original site (and only if the building was threatened on its original site); and the building must convey the impression that it was originally constructed as a dwelling.

**3. RELIGIOUS AND INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS****A. RECONSTRUCTION, RAILROADS AND RENEWAL ERA BUILDINGS**Description:

Only a few religious and institutional buildings remaining from the Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era in Searcy County have been identified. Generally, these buildings will be either simple wood-frame or log churches that frequently also served as schools, or vernacular



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residences that also served such functions as post offices. Such buildings are generally one-story to one-and-one-half stories in height and covered with either gable or hipped roofs.

Significance:

The railroad's arrival in Searcy County toward the end of this era precluded its having much overt influence on the religious and institutional buildings thereof. Such buildings, therefore, are significant for the less formal and more traditional attitude toward such construction that they represent, and for their clear emphasis upon utility and accessibility over architectural pretense.

In sum, the institutional properties are significant under National Register Criterion A as associated with education and civic functions and with the lifestyle that characterized the county during the railroad era. However, they and the churches are also architecturally significant under Criterion C for embodying the forms, methods of construction, and the traditional building styles popular during this period.

Registration Requirements:

Searcy County's surviving Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era religious and institutional buildings are individually noteworthy for stylistic reasons, due particularly to the workmanship and materials used in their construction. In general, to meet registration requirements, the properties should have been built during the Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era; they should retain sufficient physical features to identify them as having been built during the period of their construction; and they should retain their integrity of setting along abandoned or active railroad routes.

B. ECONOMIC REALIGNMENT, THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR ERA BUILDINGS

Description:

Few Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era religious and institutional buildings remain in Searcy County, and those that do were either built, funded or influenced by the federal government recovery programs of the Depression. As such they contain the stylistic elements common to government-funded buildings of this period between 1930 and 1945.

Significance:

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The federal relief programs that fueled the state's economy during the Depression years put thousands of people to work, reduced the illiteracy rate by 40 percent and served 1.7 million hot lunches in the public schools. Yet they also brought some form of physical improvement to practically every single community. From 1935 to 1939, the WPA added almost 8,000 miles of highways, roads and streets throughout the state; built some 3,700 bridges and viaducts; and constructed 773 new public buildings, including 297 schools, 81 gymnasiums, five armories, 16 hospitals, four fire stations and three penal institutions. And, as state WPA administrator Floyd Sharp remarked in 1940: ". . . a great deal [of these projects] was done in rural areas. By cooperating with county, municipal and school officials, we have been able to build modern schools and recreational facilities which fill a need long felt in these areas. These buildings have given hundreds of communities common meeting places where none existed before. . ." [Arkansas Democrat, 21 March 1940.]

These government-funded structures not only improved the culture and economy of small communities, but affected an area's architecture and landscape as well. Their consistent use of stone, brick and log construction materials, basic floorplans and Craftsman and Art Deco elements led to distinctive 'WPA buildings' that are still notable today. For example, their floorplan for American Legion buildings, which was widely used in rural and small town areas like Leslie, displays the same basic features: a large social hall, used for various community events, frequently augmented by a kitchen area placed on the side of the building.

Therefore, these Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era properties are significant under National Register Criterion A for their associations with the federal relief programs' economic, cultural and educational influences on the county. However, they are also architecturally significant under Criterion C for generating a distinctive form, method of construction and style that became popular during this period.

**Registration Requirements:**

The schools, community and government buildings, and churches in Searcy County that date from the Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era are significant because of their stylistic features, construction materials and workmanship, and because of their symbolic value as a group. They are visual reminders of the region's economic, cultural and social history, thus symbolizing the Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era as a whole. Therefore, their associations, functions and the feelings they convey also apply when determining their eligibility for the Register. In general, to meet registration requirements, the properties should have been built between 1910 and 1945; they should retain sufficient physical characteristics to identify them as having been built during the period of their

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construction; and they should be in good or excellent condition.

**4. COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS**

**A. RECONSTRUCTION, RAILROADS AND RENEWAL ERA COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS**

Description:

The surviving Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era Commercial Buildings were constructed between 1900 and 1910 and are reflective of the importance of commercial activity within their respective communities during this period. The buildings themselves housed a variety of commercial ventures such as grocery, drug, hardware, and millinery stores, as well as offices and banks. Some buildings housed commercial activities on the ground floor with either offices or private residences on the upper floors.

The majority of these commercial structures were more than one-story tall and of brick construction but some could be single-story wood frame structures. Brick commercial buildings usually had flat roofs with parapets while frame buildings generally had gable roofs with false fronts. In both types of structures ground floor fenestration generally consisted of large fixed frame windows with transom lights while the upper floors were usually adorned with multiple pane double-hung wood sash windows. Most structures lack any type of architectural detailing, but if they have any, it is usually an Italianate window hood-mold.

Commercial buildings were located in small towns near transportation hubs so that they could reach a greater number of customers.

Significance:

Commercial buildings from the Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era (1865-1910) are significant under either Criterion A and/or C. Under Criterion A, these structures reflect the significant and instrumental contributions made by local entrepreneurs to the development of their surrounding communities. The very growth of these communities occurred because of the business transacted at these locations. While all of the aforementioned businesses reflect the growth of the county during this period, none does so better than the emerging banking industry. Banking, then a symbol of stability, started to blossom in the early 1900's as more and more

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people were settling permanently in Searcy County. People also began to settle permanently in the county because of improving lines of transportation.

The crude overland trails that crossed the county early in its history were significant because they first opened up the county's interior. While commercial ventures naturally sprang up around these bustling trade routes it was not until railroads made the scene that commercial activity in Searcy County really exploded. These railroads not only opened up markets in never before reached areas throughout the country but their stopping points became prime locations for area newcomers to disembark.

Commercial buildings are also significant in architecture under Criterion C because they embody the forms and methods of construction commonly used during these periods.

Registration Requirements:

For a Reconstruction, Railroads and Renewal Era commercial building in Searcy County to be considered eligible for the National Register it must have been constructed between 1865 and 1910, still retain over fifty percent of its original integrity, and be located on its original site. It must also convey a sense of the original commercial use of the building.

B. ECONOMIC REALIGNMENT, THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR ERA COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Description:

The surviving Commercial Buildings of the Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era were constructed between 1910 and 1945 and reflect the importance of commercial activity within their respective communities during this period. The buildings housed a variety of commercial ventures such as grocery and hardware stores, and banks. Some buildings housed commercial activities on the ground floor with either offices or private residences on the upper floors.

The majority of these structures were one-story tall and of either brick or stone construction; however, there are a small number that are single-story wood frame structures. Most structures lack any type of architectural detailing; the little they have reflect the period's popular architectural styles, such as the dentilated cornices of the Colonial Revival design.

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Commercial buildings were located in small towns near transportation hubs so that they could reach a greater number of customers.

Significance:

Commercial buildings from the Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era (1910-1945) are significant under either Criterion A and/or C. Under Criterion A, these structures reflect the significant and instrumental contributions made by local entrepreneurs to the development of their surrounding communities. The very growth of these communities occurred because of business transacted at these locations. Commercial buildings are also frequently significant under Criterion C because they embody the architectural forms and methods of construction commonly used during these periods.

Registration Requirements:

For a Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era commercial building in Searcy County to be considered eligible for the National Register, it must have been constructed between 1910 and 1945, still retain over fifty percent of its original integrity, and be located on its original site oriented towards a commercial thoroughfare. It must also convey a sense of the original use of the building.

### 5. TRANSPORTATION-RELATED BUILDINGS

#### A. ECONOMIC REALIGNMENT, THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR ERA BUILDINGS

Description:

The Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era transportation-related dwellings are primarily limited to railroad depots and gasoline stations. They are primarily of the Craftsman or Mediterranean architectural styles, and are all located on a rail line or highway. Most of these buildings are a single story in height and feature a variety of floor plans. They are primarily constructed of brick or stone masonry, though wood frame transportation-related buildings may also exist.

Significance:

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The transportation-related buildings constructed during the Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era will typically be eligible under Criterion A, though they will also frequently be eligible under Criterion C, as most were designed in one of the national architectural styles popular during the period. By definition they owe their existence to their association with one of the principal modes of transportation that played such an important part in the dramatic growth, development and prosperity of Searcy County that reached its fullest realization during the first half of this period.

**Registration Requirements:**

For a Economic Realignment, the Great Depression and World War Era transportation-related building in Searcy County to be considered eligible for the National Register, it must have been constructed between 1910 and 1945, still retain over fifty percent of its original integrity, and be located on its original site oriented towards a major transportation route or thoroughfare. It must also convey a sense of the original use of the building.

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**G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods**

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Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

☒ See continuation sheet

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**H. Major Bibliographical References**

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☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- ☒ State historic preservation office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency

- ☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Goals, Objectives and Methodology

In October, 1990, the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (AHPP) initiated a context-driven survey of historic resources in the Marshall and Leslie quadrangles of Searcy County. There were a number of reasons behind the decision to focus survey activities on Searcy County. Once predominantly isolated and rural, the county is currently experiencing moderate development and growth as northern Arkansas continues to grow in popularity as a retirement and vacation destination. Searcy County's distinctive political and social history, so different from that of the rest of the state, rendered it particularly attractive as a candidate for further research. Finally, Searcy County had been the recipient of relatively little agency attention in the past, and it was felt that such a survey would therefore be warranted.

The Searcy County survey involved significant interaction and cooperation between the AHPP program areas. At the initial planning meeting in which the parameters of the project were discussed, it was agreed that the Survey staff would conduct a comprehensive survey of the Marshall and Leslie quadrangles, identifying, photographing and documenting every historic structure within the study area (i.e., those structures 50 years old or older). It was agreed that the Planning Officer would be responsible for the research and development of a historic context to accompany the survey. The National Register staff would then assess the information gathered and evaluate each property based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places. Those properties possessing sufficient historic integrity and deemed eligible would be written up by the National Register staff and presented to the State Review Board for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Those nominations approved by the State Review Board, as well as copies of the completed historic context, would then be forwarded to the National Register office of the National Park Service in Washington, D.C., for final approval. Throughout the course of the Searcy County survey, public input would be sought through press releases to media outlets in those areas targeted for survey visit. Furthermore, it was agreed that both the Survey and National Register staffs would be available for public presentations and meetings on the progress and findings of the Searcy County survey.

The multiple property nomination of historic and archeological resources of Searcy County, Arkansas, is based upon a comprehensive survey of historic structures in the Marshall and Leslie quadrangles, and involved significant interaction and cooperation between the AHPP program areas. The survey was conducted between April and September, 1991, by Barbara Lindsey-Allen, former AHPP Survey Coordinator, and Todd Ferguson, AHPP Survey Historian. William D. (Don) Baker, AHPP Planning Officer, was responsible for the research and writing of the historic context, while Kenneth Story, AHPP National Register Coordinator, and Patrick



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Zollner, AHPP National Register Historian, supervised the development of a multiple-property nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Lindsey-Allen holds a B.A. in History/Historic Preservation - Pre-Law from Arkansas College. Ferguson holds a B.A. in History/Political Science from Arkansas Tech University. Baker holds a B.A. in Foreign Service and a M.A. in Political Science from Baylor University. Story holds a B.A. in Art History from Amherst College and a M.A. in Art History with a concentration in the History of American Architecture from Tufts University. Zollner holds a B.A. in History from the University of Arkansas.

The Searcy County survey identified 270 historic properties and groups of properties, spanning the years from the 1840s through World War II. Every passable road within the targeted quadrangles, public and private, was driven during the course of the survey, and every structure marked on the appropriate USGS topographical maps were viewed and field-assessed as to historic integrity and significance. Properties from vernacular to high style were recorded if they were more than 50 percent intact. Those not recorded were passed over because of alterations that substantially damaged their integrity. For each recorded property, locations were noted on the appropriate USGS topographical maps; photographs, both black and white prints and color slides, were taken of several elevations; computerized inventory forms, complete with plan view drawings, were completed; and research, including the checking of courthouse records, Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, other primary and secondary sources, and the taking of oral histories, was conducted. Any information on research, events or issues not adequately covered in this study should be directed to the Planning Officer at AHPP.

Approximately fifty (50) of these properties were determined to be applicable to the context and potentially eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Integrity requirements were based upon a knowledge of existing properties and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places. The architectural and physical features of the county's surviving properties, derived from the survey, were considered in developing the outlines of potential registration requirements. The National Register staff intends to nominate these eligible properties over three successive State Review Board meetings in 1993. Those properties not deemed eligible were passed over because of alterations that the staff felt had substantially damaged their integrity.

In attempting to survey and record the cultural resources of Searcy County, the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program hopes to draw attention to the rich and varied history of the north-central Ozarks. Hopefully, such an effort will encourage others to develop an interest in the resources of their own communities and to foster pride in the history and culture of their state. Although survey efforts focused on only two quadrangles, the Searcy County context

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covers the entire county, and it is hoped that individual property owners will continue to approach the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program and request the additions of their properties to the multiple property nomination. By recognizing the importance of these resources to the understanding and appreciation of Arkansas's history, the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program hopes to encourage the preservation, protection, continued use, and adaptive re-use of these properties.

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