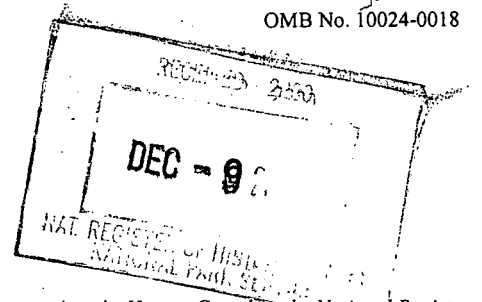


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Mercantile Bank Building

other names/site number CG0223, Jonesboro Trust Company, Craighead County Bank

2. Location

street & number 249 South Main Street

☐ not for publication

city or town Jonesboro

☐ vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Craighead code 031 zip code 72401

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cedric Meadows
Signature of certifying official/Title

12/3/04
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☒ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain:) _____

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

1/28/05
Date of Action

Mercantile Bank Building
Name of Property

Craighead County, Arkansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/

Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

STUCCO

roof SYNTHETICS/rubber

other

Narrative Description

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Mercantile Bank Building is an imposing two-story building located on the corner of a busy intersection in downtown Jonesboro, Craighead County, Arkansas. Built in 1890 by the Craighead County Bank, the Neoclassical style of the building is seen in its pilasters bordering the windows and doors of the front and one side. The Classical Revival style distinguishes it from its neighbors.

ELABORATION

A fire destroyed most of the wood frame buildings in 1889, so like many others in the area built after the fire, the bank was constructed of brick. Sometime around 1906 an addition was made to the rear of the building. This was used as a separate office until a major renovation was completed in 1919. In 1919, the Jonesboro Trust Company enlisted the Hoggson Brothers architectural firm of New York to renovate the building. The original building was rectangular, approximately 65 feet by 30 feet. This renovation involved the assimilation of the 1906 addition to create a unified structure, measuring approximately 30 feet by 90 feet. The renovation also included the application of stucco to the brick walls, alteration of the first floor windows and the creation of a neoclassical façade.

Stucco was placed on all surfaces except the western elevation, where the original brick remained exposed. The design encompassed the original windows of the second floor, but the windows on the first floor were replaced with substantially larger double-hung windows with transoms. The glass storefront was transformed into an extension of the new design. A recessed entrance was created in the center of the eastern façade and a pediment and simple columns were added. The same windows that were added to the first floor of the southern elevation were added on either side of this new entrance. The new façade included a parapet on the eastern and southern elevations to create the illusion of a much taller building. Rows of dentils were added to the exterior at the termination of the first floor and at the roofline as well. The building exterior retains the character it acquired during this renovation, with the exception of alterations to the second floor windows. The foundation is composed of brick piers.

East Elevation

The east façade features a segmental-arched corniced pediment above the recessed doorway. The entire side is symmetrical, with three windows on the upper floor, and one on each side of the lower level entrance. Pilasters serve as corners for the first floor, and all windows are recessed. The lower level windows have awning windows directly above one-over-one double-hung windows, all in the same casement.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

North Elevation

The north elevation of the building is connected to a more modern structure. The modern structure is several feet shorter than the one in place when the bank was built, therefore the trim and dentils do not continue around the top of the building on the north elevation, though they now could.

West Elevation

All windows on the west elevation have been enclosed with brick, except for one on the top left corner, and one just below and slightly to the right of it. Originally, there was one at top to the far right, one below it, and three in a row on the ground floor. Centered at basement level is an enclosed basement window. The west elevation appears to have been covered with concrete, though now the brick is mostly exposed.

South Elevation

The south elevation features twelve pilasters along the first floor. From the back, between the second and third, is a window, as well as between the sixth and seventh, seventh and eighth, and so forth to the front of the building. These windows mirror those on the front first floor. On the second floor there is a window near the back corner, and one above each first floor window after that one. All second story windows are one-over-one and double-hung. The stucco returns to cover this elevation of the property.

Interior

The bank building houses four vaults. An elevator was added to the bank circa 1950 and is believed to be the first of its kind in the area. One interior feature that has survived renovations is a hand-cast plaster crown molding that is visible from the first and second floors.

INTEGRITY

The Mercantile Bank Building, built in 1890, retains the majority of its integrity. The location and workmanship are the same. The design is in the process of returning to its original modified state, as well as the materials. The setting is now modern, though it is still a business district, lending to the feeling and association of the building.

Mercantile Bank Building
Name of Property

Craighead County, Arkansas
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** moved from its original location.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

LOCAL

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ECONOMICS

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1890-1955

Significant Dates

1890-1955

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Hoggson Brothers, Architects (renovation)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

Constructed in 1890, the Mercantile Bank Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its role in economic development in Jonesboro. The bank played a vital role in building the city of Jonesboro in its early days. It is also being nominated under **Criterion C** as a good example of a Neoclassical style commercial building in Jonesboro.

ELABORATION

In the 1880s and 1890s the railroad was fast becoming the most important industry in Arkansas and its influence was seen everywhere. Jonesboro's Main Street was no exception. Every business competed for space on the street because South Main terminated at the railroad depot. Until 1889, Jonesboro was composed mostly of frame structures. When a fire wiped out several blocks, the city planners decided the future of construction lay in brick. The streets were even paved with bricks around 1910. This particular brick building was built in 1890 for the Craighead County Bank, which operated until the end of 1894. From 1894 to 1901 it appears that the structure was used for offices and a clothing store. In 1901 it returned to its original use when the Jonesboro Savings & Trust, later called Jonesboro Trust Company, occupied the building. Around 1906 an addition was made to the building. This addition served as the offices for Jonesboro City Water & Light. Jonesboro had separate water and electric companies until City Water & Light opened around 1906. Prior to this time electricity was only available at night and the new plant offered 24-hour service.

In September 1918, the Jonesboro Trust Company joined the Federal Reserve System. In April 1919, the bank moved its operation into the building next door to allow for the remodeling and modernization of their building. The addition was enclosed and one solid structure emerged. The new plans were designed by the Hoggson Brothers architectural firm of New York. The firm's founder, Noble Foster Hoggson, was born in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1865 and was a graduate of Yale. The family business appears to have been publishing and the Hoggson name was associated with printing in New Haven for many years. Noble Foster Hoggson founded the architectural firm in 1897. The firm was well-known for its role in the construction of many bank buildings in the Northeast, several of which are on the National Register of Historic Places in that part of the country. This project may be the only one Hoggson Brothers contributed to in the Southeast. The firm published an architectural magazine, *The Hoggson Magazine*, beginning in 1914. Noble Foster Hoggson was himself a prolific writer, publishing books about his experiences in World War I, France,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Italian antiques and many articles on aspects of architecture. In 1926, Hoggson published a book titled, *Banking Through the Ages*. Hoggson died in 1939.

The institution reopened on September 10, 1919 and was known as "The Growing Bank" and later as "That Safe Bank." The Jonesboro Trust Company merged with the American Trust Company in December 1927. After the merger, the board decided to occupy the Jonesboro Trust Company building because it was larger and more up to date than the American Trust Company's building, located two blocks south on Main Street. By the end of 1931, The American Trust company had fallen victim to the Great Depression and been declared insolvent.

The American Trust Company's powerful competition, the Bank of Jonesboro, called "the Strong Bank," and considered the strongest and oldest bank in Jonesboro had closed suddenly on December 11, 1931, leaving the local citizens without a bank for more than five weeks. Jonesboro had four banks for over twenty years and the loss of banking services was a serious issue. Alex Berger, the organizer for the American Trust Company and son of prominent Jonesboro businessman, Marcus Berger, canvassed the city for investors and raised enough capital to charter the Mercantile Bank in January of 1932. The Mercantile Bank opened for business on Monday, January 18, 1932. Newspapers reported deposits of over \$125,000 and over 500 depositors from opening at 9 o'clock to closing at 3 o'clock on the first day. For a time, one bank served a city of approximately 18,000 people.

In 1969, Mercantile Bank built a new location a block away from their old building. Crowley's Ridge Development Council occupied the building from this time until 2004. During their time in the building, CRDC made many changes to the interior of the building, but did little to the exterior of the structure. The Mercantile Building has since served several functions, but it has always been known as the "Old Mercantile Bank Building."

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1890, the Mercantile Bank Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its role in economic development in Jonesboro. The bank played a vital role in building the city of Jonesboro in its early days. It is also being nominated under **Criterion C** as a good example of a Neoclassical style commercial building in Jonesboro.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

Clayton, Barry. "The History of the Mercantile Bank." *Craighead County Historical Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (1982): 11-13.

Craighead County Sun 1890-1894; January, May 1901.

Jonesboro City Directories 1902-03, 1906, 1911, 1916-17, 1923.

Jonesboro Daily Tribune July 1927; August 1931; January-February 1932.

Jonesboro Evening Sun November-December 1931, January 1932.

Jonesboro Weekly Enterprise January, April, August 1901.

Jonesboro Weekly Sun July, September 1918, January, April-May, September 1919.

Sanborn Maps: January 1890, March 1894, March 1897, July 1901, April 1908, February 1913, July 1919, May 1930.

Times Enterprise Magazine April 12, 1906.

Mercantile Bank Building
Name of Property

Craighead County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 707264 3968708
Zone Easting Northing
2

3
Zone Easting Northing
4

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Benita Duvall, National Register Historian
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 10-15-04
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone 501-324-9880
city or town Little Rock state Arkansas zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name
street & number telephone
city or town state zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

Mercantile Bank Building

Name of Property

Craighead County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot one of Thorn's Main Street Addition to the City of Jonesboro, Arkansas.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundaries include all land historically associated with the Mercantile Bank Building.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Mercantile Bank Building

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Craighead

DATE RECEIVED: 12/09/04 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/04/05
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/19/05 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/22/05
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 04001506

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 1-20-05 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Mercantile Bank
Craighead Co., AR
Danielle Russell
10-10-4

AHPP, Little Rock, AR
Front
#1 of 3



Mercantile Bank
Craighead Co., AR
Danielle Russell

10-10-4
AHPP, Little Rock, AR
Front & west side
#2573



Mercantile Bank
Craighead Co., AR
Danielle Russell
10-10-4
AHPP, Little Rock, AR
Lack
#3073



35090-G6-TF-024





The Department of Arkansas Heritage

Mike Huckabee, Governor
Cathie Matthews, Director

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural Heritage
Commission

Historic Arkansas Museum

Delta Cultural Center

Old State House Museum



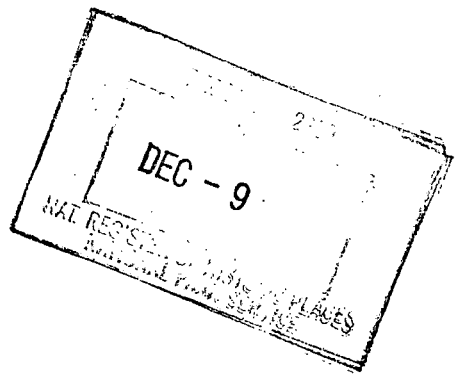
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

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December 1, 2004

Carol D. Shull
Chief of Registration
United States Department of the Interior
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
8th Floor
1201 Eye Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005



RE: Mercantile Bank – Jonesboro, Craighead County

Dear Ms. Shull:

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

If you need further information, please call Ralph S. Wilcox of my staff at (501) 324-9787. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Cathie Matthews
State Historic Preservation Officer

CM:bd

Enclosure

An Equal Opportunity Employer

