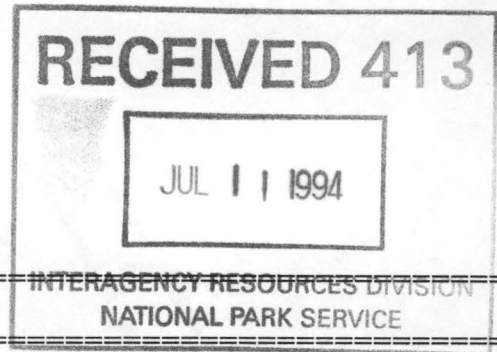


855

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name: Riggs-Hamilton American Legion Post #20

other name/site number: N/A

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number: 215 North Denver Avenue

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Russellville

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Pope code: AR 115 zip code: 72801

=====

3. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

=====

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A. Slater

Signature of certifying official

July 5, 1994

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.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====

5. National Park Service Certification

=====

I, hereby certify that this 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): _____

G. R. Loring

8/15/94

* Signature of Keeper

Date
of Action

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic: Social

Sub: Meeting Hall

Current : Social

Sub: Meeting Hall

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification:

Other _____

Other Description: WPA Rustic _____

Materials: foundation Stone _____ roof asphalt _____
walls Stone _____ other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

=====

8. Statement of Significance

=====

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Locally _____.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C _____

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A _____

Areas of Significance: Social History _____
Architecture _____

Period(s) of Significance: 1934-1944 _____

Significant Dates: 1936 _____

Significant Person(s): N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation: N/A _____

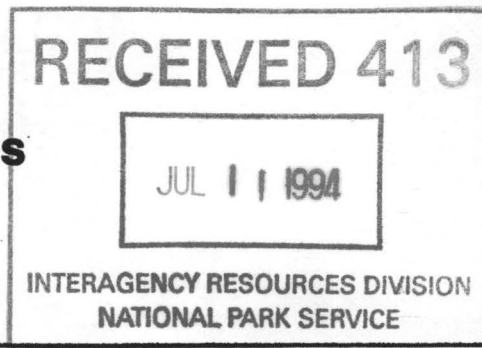
Architect/Builder: Works Progress Administration (WPA) _____

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1



Summary

The Riggs-Hamilton American Legion Post #20 in Russellville is a one-and-one-half story stone masonry structure supported by a continuous stone foundation and topped with a gabled roof covered with composition shingles. The structure features stucco and half-timbering in the gable ends and concrete medallions of the American Legion and American Legion Ladies Auxiliary above the entrances.

Elaboration

The Riggs-Hamilton American Legion Post #20 at 215 North Denver Street in Russellville, Arkansas is constructed of native stone in the Rustic style with a rectangular plan. The eastern facade of the structure serves as the entrance and faces North Denver Street. This facade features two separate entrances placed near the northern and southern ends of the facade with separate stone porticos. The entrances are faced with stone and concrete with a slight stone arch above each door and transom light. Centered above each door and transom is a concrete medallion featuring the crests of the American Legion and the American Legion Ladies Auxiliary. The facade is fenestrated with a central set of three windows between the two entrances on the first story and a central set of four windows on the second story. The second story features stucco and half timbering in the gabled end which is flanked on each side by the smaller gables of the entrances. On the south corner is a cornerstone which reads "Riggs-Hamilton, Post No. 20, American Legion, Erected 1934." The cornerstone near the north corner reads "This lot donated to Riggs-Hamilton Post of Pope County - By Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Mathews - in honor of our brothers - William R. Davis, Virgil H. Davis and Walter E. Blackburn - served with the A.E.F." Just to the right of the southern entrance is the standard brass W.P.A. plaque with the year 1936 on it.

The north facade of the structure is fenestrated with four sets of double windows which have been covered with boards. The wall is rather simple and plain with the exception of a chimney which is located in the middle of the wall and a small outcrop at the rear of the structure which is part of the kitchen area. The western or rear of the structure has two separate doors located symmetrically on either side. The door on the south side is flanked by two windows which have been in-filled with boards. The southern facade is a simple stone wall with five pairs of windows. On the east side of this wall is a buttressing wall which is the only other feature of this facade and the only buttress on the entire structure. The structure rests on a continuous stone foundation and has a simple gabled roof which is covered with asphalt shingles.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

The interior of the structure is largely intact on the second half story. The first story has been remodeled but still retains many of the original features. The structure has been altered over the years with the replacement of the windows to a thermally-efficient variety as well as an update of the kitchen after a fire a few years ago. The only other known alterations to the structure are the removal of dormers from the roof line; no clear date for these alterations could be obtained.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 1

Summary

Criteria A and C, local significance

The Riggs-Hamilton American Legion Post #20 is eligible under Criterion C with local significance as the best example of an assembly/meeting structure of typical W.P.A. Rustic construction in Pope County. The post is also eligible under Criterion A through association with the American Legion and its history as an American social organization.

Elaboration

The American Legion was founded in France during the relatively quiet and uneventful days that followed the signing of the armistice that ended World War I. American enlisted men from all three of the principal branches of the service then in existence -- the Army, Navy and Marine Corps -- were billeted in various locations for the purpose of maintaining a military presence while the negotiators worked out the details of the treaty that would outline the political future of much of Europe for the next decade. These servicemen found life during the occupation uneventful and boring, and this only compounded the frustration felt by many at not being allowed to return home to family and friends. A small group of officers -- and especially Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. and Lieutenant Colonel George A. White -- met to discuss the possibility of establishing a veterans' organization which would include all branches of the military and which would serve the immediate purpose of providing an outlet for some of the energy and frustration felt by the occupation forces but which would also set as its larger goal the establishment of a nationwide veteran's organization that would provide its members with both a social organization and a vehicle for voicing their collective concerns about such issues as national defense, subversive activity, radical thought, domestic social programs and veterans' affairs.

Successive meetings over the course of the next several months in both Europe and America further defined the Legion's mandate and purpose. However, it was the shooting of four Legionnaires during an Armistice Day parade in the lumber town of Centralia, Washington in 1919 by socialist IWW organizers and the subsequent coverage of the trial that followed -- in which the Legionnaires were portrayed as the aggressors -- that both galvanized and tempered the Legionnaire spirit. Both the public and the Legion press recognized the dangers of extremism by any party while admitting the need for responsible vigilance against any activity that threatened the democratic form of government. The American Legion began to grow steadily thereafter through an organization that elected officers on the national, state and local levels and provided a voice for its members regarding a variety of national concerns. During the

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

Depression the American Legion distinguished itself in particular through the expansion of local programs targeted at youth. Of particular note were the founding of American Legion Junior Baseball, the American Legion Oratorical Contest and Boys' State. The Legion took as its motto "We have stood together, let's stick together."

On January 23, 1919, a story in a local newspaper in Russellville, Arkansas reported that an Army-Navy Club of Pope County was being formed to assist and to serve as a civic organization for all veterans and their families. Eligibility requirements for the club stipulated that an individual be an honorably discharged member of the Army, Navy, or Marine Corps that had been on either home guard or overseas duty. Honorary membership could be extended to the wife, parents and siblings of men who made the supreme sacrifice. The club was dedicated to assisting partially disabled veterans in finding work and to provide free legal and medical advice. This organization was first conceived by Mr. Robert A. Ragsdale, who was elected president of the organization, and Mr. Wallace Cowan, who was elected secretary.

This organization met in the Ferguson Building which was located at the corner of Arkansas highway 7 and U.S. highway 64. One of the specific tasks the organization had in mind was to construct a memorial auditorium and armory. The armory would serve as the barracks and drill hall for infantry and artillery units to be formed in town.

At the July meeting of the Army and Navy Club of Pope County, a vote was taken to join the national organization of the American Legion. The post was named in honor of Samuel L. Riggs and Ed Hamilton, two Pope County men who were killed in battle in France.

In 1934 and 1935, construction on an American Legion Hut was begun but ran into financial difficulty. However, by July 1936, the post was ready for dedication and the date for the official ceremony was set for July 31, 1936. Speakers at the dedication were Mr. Jerome Thompson of Fayetteville, the State Commander of the American Legion; Mr. Charles Q. Kelly, National Committeeman of the American Legion; and U. S. Senator Joe T. Robinson. Mr. Wallace Cowan -- the original secretary of the Army-Navy Club of Pope County and later Commander of the Post in Russellville -- would preside at the meeting and Mr. Robert Ragsdale -- original president of the Army-Navy Club of Pope County, later State Vice President of the American Legion in Arkansas -- would introduce Senator Robinson.

The structure was built at a cost of \$6,000 at its completion. The lot for the structure was donated by Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Mathews in honor of Mrs. Mathews brothers, W.R. Davis of North Little Rock and Virgil H. Davis of Searcy, and her brother-in-law, Wallace E. Blackburn

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

of Forrest City, all of whom saw service overseas with the American Expeditionary Force (A.E.F.) in the First World War. The Riggs-Hamilton American Legion Post #20 has remained active in Veterans affairs and in the Russellville community generally since its inception and the facility is still used for many events and meetings.

The Riggs-Hamilton American Legion Post #20 building is locally significant under Criterion A (Social History) by virtue of its direct associations with the American Legion for which it was built. As a particularly good example of this popular, Depression-era style and the most intact example in the community of Russellville, the Riggs-Hamilton American Legion Post #20 is also locally significant under Criterion C.

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

The Russellville Weekly Courier Democrat, Vol. XLV, No. 4, January 23, 1919, pg. 1.

The Russellville Weekly Courier Democrat, Vol. XLV, No. 19, July 17, 1919, pg. 1.

The Russellville Weekly Courier Democrat, Vol. LIX, No. 56, July 16, 1936, pg. 1.

The Russellville Daily Courier Democrat, Vol. XIII, No. 182, July 30, 1936, pg. 4.

The Russellville Daily Courier Democrat, Vol. XIII, No. 184, August 1, 1936, pg. 1.

The Russellville Weekly Courier Democrat, Vol. LIX, No. 59, August 6, 1936, pg. 1.

Information provided by Barbara Bowden of Magazine, Arkansas.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 94000855

Date Listed: 8/15/94

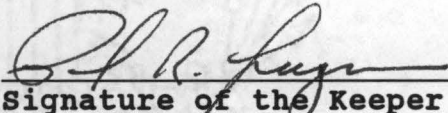
Riggs-Hamilton American
Legion Post No.20
Property Name

Pope
County

AR
State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

8/15/94
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Acreage:

The correct acreage should be listed as: **less than one.**
[The original nomination form omitted this information]

This information was confirmed with Ken Story of the Arkansas SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Riggs--Hamilton American Legion Post No. 20

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Pope

DATE RECEIVED: 7/11/94 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/28/94
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/13/94 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/25/94
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 94000855

NOMINATOR: STATE

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: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 8.15.94 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The Riggs-Hamilton American Legion Post No. 20 is eligible under National Register Criteria A and C, in the areas of Social History and Architecture. Completed in 1936, the modest-scaled social hall is a good local example of Rustic-style design and reflects the typical design forms associated with WPA construction in Arkansas during the 1930s. Historically, the building served as an important social center for local residents, veterans, and their families during the period prior to World War II.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A+C
REVIEWER Paul R. Lusignan
DISCIPLINE HISTORIAN
DATE 8/15/94

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

CLASSIFICATION

___ count ___ resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

___ historic ___ current

DESCRIPTION

___ architectural classification
___ materials
___ descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

___ summary paragraph
___ completeness
___ clarity
___ applicable criteria
___ justification of areas checked
___ relating significance to the resource
___ context
___ relationship of integrity to significance
___ justification of exception
___ other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

___ acreage ___ verbal boundary description
___ UTMs ___ boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

___ sketch maps ___ USGS maps ___ photographs ___ presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Phone _____

Signed _____

Date _____



Riggs - Hamilton American Legion Post #20

Russellville, Pope County, Arkansas

Photo by T. Ferguson

March 1992

Negatives on file at AHPP

View from East



Riggs - Hamilton American Legion Post #20

Russellville, Pope County, Arkansas

Photo by T. Ferguson

March 1992

Negatives on file at AHPP

View from Northeast



Riggs - Hamilton American Legion Post #20

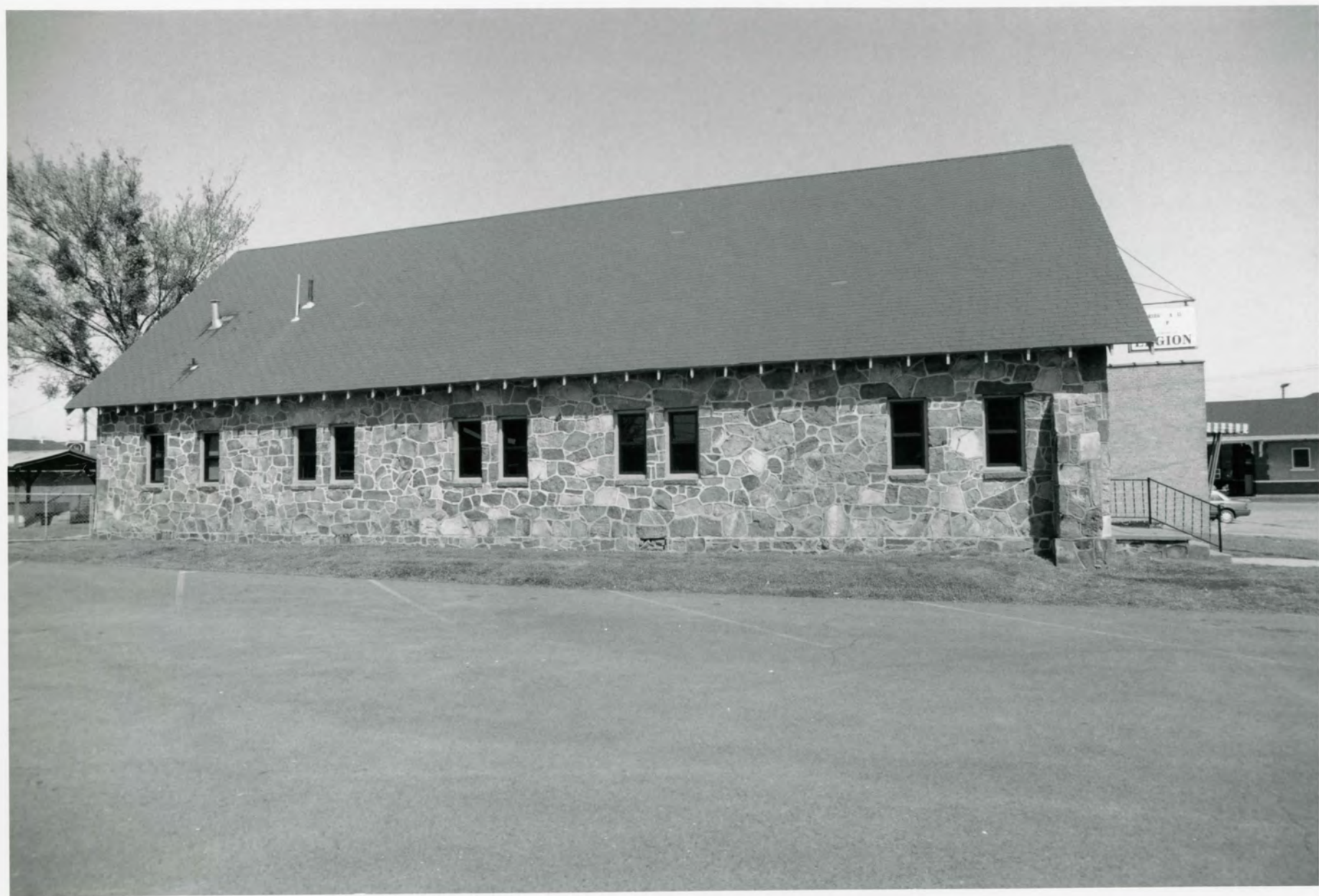
Russellville, Pope County, Arkansas

Photo by T. Ferguson

March 1992

Negatives on file at AHPP

View from Southwest



Riggs - Hamilton American Legion Post #20

Russellville, Pope County, Arkansas

Photo by T. Ferguson

march 1992

Negatives on file at AHP

View from South

RIGGS - HAMILTON

POST No. 20

AMERICAN LEGION

ERECTED 1934

Riggs-Hamilton American Legion Post #20

Russellville, Pope County, Arkansas

Photo by T. Ferguson

March 1992

Negatives on file at AHPP

Detail of South Cornerstone, View from East



Riggs - Hamilton American Legion Post #20

Russellville, Pope County, Arkansas

Photo by T. Ferguson

March 1992

Negatives on file at AHPP

First floor Interior detail

View from East.



Riggs - Hamilton American Legion Post #20

Russellville, Pope County, Arkansas

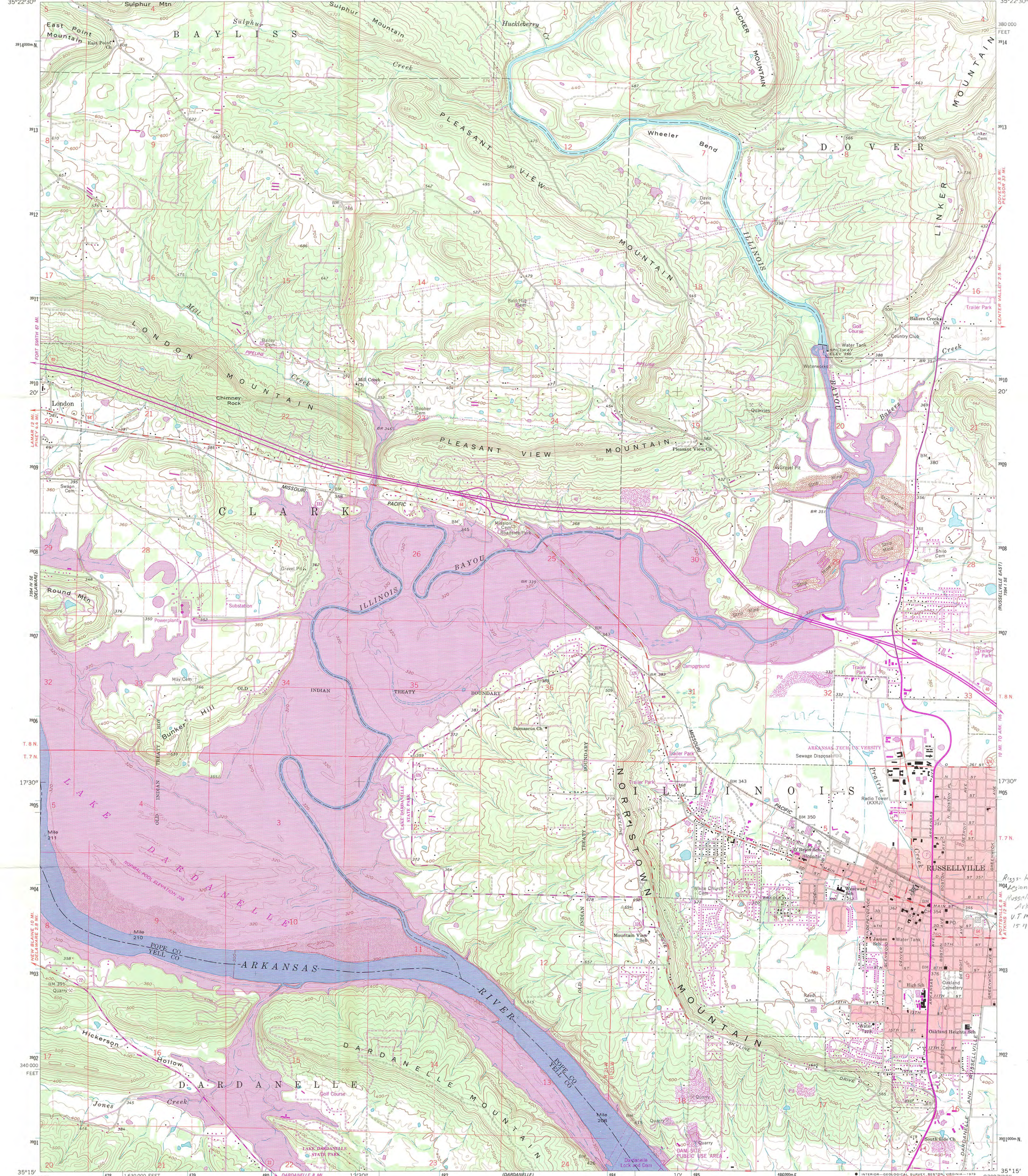
Photo by T. Ferguson

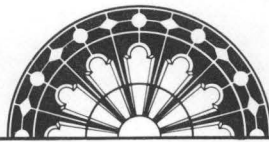
March 1992

Negatives on file at AHPP

Second floor Interior detail

View from East

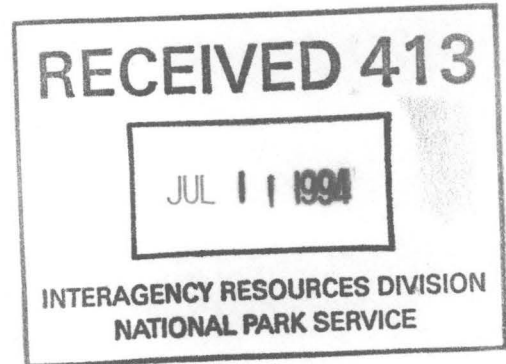




ARKANSAS
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
PROGRAM

July 1, 1994

Carol D. Shull
Chief of Registration
United States Department of the Interior
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
800 North Capitol Street, Suite 250
Washington, DC 20002



RE: Riggs-Hamilton American Legion Post #20
Russellville, Pope County

Dear Carol:

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

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Cathy Buford Slater
State Historic Preservation Officer

CBS:kg

Enclosures

