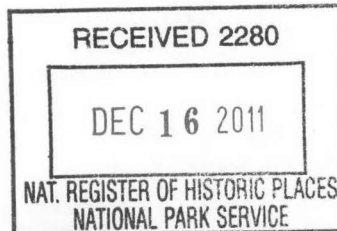


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



1048

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 Perryville Commercial Historic District

other names/site number Sites #PE0010, PE0054, PE0119-PE0134

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by AR 10 (Aplin Street), Magnolia Street, Main Street, and Plum Street ☐ not for publication

city or town Perryville ☐ vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Perry code 105 zip code 72126

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.)

Cathie Matthews  
Signature of certifying official/Title

12/7/11  
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:) \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]  
Signature of the Keeper

1/26/2012  
Date of Action

**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

9

6

buildings

1

sites

structures

objects

9

7

Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

2

**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE/department store

SOCIAL/meeting hall

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE/department store

SOCIAL/meeting hall

**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN

MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN

MOVEMENTS/Bungalow/Craftsman

OTHER/Plain-Traditional

MODERN MOVEMENT/Mid-Century Modern

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK, STONE

walls BRICK, STONE, CONCRETE, VINYL

roof TAR, ASPHALT

other

**Narrative Description**

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

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### SUMMARY

The Perryville Commercial Historic District consists of 18 resources located generally around the courthouse square in the center of Perryville's downtown. Of the 18 resources, nine (50%) are considered to be contributing, seven (39%) resources (which includes one vacant lot) are considered to be non-contributing. In addition, two (11%) resources, the Perry County Courthouse and the Perryville American Legion Building, are individually listed. The majority of the buildings in the district are Plain-Traditional or standard twentieth-century style commercial buildings. The Perryville American Legion Building, which is the most high-style building in the district, is an excellent example of Rustic Revival or Craftsman style. Most of the buildings are one story in height and have a mixture of flat or gabled roofs, although a couple of buildings have hipped roofs. Wall materials include brick, stone, and decorative concrete block.

### ELABORATION

The Perryville Commercial Historic District consists of 18 resources located around the courthouse square in downtown Perryville. Of the buildings in the district, the vast majority of them are either Plain-Traditional or standard twentieth-century style commercial buildings, with the notable exception being the Perryville American Legion Building, which was built c.1935 in the Rustic Revival or Craftsman style. The former Paul's Grocery Building, now Los Alamos Mexican Restaurant, also exhibits characteristics of the Mid-Century Modern style.

The centerpiece of the district is the Perry County Courthouse (Building #17, PE0010), a two-story brick building with hipped roof built in 1888 with two one-story wings that were built c.1958. Located on the courthouse square in the center of the district, the Perry County Courthouse is also the oldest building in the district. The courthouse is also one of the few two-story buildings in the district, the others being the brick and stone building at 309 Main Street (although it was originally one story), the building on the north side of Main east of Pine, and the building on the east side of Pine south of Main.

The vast majority of buildings in the district are Plain-Traditional, reflecting the circumstances under which they were built. Commercial buildings in Perryville needed to be utilitarian, and there was not a lot of extra money to include ornamentation on the buildings. As a result, the buildings are strictly functional in design. In addition, the vast majority of the buildings are only one story in height, also reflecting their functional nature.

The earliest buildings in the district are built out of fieldstone, likely obtained locally. It was a cheap and easy material to obtain and would not have required much trouble to transport to the site. The building at the northeast corner of Main and Pine (which also includes Coke bottles above the arch in the front façade for ornamentation) (Building #3, PE0121), the American Legion Building (Building #12, PE0054), the original first floor of the building at 309 Main Street (Building #9, PE0127), and the building on the east side of Pine south of Main (Building #4, PE0122), were all built prior to World War II.

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However, after World War II, it seems that brick became the building material of choice for buildings in downtown Perryville. The Perryville Abstract/Realty Company at 110 Pine (Building #1, PE0119), Paul's Grocery at 213-215 Main Street (Building #6, PE0124), and the second floor of the building at 309 Main, illustrate typical brick construction in the district. A variation of brick, Breeko Blocks, a glazed, fired clay building block patented and produced by the Breeko Block and Tile Company of Nashville, Tennessee, was used for the construction of Suds art gallery at 312 Aplin Avenue (Building #16, PE0131), and a similar material was also used for the former Rankin's Café Building at 301 Main (Building #7, PE0125).

However, the district also has several buildings that were built out of concrete block. Loyra's Barber Shop at 403 Main (Building #11, PE0129), for example, illustrates the use of concrete block. The Head of Class Building at 204-208 Main Street (Building #5, PE0123) along with the building at 113 Plum (Building #14, PE0130) uses decorative concrete blocks, which would have allowed a more decorative building for a relatively low cost.

Interestingly, only one frame building remains in the district. The Lovell Appraisal Group building at 316 Aplin Avenue was built c.1940 (Building #15, PE0133). (A second frame building located at 307 Main Street was demolished in April 2011.)

### INDIVIDUAL BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

- 1) *Perryville Realty Company/Perryville Abstract – 110 Pine, Contributing* – The Perryville Realty Company/Perryville Abstract building is a one-story building with plate-glass windows on the front. The front is covered in brick and the building's flat roof also forms an awning across the front. Part of the rear of the building is built out of concrete block.
- 2) *Perry County District Clerk – 108 Pine, Contributing* – The Perry County District Clerk's building is a one-story building covered with Roman brick on the front and stone on the side and rear. Two plate-glass windows fenestrate the front and a paneled door enters the building between the windows. The building has a flat roof and a metal awning spans almost the entire front of the building.
- 3) *Flewellen Building – Pine, Contributing* – The Flewellen Building is a one-story stone building with brick quoining around the doors and windows on the front. The doors are wood and the large windows on the front are also wood framed. An arched opening is located near the north end of the building and old Coke bottles are placed in the mortar around the arch giving some whimsical decoration to the building. A flat metal awning spans the front of the building. The rear portion of the building is framed and covered with sheet metal that looks like decorative concrete block.



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- 4) *Van Dalsem Building – 112 Pine, Non-Contributing* – The Counseling Associates building is a large stone building with three storefronts. The storefronts have plate-glass windows that flank the entrances. The front of the building is spanned by a flat awning. Two small additions constructed out of concrete block are located on the rear towards each end, giving the building a U-shaped plan. The building is non-contributing due to the hipped roof, which was constructed on top of the building's original flat roof.
- 5) *Fourche Theatre Building – 204-208 Main, Contributing* – The Fourche Theatre Building is constructed out of decorative concrete block. The western portion of the building is two stories tall and the eastern portion of the building is one story tall. The building has a flat roof. A gable-roofed addition with a garage door and entrance is located off of the rear. The building's fenestration is mainly plate-glass windows although the upstairs windows are one-over-one double-hung windows.
- 6) *Paul's Market – 213-215 Main, Contributing* – The Paul's Market building is divided into two sections, one with a flat roof that houses the office, and one with a gable roof that houses the restaurant. The front and side walls are brick while the rear wall is concrete block. Fenestration on the front of the building is plate-glass windows and windows on the side and rear are double-hung windows.
- 7) *The Perryville Café – 301 Main, Contributing* – The Perryville Café Building is built out of large builder brick and is topped by a gable roof. The front façade has a stepped parapet and is fenestrated with plate-glass windows. The front of the building is spanned by a metal awning and it also features a recessed entry. A louvered attic vent is also on the front of the building. Windows on the sides and rear are double-hung windows. A central entrance is also located on the rear of the building.
- 8) *Vacant Lot – 307 Main, Non-Contributing* – The building that stood on this lot, which was a small wood-framed building, was demolished in early 2011.
- 9) *Gutowski Building – 309 Main, Contributing* – The Gutowski Building features a first floor built out of stone and a second story built out of brick, which was added in 1941. The first-floor storefronts are fenestrated by large plate-glass windows. The second-floor window openings are currently covered. The rear of the building has openings with double-hung windows. A large wood deck with stairs is located near the west end of the building. The second-floor window opening are boarded up. The building has a flat roof.
- 10) *Perry County Bank Building – Main, Non-Contributing* – The Perry County Bank Building is a one-story brick building with a flat roof. The building is fenestrated by plate-glass windows and a recessed entrance is located on the front. The rear of the building has two

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entrances, one of which is sheltered by a flat-roofed porch. The building is non-contributing because it was drastically altered to its current appearance within the last twenty years.

- 11) *Perry County News Building – 403 Main, Contributing* – The *Perry County News* Building is a one-story concrete-block building with a front-facing gable roof. The front has a central entrance that is flanked on each side by two double-hung windows. Several windows on the sides of the building have been enclosed as have the windows on the rear. The rear façade also has a central entrance.
- 12) *American Legion Building – 408 Main, Individually Listed* – The American Legion Building is a one-story stone building with cross-gabled roof. The building features double-hung six-over-six windows. The gable ends, in addition to the stonework, also feature half-timbering. The steeply-pitched roof has decorative bargeboards and exposed rafter tails.
- 13) *Perry County Branch Library – Plum, Non-Contributing* – The Perry County Branch Library building is a simply rectangular brick building with front-facing gable roof. The building has a central entrance flanked by double-hung windows on the front and a central entrance on the rear. A shed-roofed metal awning spans the front façade. Since the building originally had a flat roof, it is non-contributing.
- 14) *Hotel Kim/Kim's Café – 113 Plum, Non-Contributing* – The Hotel Kim/Kim's Café building is a one-story decorative concrete block building with two storefronts. The front façade features two recessed entries and four plate-glass windows. The windows are sheltered by fabric awnings. A row of double-hung windows fenestrates the north façade and the windows on the rear have been enclosed. The entire building is topped by a large gable roof. The building is non-contributing since it was originally two stories tall.
- 15) *Lovell Appraisal Group, Inc. – 316 Aplin, Non-Contributing* – The Lovell Appraisal Group appears to have been a residential duplex originally. The frame building, which has been sided, is fenestrated with double-hung windows and features two gable-roofed porches. A large carport is located on the building's west side. The building is considered to be non-contributing due to the alterations to the building.
- 16) *Tarvin's Grocery – 312 Aplin, Contributing* – The Tarvin's Grocery building is built out of large builder brick and is topped by a gable roof. The front façade has a stepped parapet and is fenestrated with plate-glass windows. The front of the building is spanned by a cloth awning and it also features a recessed entry. A louvered attic vent is also on the front of the building. The original windows on the sides and have mainly been enclosed. The east side also features an entrance and a large garage door. An entrance is also located on the rear of the building.

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- 17) *Perry County Courthouse – Court Square, Individually Listed* – The Perry County Courthouse is a brick building with a two-story central section topped with a hipped roof with a flat top. The center section has two one-story wings, one on the east and west sides. The building is fenestrated by four-pane windows and entrances to the building are located on the north and south sides. The building is located on the courthouse square and is surrounded by a metal fence.
- 18) *Roland's Drug – 116 Pine, Non-Contributing* – The Roland's Drug building is a one-story brick and concrete block building with a front-facing gable roof. The front façade is brick while the other façades are concrete block. The front façade has the entrance and three plate-glass windows. The façade is also spanned by a cloth awning. The rear façade has two entrances and the side façades have no fenestration. The building is non-contributing due to age.

### Integrity

The Perryville Commercial Historic District retains good integrity to convey its significance as the commercial and governmental center of Perryville and Perry County. The courthouse is the only remaining nineteenth-century building and reflects the early days of Perryville's significance. Although the courthouse has changed drastically with additions in the 1950s and 1960s, it shows that Perryville has remained the governmental center of the county throughout the twentieth century. The commercial buildings in the district also reflect the development of the commercial importance of the district throughout the twentieth century. From the stone buildings of the 1930s and early 1940s, such as the Flewellen Building, Van Dalsem Building, American Legion Hut, and first floor of the Gutowski Building to the brick and concrete-block buildings of the 1950s and 1960s, such as the Hotel Kim/Kim's Café and Paul's Market, the building reflect the changing architectural and commercial tastes throughout the twentieth century. The buildings retain a lot of their original materials and designs, which helps them to reflect the continued importance and evolution of the commercial status of the district. Finally, Perryville has retained its small-town setting just as it would have had during the district's period of significance.

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<b><i>Building #:</i></b>	<b><i>Resource Number:</i></b>	<b><i>Building Name:</i></b>	<b><i>Address:</i></b>	<b><i>C/NC:</i></b>
1	PE0119	Perryville Realty Co./Perryville Abstract	110 Pine	C
2	PE0120	Perry County District Clerk	108 Pine	C
3	PE0121	Flewellen Building	Pine	C
4	PE0122	Van Dalsem Building	112 Pine	NC
5	PE0123	Fourche Theatre Building	204-208 Main	C
6	PE0124	Paul's Market	213-215 Main	C
7	PE0125	The Perryville Café	301 Main	C
8	PE0126	Vacant Lot	307 Main	NC
9	PE0127	Gutowski Building	309 Main	C
10	PE0128	Perry County Bank	Main	NC
11	PE0129	Perry County News Building	403 Main	C
12	PE0054	American Legion Hut	408 Main	IL
13	PE0134	Perry County Branch Library	Plum	NC
14	PE0130	General Store	113 Plum	NC
15	PE0133	Lovell Appraisal Group, Inc.	316 Aplin	NC
16	PE0131	Tarvin's Grocery	312 Aplin	C
17	PE0010	Perry County Courthouse	Court Square	IL
18	PE0132	Roland's Drug	116 Pine	NC

C = Contributing

NC = Non-contributing

IL = Individually Listed

**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** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- ☐ **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)

COMMERCE

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

**Period of Significance**

1888-1962

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked)**Cultural Affiliation** (Complete if Criterion D is marked)**Architect/Builder**

Erwin McDaniels, McDaniels Architects , architect  
Whitey Falls, builder

**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:  
\_\_\_\_\_



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### SUMMARY

The Perryville Commercial Historic District, which consists of the commercial area in downtown Perryville around the courthouse square, is important for its association with the commercial and governmental history of Perryville and Perry County. Perryville, which is the largest city in Perry County, has served as the commercial center of Perry County since the nineteenth century. In addition, as the county seat of Perry County, Perryville is also important in the governmental history of Perry County. The Perryville Commercial Historic District represents the most intact portion of Perryville's commercial and governmental core and is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its associations with the commercial and governmental history of Perry County.

### HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

European settlement in the Perry County area began in 1808 when Aaron Price and some stockmen settled on the Fourche la Fave River, approximately eight miles from Perryville. Settlement continued throughout the first part of the nineteenth century. Robert B. Blackwell, father of W. H. Blackwell, for example, came to the area in 1818. A little over a decade later, about 1830, a man named Massengill settled approximately three miles south of the current location of Perryville, and the McCabe family settled in the same area at the same time. In 1832, Jodiah Rankin came to the area and built his house on the Fourche approximately eight miles below Perryville.<sup>1</sup>

After the formation of the Missouri Territory in 1812 and prior to 1818, the land that now comprises Perry County belonged to Arkansas County. In 1818, after Hempstead County was formed, the land that is now Perry County belonged to it and it then became part of Conway County in 1825. It was not until December 18, 1840, that Perry County was formed by the Arkansas General Assembly.<sup>2</sup> The county was named after War of 1812 war hero Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry.<sup>3</sup>

From the very beginning of Perry County's existence, commercial activity was an important part of life, especially along the Fourche la Fave River. As *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Central Arkansas* states:

Most of the goods were brought up the River Fourche la Fave on pirogues, then keelboats followed. Frederick Buckingham was among the first to make the trip that way. W. C. Blackwell, in partnership with John W. Risen, was the first to

<sup>1</sup> *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Central Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing co., 1889, p. 662.

<sup>2</sup> *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Central Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing co., 1889, p. 663.

<sup>3</sup> Kirk, Dianna. "Perry County Courthouse, Perryville, Perry County, Arkansas." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. 1976.

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own and run the keelboats. The earliest steamboat to run up the Fourche was named *Inspector*, a very appropriate name for the vessel first inspecting the condition of the river for navigation. The capacity of this boat was about twenty-five bales of cotton, and a few barrels of whisky that were not disfigured by revenue stamps. The first grocery was owned by Joseph Leache and Frederick Buckingham on the south side of the river, opposite the present town of Perryville. A short time after that Buckingham moved to the north side of the river... New settlers began to flock in, and the first rude log cabins commenced to give way for the more ornamental frame houses...and from this arose the kingdom of Perry...<sup>4</sup>

As Perryville developed, and transportation in the area became more vital, John L. Houston began running a ferry across the Fourche opposite Perryville in 1847.<sup>5</sup>

The importance of the river in trade in the Perryville area even led to the construction of at least two boats in the 1800s. W. H. Rankin and John Bland, for example, contracted with R. A. Bowen to build a vessel. He constructed the boat on the Fourche River approximately 100 yards west of the present bridge. The boat was named the *Rosa Bland* after Bland's six-year-old daughter. When the *Rosa Bland* was finished, it made regular trips between Little Rock and Perryville, bringing supplies to Perryville. Henry and Sidney Woods also had a steamboat built at the same location, which was named the *Aunt Sally* after a woman who helped operate a ferry across the Fourche River.<sup>6</sup>

From the time of Perry County's formation in 1840, Perryville was the county seat. Initially, the county's business was conducted in the log house of John L. Houston. However, in 1841, Houston and John Greathouse donated land for the construction of the courthouse. A log courthouse was constructed, although it was destroyed by fire in 1850. After the fire, a second log courthouse was constructed on the same site, which was described in the 1880s as "a little old log cabin about sixteen feet square." Interestingly, it was also noted that "The grand jury held its sessions in the bushes, and when the petit jury went out to deliberate the same covering was utilized by them."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Central Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing co., 1889, p. 663.

<sup>5</sup> *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Central Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing co., 1889, p. 663.

<sup>6</sup> Gipson, Barbara. *Living the Times...1776-1976. A Bicentennial Tribute to Perry County*. Privately printed, 1976, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Kirk, Dianna. "Perry County Courthouse, Perryville, Perry County, Arkansas." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. 1976, and *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Central Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing co., 1889, p. 666.

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The second log courthouse remained in use until 1872 when a large frame building was built approximately one-half mile from the original courthouse site on land donated by J. L. Matthews. Although there had been some action to build a new courthouse beginning in the late 1850s, including purchasing materials, the Civil War prevented its construction. However, the courthouse built in the 1870s did not last long with the first one burning in May 1874, and the second burning in December 1881. After the fire in 1881, it took several years to replace it, and it was not until 1888 that the current courthouse (NR-listed July 6, 1976) was built on the site. Although altered and added onto, including wings added c.1958, the current courthouse has served the county's residents continuously since its completion in 1888.<sup>8</sup>

Once Perryville was established in the 1840s, it did not take long for the town to develop, which was no doubt helped by its designation as the county seat. The growth of Perryville led to its incorporation on December 5, 1878.<sup>9</sup> By the late 1880s, Perryville was described by Goodspeed's *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Central Arkansas* as follows:

Perryville, the county seat, is a village of some 450 inhabitants, and is situated about half a mile from the north bank of the Fourche la Pave River. The town was founded about 1840, upon its becoming the seat of justice for the county. John L. Huston, Hines, Greathouse and Cribbens were among the first to settle here. At this place have been enacted some of the most dastardly tragedies that ever stained the records of any county. But, since the banishment of the saloons, a quieter and better ordered town does not exist. In 1876 it was incorporated, and J. F. Sellers was chosen first mayor. Five aldermen, the mayor and recorder, constitute the town council, which meets once a month. The business is represented by three drug stores, three groceries, four general stores, two blacksmith and wagon shops, one grist and sawmill and cotton-gin combined, two hotels, and some minor industries. There are also two churches and a school-house here. ...The Perryville News, edited by J. A. Sellers, is published weekly at Perryville.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Kirk, Dianna. "Perry County Courthouse, Perryville, Perry County, Arkansas." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. 1976, and Gipson, Barbara. *Living the Times...1776-1976. A Bicentennial Tribute to Perry County*. Privately printed, 1976, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Gipson, Barbara. *Living the Times...1776-1976. A Bicentennial Tribute to Perry County*. Privately printed, 1976, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Central Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing co., 1889, pp. 666-667.

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Besides Perryville, the only other place in the county that had any organized commercial center was Aplin, approximately ten miles west of Perryville, although it was much smaller than Perryville, having only "three general stores, two blacksmith shops, [and] one saw-mill."<sup>11</sup>

Although the construction of the railroad through the area in the early twentieth century bypassed Perryville, choosing a route through Perry on the north side of Perry Mountain instead, it did not have the detrimental effect that it would have had on many other Arkansas communities. The railroad supported the lumber mills and camps located in the surrounding forests, which allowed people to come to Perryville to shop. Also, the fact that Perryville did not become the hub of industry that other communities did saved it from severe decline when the lumber mills closed down.<sup>12</sup>

By the late 1920s, there were several different types of businesses in downtown Perryville. In the January 17, 1929, *Perry County News*, for example, there were advertisements for H.A. Thedford & Son, General Merchandise ("We will save you money & appreciate your patronage."), H.E. VanDalsem, which advertised "Everything to eat and wear, Cold drinks and Sandwiches," C.C. Adams, General Merchandise ("The Store that appreciates Your Trade."), and Rankin's Café, which boasted "Foods of the first quality, perfectly prepared and well served – that's what makes this a popular eating place." Downtown Perryville also had at least one drug store by the late 1920s, since the *Perry County News* reported that Reiff & Son Drug Store had been purchased by Oscar Brazil and would become known as Brazil & Sons.<sup>13</sup>

The development of downtown Perryville as a commercial center would have also been aided in the late 1920s and 1930s with roadwork that was undertaken in the area. Arkansas Highways 9 and 10 were improved in 1929, and an article titled "Work on New Highway Through Town Progressing" stated that "...it gives the city of Perryville another good street and adds greatly to the town."<sup>14</sup>

However, it was not just the highway around Perryville that received upgrades in the 1920s and 1930s. Paving came to the streets of the courthouse square in 1938. The July 14, 1938, *Perry County News* reported that:

Work will begin Monday morning on the paving of Perryville streets...blacktopping 8 blocks in the business district and graveling of 30 blocks over the twons (sic.) resident section.

<sup>11</sup> *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Central Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing co., 1889, p. 667.

<sup>12</sup> Gipson, Barbara. *Living the Times...1776-1976. A Bicentennial Tribute to Perry County*. Privately printed, 1976, p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> *Perry County News*, 17 January 1929, p. 2, and *Perry County News*, 21 February 1929, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> "Work on New Highway Through Town Progressing," *Perry County News*, 2 June 1929, p. 2.



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A WPA project calling for \$15,425 of federal material, labor, and sponsors' materials has been approved for the work that will get underway Monday, July 18.

...It is estimated [that it] will be finished within 4 months time.

...The heavy traffic to which the streets have been subjected in increasing amount during the past several years has worn the (illegible) graveled streets into dust beds in the summer and muddy runways in the rainy weather.

The 8 blocks of blacktop will include the 4 blocks around the court house (or square) and extend east to the highway on two streets...<sup>15</sup>

Although the work on the streets was supposed to be done in July, it was apparently delayed, since it was reported in November that "A dream is about to be realized by the people of Perryville and Perry County when the blacktopping of the courthouse square and the streets that lead to the highway starts Friday morning."<sup>16</sup>

The WPA's involvement in downtown Perryville was also intended to involve a remodeling and expansion of the courthouse. The front page of the February 9, 1939, *Perry County News* featured a rendering for the remodeled and expanded courthouse, and stated that "...the proposed plan calls for a 48-foot additional building on the north side of the present building with the two buildings being merged into one... It is expected to be approved by WPA officials without question." However, the plans were never carried out.<sup>17</sup> The *Perry County News* reported that "Despite desperate efforts on the part of many persons who were vitally interested in the construction of a new courthouse for Perry County, the official count of votes Saturday night, after all precincts had been heard from, showed that the measure had been voted down by a count of 682 to 277."<sup>18</sup>

The face of the courthouse square changed again c.1935 with the construction of the American Legion Building (NR-listed September 5, 1990). During the Depression, the American Legion focused on the expansion of programs that targeted youth, such as American Legion Junior Baseball, the American Legion Oratorical Contest, and Boy's State. The Perryville American Legion Building was built during this period, and was heavily influenced by the Rustic style architecture being constructed throughout Arkansas by the Civilian Conservation Corps, most notably at Camp Ouachita on Lake Sylvia just ten miles south of Perryville. The use of wood and stone on the exterior, probably obtained locally, also allowed it to fit in with

<sup>15</sup> "Work on P'ville Streets to Begin," *Perry County News*, 14 July 1938, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> "Asphalt Being Put on Street," *Perry County News*, 24 November 1938, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> "New Court House Annex and Remodeling of Old Proposed," *Perry County News*, 9 February 1939, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> "Court House Issue Rejected by County Voters," *Perry County News*, 11 December 1941, p. 1.



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some of the other buildings in downtown, such as the building on the south side of the square at 309 Main Street and the buildings on the east side of Pine Street north and south of Main.<sup>19</sup>

By the late 1930s Perryville residents could come to downtown and enjoy movies at the theater. On August 4, 1938, The Rainbow Theater opened in "the building belonging to Roy Brown immediately north of Nordin's Grocery store." It was further reported that "Messrs. Howell and Simms have been here all week remodeling the building and getting it in shape... The managers come here from Ola where they have been in the theater business for several years. They have put in equipment with a clear sound machine and have booked clean pictures." Early films shown at The Rainbow Theater included *Border Romance* and *Sweethearts of Sigma Chi*, which featured Ola native Ezell Pool.<sup>20</sup>

Apparently, though, The Rainbow Theatre was short-lived and was soon replaced by a more substantial building. On March 23, 1939, it was reported that:

The frame business house between Black's and Nordin's grocery stores in Perryville is being razed and remodeled this week by the new owner, Claud Flewellen.

For the past several months the building has been improvised for use as a part-time theater. Mr. Flewellen plans to rebuild the entire plant and make an attractive stone front with a regular ticket office, lobby, and other additions necessary for use as a theater. Work has already been began (sic.) toward the completion of plans.<sup>21</sup>

The new theater reopened later in 1939 as the New Theater. The New Theater was the "only movie house in the county" and was "well equipped with a cooling system and comfortable seats."<sup>22</sup>

As the 1940s dawned in Perryville new businesses opened around the courthouse square. Kempner Cole purchased Moore's Meat Market, which was located in the Flewellen Building, and he planned to "continue to handle a stock of fresh meats as well as a complete line of fancy and staple groceries."<sup>23</sup> In addition, 1940

<sup>19</sup> Story, Kenneth. "Perryville American Legion Building, Perryville, Perry County, Arkansas." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. 1990.

<sup>20</sup> "Rainbow Theatre Opens In Perryville," *Perry County News*, 4 August 1938, p. 1. Roy Brown was also a merchant in Perryville selling Hardware, Groceries, and Dry Goods.

<sup>21</sup> "Improvements Being Made In Business Houses In Town," *Perry County News*, 23 March 1939, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> "Perryville Theater Bringing In Good Shows," *Perry County News*, 3 August 1939, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> "Kempner Cole Purchases Moore's Meat Market," *Perry County News*, 25 January 1940, p. 1.

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brought the opening of a new shoe store on the square when "H. L. Stigall of Ashflat [sic.] [was] remodeling the old Green Front building on the South side of the square into a modern Shoe shop."<sup>24</sup>

The early 1940s, in addition to bringing new businesses to downtown Perryville also brought new construction. On June 12, 1941, the *Perry County News* proclaimed "Perryville To Have Two New Business Buildings." The article stated:

About July 1<sup>st</sup> is the date set for the completion of two buildings in the business district of Perryville.

H.E. Van Dalsem is building a new 30x60 foot native stone building which will house the offices of the Farm Security Administration and a warehouse for the Van Dalsem Grocery. These offices will be equipped with running water and will be modern in all respects.

Dr. Stanley Gutowski has under construction an additional second story over the New Deal Hardware and the Perryville Drug Store building. Announcement has not yet been made as to [the] use of this structure.<sup>25</sup>

The Van Dalsem Building was ready for occupancy in July and the office of the Farm Security Administration was the first occupant. The *Perry County News* reported that the Van Dalsem Building "is composed of three units, each of a size equal to that occupied by the FSA. Each unit is equipped with running water and sewage facilities. This is the only business building in Perryville that offers these facilities to occupants." The draft office moved into the building on August 1, 1941, and "...The AAA office is expected to be moved to the remaining office some time in the ensuing week."<sup>26</sup> Although it was hoped that the Gutowski Building would open about the same time, it did not get finished and ready for occupancy until August, when it was reported that "The Perryville Drug Store and the New Deal Hardware and Furniture Company have been enlarged, the former to twice its former size, and the latter to six times its original size."<sup>27</sup>

The changes that occurred in the 1940s in Perryville around the courthouse square really illustrated the fact that it was the heart of the community. An article in the March 28, 1948, edition of the *Perry County News* echoed the belief. It reported:

<sup>24</sup> "New Shoe Shop for Perryville," *Perry County News*, 13 June 1940, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> "Perryville To Have Two New Business Buildings," *Perry County News*, 12 June 1941, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> "New Van Dalsem Building Ready for Occupation," *Perry County News*, 10 July 1941, and "Draft Office is Moved Into New Building," *Perry County News*, 7 August 1941.

<sup>27</sup> "Formal Opening of New Businesses Aug. 16," *Perry County News*, 7 August 1941, p. 1.

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Perryville's new residences and business buildings are ample proof to the visitor that the citizens of Perryville, in their desire to better their living conditions, are making great strides in building.

...Business buildings in the business district includes [sic.] the Fourche Theatre, The Perryville Drug Store, Tarvin's Grocery and the Perryville Service Station. Other business buildings are now under construction. The Court House is wearing a coat of white paint which was applied last summer and does much towards its appearance. The Perry County News is also boasting a new home that was completed last summer.

Perryville has been suffering from so called "Growing Pains" but if the routine of building continues, it is expected that the little city of Perryville will rank high in beauty.<sup>28</sup>

The remainder of the 1940s brought more changes to the courthouse square with the "installation of modern restrooms and a water system for the court house, which when completed will fulfill, perhaps one of the county's most needed projects" and the opening of the Home Furniture Store in the Van Dalsem Building, and "Stewart's 'Your Family Store' [moving] into the new building on the south side of the square..."<sup>29</sup>

However, not all of the changes in downtown Perryville were necessarily positive changes. A disastrous fire hit the courthouse square in 1948, but fortunately, it only destroyed one building on the square, although it damaged others. As the newspaper reported:

Perryville's business district was saved from a disastrous fire loss Tuesday night by a determined bucket brigade of 600 persons assisted by pumpers from the Morrilton and Conway fire departments.

Although the city has no water works, they kept flames from a two-story brick building on the southwest corner from spreading. The adjoining New Deal Hardware Store building and The Perry County News building across a side street were damaged by heat, but were not burned.

The burned structure was the oldest business building in Perryville. It had survived two previous fires, one in the late 1920s when all other buildings in the block were destroyed. It contained a grocery store owned by Ben Bowen and a barber shop and pool hall owned by Harry Aymond.

<sup>28</sup> "Perryville Gets 'New Look' by Recent Building," *Perry County News*, 28 March 1948, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> "Sanitary Toilets Being Built on Court House Lawn," *Perry County News*, 10 June 1948, p. 1, "Home Furniture Store Locates in Perryville," *Perry County News*, 14 April 1949, p. 1, and "New Businesses in Perry County During Past Year," *Perry County News*, 29 December 1949, p. 1.

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Damage was estimated to be \$20,000. The building was owned by Mrs. C. C. Adams.<sup>30</sup>

Even though the fire devastated the community and the business district, it did not take long for the community to bounce back. A year later, in 1949, the new Perry County Bank building was under construction and was expected to be finished by December. The newspaper indicated that "The building will be 30 by 70 feet, one floor, and of brick and tile construction. The 30-foot front will be of buff brick and will have a metal-trimmed plate glass window. The concrete vault which will be 13 by 20 feet is ready to be poured this week, Mr. Van Dalsem [bank president] said. The building will have running water and an indoor toilet."<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the Perry County Bank, 1949 also brought the opening of Kim's Café, a "modern up-to date restaurant" owned by H. L. Kimbrough to the west side of the courthouse square in the same building as the Bargain Market. "The new café seats 24 at its tables and will soon have 20 stools at the beautiful cedar topped, horseshoe shaped counter. Air condition equipment is expected to start functioning this weekend to add to the many conveniences offered to the food buying public." Besides Kim's Café, Kimbrough also expected to open the Hotel Kim, a 20-room hotel, on the building's second floor. Tarvin's Grocery, which had been located in the Gutowski Building on the south side of the square, also decided in 1949 to build a new "30x80 tile brick building" on the north side of the square.<sup>32</sup>

Tarvin's simple building was built of Breeko Blocks, a glazed, fired clay building block patented and produced by the Breeko Block and Tile Company of Nashville, Tennessee. As with the other buildings in downtown Perryville, Tarvin's building was strictly utilitarian in nature and design with the only decoration being the stepped parapet in the front.<sup>33</sup>

Tarvins sold all kinds of goods in their store, including vegetables and fresh meat, cattle feed and farm goods, clothing, fabric, boots, and shoes. The Tarvins even offered a promotion at one time where a customer purchasing two pairs of overalls would receive a free pocket knife. However, in the early 1960s, the Tarvins sold the building to Othel (Chick) and Grace Padgett, who opened a Laundromat in the building. The building remained a Laundromat under several owners until 2009 when Al Garrett, Jr., purchased the building and opened Suds art gallery.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> "Bucket Brigade Prevents Serious Damage to Perryville Business District," *Perry County News*, 2 September 1948, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> "New Bank Building Will be Completed in December," *Perry County News*, 22 September 1949, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> "Kim's Café Opens Saturday on West Side of Square," *Perry County News*, 23 June 1949, p. 1, and "Tarvin's Grocery to Build 30x80 Tile-Brick Unit," *Perry County News*, 23 June 1949, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Garrett, Al, Jr. "History of Suds Gallery." In the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

<sup>34</sup> Garrett, Al, Jr. "History of Suds Gallery." In the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.



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Perryville's status as the commercial and governmental center of Perry County continued into the 1950s, and its role as the county seat brought more changes to the courthouse. For example, air-conditioning was installed in the building in 1957, and "county officials expressed their gratitude to the judge for his consideration in adding this much needed equipment to the county's legal headquarters." The need for additional space in the courthouse also brought about the construction of a new wing on the east side in 1959.<sup>35</sup>

The 1950s also brought new buildings to the courthouse square, beginning in 1951 with the construction of the new Perryville Café. Located on the south side of the square at the southwest corner of Main and Pine streets, the newspaper described it as a "new modern building." The newspaper reported further that "most of the equipment is new and the interior is attractively decorated and will have a seating capacity of 50. The café is owned by Mrs. Pearl Rankin and her son and daughter-in-law, Mr. & Mrs. Cleburne Rankin. The Rankins have been in the restaurant business in Perryville for the past quarter of a century. Regular meals as well as short orders will be on the daily menu..."<sup>36</sup>

At least one new building, which currently houses the Perryville Abstract and Perryville Realty Company at 110 Pine, was built on the east side of the square, likely in the late 1950s. In 1957, the *Perry County News* reported on the demolition of a building on the east side of the square, writing:

All that remains of one of the older business establishments on the east side of [the] Courthouse square at Perryville is several piles of salvaged lumber and old brick.

Although the building is not the oldest, it is believed to have been constructed in 1909 by W. F. Pitts who established headquarters for a confectionary for his son, Tom Pitts. The property was located between the building known as Roy Brown's Store and Walter Paul's WOW office. Shortly after construction, the building was used for a skating rink and several months later became a café

In November, 1911, Julian Barnett became manager of the café which he operated for two years for Mr. Pitts, two years for Bob Myers and finally for 22 years for H. E. Van Dalsem.

In recent years the building housed a Bargain Store operated by H. L. Kimbrough and later, a furniture and appliance store operated by C. F.

<sup>35</sup> "3 Air Conditioning Units Installed In Courthouse Here," *Perry County News*, 6 June 1957, p. 1, and "Construction on Courthouse Slated to Begin Next Month," *Perry County News*, 30 March 1961, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> "Perryville Café Opens in New Home," *Perry County News*, 29 November 1951, p. 1.



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Billingsley, Jr. Since that time the structure was used as [a] warehouse for H. E. Van Dalsem's General Merchandise Store.  
Final razing of the building was completed last week.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to the new construction and remodeling that was happening around the courthouse square during the 1950s, new stores were coming to the downtown to better serve Perryville's residents. Ken Stewart of Stewart's Dry Goods Store, for example, announced in 1952 "the addition of a complete stock of groceries in his store."<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, it was announced in 1957 that "Mr. and Mrs. J. C. McClain, formerly of Hot Springs, have leased the building owned by Mrs. C. A. Black Sr., east of [the] court house square, and are equipping it with shoes for the entire family. ... They will also carry a line of clothing and wearing apparel."<sup>39</sup> The Perryville Variety Store opened in 1958 in the "Claude Flewellen building on the east side of the courtsquare. The building formerly housed the Flewellen Skating Rink and theatre..."<sup>40</sup>

The 1950s also brought changes to the Fourche Theatre Building at 204-208 Main Street. The *Perry County News* reported:

...Right after the War [World War II] Dr. Gutowski had [an 80x101 foot concrete block building constructed to] house his new theatre, the departmentalized drug store and a modern grocery store. The theatre, managed by Bob Craig, was closed after several years of operation when television moved to the front in the local area and other problems arose. Later the theatre building was remodeled and the hardware was moved and combined, all of Dr. Gutowski's business under one roof with the business name changed to Stanley Stores.<sup>41</sup>

The commercial area around the courthouse square was not only important in the 1950s for the courthouse and the commercial establishments, but also as the location of many county offices and the post office. B. J. Suffridge, for example, remodeled his building on the south side of the courthouse square in 1955 to accommodate offices. The *Perry County News* reported that "Three rooms of the building will house [the] Perry County Welfare Department and one room will be occupied by J. J. Lipsmeyer of the county revenue department. Both departments are now in the building owned by Paul Van Dalsem. Perryville postoffice

<sup>37</sup> "Business Building Razed, Salvaged," *Perry County News*, 28 November 1957, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> "Stewart's Store Adds Grocery Line," *Perry County News*, 26 June 1952, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> "New Shoe Store By McClains Will Open Here Friday," *Perry County News*, 2 May 1957, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> "New Perryville Store to Open," *Perry County News*, 16 July 1958, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> "Local Businesses To Change: Stanley Drug Store To Move, Grocery Store To Expand," *Perry County News*, 5 March 1964, p. 1.

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[sic.] will move into the Van Dalsem building, Arthur Poteete, postmaster said.”<sup>42</sup> The courthouse square area of Perryville was the most important commercial and administrative area of the county for much of the twentieth century as the place where residents came to shop, socialize, and conduct county business.

As Perryville entered the 1960s, while the downtowns of many communities lost their commercial importance as suburbs and more auto-oriented shopping areas developed, Perryville’s downtown area retained its commercial and governmental significance to the county’s residents. Changes did come to Perryville that helped in the conducting of business. For example, as the *Perry County News* reported, “Modern dial telephones will go into operation in Perry and Perryville at 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 17 [1961], climaxing a long wait for telephone subscribers in the county.”<sup>43</sup>

As such modern conveniences as dial telephones came to Perryville, there was also a trend to modernize some of the buildings in the downtown area. The building at 108 Pine, which currently houses the Perry County District Clerk’s Office, for example, received a new façade in 1961. The newspaper reported in May 1961 that “Nearing completion is the new brick front and remodeling of the abstract office of Thomas Jones Agency and Law Office of Billy Bland Sorrels. The attractive new front features large plate glass windows and red brick veneer. Wood paneling [is] in the interior along with pink sheet rock and acoustic tile ceiling.”<sup>44</sup>

However, it was not just remodeling that occurred around the Perry Courthouse Square. New construction also continued during the 1960s. By 1961, the Perry County Courthouse once again needed expanding, and it was reported that “construction will begin on a second courthouse annex [on the west side] within the next few weeks Judge W. A. Glenn announced this week. Plans and blueprints have been drawn up by Erwin McDaniel of Springs, architecture, and construction bids are being solicited, the judge said. ...A special feature of the proposed annex will be a fire proof vault to preserve the county’s records in the future...”<sup>45</sup>

As the 1960s dawned, the residents had more services on around the courthouse than they did previously, most notably the presence of a library. “The Perry County Branch Library of [the] Pulaski-Perry Regional Library located at Perryville west of the courthouse between the American Legion Hut and Perryville Rest Haven will be dedicated Sunday afternoon (Dec. 3),” the *Perry County News* reported. The article further reported that “Winthrop Rockefeller of Petit Jean Mountain will be principal speaker at the program scheduled at 2 p.m. at the high school cafetorium for opening ceremonies. ...Following the program, the group will go to the library for ribbon cutting ceremonies supervised by Mrs. Merlin Moore; chairman of the

<sup>42</sup> “Suffridge Building Being Remodeled; Moves Planned,” *Perry County News*, 26 May 1955, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> “Dial Phone System Begins Operation Here This Week,” *Perry County News*, 15 November 1962, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> “Construction Begins on New First Electric Co-op Building,” *Perry County News*, 4 May 1961, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> “Construction on Courthouse Slated to Begin Next Month,” *Perry County News*, 30 March 1961, p. 1.

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State Library Commission...<sup>46</sup> The library was instantly popular with Perryville residents and by the end of 1961 "over 200 persons [had] signed cards or library memberships."<sup>47</sup> Although the building had a flat roof originally, the building is still in use today as the University of Agriculture Extension Office on Plum Street.

In the 1960s the courthouse square remained the commercial heart of Perryville, and new businesses were opening and new construction continued. Paul's Market at 213-215 Main Street was built in 1961, and prior to construction Howard Paul, the store's owner, boasted that "the new building ...will feature ample parking space and modern counters and equipment." The building would also house offices of the Perryville Abstract Company, and it was also reported that Scott Architects of Little Rock would be the building's architect.<sup>48</sup> Apparently, though, the architect changed, since when the building was finished, the newspaper reported:

...McDaniels Architects of Hot Springs designed the building which is of red brick veneer front and concrete blocks...

...The new display shelves and racks were designed by Bob Cannon of Perryville along with other cabinet making.

The attractive market not only displays merchandise to make shopping easier but features push carts for self-service purchasing...<sup>49</sup>

Paul's Market was unlike anything in Perryville that had been built previously, and brought modern architecture to Perryville's downtown. With its large plate-glass windows, big beams, and shallow gable roof, it brought characteristics of Mid-Century Modern to the courthouse square. It was also the first building in Perryville that specifically touted "ample parking space" geared towards automobile-based shopping.

In the era after the 1960s, Perryville's courthouse square remained the commercial heart of the community. Although recently commercial development in the community has shifted to the east along Highway 9/10 and Highway 60, the courthouse square still retains some commercial establishments, notably Roland's Drug and Suds Art Gallery. The courthouse square still has a number of offices, including the Perryville Abstract Company and Perryville Realty Company, the Perry County District Clerk's Office, and the University of Arkansas Extension Office. The courthouse square is also home to Los Alamos Mexican Restaurant and Mustang Sally's, another restaurant, is in the works. Plans are also in the works to renovate the Gutowski Building into a small bed and breakfast and market. As a result, Perryville's courthouse square will still

<sup>46</sup> "Grand Opening of New Library Here Scheduled Sunday," *Perry County News*, 30 November 1961, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> "Library Gaining in Memberships," *Perry County News*, 28 December 1961, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> "Paul's Market Will Move to New Building," *Perry County News*, 6 April 1961, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> "Grand Opening of Paul's Market Scheduled For New Store Saturday," *Perry County News*, 10 August 1961, p. 1.

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remain an important area in Perryville's downtown and a center for Perry County's governmental and commercial activities.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

From the time of its founding in the 1840s, Perryville has been the center of Perry County government and commerce. By the 1880s, only one other village existed in Perry County, and that was Aplin. Although it had some commercial activity, including "three general stores, two blacksmith shops, [and] one saw-mill," it never achieved the commercial importance that Perryville enjoyed.<sup>50</sup> The town's location on the river was a quintessential factor in contributing to it being the commercial center of Perry County early on, since goods were more often than not brought in by steamboat from Little Rock in the 1800s.

As the twentieth century dawned in Perry County and such other towns as Houston, Bigelow, and Casa developed, they never achieved the significance that Perryville did in the county's commercial history. Instead of serving all of the county's residents, as Perryville did, they served local residents in their respective areas. Perryville, on the other hand, would have had the greatest variety of stores, and would have been important to all of the county's residents as they came to Perryville to conduct official business. It would have been easy and more convenient for the county's residents to plan a day to Perryville to take care of business at the courthouse and purchase supplies in the same trip.

Although in recent years there is more commercial activity along AR 9/AR 10 and AR 60 to the east of the courthouse square, it has only developed within the past couple of decades. Prior to that, the courthouse square was still the commercial center of Perryville. However, even so, the courthouse square in Perryville retains commercial establishments today (and more are planned) along with various offices, and still plays an important role in the governmental and commercial history of the town and county.

The Perryville Commercial Historic District is also significant for its connection to the development of Perry County's government in the 1800s. From the time of Perry County's creation in the 1840s, Perryville has been the county's only seat of government. The town's location on the Fourche la Pave River, the easiest way to travel during the county's formative years, made the designation of Perryville as the county seat a logical one. Even though the county has had to build numerous courthouses due to fires, there was never any consideration of moving the county seat from Perryville. As a result, the town has remained the governmental center of Perry County from the beginning.

<sup>50</sup> *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Central Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing co., 1889, p. 667.

Perryville Commercial Historic District  
Name of Property

Perry County, Arkansas  
County and State

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Due to its associations with the commercial and governmental history of Perry County, the Perryville Commercial Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **local significance**.



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"Court House Issue Rejected by County Voters," *Perry County News*, 11 December 1941, p. 1.

"Dial Phone System Begins Operation Here This Week," *Perry County News*, 15 November 1962, p. 1.

"Draft Office is Moved Into New Building," *Perry County News*, 7 August 1941.

"Formal Opening of New Businesses Aug. 16," *Perry County News*, 7 August 1941, p. 1.

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Gipson, Barbara. *Living the Times...1776-1976. A Bicentennial Tribute to Perry County*. Privately printed, 1976.

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"Grand Opening of New Library Here Scheduled Sunday," *Perry County News*, 30 November 1961, p. 1.

"Grand Opening of Paul's Market Scheduled For New Store Saturday," *Perry County News*, 10 August 1961, p. 1.

"Home Furniture Store Locates in Perryville," *Perry County News*, 14 April 1949, p. 1.

"Improvements Being Made In Business Houses In Town," *Perry County News*, 23 March 1939, p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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"Kempner Cole Purchases Moore's Meat Market," *Perry County News*, 25 January 1940, p. 1.

"Kim's Café Opens Saturday on West Side of Square," *Perry County News*, 23 June 1949, p. 1.

Kirk, Dianna. "Perry County Courthouse, Perryville, Perry County, Arkansas." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. 1976.

"Library Gaining in Memberships," *Perry County News*, 28 December 1961, p. 1.

"Local Businesses To Change: Stanley Drug Store To Move, Grocery Store To Expand," *Perry County News*, 5 March 1964, p. 1.

"New Bank Building Will be Completed in December," *Perry County News*, 22 September 1949, p. 1.

"New Businesses in Perry County During Past Year," *Perry County News*, 29 December 1949, p. 1.

"New Court House Annex and Remodeling of Old Proposed," *Perry County News*, 9 February 1939, p. 1.

"New Perryville Store to Open," *Perry County News*, 16 July 1958, p. 1.

"New Shoe Shop for Perryville," *Perry County News*, 13 June 1940, p. 1.

"New Shoe Store By McClains Will Open Here Friday," *Perry County News*, 2 May 1957, p. 1.

"New Van Dalsem Building Ready for Occupation," *Perry County News*, 10 July 1941.

"Paul's Market Will Move to New Building," *Perry County News*, 6 April 1961, p. 1.

*Perry County News*

January 17, 1929, p. 2.

February 21, 1929, p. 1.

"Perryville Café Opens in New Home," *Perry County News*, 29 November 1951, p. 1.

"Perryville Gets 'New Look' by Recent Building," *Perry County News*, 28 March 1948, p. 1.

"Perryville Theater Bringing In Good Shows," *Perry County News*, 3 August 1939, p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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"Perryville To Have Two New Business Buildings," *Perry County News*, 12 June 1941, p. 1.

"Rainbow Theatre Opens In Perryville," *Perry County News*, 4 August 1938, p. 1.

"Sanitary Toilets Being Built on Court House Lawn," *Perry County News*, 10 June 1948, p. 1.

"Stewart's Store Adds Grocery Line," *Perry County News*, 26 June 1952, p. 1.

Story, Kenneth. "Perryville American Legion Building, Perryville, Perry County, Arkansas." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. 1990.

"Suffridge Building Being Remodeled; Moves Planned," *Perry County News*, 26 May 1955, p. 1.

"Tarvin's Grocery to Build 30x80 Tile-Brick Unit," *Perry County News*, 23 June 1949, p. 1.

"Work on New Highway Through Town Progressing," *Perry County News*, 2 June 1929, p. 2.

"Work on P'ville Streets to Begin," *Perry County News*, 14 July 1938, p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Block 1, Lot 12; Block 2, Lots 1-6; Block 6, Lots 3-8; Block 7, Lots 5-12; Block 8, SW Corner and NW Part; Block 9, North 70' E/2 Lots 1-6 exc. 50' x 110' and Lots 7-12; and the Courthouse Square of the Original City of Perryville.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary was drawn to include the properties in the Perryville Commercial Historic District that maintain the highest level of historic integrity and the strongest association with the commercial and governmental growth of Perryville.

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Approximately 8 acres.

## UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>517963</u>	<u>3873614</u>
	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	Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator				
organization	Arkansas Historic Preservation Program			date	September 7, 2011
street & number	1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street			telephone	(501) 324-9787
city or town	Little Rock	state	AR	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.



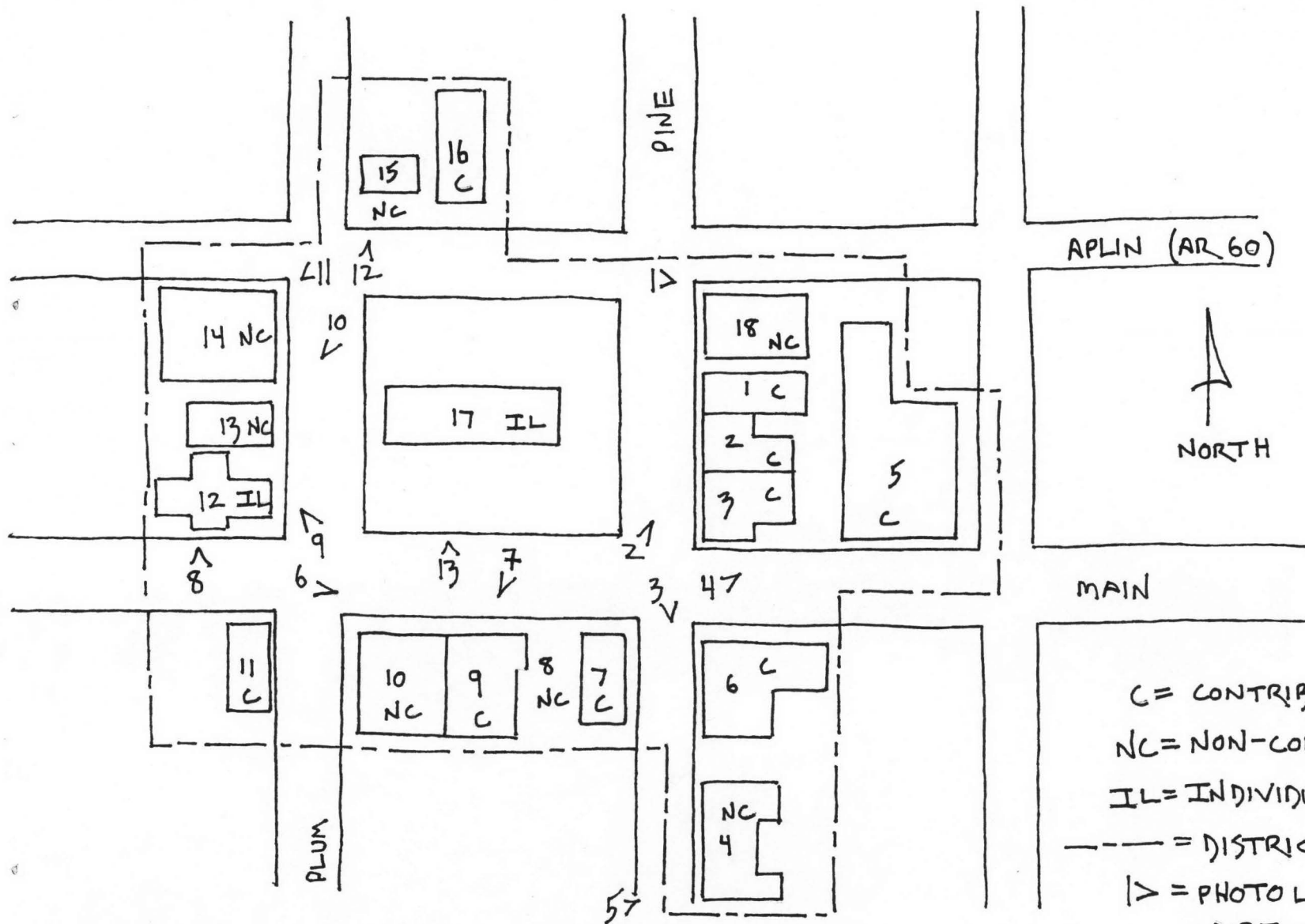
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number      Additional      Page      1  
                                 Documentation



South side of Main Street, west of Pine Street, c.1958 (From the files of the *Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Central Arkansas Library System*)



PERRYVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
PERRYVILLE, PERRY COUNTY, AR

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Perryville Commercial Historic District

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Perry

DATE RECEIVED: 12/16/11      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/11/12  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/26/12      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/31/12  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11001048

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: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT      ☐ RETURN      ☐ REJECT      1-26-2012 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*This is a minimally acceptable district. Poor integrity due to changes to individual buildings, and not a great collection to start with. It was, however, the Commercial & Political heart of the County and featured some of the only retail and entertainment venues in the hilly surrounding area.*

RECOM. CRITERIA Accept A

REVIEWER Jim Galt

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.



PERRYVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

PERRY COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILCOX

MAY 2011

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR

VIEW SOUTHEAST FROM THE APLIN (AR 60) AND PINE INTERSECTION

#1





PERRYVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

PERRY COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILCOX

MAY 2011

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR

VIEW NORTHEAST FROM THE MAIN AND PINE INTERSECTION

#2





PERRYVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

PERRY COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILCOX

MAY 2011

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR  
VIEW SOUTHEAST FROM THE MAIN AND PINE INTERSECTION

#3





PERRYVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

PERRY COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILCOX

MAY 2011

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR  
NORTH SIDE OF MAIN EAST OF PINE, LOOKING NORTHEAST

#4



PERRYVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

PERRY COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILCOX

MAY 2011

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR

VAN DALSEM BUILDING, LOOKING NORTHEAST

#5





PERRYVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

PERRY COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILCOX

MAY 2011

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR

VIEW SOUTHEAST FROM THE MAIN AND PLUM INTERSECTION

#6





PERRYVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

PERRY COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILCOX

MAY 2011

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR

GUTOWSKI BUILDING, LOOKING SOUTHWEST

#7





PERRYVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

PERRY COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILCOX

MAY 2011

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR

VIEW OF THE AMERICAN LEGION BUILDING, LOOKING NORTH

#8





PERRYVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

PERRY COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILCOX

MAY 2011

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR  
VIEW NORTHWEST OF THE MAIN AND PLUM INTERSECTION

#9



PERRYVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

PERRY COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILCOX

MAY 2011

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR  
VIEW SOUTHWEST OF THE APLIN (AR 60) AND PLUM INTERSECTION  
# 10





PERRYVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

PERRY COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILCOX

MAY 2011

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR

VIEW OF THE HOTEL KIM/KIM'S CAFE, LOOKING SOUTHWEST

#11





PERRYVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

PERRY COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILCOX

MAY 2011

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR  
VIEW NORTHEAST OF THE APLIN (AR 60) AND PLUM INTERSECTION

#12





PERRYVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

PERRY COUNTY, AR

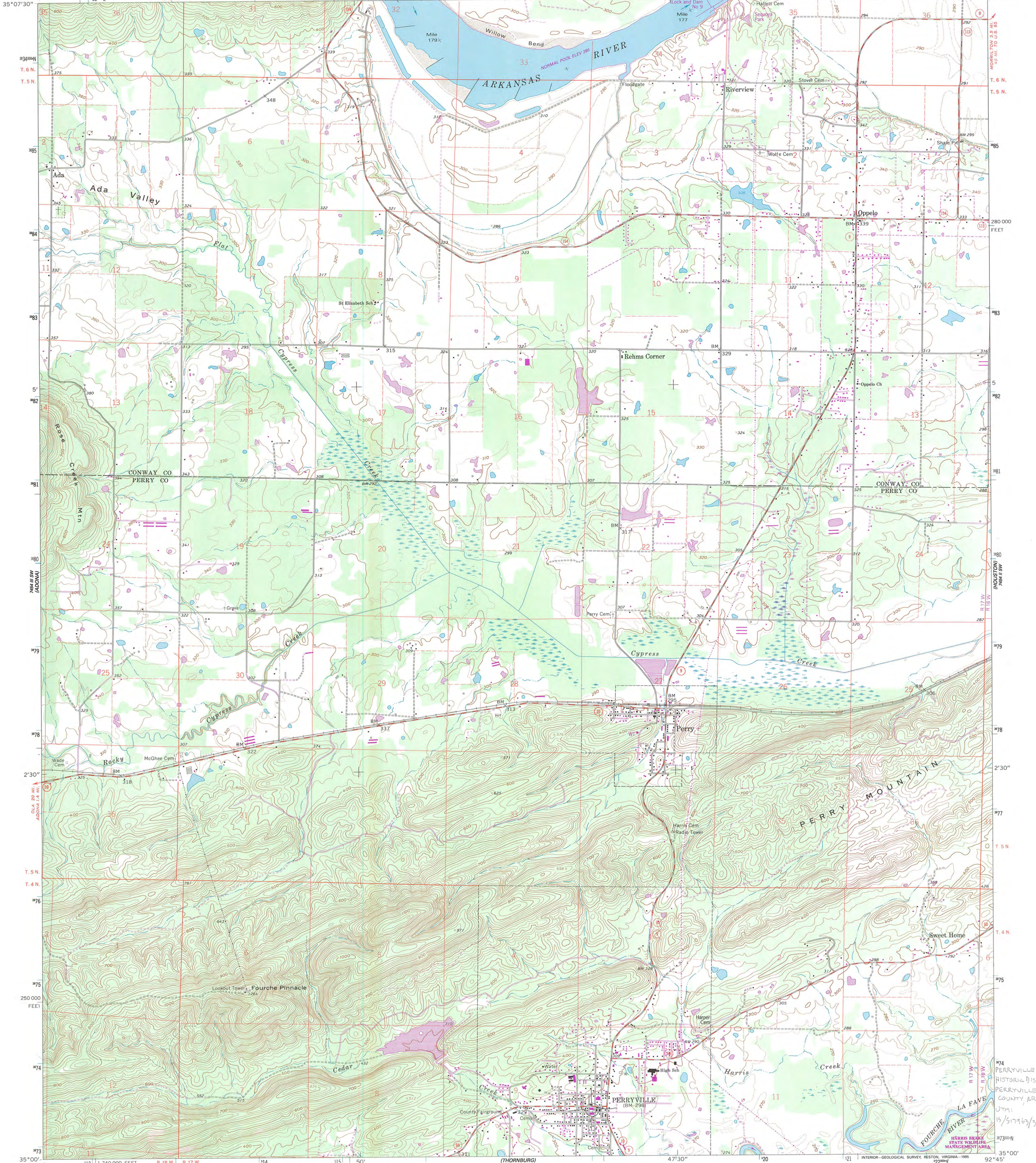
RALPH S. WILCOX

MAY 2011

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR  
VIEW OF THE PERRY COUNTY COURTHOUSE, LOOKING NORTH

#13









**The Department of  
Arkansas  
Heritage**

Mike Beebe  
Governor

Cathie Matthews  
Director

Arkansas Arts Council

\*

Arkansas Natural Heritage  
Commission

\*

Delta Cultural Center

\*

Historic Arkansas Museum

\*

Mosaic Templars  
Cultural Center

\*

Old State House Museum



**Arkansas Historic  
Preservation Program**

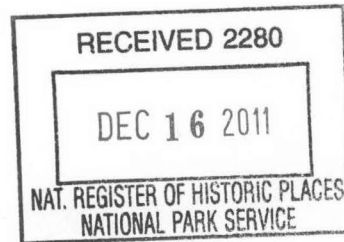
1500 Tower Building  
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Little Rock, AR 72201  
(501) 324-9880  
fax: (501) 324-9184  
tdd: (501) 324-9811  
e-mail:

[info@arkansaspreservation.org](mailto:info@arkansaspreservation.org)

website:

[www.arkansaspreservation.com](http://www.arkansaspreservation.com)

An Equal Opportunity Employer



December 7, 2011

Ms. Carol 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, DC 20005

RE: Perryville Commercial Historic District – Perryville, Perry  
County, Arkansas

Dear Carol:

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:rsw

Enclosure