

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

=====

historic name: Newton County Courthouse

other name/site number: N/A

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2. Location

=====

street & number: Courthouse Square

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Jasper

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Newton code: AR 101 zip code: 72641

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Public-local

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

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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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. Slaton
Signature of certifying official

10-24-94
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

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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): _____

Edson H. Beall

12.1.94

Entered in the
National Register

[Signature] Signature of Keeper

Date
of Action

=====

6. Function or Use

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Historic: GOVERNMENT

Sub: Courthouse

Current: GOVERNMENT

Sub: Courthouse

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7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification:

Other
Art Deco

Other Description: Native Ozark stone tradition

Materials:	foundation	<u>Stone/concrete</u>	roof	<u>Asphalt</u>
	walls	<u>Stone</u>	other	<u>N/A</u>

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

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8. Statement of Significance
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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: 1939-42 _____

Significant Dates: 1939 _____

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A _____

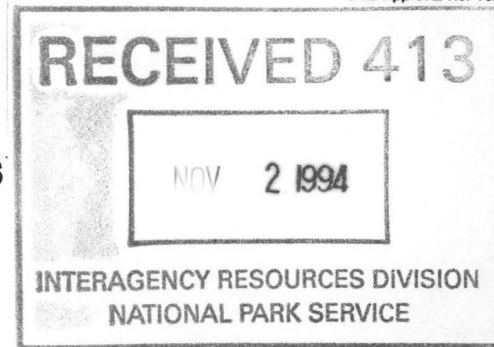
Architect/Builder: Works Progress Administration

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

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Summary

Located in the center of the courthouse square in downtown Jasper, the Newton County Courthouse is a two-storey, reinforced concrete and limestone public building designed in a restrained interpretation of the Art Deco style, yet also reflecting the native stone construction tradition indigenous to the Ozark region. Though not elaborately detailed, its design does include such noteworthy elements as an ornamented concrete sign over the main entrance -- containing the words "Newton County" in block Art Deco letters -- and an axial plan revolving around the northern or front entrance. It is in good condition.

Elaboration

The Newton County Courthouse is a two-storey, reinforced concrete and stone public administration building designed in a restrained interpretation of the Art Deco style popular for such Works Progress Administration (WPA) construction throughout the state, yet also reflecting the native stone construction tradition indigenous to the Ozark region. With flues for venting the interior heating system -- and thus without chimneys -- the plan is "H"-shaped and symmetrical, with the axis running from the center of the double-leaf front entrance to the central window on the southern or rear elevation. The flat, built-up tar roof and limestone walls rest upon a concrete foundation, sheathed with limestone.

The northern or front elevation is composed of the two projecting wings flanking the central, connecting section. The central, double-leafed entrance is surmounted by a concrete panel bearing the words "Newton County" and decorated with bands of stylized Art Deco detailing at the top and bottom. The entire bay is flanked by two pairs of pilasters, the outside pilaster slightly shorter than the inside pilaster, and all capped with decorative concrete blocks that feature more incised, stylized Art Deco detailing. The pilaster immediately to the west features the typical concrete WPA plaque, set flush with the surrounding surface and containing the inscription "USA/1939/WPA," all set within a shield. A single window is placed centrally above the entrance in the second floor, and a single window bay is placed on either side of the entrance on each floor, followed by a smaller window bay that lights stairwells within. The projecting wings to either side of the central connector are lit by a single window on each floor.

The southern elevation opposite is quite similar to the northern elevation, the only exception being the fenestration of the connector. It is accessed via two separate single-leaf entrances placed at either end, next to the projecting wings, and the central portion is fenestrated with

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three symmetrically-placed window openings on each floor.

The eastern and western elevations are virtually identical. Each is composed of three full-height pilasters, the outside two of which are considerably broader than the central pilaster, and a total of four window bays placed to either side and in between these pilasters, each containing a single window opening.

The significant exterior details are largely limited to the afore-mentioned concrete panels and blocks surrounding the front entrance, the metal frame hopper windows that survive throughout most of the building, and the rough-hewn, rubble aspect lent by the limestone exterior.

The interior is somewhat unusual in that it is essentially a "split-level": the front entrance allows the visitor to go either down or up. The lower floor is filled with offices while the upper floor contains the courtroom and ancillary rooms. The decoration throughout is simple and relatively functional, the only exception being the benches in the courtroom, which are constructed of wood and stained a rich, light brown.

The principal alterations to the building appear to be limited to the replacement of some of the original metal hopper windows and the addition of an acoustic tile ceiling in the courtroom.

The Newton County Courthouse is in good condition.

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Summary

Criteria A and C, local significance

Designed and constructed in 1939 by the Works Progress Administration, the Newton County Courthouse in Jasper remains one of the Ozark region's finest examples of a Depression-era county courthouse designed in the nationally-popular Art Deco that also reflects the native stone construction traditions of this mountainous area; for this reason it is eligible under Criterion C with local significance. It is also eligible under Criterion A with local significance by virtue of its direct associations with the Works Progress Administration and that organization's extensive public works legacy throughout the state.

Elaboration

Located in the heart of Arkansas's Ozark Mountain region, Newton County was established by an act of the state legislature on December 14, 1842. The county was named for Thomas W. Newton, a Virginian who moved to Arkansas and became known for his mail deliveries from Arkansas Post to nearby Cadron. Yet Newton was also politically well-connected. A close associate of Robert Crittenden, one of the most influential early settlers of the state, Newton also served as clerk of the legislature, a member (at different times) of the Arkansas house and senate, postmaster at Little Rock, private secretary to Governor Yell, and even finished out Yell's final month in the United States Congress after Yell's death.

The first county seat was designated at John Bellah's house, located on the Buffalo River; soon, however, it was moved to the centrally-located village of Jasper. Clinging to the sides of the narrow Little Buffalo River valley, Jasper has always retained a small town atmosphere. The 1850 census recorded the presence of approximately 75 families; the 1930 census established the town's total population at 412. Furthermore, this character is representative of the county as a whole. Arguably the most rural county in the state, it is the only county never to have been crossed by a single mile of railroad.

The current courthouse building is the fourth constructed for the county. The style of the first building is unknown, but the second courthouse was probably a modest, two-storey, hipped roof structure. The third courthouse, built at the same time as the extant jail, probably resembled the jail in the use of locally-quarried stone; however, it burned in 1938. The current building was constructed thereafter, with the help of labor supplied by the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

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In fact, it was as a result of the Depression that the Works Progress Administration came into being at all. The onset of the Great Depression in 1929 and the subsequent advent of such federal public works programs as the Works Progress Administration brought a new courthouse to Jasper in 1939. The WPA -- an organization that hired unemployed men and women to work on a variety of public projects throughout the nation -- was established by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his administration as part of the federal response to the dire economic circumstances brought upon the American people by the Great Depression. The WPA was but one of many such public works organizations instituted by the Roosevelt Administration and managed under the aegis of the umbrella agency in charge of all such public works efforts, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA); other agencies under its direction included the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the short-lived Public Works and Civilian Works Administrations (PWA and CWA), and such regional projects as the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the Rural Colonization Projects in Arkansas established at such places as Dyess, Clover Bend and Plum Bayou. Among its various other projects, the WPA constructed or repaired a number of courthouse buildings throughout the state, and the courthouse at Jasper was erected as part of this statewide effort.

The Newton County Courthouse, like several other Depression-era courthouses in the Ozark Mountain region of the state, is also architecturally significant. By virtue of its synthesis of the Ozark region's indigenous stone building tradition -- marked by an emphasis upon the use of locally-quarried stone in service to solid, functional designs that do not reflect the influence of any national architectural style -- with the Art Deco aesthetic that WPA architects and supervisors embraced for such construction, the Newton County Courthouse stands as an unusual combination of local and national aesthetic traditions. For the above reasons it is locally eligible under Criteria A and C.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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X See continuation sheet.

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:

- X State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: _____

=====

10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>15</u>	<u>483160</u>	<u>3984650</u>	B	<u>15</u>	_____
C	<u>15</u>	_____	_____	D	<u>15</u>	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ____ See continuation sheet.

Bounded on the west by the eastern edge of Stone Street; on the north by the southern edge of Court Street; on the east by the western edge of Spring Street; and on the south by the northern edge of Church Street.

Boundary Justification: ____ See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes all the property historically-associated with this resource.

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Continuation Sheet**

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Bibliography

Deane, Ernie, *Arkansas Place Names*, (Branson, Missouri: 1986).

Gill, John Purifoy and Marjem Jackson Gill, *On The Courthouse Square In Arkansas*, (1980).

Lackey, Walter F., *History of Newton County, Arkansas*, (Independence, Missouri: 1950).

Workers of the Writers' Program. *The WPA Guide to 1930's Arkansas*, with a new introduction by Elliot West. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1987 (original copyright 1941).

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Kenneth Story, Architectural Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 10/13/94

Street & Number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500 Telephone: (501) 324-9880

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

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Newton County Courthouse
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Newton

DATE RECEIVED: 11/02/94 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/15/94
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/01/94 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/17/94
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 94001412

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: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 12.1.94 Entered in the
DATE National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

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 _____



NEWTON Co. COURTHOUSE

✓ASPER, NEWTON Co., ARKANSAS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY T. FERGUSON

AUGUST, 1992

NEG. ON FILE AT AHPP

VIEW FROM NORTH



NEWTON Co. COURTHOUSE

JASPER, NEWTON Co., ARKANSAS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY T. FERGUSON

AUGUST, 1992

NEG. ON FILE AT ANPP

VIEW FROM EAST



NEWTON Co. COURTHOUSE

JASPER, NEWTON Co., ARKANSAS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY T. FERGUSON

AUGUST, 1992

NEG. ON FILE AT AHPP

VIEW FROM SOUTH



NEWTON Co. COURTHOUSE

JASPER, NEWTON Co., ARKANSAS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY T. FERGUSON

AUGUST, 1992

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP

VIEW FROM WEST



NEWTON Co. COURTHOUSE

JASPER, NEWTON Co., KANSAS

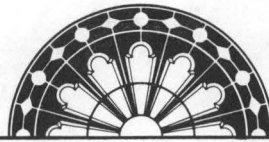
PHOTOGRAPHED BY T. FERGUSON

AUGUST, 1992

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP

VIEW OF COURTROOM





ARKANSAS
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
PROGRAM

RECEIVED 413

NOV = 2 1994

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

October 24, 1994

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

RE: Newton County Courthouse Square
Jasper, Newton 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:br

Enclosures

