

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received JAN 26 1984

date entered

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Opera Block

and/or common Cardinal Grocery

2. Location

street & number N/A Main St.

N/A not for publication

city, town Westville

N/A vicinity of

state Oklahoma

code 040

county Adair

code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Bessie Leerskov

street & number

city, town Westville

N/A vicinity of

state Oklahoma

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Adair County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Stillwell

state Oklahoma

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Oklahoma Comprehensive Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1983

federal state county local

depository for survey records Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society

city, town Oklahoma City

state Oklahoma

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Opera Block is a large two story buff and red brick Plains Commercial style building on Westville's main street. Buff brick pilasters with brick capitals divide the front (east) elevation into five bays. Two bays on the south front second story have three windows each. The center bay has four windows and the north two bays have two and one window each respectively. Blind retangular arcading is in the stepped parapet roof line directly above the pilaster capitals. A brick string course separates the cornice and the blind arcading.

The ground story is divided into three separate storefronts. The south storefront display windows and clerestory (now painted). The north storefront has a cut-away corner with single brick pillar, round brick relieving arches with the entry angled in the arcade. The entryway has sidelights and transom. A large double window with clerestory is on the south end of this storefront. The entablature of second story of the north storefront contains a round arch with the inscription Opera House Block.

The side (north) elevation has a stepped roofline and a repeat of blind arcading above the six second story pilaster strips. Windows have buff brick continuous stone sills. A corbelled water table of buff brick divides the first and second stories. The entablature has a repeat of the round arch and inscription "Opera House Block."

The ground floor contains three window sections and four entryways unevenly spaced along the facade. All have transoms (now painted).

Two contemporary store signs and three new metal framed glass doors are the major exterior alterations. Interior alterations on the ground floor shops have been made to accomodate a furniture store, grocery, and investment company.

The second floor served primarily as an opera house and vaudville auditorium. It remains largely unchanged structurally.

Along with the Buffington Hotel the Opera House is the most impressive structures in Westville. Other commercial buildings along the two block main street are single story unadorned plains commercial buildings. Only one structure is contemporary, a bank building.

The survey of the Westville building was conducted in the summer of 1983 as part of a comprehensive survey of Adair county. The survey was conducted by graduate students in the history department of Oklahoma State University. Methodology consisted of a windshield survey, document search and interviews with local residents.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1911–1912 **Builder/Architect** N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Opera Block is significant for its associations with Westville's period as Adair county seat and for its part as entertainment center during the era of traveling Vaudville and Chautauquas made possible by the railroads.

Westville, now a town of 1,000, officially was established in 1895 as a trading center. Settlers had been in the area since the 1820s and trade centers had been established in Arkansas border towns. The military road from Fayetteville, Arkansas, to Ft. Gibson, Oklahoma, ran north of Westville and the stage route (east and west) ran just south of Westville. This gave Westville a strategic position for growth. Real growth came, however, when the Frisco Railroad and the Kansas City Southern Railroad came through Westville (ca 1902) making it a crossroads for rail traffic. Added prestige came when at statehood in 1907 Westville was designated county seat of Adair county.

The Opera Block was built in 1911–1912 in response to the need for commercial facilities, a county building and an entertainment hall. The north portion served as the county courthouse, the south portions as businesses and the second floor was the Opera House.

However, Westville's eminence was short lived. Stillwell protested Westville's designation as county seat. An election was held, Stillwell won by 13 votes and the county seat was changed. Live shows were held in the Opera House into the 1920s when their popularity dwindled both locally and nationally. The State highway from Siloam Springs, Arkansas, to Stillwell and Sallisaw, Oklahoma, bypassed Westville by one mile. When the railroads ceased to be a primary mode of passenger travel Westville's growth stopped. The Opera Block, along with the Buffington Hotel, remained as sole reminders of fast growth and equally fast decline.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Summers, Luther, Westville, Oklahoma. Interview, 20th July, 1983.

Westville Reporter, 30th June, 1983, p. 5w, Column 1-8.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property under one acre

1:24000

Quadrangle name Westville, OK-AR

Quadrangle scale 7.5 minute

UTM References

A

1	5	3	5	8	6	6	0	3	9	8	4	1	3	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Block 27, Lot 1, original town

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Ann Anders, Ph.D

organization Oklahoma State University date September 1983

street & number 502 Math Science telephone (405) 624-5678

city or town Stillwater state Oklahoma

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Cemeticalf* 1-23-84

title _____ date _____

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register Entered in the National Register

J. Melores Byers
Keeper of the National Register

date 2/23/84

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration _____