

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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OMB No. 10024-0018

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Heber Springs Commercial Historic District

other names/site number Heber Springs Commercial Historic District, Site #CE0207

2. Location

street & number 100, 200 blocks E. Main Street; 100-500 blocks of W. Main Street; 100 blocks of N. & S. 3<sup>rd</sup> and N. & S. 4<sup>th</sup> Streets; Spring Park

☐ not for publication

city or town Heber Springs

☐ vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Cleburne code 023 zip code 72543

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.)

Cathy March  
Signature of certifying official/Title

3/23/09  
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:) \_\_\_\_\_

James Walker  
Signature of the Keeper

5/1/2009  
Date of Action

Name of Property

County and State

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
50	25	buildings
1 Park	4 vacant lots	sites
		structures
	1 monument	objects
51	30	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**

3

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Hotel

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business, Financial Institution,  
Specialty Store, Department Store, Restaurant

GOVERNMENT: Courthouse, City Hall, Post Office

FUNERARY: Mortuary

RECREATION & CULTURE: Theater, Music Facility

LANDSCAPE: City Park

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Hotel, Multiple Dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business, Financial Institution,  
Specialty Store, Restaurant

GOVERNMENT: Courthouse, Municipal Court

RECREATION & CULTURE: Theater, Music Facility,  
Monument

LANDSCAPE: City Park

LANDSCAPE: City Park

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN  
MOVEMENTS- Classical Revival

OTHER- Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Vernacular Commercial  
20<sup>th</sup> Century Vernacular Commercial

MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Brick, Stone, Concrete

walls Brick, Stone, Stucco, Metal & Wood

roof Asphalt, Metal

other

**Narrative Description**

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET, SECTION 7 PAGE 1

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### SUMMARY

The Heber Springs Commercial Historic District is located in the historic center of Heber Springs, Arkansas, the county seat of Cleburne County. Heber Springs is situated in a deep valley in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains in north-central Arkansas. The district encompasses the earliest extant commercial development in the town. The centerpiece of the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District is the Cleburne County Courthouse, a Classical Revival design two-story courthouse with dome that is visible from much of the downtown. The Heber Springs Historic District contains a total of 80 resources of which there are 70 buildings, one site- Spring Park including eight resources within the park, and one monument on the courthouse square.

Three of the resources in the historic district have been previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places: The Cleburne County Courthouse at 301 W. Main Street (NR 07-12-76), the T. E. Olmstead & Son Funeral Home at 108 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street (NR 12-13-95), and the Women's Community Club Bandshell, located in the northeast corner of Spring Park (NR 08-16-94). Including the three properties previously listed on the National Register, 54 (67%) of the resources in the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District contribute to the historic significance and integrity of the district. All of the contributing buildings retain their overall massing, setback, and remain genuine to the historic character of the district, validating the history and the development of Heber Springs as a political and commercial center. Due to lack of integrity, or construction after the period of significance, 26 (33%) do not contribute to the historic character of the district.

### ELABORATION

Cleburne County lies in the north central part of Arkansas. It is the last of the 75 Arkansas counties to be created. Heber Springs is located in a valley near the center of Cleburne County. Natural character-defining elements in Cleburne County include its mountainous Ozark terrain with the Little Red River running diagonally through the center of the county. A dam was constructed on the Little Red River three miles north of Heber Springs in 1962. The dam and the 31,500 acre lake it created changed

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development patterns in the town. Although the town has experienced growth and new construction oriented toward recreational lake activities, the original commercial center of Heber Springs has remained viable.

When the earliest settlers arrived in the area now known as Heber Springs, they were attracted to nearby scenic Sugar Loaf Mountain and the ten sulphur springs that bubbled out of the ground in the valley. The town of Heber Springs in Cleburne County started as the town of Sugar Loaf Springs in Van Buren County. The tract of land that is the location of present-day Heber Springs was granted by the U.S. Government in a land patent to John Magness in 1835. The 40-acre tract of land included part of the present town of Heber Springs and all of Spring Park where the natural sulphur springs are located. In 1837 the tract was sold to a group who intended to capitalize on the springs by developing a resort, but no development occurred. The land was sold to Conway, Arkansas, businessman Max Frauenthal in 1881, who organized the Sugar Loaf Springs Company. The new company's objective was to build a town and a health resort. A bond for title with 680 acres of land, including the site of the sulphur springs was executed and a town site was surveyed in 1881. The four square blocks now known as Spring Park was laid out to be an undivided plat and was to be under ownership of the town. West of the park, a block was laid out for a courthouse, although the county seat of Van Buren County had been established in Clinton in 1844. Notice of intent to incorporate Sugar Loaf Springs as a town appeared in the *Clinton Banner* in July 1882 and public hearings were held. On October 4, 1882, the town of Sugar Loaf became official.

The *Weekly Arkansas Gazette* in an 1886 article stated, "The springs, until 1881, were situated upon property belonging to parties who would neither sell, lease, on or rent; which fact...accounts for the absence of a general reputation alongside the famous sulphur springs east of the Mississippi."

Main Street in the town of Sugar Loaf was laid out 80 feet wide. There were stumps in the middle of the street when it was first made and wooden sidewalks were built to protect from the mud and dust. The first business buildings in the town faced the



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Courthouse Square. They were wooden frame buildings, raised above the level of the street with wood sidewalks.

As the town prospered and grew, there was increasing pressure to form a new county with Sugar Loaf as the county seat. Cleburne County was created in 1883 with land taken from parts of surrounding Van Buren, White and Independence counties. Centrally located in the new county, Sugar Loaf was the natural choice for the county seat.

### Courthouse

Shortly after formation of Cleburne County in 1883, a courthouse and jail was constructed on the land that the Sugar Loaf Springs Company designated for that purpose in the original plat of the town. The first courthouse was completed in 1884 on the site of the current courthouse. It was a two-story wood frame Greek Revival style building with a two-story porch supported by square columns at the front entrance facing Main Street. When construction of a new courthouse was begun in 1914, the old courthouse building was disassembled, moved a block to the south, and used as a hotel until it burned in the 1930s.

The current Cleburne County Courthouse was completed in 1914. Designed by Little Rock architect Clyde A. Ferrell, the two-story brick building is Classical Revival in style with two-story pedimented porticos on the north and south elevations. The front (north) and rear (south) elevations of the building are identical in detail. The building features quoins, a dentiled cornice, stone lintels and sills, and a dome with arched louvered air vents. This dome is visible from much of the downtown commercial district. Interiors of the Cleburne County Courthouse feature the original patterned ceramic tile floors, marble wainscoting, and marble stairways with decorative iron railings.

As early as 1915, the courthouse square had a fence around it to keep free ranging animals off the courthouse lawn. There was also a concrete sidewalk built around the courthouse square at this time, however the streets remained unpaved. The WPA paved several blocks of Main, and a few other blocks surrounding the downtown commercial district between 1933 and 1936. Some of the concrete curbs from these WPA-built roads

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are visible in places, but most of the roads have been covered with asphalt. The majority of the roads in Cleburne County were not paved until after World War II.

The Heber Springs Commercial Historic District spreads three blocks west and four blocks east along Main Street from the courthouse square. At the eastern end of the district is Spring Park, encompassing ten acres. The buildings contained in the district line seven blocks of Heber Springs' Main Street and the courthouse square on the east and west. Main Street in Heber Springs is a busy thoroughfare where State Highways 110 and 5 converge. Residential areas lie to the north and south of the historic district.

Only one building in the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District represents the period of earliest development of the town. Constructed circa 1895, the Morton Building at 101 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, was the first brick commercial building in Heber Springs and oldest remaining building in the downtown. There are 21 ( 27%) buildings in the district that were constructed between 1900 and 1919. The 1920s and 1930s are represented by 11 buildings in the district. Another significant construction period was in the 1940s when 21 of the buildings in the historic district were constructed. Only 15 buildings in the district were built in the 1950s. Many of these were built after fire destroyed previous buildings. Only nine buildings in the Heber Springs Historic District have been constructed since 1960.

In addition to the commercial buildings in the district, there are three other buildings that were originally constructed as hotels, a former single-family home and the town's original attraction, Spring Park. The park contains seven natural sulphur springs, an historic bandshell, an amphitheater, recreational areas, and an abundance of site features such as stone retaining walls, and stone footbridges,

The core of the historic commercial district of Heber Springs historically provided services and goods to the visitors to the resort town who stayed at boarding houses and hotels near Spring Park. As with the courthouse, many of the earliest business buildings around the square were wood frame. Due to fire and storm damage, many of the earliest buildings in the area within the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District were destroyed and rebuilt. Most of the frame commercial buildings had been replaced with

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substantial masonry buildings by 1920. Adjacent buildings in the 100 through 300 blocks of W. Main Street are connected by fire walls, as are buildings in the 100 blocks of S. 3<sup>rd</sup> and S. 4<sup>th</sup> Streets facing the courthouse square.

The streets in the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District are laid out in a grid pattern with Main Street, State Highways 110 and 5, the major thoroughfare through town. The Cleburne County Courthouse faces the 300 block of W. Main Street and the blocks surrounding the courthouse square have always contained the core of the town's commercial activity.

The majority of the buildings in the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District are one or two-story masonry buildings. The most notable characteristic of the buildings in the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District is not their design or the style that they reflect, but the materials of which they are made. Native stone, abundant in the area, is used on exterior walls of numerous buildings in the district and in foundations of buildings with brick walls. Some of the earliest buildings in the district were constructed of cut stone block, while buildings constructed in the 1930s and 1940s used large fieldstone in their walls. Most of the buildings are vernacular versions of popular American commercial architectural styles during the district's period of significance 1895-1959.

### Spring Park

A booklet published in 1886 entitled *The Famous Health Resort of Sugar Loaf Springs and Cleburne County* said, "The principal feature of the place is the beautiful park containing our wonderful medicinal springs." Originally ten springs were maintained, all within a few steps of each other. Only seven of the original springs are recognized and maintained today; the White Sulphur, Arsenic and Iron, Red Sulphur, Magnesium (Powder), Eye Spring, and Black Sulphur. The ten-acre park was deeded to the city of Heber Springs in 1907 with the stipulation that the water was for the free use of the town's citizens and visitors. The rapid growth of the town in the early 1900s was attributed to the popularity of its waters. In April 1891, the *Jacksonian Newspaper* reported "Over 100 families have located in Cleburne County since last November. Many persons who come here to visit the Medicinal Springs purchase property". The

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springs ran into a muddy branch when they were first discovered. Gum logs were later used to hold the water. Tiles were put into place to hold the water in the late 1880s and by 1900 concrete curbs were built around each spring. Wood pavilions were erected to shelter residents and visitors coming to drink the water during the 1890s. Physicians recommended the water for treatment of stomach ailments, rheumatism and arthritis well into the 1940s.

A distinctive angled entrance at the entrance of the park on the corner of E. Main and Broadway Streets is constructed of fieldstone. This entry features two square, fieldstone columns with a wood arch on which SPRING PARK is carved. The stonework on the archway is similar to the Women's Club Bandshell, constructed by the National Youth Administration in 1933.<sup>5</sup>

Four pavilions have been constructed over the seven springs that continue to be maintained. Although none of the existing pavilions were constructed during the period of significance of the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District, concrete steps leading down to recessed concrete floors with curbing to spigots from which the reputedly medicinal, sulphur waters flow are original. Concrete sidewalks, fieldstone footbridges, and concrete picnic tables are found through the park.

Spring Park has consistently maintained its popularity and has been the location for the annual "Old Soldiers' Reunion". An amphitheater was constructed in the early 1970s to meet the demand for a larger performing venue and is still used for local events. A tennis court, skateboard park, and playground with equipment have been added in the southwest portion of the park.

### 1895-1899

Although development of the commercial district in downtown Heber Springs grew immensely in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, substantial brick buildings in the 1910s replaced almost all of the buildings from that area. The only remaining building from early development, and the first brick building in the town was constructed circa 1895 at the southeast corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Main Streets. The Morton Building at 101 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> is a two-story brick commercial structure featuring distinctive Italianate style characteristics in its



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arched second story windows with round-arch hoods, second story belt course, and elaborate cornice with brackets on the front (west). The building has long been a local landmark used to give directions in reference to the "Brick Store". As the oldest remaining building in the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District, the Morton Building is a significant part of the physical and historic character of downtown Heber Springs.

### 1900-1919

The first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century were those of significant growth for the resort town of Heber Springs and consequently its commercial district. Although many businesses had been established on Main Street and the blocks surrounding the courthouse prior to 1900, most of the buildings were frame. There are 21 (27%) buildings in the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District constructed between 1900 and 1919.

The earliest extant buildings in the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District from the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were constructed around 1910. Two buildings next door to the oldest brick building at 101 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street were built circa 1910. Located at 103 and 105 S. 3<sup>rd</sup>, these are simple, one-story, brick buildings with brick corbelling at the cornice. Arched Italianate style windows are visible on the backs of these buildings.

The T. E. Olmstead & Sons Funeral Home building at 108 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> (NR 12-13-95) was constructed in 1910 to replace a frame building that burned in 1909. Facing the Courthouse Square on the west side, the one-story Olmstead Building is constructed of cut native stone and is one of the earliest remaining stone commercial buildings in Heber Springs' downtown. Adjacent buildings at 104 and 106 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street were also constructed circa 1910 and are one-story brick buildings with brick detail seen on the building at 104 S. 4<sup>th</sup>, while the 106 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street building has been sheathed in stucco on its upper front (east) wall.

Other buildings in the district constructed in the 1910 era are located in the 200 block of W. Main Street. The two-story building at the northeast corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and W. Main Streets, 222 W. Main, was constructed circa 1910 and contains some detail at the cornice

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and Italianate style influence in the second-story arched window openings. Adjacent to the east, the King Buildings at 214 and 216 W. Main, constructed circa 1910, are similar to the Olmstead Building at 108 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street in their simple, cut stone, one-story commercial design. The O.B. Robbins Ford Building at 210 W. Main was constructed circa 1912, rebuilt to look very similar to the original appearance of a two-story brick building on the site that was a livery stable and burned in 1911. Although now covered by an aluminum façade, the original brick building remains.

Across the street on the south side of Main Street, the building at 203 W. Main is another one-story commercial building with distinctive cut-stone walls that was constructed circa 1910. The J.N. Barrett & Sons General Mercantile Building at 211 W. Main was constructed circa 1910 and housed the local fraternal lodge on the second floor. The building features an Italianate style decorative brick cornice and arched second story windows.

The most elaborately designed building in the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District is the Cleburne County Bank Building located on the highly visible corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and W. Main Street. Prominent Arkansas architect Charles L. Thompson designed the two-story Classical Revival style building in 1914 to replace a two-story brick Cleburne County Bank Building that had burned in 1913. The building features a distinctive recessed chamfered corner entrance with two-story fluted Ionic columns. The building also features rusticated brick pilasters, transom windows, and a dentiled cornice.

The five buildings on the north side of the 300 block of W. Main, facing the Cleburne County Courthouse, were constructed in 1914 and 1915. Buildings at 304, 306, 308, 312, and 314 W. Main Street were rebuilt in this period to replace previous frame buildings. These buildings are all two-story, brick vernacular commercial structures with varying subtle detail in cornices, brick color and second story windows.

### 1920-1929

Heber Springs had replaced the bulk of their frame commercial buildings with substantial masonry buildings before the 1920s. Unlike most small towns in Arkansas, Heber Springs did not see many new commercial buildings constructed in the 1920s. Only four

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buildings from the 1920s are in the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District. Two of the buildings at 109 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 411-413 W. Main are one-story brick structures with minimal stylistic detail. A filling station was constructed at 400 W. Main circa 1926 to service the growing number of automobiles in the area. This one-story brick building is situated at an angle on the southeast corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and W. Main Streets and features a hipped roof.

The Cleveland Hotel Building at 201 E. Main is located directly across the street from the main entrance to Spring Park. The building is a two-story T-shaped frame structure with Craftsman style extended rafter tails and columns on brick piers supporting the full front porch. The porch becomes two-story at the center of the front of the building. A motel addition to the west side of the rear of the house, on S. Broadway Street was constructed in 1957.

In the evening of Thanksgiving Day in 1926 a tornado that first touched down in the 900 block of W. Main Street in Heber Springs swept a path down Main Street, destroying and damaging numerous buildings. Although the commercial district of Heber Springs suffered less destruction than the areas just to the west, there were damages to the buildings such as glass breakage and roofs being blown off, but no significant reconstruction of downtown business buildings occurred after this storm.

### 1930-1939

During the years of the Great Depression and President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs, two buildings in Heber Springs were constructed with government assistance. A U.S. Post Office was constructed at 102 E. Main in 1937. The one-story brick building was designed by Louis A. Simon and contains a mural painted by artist Louis Freund in 1939 entitled "From Timber to Agriculture". The post office building has an addition to the rear constructed in 1965. Although it is no longer used as a post office, the building is the location of Heber Springs Municipal Court.

Located at 510 W. Main Street, the Heber Springs City Hall Building was constructed with assistance from the National Youth Administration in 1939. It is a one and one-half story building with fieldstone walls. The center entry of the building is slightly recessed

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and denoted by a cast concrete surround. An article in the *Cleburne County Times* on November 2, 1940 entitled "New Heber Springs City Hall to Be Dedicated" stated that the building cost \$25,000 and contained spacious quarters for the mayor's office, the public library, a large auditorium with a seating capacity of 400, a kitchen unit and an annex and facilities for the city's fire department. The building is now privately owned, but retains much of its original appearance.

Other buildings constructed in the 1930s in the Heber Springs Historic District include the Houston Building at 109 W. Main Street circa 1938. This distinctive building with its fieldstone walls is one of the few buildings to survive a devastating fire in this block in 1941. The Whitaker's Drugstore Building, located at 201 W. Main, was constructed circa 1934 and features a cut-stone foundation with brick walls.

### 1940s

The 1940s saw significant growth in the commercial district of Heber Springs with the construction of 21 buildings. The majority of this construction was the result of rebuilding after fires had destroyed existing buildings. Other construction in this period was due to an invigorated economy with the end of World War II and return of soldiers to their hometown.

The Cecil Alexander Restaurant Building at 419 W. Main Street was constructed circa 1941 and served as a local gathering place for over fifty years before being remodeled and converted to office use. The Alexander Building is a one-story, brick building with front parapet towers and ceramic tile on its cornice.

In 1933 the Gem Theatre opened in the center of the 100 block of W. Main Street. On December 7, 1941, a fire began in the Gem Theatre and burned it and most of the west half of the block. The Gem Theatre was rebuilt and opened in 1942. An Art Moderne style theatre marquee dominates the streetscape in this block. Buildings to the west of the Gem Theatre were also rebuilt in the early 1940s.

The Loreen Hotel at 122 E. Main Street rebuilt in late 1944 after a fire destroyed the original hotel building earlier that year. It is a buff-colored brick, three-story building



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with Craftsman style double-hung windows and full front porch. At the time of its completion, the Loreen Hotel was the only three-story building in Cleburne County. The style of the Loreen Hotel reflects minimal detail as seen in its close rake eaves. Craftsman style double-hung windows provide most of the detail on the building. With the proximity of Spring Park to its east, the hotel became a popular destination. It was used as a hotel until the late 1950s when it was converted to apartments to fill the demand for housing during the construction of Greer's Ferry Dam.

Automobile travel became more important to Heber Springs after World War II, with the paving of a number of Cleburne County roads in the mid 1940s. The McCurry Chevrolet Company constructed an auto sales showroom and associated garage buildings on the south side of the 100 block of E. Main Street circa 1949.

### 1950s

There are fifteen buildings in the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District that were constructed in the 1950s. The majority of the buildings in the district from this period are concentrated in the 400 and 500 blocks of W. Main Street. As business grew in the town, it spread west along Main Street (State Highways 110 and 5) to meet the growing demand for goods and services.

Construction of some of the buildings in the district in the late 1950s was a result of reconstruction after a fire destroyed portions of the south side of the 200 block of W. Main Street. Buildings at 213 and 217 W. Main were constructed circa 1959 as a result of this fire. Their dark red brick walls distinguish them from surrounding older buildings.

The announcement in 1959 that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would begin construction of a dam across the Little Red River just three miles northwest of downtown Heber Springs, caused a boom to business in the small town. Five buildings on the south side of the 500 block of W. Main were constructed circa 1959. These five buildings located at 503-521 W. Main Street, are all one-story with aluminum-framed plate-glass storefronts.

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### 1960-Present

New development in Heber Springs after the construction of Greer's Ferry Dam and the subsequent creation of the 31,500 acre Greer's Ferry Lake was oriented to the lake and recreation in the area northwest of downtown. Increased traffic along W. Main Street/Highway 110 and 5, resulted in the construction of two restaurants, one at 421 W. Main and the other at 525 W. Main. Both of these buildings are one-story and set back from the street with parking in front of the buildings. The Heber Springs State Bank is the largest and newest buildings constructed within the boundaries of the historic district, occupying much of the south side of the 200 block of W. Main Street. Its construction in 2001 stands as confirmation that the commercial center of Heber Springs has remained in historic downtown.

### **INTEGRITY**

The Heber Springs Commercial Historic District is a cohesive group of 80 resources of which 54 (67%) contribute to the district's significance. The resources contained in the historic district represent the development of Heber Springs as a resort destination and county seat of Cleburne County. These resources possess integrity of location and setting in their original setbacks and configurations. The buildings, which contribute to the historic significance of the district, retain much of their original materials and workmanship. The Heber Springs Historic District also represents the individuals who established, planned and developed the town. The resources contained in the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District convey a sense of place and time in its period of significance from 1895 to 1959.

Spring Park with its natural springs and associated built resources occupies ten acres in the eastern part of the historic district. The park has been continuously used as the center of social life in the small town of Heber Springs. This grouping of 80 resources serves as a reminder of how Heber Springs has evolved while staying true to its original design laid out along an 80 feet wide Main Street with a city park and courthouse square. The resources continue to maintain their integrity of association through their continuous use as places of commerce, government, and recreation.

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## PROPERTY LIST

<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>C/NC or IL (Individually Listed)</u>
Heber Springs Post Office	103 E. Main Street	C
Motel at 120 E. Main	120 E. Main Street	NC
Loreen Hotel	122 E. Main Street	C
Chevrolet Dealership Bldg.1	117 E. Main Street	C
Chevrolet Dealership Bldg.2	119 E. Main Street	C
Chevrolet Dealership Bldg.3	121 E. Main Street	C
McMurry Chevrolet Dealer	123 E. Main Street	NC
Anderson House	201 E. Main Street	NC
Mullens House	209 E. Main Street	C
House at 106 S. Broadway	106 S. Broadway	C
Morton' Bros. Clothing Store	101 S. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street	C
Building at 103 S.3 <sup>rd</sup>	103 S. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street	C
Building at 105 S.3 <sup>rd</sup>	105 S. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street	C
Studebaker Auto Building	107 S. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street	C
Building at 109 S. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	109 S. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street	C
Building at 115 S. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	115 S. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street	NC
Building at 117 S. 3rd	117 S. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street	NC
Young's Department Store	121 S. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street	NC
Building at 104 N. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	104 N. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street	C
Barrett Grocery Store	104 S. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street	C
Olmstead Chevrolet Bldg.	106 S. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street	C
T.E. Olmstead & Son Funeral	108 S. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street	IL
Building at 110 S. 4 <sup>th</sup>	110 S. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street	NC
Building at 104 N. 4 <sup>th</sup>	104 N. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street	NC
Building at 110 S. 5 <sup>th</sup>	110 S. 5 <sup>th</sup> Street	C
Cleburne County Courthouse	301 W. Main Street	IL
Cleburne County War Monument	301 W. Main Street	NC
Cleburne County Bank	300 W. Main Street	C
Building at 304 W. Main	304 W. Main Street	C
Speed Meat Market	306 W. Main Street	C
Drug Store at 308 W. Main	308 W. Main Street	C
Building at 312 W. Main	312 W. Main Street	C
Gribble Grocery Store	314 W. Main Street	C
Building at 316 W. Main	316 W. Main Street	NC

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### PROPERTY LIST (Cont.)

Ben Franklin 5 & 10c Store	320 W. Main Street	NC	
155 Filling Station	400 W. Main Street	NC	
Building at 408 W. Main	408 W. Main Street	C	
New Theatre Building	422 W. Main Street	NC	
Crosby's Drug Store	401 W. Main Street	C	
Building at 411-413 W. Main	411-413 W. Main Street	C	
Building at 415 W. Main	415 W. Main Street	C	
Alexander's Restaurant	419-419B W. Main Street	C	
Building at 421 W. Main	421 W. Main Street	NC	
Building at 500 W. Main	500 W. Main Street	NC	
Building at 506-508 W. Main	506-508 W. Main Street	NC	
Heber Springs City Hall	510 W. Main Street	C	
Filling Station at 522 W. Main	522 W. Main Street	NC	
Building at 503-507 W. Main	503-507 W. Main Street	C	
Building at 509-511 W. Main	509-511 W. Main Street	NC	
Building at 513 W. Main	513 W. Main Street	C	
Building at 515 W. Main	515 W. Main Street	C	
Building at 521 W. Main	521 W. Main Street	C	
Building at 525 W. Main	525 W. Main Street	NC	
Spring Park	north side 200 block E. Main Street	C	
Spring Park Entrance Arch	corner N. Broadway and E. Main Streets	C	
Spring Park Springhouses	Spring Park	NC	
Spring Park Pavillions	Spring Park		NC
Women's Club Band Shell	Spring Park	IL	
Heber Springs State Bank	100 W. Main Street	NC	
Max Allen-Wilson Grocery	101 W. Main Street	C	
Building at 107 W. Main	107 W. Main Street	C	
Houston Building	109 W. Main Street	C	
Stover Building #1	111 W. Main Street	NC	
Stover Building #2	113 W. Main Street	NC	
GEM Theatre	119 W. Main Street	C	
Building at 119B W. Main	119 B W. Main Street	C	
Building at 121 W. Main	121 W. Main Street	C	
Building at 123 W. Main	123 W. Main Street	C	
Building at 200 W. Main	200 W. Main Street	NC	
O.B. Robbins Ford Dlrshp.	210 W. Main Street	NC	



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### PROPERTY LIST (Cont.)

King Building #1	214 W. Main Street	C
King Building #2	216 W. Main Street	C
Building at 222 W. Main	222 W. Main Street	C
Whitaker Drug Store	201 W. Main Street	C
Drug Store at 203 W. Main	203 W. Main Street	C
Building at 205 W. Main	205 W. Main Street	C
Building at 207 W. Main	207 W. Main Street	C
J.N. Barrett Gen. Merch.	211 W. Main Street	C
Building at 213 W. Main	213 W. Main Street	C
Building at 217 W. Main	217 W. Main Street	C

**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.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Levels of Significance** (local, state, national)

LOCAL

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

**Period of Significance**

1895-1959

**Significant Dates**

1914-Date of construction of County Courthouse

1937-Date of construction of Federal Post Office

1939-Date of construction of City Hall Building

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Clyde Ferrell

Charles L. Thompson, Louis A. Simon

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

Cleburne County Historical Society

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### SUMMARY

The Heber Springs Commercial Historic District contains a collection of 84 late 19<sup>th</sup> Century to mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century resources located in a deep valley in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains of north-central Arkansas. The district also contains the ten-acre Spring Park with seven natural mineral water springs around which the town was developed as a health resort. This historic district is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Place with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for the role that it played in the establishment of Cleburne County and the commercial growth and development of Heber Springs. It is also being submitted under **Criterion C** for its good examples of late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century vernacular commercial architectural. The Heber Springs Commercial Historic District includes 70 buildings, one monument, and Spring Park, containing eight resources. Of the 80 resources comprising the district 54 (67%) have integrity and/or contribute to the district's period of significance; of these, the Cleburne County Courthouse at 301 W. Main, the Women's City Club Bandshell in Spring Park, and the Olmstead & Sons Funeral Home Building at 108 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street were previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### ELABORATION

Heber Springs, Arkansas, is situated in the mountainous north central part of the state. Located near the geographic center of Cleburne County, named after a Confederate war hero, General Patrick R. Cleburne, Heber Springs is the county seat. Early settlers to the area were drawn to the rich farmlands found in the valleys surrounding the scenic landmark known as Sugar Loaf Mountain which rises almost perpendicularly for 500 feet. Its flat top was capped by a massive layer of limestone and studded with pine trees. Looming into view from the east end of Main Sugar Loaf Mountain historically was a popular climbing and recreational area. In one of the valleys near Sugar Loaf Mountain lay a plot of land that contained several mineral springs. These sulphur springs had a reputation among the early settlers for curing a number of illnesses.

John Magness received a land patent from the U. S. Government in 1835 for forty acres that included the land containing the mineral springs that later became known as Spring Park. The

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land around it. The White Sulphur Springs Company was established in 1838 for the purpose of creating a health resort. Although one of the four purchasers of the tract, McKim was not included in the list of stockholders in the White Sulphur Springs Company. After eight years the company that had organized to develop the forty-acre tract had accomplished nothing worth noting. McKim sold his one-fourth ownership in the land for \$700.00 to his remaining partners Jones, Lee, and a representative of Collins, who had died.

John Jones' willingness to pay such an increase in the purchase price attests to his belief in the possibilities for the future of the sulphur springs. Later that year the administrator of the deceased third partner, R.D.C. Collins, won a settlement from the District Court in which the original forty-acre tract and additional land south and east of the springs would be sold. Two purchasers from Little Rock, Alexander Boileau and Archibald Rutherford sold the land back to John Jones for \$250.00 in December of 1846. For five years the land and its ownership lay undisturbed, until Jones' last partner, Richard Lee, won a judgement in the Van Buren Circuit Court to partition the land in question. Following the courts ruling, a commission of three citizens was established to divide the property. An agreement could not be reached and so the land was ordered sold at auction. On the assigned date no one came forward to offer a bid. A second date was set and on September 22, 1851, John T. Jones paid \$189.00 for the sole ownership of the land and springs he had purchased three times previously.

Although Jones, who was a circuit court judge in Helena, Arkansas, had complete control of the sulphur springs and surrounding lands, it remained undeveloped for another thirty years. John Jones remained a resident of Helena until his death. There is no record of Jones visiting the property he had fought so long to own or why he never began the development of the health resort he had planned. Jones did however make a profit, when he sold all the property except the one-acre next to the sulphur springs for \$10,000.00 to Max Frauenthal in 1881.

Max Frauenthal, a Conway, Arkansas, businessman, was originally from Bavaria. Within weeks of the purchase of the land, Frauenthal began selling stock in his new company, Sugar Loaf Springs Land Company. The 500 shares sold for \$25.00 each, with Frauenthal retaining 220 shares for himself. Ten other Conway businessmen held the remaining shares. The purpose of the company, like its predecessor, the White Sulphur Springs Company, was to facilitate the development of a health resort town. Engineer Douglas Dickerson was hired to survey and plat the new town. The ten acres containing the sulphur springs was platted as an undivided tract. In



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1907, Max Frauenthal legally transferred the entire ten-acre Spring Park tract to the town of Sugar Loaf for "the free use of the springs and its surrounding lands to its citizens and visitors for the purpose of recreation and drinking water."

In only four months after laying out the new town in 1881, Sugar Loaf boasted of twelve houses and more than thirty lots sold. A boarding house was in the planning with twenty-five rooms for the expected flow of visitors and salesmen. During that first year of growth, two applications were filed for the establishment of a post office, but were denied because at that time a Sugar Loaf post office already existed in the county. A permit was granted in March 1882 for a post office under the name of Heber. The name of Heber was chosen in honor of Dr. Heber Jones the son of Judge John Jones, the original owner of the springs.

The town was incorporated on October 4, 1882, as Sugar Loaf, Arkansas, but received its mail from the Heber Post Office, located on the second floor in one of the new business buildings facing the court square. Sugar Loaf was laid out around two focal points Spring Park and the Courthouse Square. The size and prominence of the courthouse square suggested that the developers planned, from the beginning, for their town to become a county seat. A new county would have to be created to complete the plan. Arkansas already had 74 counties and land would have to be taken from one or more of the surrounding counties. White, Van Buren, and Independence counties all agreed to give up land for formation of a new county. In February 1883 Cleburne County was established as Arkansas's seventy-fifth and last county with the town of Sugar Loaf as its seat of government. The developers behind Sugar Loaf and the newly formed county had committed to build a courthouse on the land that they donated. Cleburne County's first courthouse was a Greek Revival style, two-story building completed in 1884. The two-story frame structure sat in the center of the courthouse square on the same site as the present courthouse. It served as the seat of Cleburne County government until 1910 when the building was disassembled, moved a block south to Searcy Street, and remodeled to become Edwards Hotel, which operated until it was destroyed by fire in 1930.

County officials began talking about construction of a new fireproof courthouse as early as 1911, with complaints that the courthouse was in disrepair and had insufficient room for the records of the county's business. Despite local sentiment that a new courthouse was not needed, the Cleburne County Quorum Court announced in December 1911 that they had selected a set of plans and specifications for a new courthouse designed by Little Rock architect Clyde Ferrell,

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whom they had also employed to oversee the construction. However demands from Cleburne County citizens who insisted the county did not need to spend money on a new courthouse caused the project to be abandoned. In April 1912, the Cleburne County Quorum Court revived the plans for a new courthouse and a tax was levied the following year to pay for it. The low bid for construction of Clyde Ferrell's courthouse design for \$61,400 by Fayetteville, Arkansas firm A.M. Byrnes Construction was accepted. Clyde Ferrell supervised the project and C. C. Howell was appointed overseer for the new courthouse construction. The two-story Classical Revival style courthouse building features identical two-story pedimented porticos on the north and south elevations and is still the center of county government.

The early business buildings that were built around the courthouse square and along the wide streets of the town were of wood construction. Lumber was milled locally and came from nearby forests as they were cleared to make way for development of an aspiring health resort. Main Street was laid out due East and West and cleared to an impressive 80-foot width. None of the streets, including Main Street, were graded or paved in Heber Springs until the WPA paved a few streets around the courthouse in 1933-1936. The new town with its sulphur springs, lay in a deep valley, and as a result, the streets of the new town were either muddy or dusty. Merchants collaborated and purchased a horse-drawn sprinkler tank that went up and down Main Street to keep the dust down. In 1892 the Sugar Loaf created Sidewalk District No.1. This ordinance required property owners within a five-block area on Main Street to build sidewalks in front of their places of business. Most of these sidewalks were raised off the ground with steps. For the early townspeople, the raised sidewalks became the town's front porch. The hand-hewn wooden benches in front of most every business became gathering places from early morning until long after business hours. Although the streets have long been paved, and the sidewalks are concrete, many are still raised above the street and have benches in front of businesses. This unique expression of community is an important characteristic of Heber Springs' Main Street.

In spring 1882 a local correspondent from Sugar Loaf Springs began reporting regularly to the *Clinton Banner*. The report from Sugar Loaf Springs in April 1882 stated, "The town is progressing. We have six business houses in operation but no dry good house yet. We have a boot and shoe and blacksmith shop and a livery and feed stable." Subsequent reports provide information that a photographer and billiard hall had been established, and discussed homes, churches and school. Reports of a good local whiskey trade were common.

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A public school was in operation in a temporary location by 1884. The town had to look to itself for its needs because it had no reliable form of transportation as it was not on a river, on a railroad line, or close to a state roadway. Clinton, Arkansas, the nearest town on a major roadway was a rugged 40-mile trip over mountainous roads. Despite the difficulty of getting to the remote valley, settlers flocked to the new town of Sugar Loaf. Within a few years, the town boasted of a town photographer, a billiard hall, a gristmill, shingle planing mill, and a flourmill with a population near 500.

One of the early businesses to open in Heber Springs was the Olmstead Furniture and Hardware Store on Main Street, established in 1896. T. E. Olmstead had moved to Sugar Loaf from Brook, Indiana. Among the many items that Mr. Olmstead sold were coffins. He saw a community-wide need that was not available and opened an undertaking shop in a small building west side of the courthouse square. To pursue his new business interest, Mr. Olmstead sold the furniture and hardware store. His wood frame undertakers shop burned in 1909. A rough-cut stone building was constructed on the same site at 108 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street in 1910. This building served as the Olmstead Funeral Home until 1939 when it relocated on Main Street, outside of the downtown business district. The Olmstead Funeral Home Building on S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street has been passed down through four generations of the Olmstead family and now houses the Cleburne County Museum.

The booming town of Sugar Loaf attracted hopeful businessmen, but many others came for the repudiated health benefits of the sulphur springs and cool mountain air. One such man was W. H. Gribble. Born in North Carolina in 1863, Gribble moved to Bennette, Missouri, as a young man where he developed a passion for treating sick and injured animals, but his young children were sick most of the time. Committed to finding a healthier place to raise his children, Mr. Gribble loaded a covered wagon with his family and possessions and headed south for the healing sulphur waters of Sugar Loaf, Arkansas. The family was forced to wait two weeks before the water level of the Little Red River dropped low enough to cross. The Gribbles arrived in Sugar Loaf on August 15, 1905, and soon bought a house at the corner Sixth and Searcy Street. Mr. Gribble began a veterinary practice and opened a grocery business. His first store was located on Main Street at the corner of Second. He then purchased the property and wood frame building at 314 W. Main, next door to a hot-tamale stand. The grocery business boomed in the new location until 1914 when lightning struck a frame building on the other side of the hot-tamale stand. In the resulting fire, all three businesses burned. By 1915 Gribble had built a new brick building on the same site and reopened the W. H. Gribble Grocery that operated in this location until the



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1930s. Mr. Gribble continued to work in his veterinary practice, passing the newly required state-licensing test when he was well into his seventies.

It was the transition from wood-frame business buildings to brick and natural stone that lends much of the architectural character of Heber Springs' downtown. The first brick building in Heber Springs was built at 101 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street on the corner with Main Street in the mid 1890s. Samuel D. Morton acquired the property in 1890 and is said to have built the two-story building with bricks formed from clay found along the banks of Sulphur Creek that flows at the eastern edge of the town. Early records indicate the Morton Building was often used in giving directions by referring to the "brick building" as a landmark. It has remained a strong focal point for downtown visitors and prized location for many businesses through the years including Morton's Mercantile, a bank, and in 1918 a Piggly Wiggly Grocery, the first chain store to locate in the town. The building continued to serve as a grocery store until the late 1920s. An art gallery currently occupies the town's first brick building.

Timber was an important industry from the beginning of the development of Sugar Loaf. John Bridwell, who also operated a dry-goods business on the courthouse square, started operation of his steam-powered sawmill in 1881 in the ravine north of Spring Park. By the turn of the century Doniphan Lumber Company of Missouri and others were harvesting large areas of virgin timber. The timber industry steadily grew but was hampered by the lack of any institution in the county to support daily financial transactions. Doniphan Lumber Company entered into an agreement with H. F. Fix of Missouri to obtain a charter for a bank in Cleburne County, which Fix would manage. The Cleburne County Bank opened in November 1902 in a frame building in the 300 block of Main Street. By 1905 the bank had acquired the corner lot at the 300 W. Main Street, and constructed a new frame bank building. Between 1910 and 1912, a two-story brick building with corner entrance was constructed. It housed the bank as well as a local newspaper office until it burned in 1915. A new brick structure, designed by renowned Arkansas architect Charles L. Thompson, was completed by 1916. An impressive Classical Revival style building, it features two-story fluted columns at its corner entrance and is one of the landmarks in the downtown commercial district of Heber Springs.

Three years later in 1919 a charter was granted to the Arkansas National Bank which was originally located at 210 W. Main in the same brick building with Robbins Motors. The bank relocated across the street to 211 W. Main Street then moved to its present site at 100 W. Main in



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1963. The bank changed its charter and name to Heber Springs State Bank in 1977.

The reputation as health resort fueled the sudden growth of the town, but access to the remote valley limited the number of tourists and/or new residents who could make the trip on the rugged unpaved road to the Sugar Loaf. That all changed in 1908 when the Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad ran a line to Sugar Loaf. Visitors traveled comfortably on one of the two passenger trains that arrived every weekday to find fleets of horse drawn carriages available for rent. It was the period after the railroad came to Sugar Loaf that most of the existing buildings were constructed. Available for the visitor to Sugar Loaf in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a soda fountain, a candy store, an ice cream parlor and open-air dance pavilion, a roller rink, the Clarice Air Dome, where patrons watched silent movies while someone played piano. In 1912 a theater was constructed in the 100 block of W. Main that not only showed movies but also offered entertainment from traveling theatrical troops and opera performances.

The ongoing confusion around the town of Sugar Loaf receiving and sending its mail from the Heber Post Office in a building just across the street from the town square was resolved in 1910. The name of the town and the post office were both officially changed to Heber Springs. The town of Heber Springs had become more than a health resort as it had grown into a popular summer retreat for families. Within three years of the name change more than ten major hotels were constructed within a short walk from Spring Park.

Within the ten-acre Spring Park ten different springs flowed, each with different mineral content. Today seven of the springs are maintained and under four wood pavilions with concrete flooring. For visitors as well as locals, Spring Park offered more than a drink of foul tasting water that was reputed to have medicinal qualities, it was a gathering place for family picnics, nighttime strolls, or musical performances at the park's bandshell. There is no record of when the original band shell was built, but it was replaced with the existing Women's Community Club Band shell in 1933. Built of native stone and concrete, this bandshell was constructed with assistance of the Work Projects Administration and is still used for events in the park. An amphitheater constructed in the 1970s provides a location for the many performances and public activities that take place in the park. Spring Park has been the site of many festivals throughout its history, but none more notable or longer lasting than the Old Soldiers' Reunion held every year in the park since 1887. The event was initiated through the joint efforts of the Confederate and Union veterans of the Civil War who lived in the area. As late as 1915, the event was entitled "The

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Blue and Gray Reunion.” The Old Soldiers’ Reunion continues to be one of the major events in the town of Heber Springs each year with a parade down Main Street and now encompasses a reunion of all people in and from Cleburne County.

Heber Springs’ growth in the early decades of the twentieth century brought services to the residents of the town. Electrical service began 1909 with formation of the Heber Power and Light Company, although it was not until 1920 that 24-hour electrical service was provided. A water and sewer service was in place by 1915. Telephones were in use in Heber Springs before 1920.

The crash of the stock market in 1929 set in place a bleak series of events for Cleburne County. Most people in the county were small farmers, and were not affected until the summer of 1930 when a severe drought ruined crops all over the county. Federal work programs such as the Civil Works Administration and the Public Works Administration provided much of the relief work in Cleburne County. These programs also worked by paying farmers to reduce crop acreage. Later the Soil Conservation Program in 1937 coordinated projects under which farmers were paid for planting crops that would build up the soil rather than wear it out.

By the 1930s a significant number of Cleburne County residents were not living on the farm. In addition to storekeepers, bankers, doctors and owners of gins and mills, many county residents were employed in the timber industry. As these industries cut back or shut down completely in the 1930s, many residents found themselves out of work. The need in Cleburne County was severe and more than 1,200 families were given relief aid in 1933.

Federal programs in the 1930s in Cleburne County largely involved farm aid, but two significant buildings in downtown Heber Springs were constructed under these programs. One of these federal projects constructed a new post office building at 102 E. Main in 1937. The building features a wall mural, “From Timber to Agriculture” painted by Louis Freund in 1939.

By the 1930s tourism had dropped significantly. Heber Springs failed to attract automobile travelers due to lack of paved roads and the town continued to promote the image of a slower pace of life with horse drawn carriages. Farmers living on the road to Heber Springs often earned a little money pulling automobiles out of the mud with their teams of mules. There were no paved roads into Heber Springs until 1940 when a route was completed to Conway, Arkansas.

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Although the Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad had brought a new and improved means to reach Heber Springs, it never quite functioned as it should. The M&NA Railroad was locally said to have stood for "May Never Arrive" because the train conductors often picked up unscheduled riders and let them off at unscheduled stops on a regular basis. This worked well through the first part of the century, but with the economic downturn during the Great Depression, World War I and II, and the growth of travel by automobile, fewer and fewer visitors arrived by train. The Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad closed its route to Heber Springs in 1945.

The town built on healing waters and tourism fell on hard times in the 1930s and early 1940s. It was in this depressed economy that Mike Meyer opened his photographic shop one-half block north of Main Street in the late 1920s. The studio, razed after his death, was a small stucco building, approximately 20 X 30 feet, facing east on First Street. It featured a glass skylight on the north. Meyer used natural light for his portraits. He lived in small space in the back of the building. Meyer changed his name to Disfarmer as a statement against his own farm roots. Long after his death Disfarmer became famous for his many portraits, particularly of those during the desolate years of the Great Depression and World War II. The haunting pictures of posed children, friends, families, and lovers offer a unique insight on that somber phase of the history of the United States as reflected in the faces of the residents of Cleburne County, Arkansas. Disfarmer died, a hermit, at the age of 75 in 1959. The Bank of Heber Springs handled Disfarmer's estate. In going through the contents of Disfarmer's studio, a box of negatives was found and sold to a local resident for \$1. This same box of Disfarmer negatives was sold in 1973 for \$5. Some of the photographs were published in Modern Photography Magazine, bringing attention to the art of the photographs. Several books have since been written about Mike Meyer (Disfarmer). One of the books, *Disfarmer: The Heber Springs Portraits 1939-1946* by Julia Scully and published in 1976 stated, "The power of the Heber Springs portraits lies both in the character of the people portrayed and in the moment of time in which that character was revealed."

Heber Springs experienced a second birth as a town of water and tourism when construction began in 1959 on Greer's Ferry Dam on the Little Red River, three miles north of downtown. The dam was completed in 1962 and dedicated by President John F. Kennedy in September 1963, the last public address before his assassination two months later. The \$46.5 million

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construction project brought needed jobs to the area, but more importantly the 31,500 acres of recreational waterways brought tourism back to Heber Springs. Greer's Ferry Lake offers 18 parks and its shoreline provides modern campgrounds, boat launches, swimming areas and marinas. The tens of thousands of visitors that come through Heber Springs no longer come to drink sulphur water but to shop and stroll through a downtown that looks and functions much as it did over a century ago.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Heber Springs Commercial Historic District is being nominated with **local significance** to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** and **Criterion C**. The area contained in the district is the center of the original 1881 plat of the town. Heber Springs has served as the county seat of Cleburne County since the county's formation in 1883. The historic resources located in the district are significant because they are the best extant representations of Heber Springs' commercial, governmental, and political history as well as architectural styles from 1895 to 1959. The earliest building in the district was constructed circa 1895 while 1959 is the last date for those resources considered historic based on their 50-year age. The buildings located in the district are architecturally significant in the commercial styles that they portray including restrained versions of: Italianate, Classical Revival, Art Moderne, Craftsman, and National styles. Additionally, there are a number of resources within the district that are clad in native stone, plentiful in the area, a reminder of the rugged mountainous region in which Heber Springs is located.



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National Park Service

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 2

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Stewart, Charles, Interview Cleburne County Historical Society,

Taylor, Lois, Interview. Kensett, Arkansas. July 20, 2008.

The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas. With an Introduction by Elliott West. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987. Reprint of: *Arkansas: A Guide to the State, 1941*.

Heber Springs Commercial Historic District  
Name of Property

Cleburne County, Arkansas  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 31.46 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1  
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 Sandra Taylor Smith, Historic Preservation Consultant  
organization Prepared for: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date October 25, 2008  
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501)371-0755  
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72210

### 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 Multiple Property Owners- Public & Private  
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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

## UTM REFERENCES

1	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>587529E</u> Easting	<u>3298979N</u> Northing
2	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>507878E</u> Easting	<u>3928069N</u> Northing
3	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>587684E</u> Easting	<u>3928124N</u> Northing
4	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>587754E</u> Easting	<u>3928120N</u> Northing
5	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>587748E</u> Easting	<u>3928055N</u> Northing
6	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>588305E</u> Easting	<u>3928050N</u> Northing
7	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>588203E</u> Easting	<u>3928216N</u> Northing
8	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>588383E</u> Easting	<u>3928203N</u> Northing
9	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>588363E</u> Easting	<u>3927953N</u> Northing
10	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>588309E</u> Easting	<u>3927956N</u> Northing
11	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>588305E</u> Easting	<u>3927894N</u> Northing
12	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>587907E</u> Easting	<u>3927873N</u> Northing
13	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>587902E</u> Easting	<u>3927873N</u> Northing
14	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>587743E</u> Easting	<u>3927884N</u> Northing
15	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>587741E</u> Easting	<u>3927927N</u> Northing
16	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>587523E</u> Easting	<u>3927949N</u> Northing



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 2

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District contain the South ½ of Blocks 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, Original Town of Heber Springs, the North ½ of Blocks 40, 41, and 42, Original Town of Heber Springs. The South ½ and West ½ of Block 43, all of Block 44 containing the Cleburne County Courthouse, the east ½ and south ½ of Block 45 and the south ½ of Block 46. The Heber Springs Commercial Historic District also contains Spring Park on the northeast end of the district, bounded by E. Main Street on the south, N. Broadway Street on the west, E. Sugar Loaf Street on the north, and Frauenthal Street on the east.

The Heber Springs Commercial Historic District is also described as follows:

Beginning at the northwest corner of the property line of the building at 522 W. Main Street, the boundary of the Heber Springs Commercial Historic District runs due east along the alley to the north of buildings on the north side of the 500 and 400 blocks of W. Main Street. At the rear property line of the building at 408 W. Main Street, the boundary turns and runs due north to its intersection with W. Spring Street where it turns and runs east to its intersection with N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street. At N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street and W. Spring Street, the boundary turns and runs south to the rear property line of buildings in the 300, 200 and 100 blocks of W. Main Street and north side of the 100 block of E. Main Street. At the point where the boundary intersects with N. Broadway Street, it turns to run due north along the center line of N. Broadway to its intersection with E. Sugar Loaf Street. At this point the boundary turns and runs east along E. Sugar Loaf Street one block to its intersection with Frauenthal Street. Then boundary then turns to run south along the center line of Frauenthal Street, including all of Spring Park. At the intersection of Frauenthal and E. Main Streets, the boundary runs west along E. Main Street to S. Center Street. At S. Center and E. Main Streets, the boundary runs south along S. Center Street to the center point of the block where it turns and runs due west along a line through the center line of the blocks containing buildings on the south side of the 200 and 100 blocks of E. Main and continues running west on a line behind buildings on the south side of the 100 block of W. Main Street. The boundary runs due west on a line south of the buildings on the south side of the 200 block of W. Main, then turns and runs south along the alley between 211 and 213 S. Main to its intersection with W. Searcy Street to include buildings in the 100 block of S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The boundary continues to run west along the center line of W. Searcy Street to its intersection with S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street where it runs north on S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street to the southeast corner of the lot containing the building at 110 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street. At this point the boundary runs west to the rear property line and alley west of 110 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, then runs north to the rear property line of the building at 419 W. Main Street. At the alley and rear line of this building, the boundary turns to run due west behind the building at 421 W. Main Street to the intersection of S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street. At this point the boundary continues to run due west along the alley south of buildings on the south side of the 500 block of W. Main Street until its intersection with S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street. The boundary then turns to run due north along the center line of S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the point of beginning on N. 6<sup>th</sup> Street at the northeast corner of the property line of 522 W. Main Street.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

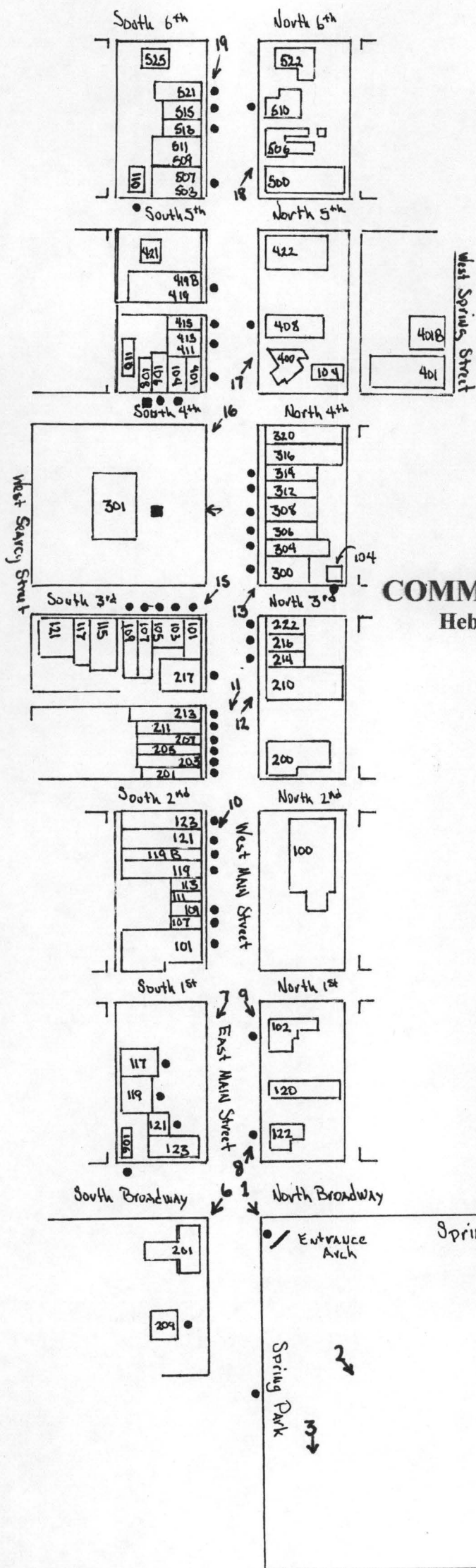
## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 3

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### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The Heber Springs Commercial Historic District includes contiguous and intact historic resources at the center of Heber Springs' commercial area whose original functions were: commercial, governmental, and recreational in nature. This built environment documents Heber Springs from 1895 to 1959. These resources, which radiate to the west from Spring Park on lots as originally laid out when the town was platted. The resources within the district provide an excellent picture of the development patterns of Heber Springs from 1895 to 1959. The boundaries chosen for the district encompass the area that has always been Heber Springs' commercial area and highlights those buildings that portray the city's commercial development during the twentieth century.



## HEBER SPRINGS COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Heber Springs, Cleburne County, Arkansas

● Contributing

■ NR Listed

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Heber Springs Commercial Historic District  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Cleburne

DATE RECEIVED: 3/27/09 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/15/09  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/30/09 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/10/09  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 09000266

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

X ACCEPT        RETURN        REJECT 5/1/2009 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Typical County Seat Commercial Center Representing the Social, Commercial, & Cultural  
Center of the County. Town was founded on popularity of sulphur springs.  
Hotels & spas remain from heyday. Town also an Ag center.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Crit A & C

REVIEWER J. Caldwell DISCIPLINE hist.

TELEPHONE                                  DATE 5/1/2009

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.





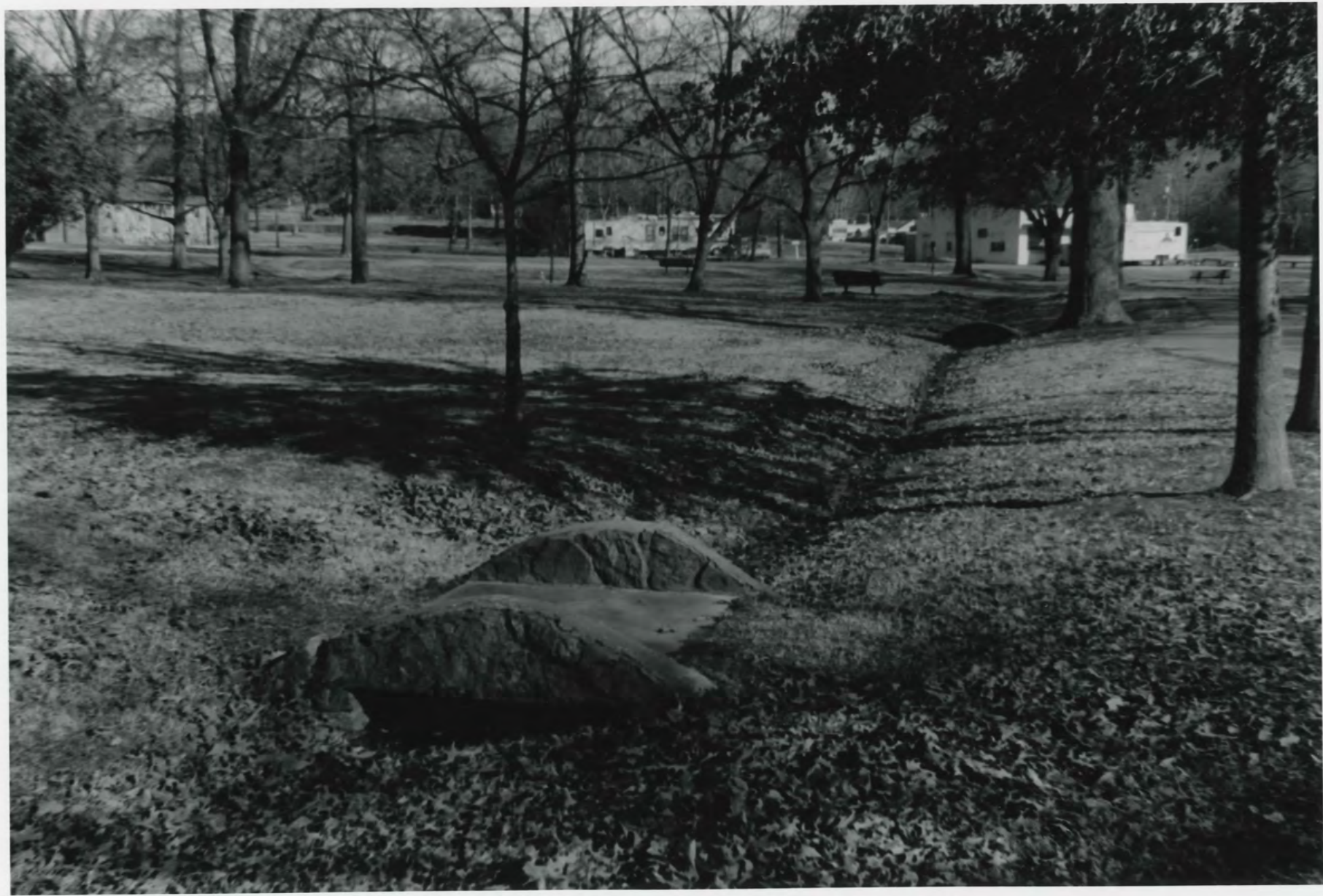
1. Entrance Arch - Spring Park  
Heber Springs Commercial Historic District  
200 Block E. Main
2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., AR
3. photo by Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 1-27-08
5. negative at AHPP
6. view looking north east
7. photo #1





1. Springhouses  
Spring Park  
Heber Springs Commercial Historic District  
200 E. MAIN Block
2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., AR
3. photo by Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 1-27-08
5. negative at AHPP
6. view looking east
7. photo #2





1. Site Features  
Spring Park  
Heber Springs Commercial Historic District  
200 E. Main Block
2. Heber Springs, Cleburne County, AR
3. Photo By Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 1-27-08
5. NEGATIVE AT AHPP
6. View Looking EAST
7. photo #3





1. Site Features  
Spring Park  
Heber Springs Commercial Historic District  
200 E. Main Block

2. Heber Springs, Cleburne County, AR

3. photo by Sandra Taylor Smith

4. 1-27-08

5. negative at AHPP

6. view looking west

7. photo #4





1. Women's City Club Bandshell  
Spring Park  
Heber Springs Commercial Historic District  
200 Block E. Main
2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., AR
3. photo by Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 1-27-08
5. NEGATIVE AT AHP
6. view northeast
7. photo #5





1. 201 & 209 E. MAIN ST.

Heber Springs Commercial Historic District

2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., AR

3. Photo By Sandra Taylor Smith

4. 01-27-08

5. NEGATIVE AT AHPP

6. View Looking Southeast

7. Photo #6





1. South side 100 & 200 blocks E. Main

Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., AR

2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., AR

3. Photo by Sandra Taylor Smith

4. 01-27-08

5. Negative at AHPP

6. View looking southeast

7. Photo #7





1. North side 100 block E. Main Street  
Heber Springs Commercial Historic District
2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Cty., AR
3. Photo by Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 01-27-08
5. Negative at AHPP
6. View looking northeast
7. Photo #8





1. north side 100 Block E. Main  
Heber Springs Commercial Historic District
2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., AR
3. photo by Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 01-27-08
5. negative #1 AHDP
6. view looking northeast
7. photo #9





1. South Side 100 Block W. Main Street  
Heber Springs Commercial Historic District
2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., AR
3. Photo By Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 01-29-08
5. Negative at AHPP
6. View looking South East
7. Photo #10



1. South side 200 Block W. Main St.  
Heber Springs Commercial Historic District
2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., AR
3. Photo By Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 01-27-09
5. Negative at AHP
6. View looking Southeast
7. Photo #11





1. North side 200 Block W. Main St.  
Heber Springs Commercial Historic District
2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Cty., AR
3. photo by Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 01-27-08
5. negative at AHPP
6. View looking Northwest
7. photo #12







1. North Side 300 Block W. Main St.  
Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., AR
2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., AR
3. photo by Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 01-27-08
5. negative at AHP
6. View looking northwest
7. photo #13



1. Cleburne Cty. Courthouse  
301 W. MAIN  
Heber Springs Commercial Historic District
2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Cty., AR
3. photo by Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 4-10-08
5. NEGATIVE AT AHP
6. view looking south
7. photo # 14





1. 100 Block S. 3rd Street  
Heber Springs Commercial Historic District
2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., AR
3. photo by Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 01-27-08
5. NEGATIVE AT AHPP
6. view looking southeast
7. photo #15





1. 4th + W. MAIN STREETS  
Heber Springs Commercial Historic District
2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., AR
3. Photo By Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 1-27-08
5. NEGATIVE AT AHPP
6. N. 4th + W. MAIN STREETS, Looking Southeast
7. Photo #16



1. North side 400 Block W. Main
2. Heber Springs Commercial Historic District
2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., AR
3. photo by Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 01-27-08
5. negative at AHPP
6. view looking northwest
7. photo #17





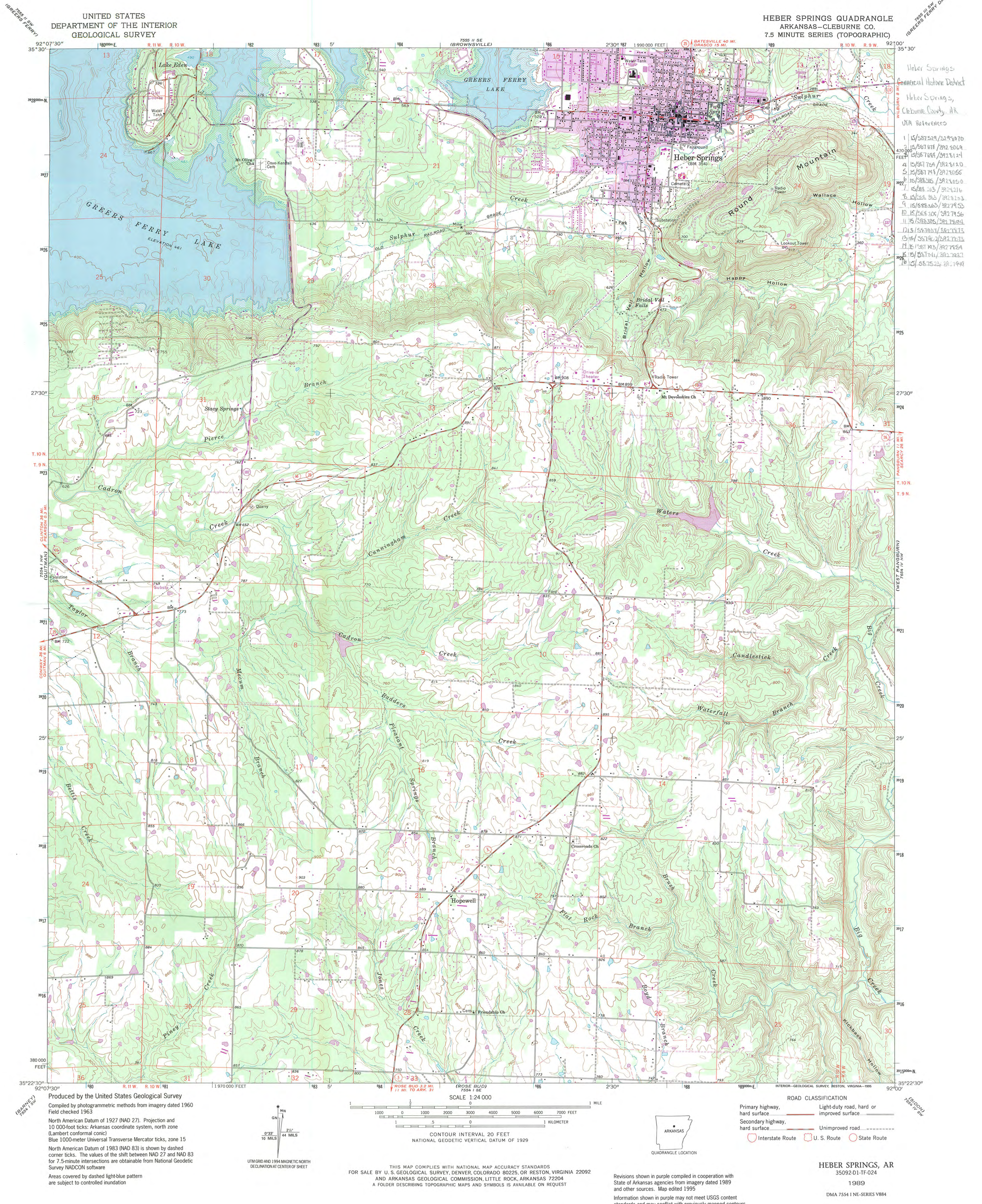
1. NORTH SIDE 500 BLOCK W. MAIN  
Heber Springs Commercial Historic District
2. Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., AR
3. photo By Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 01-27-08
5. NEGATIVE AT AHPP
6. view looking northwest
7. photo #18





1. South Side 500 Block W. Main
2. Heber Springs Commercial Historic District
3. Photo By Sandra Taylor Smith
4. 0124-08
5. Negative At AHDP
6. View Looking South East
7. Photo #19





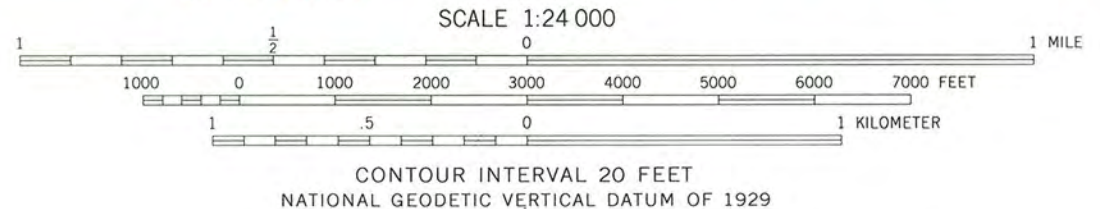
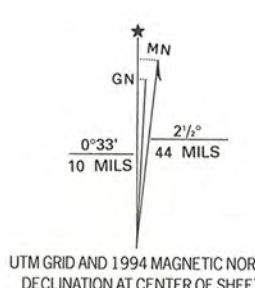
UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

HEBER SPRINGS QUADRANGLE  
ARKANSAS-CLEBURNE CO.  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

Heber Springs  
Commercial Historic District  
Heber Springs, AR  
UTM References

- 1 15/587529/2929070
- 2 15/587618/2929069
- 3 15/587699/2929124
- 4 15/587799/2929120
- 5 15/587799/2929065
- 6 15/587805/2929050
- 7 15/587805/2929116
- 8 15/587805/2929103
- 9 15/587805/2929152
- 10 15/587805/2929156
- 11 15/587805/2929194
- 12 15/587805/2929193
- 13 15/587805/2929193
- 14 15/587805/2929194
- 15 15/587805/2929227
- 16 15/587805/2929194

Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
Compiled by photogrammetric methods from imagery dated 1960  
Field checked 1963  
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and  
10 000-foot ticks: Arkansas coordinate system, north zone  
(Lambert conformal conic)  
Blue 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator ticks, zone 15  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed  
corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83  
for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic  
Survey NADCON software  
Areas covered by dashed light-blue pattern  
are subject to controlled inundation



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
AND ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72204  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION	
Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with  
State of Arkansas agencies from imagery dated 1989  
and other sources. Map edited 1995  
Information shown in purple may not meet USGS content  
standards and may conflict with previously mapped contours

HEBER SPRINGS, AR  
35092-01-TF-024  
1989  
DMA 7554 1 NE-SERIES V884





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  
323 Center Street  
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



March 23, 2009

Dr. Janet Matthews  
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: Heber Springs Commercial Historic District – Heber  
Springs, Cleburne County, Arkansas

Dear Dr. Matthews:

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