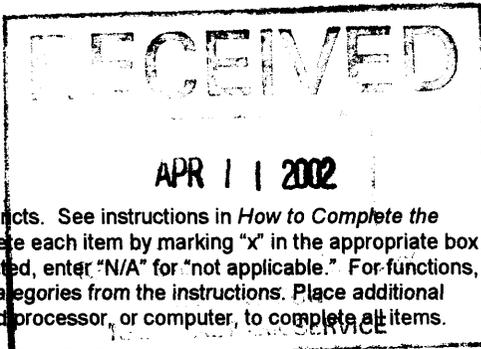


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 Community Building
other names/site number War Memorial Building, American Legion Building

2. Location

street & number 5 W. Maple Street N/A not for publication
city or town Sparta vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county White code 185 zip code 38583

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.)
Harold L. Boyer 4/10/02
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
 determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other,
(explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Bertha Savage Date of Action 5/20/02

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	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
1	1	objects
2	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: Civic, Meeting Hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: Civic, Meeting Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Neo-Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof OTHER

other GLASS

Narrative Description

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

See Continuation Sheet

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: N/A

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** moved from its original location.
- 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1935-1951

Significant Dates

1935

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Winton Builders

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): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: (TN State Library and Archives)

Community Building
Name of Property

White County, Tennessee
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one Sparta 332 NW

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 368480 3976540
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 Holly Barnett and Ted Karpynec
organization Middle Tennessee State University/Tennessee Historical Commission date July 24, 2001
street & number 2941 Lebanon Rd. telephone 615-5321550
city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37143-0442

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 American Legion Post No. 99 (Jack Russell, Service Officer)
street & number 5 W. Maple St telephone 931-836-3595
city or town Sparta state TN zip code 38583

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.

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Community Building
White County, Tennessee

Architectural Description

Sparta, located in southwestern Middle Tennessee, is the only major community and the county seat of rural White County. The White County Community Building is located on the south side of the public square in Sparta facing the White County Courthouse. Designed in the Classical Revival style, the Community Building reflects a popular style for many public buildings of the Depression era. The building has been well maintained and altered only slightly, retaining the majority of its original architectural features including: windows, bathroom fixtures, and light fixtures. The Community Building is set back from the street more than the rest of the buildings on the square, which provides a small grassy area in front of the building for a flagpole and a recently placed marker for White County veterans of World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. A retaining wall surrounds the north, south, and west facades and hides most of the raised basement from view.

The Community Building is two stories tall with a barrel shaped roof covered with tar paper. A continuous concrete block foundation is visible from the west, north, and south elevations. The brick veneer of the first and second floors is arranged in a running bond pattern on the façade with the other three elevations composed of a common bond pattern. The Community Building is laid out in a rectangular plan with the basement and first floor containing offices and the second floor containing an auditorium, stage, and small kitchen. New exterior doors were added to the building in the 1950s, which is the only architectural feature that has been altered. All, but four, of the windows of the Community Building have fixed metal sashes consisting of: a six-pane awning section at the top portion of the windows, and a three pane hopper section located at the sill of each window for ventilation. The building has three chimneys that were once used with a coal furnace that has been converted to gas. The roof covering and gutters were replaced in 1990.

The façade of the Community Building faces north and is divided into three bays. It has a parapet wall that conceals the structure's barrel shaped roof. A pair of concrete fluted pilasters, painted white, flanks the main entrance and a large window opening containing a 25-light fixed metal sash on the second floor. Comprising the main entrance are two centrally located metal and glass doors that are topped by a large single pane transom and surrounded by a molded architrave. Eight small concrete quoins surround the central window. The pilasters support an entablature that is embellished with dentils and has "American Legion" painted on the frieze. Resting above the entablature is a brick parapet wall, which is accented with a thick cornice at the base. Both the cornice and the parapet wall extend wrap around to the bordering elevations. An accompanying stringcourse is located at the base of the frieze and extends around to the adjoining elevations. Above the concrete entablature is a brick parapet wall, which is joined by two small panels outlined in concrete. Two decorative scrolled consoles ornament the central panel of the parapet wall. A masonry pilaster is located on each end of the façade capped by a simple concrete capital. In between the concrete pilasters and the masonry pilasters on each side of the facade is a window with a twelve-light fixed metal sash. The sills for these windows are concrete. Used as a design

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Community Building
White County, Tennessee

element, the roughly textured masonry of the façade is different from the common brick found on the other three elevations. Vertical rows of very dark, hardened stretchers surround the two outside windows creating a panel that extends to the lower part of the façade near the base of the pilasters. Concrete sills form the base of the brick panels.

The east elevation reveals fifteen symmetrically placed large windows with fixed metal sash and a small window with a four-panel fixed metal sash located on the first floor of the northern most section of the elevation. A concrete stringcourse extends the length of the elevation acting as a sill for the first floor windows. The cornice and concrete stringcourse of the facade continue around to the eastern most bays, but does not extend the length of the elevation. Five basement windows pierce the concrete foundation. The windows are square and have 25-light fixed metal sashes. A section of seven rows of running bond bricks divide the foundation from the cast concrete belt that runs the length of the elevation. The belt course acts as a sill for five of the six first story square 20-light windows. The sixth window, located at the rear of the building is a divided four over two with metal sash and a concrete sill. A plain concrete lintel tops each window on the first floor. Two air-conditioning units project from the third and fifth first story windows. The five windows for the second floor are larger than the other two stories. The second story windows have 25-light fixed metal sashes and arched lintels of concrete and segmental arches composed of two rows of rowlock masonry. Vinyl gutters are found at the roofline that empty into metal downspouts in the middle and rear of the elevation.

The west elevation is composed of fourteen symmetrically placed large windows with fixed metal sash and a small four-panel window with a fixed metal sash and a side entry door located on the first floor of the northernmost section of the elevation. The basement has four windows with 20-light fixed metal sash. The two westernmost windows are partially covered with plywood and have air conditioning units projecting from them. Concrete steps project from the front of the basement, which lead to a single pane glass metal door on the first floor. Cast iron handrails lead around the concrete steps and landing. A small square vinyl awning and light cover the concrete landing. The first floor has four, square windows with 20-light fixed metal sashes that are divided by a double four over four window. A concrete stringcourse makes up the sill for the four large square windows and all five are topped by simple cast concrete lintels. The second story window openings have 25-light fixed metal sashes and arched lintels of concrete and segmental arches composed of two rows of rowlock masonry. Vinyl gutters are found at the roofline that empty into metal downspouts in the middle and rear of the elevation.

The rear elevation has only two window openings located on the west side of the elevation, one on the basement and one providing light to the first floor. The rectangular basement has a window opening with a 20-light fixed metal sash, and a first floor square window opening with a 20-light metal fixed sash capped with a concrete lintel. A concrete stringcourse creates a sill for this window like the first story windows on the other elevations. A single pane glass metal door is located in the

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Community Building
White County, Tennessee

center of this elevation on the first story. The door has a single pane transom that is topped with a concrete lintel. Concrete steps with iron handrails lead to the first floor door. A single pane glass door is located approximately two feet from the concrete steps at the basement level. The basement door does not have a transom and is topped with a concrete lintel. Directly beside the basement door is an exterior end brick chimney.

The interior of the Community Building retains its original floor plan, as very little has been done to alter it from its 1930s appearance. The floors of all three levels are concrete. The ceilings are composed of concrete on basement and first floor levels and of acoustical tile on the second floor. The interior doors are double paneled wood doors and are capped with single light transoms. The individual offices have been partitioned off with wood paneling. The first floor lobby is located at the north end of the building. A large double staircase located in the lobby leads up to the second floor auditorium. A second flight of stairs from the lobby provides access to the basement. At the rear of the building, a third staircase leads to both the basement and the second floor. The steps of the staircases are concrete and the posts and rails are metal.

The basement contains two bathrooms, the boiler room, and ten small offices. A fallout shelter, which is now used as a janitor's closet, is located in one of the rooms of the basement floor. The boiler room, still contains its original coal equipment, although the building has been converted to gas heat.

Contained within the first floor are nine offices, and two bathrooms. A ladies rest room was located in a first floor room on the northwest side of the building that has now been partitioned off into two offices. Opposite the ladies rest room, the rooms that served as a doctor's office are connected with original walls. A door separating the waiting room, which is now an office, is accompanied by an arched interior window opening containing a pair of casement windows with eight-paned frosted sashes.

The second floor has a small lobby on the north side of the building containing three door openings that provide access to the auditorium. The central door opening consists of a pair of double paneled wood doors, which are capped with an eight-light transom. Flanking the central door opening are two, wood paneled doors that are capped with six-light transoms. The auditorium retains its original open space and stage, which is located at the south end of the room. Two rows of hanging light fixtures with milk glass Art Deco styled light globes make up a major design feature of the room. The lower half of the walls surrounding the auditorium is concrete while the upper half is covered with a thick lincrusta type material stamped to appear like concrete block. A small anteroom located on the southeast part of the stage provides access to the stage area from the stairway. A small kitchen located on the southwest part of the stage also provides connection to the stage by a doorway.

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Community Building
White County, Tennessee

An original flagpole (C) is located on the southwest side of the small lawn in front of the Community Building. A recently placed marble marker (NC) for White County veterans of World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam is located on the northeast side of the small lawn.

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Community Building
White County, Tennessee

Statement of Significance

The Community Building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and C for its local significance in social history and architecture. The Sparta Community Building has continually served as a social, recreational, and charitable center for the town of Sparta and it retains its historic use. Completed during the Great Depression with funds provided by the Red Cross, the local American Legion Post and labor from the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Community Building originally provided Sparta with a civic auditorium, a ladies rest room, Red Cross offices, and a WPA sewing room. The Sparta Community Building is also significant for its association with local American Legion Post. 99, which bought the building in 1946. Architecturally, the building is a fine local example of Neo-Classical Revival architecture. The paired fluted pilasters that flank the main entry, coupled with the molded architrave and dentiled cornice highlight the Neo-Classical features found on the Community Building.

Sparta was founded in 1802, but was not made the county seat of White County until the 1820s, when pieces of the county were taken to form parts of Cannon, Coffee, DeKalb, Franklin, Grundy, Putnam, and Van Buren counties. Population and development in Sparta remained steady until the demand for raw materials increased significantly during the early twentieth century and especially during WWI when large amounts of timber and coal from the Cumberland Plateau were shipped from out from the town.¹ The economic boom lasted into the 1920s and was supported by several factories along the railroad corridor and the development of U.S. Highway 70 as a commercial corridor.² With 5,000 residents, Sparta is the only major residential and commercial area in the county.

When the Community Building opened in 1935, Sparta and White County experienced the worst of the Great Depression. Sparta's economy had been dependant on logging and the mining camps at nearby Bon Air, Ravenscroft, and Clifty.⁹ Throughout the 1930s, the depressed economy disrupted many of these activities and in 1935 and 1936 the leading Tennessee Products Corporation shut down their timber and mining activities forcing hundreds out of work. Like much of the nation, the local economy did not see a change of fortune until the demand for raw materials increased during World War II.¹⁰

¹ Lynn Niedermeier and Carroll Van West. *Sparta Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railroad Depot, National Register of Historic Places Nomination*. Listed December 7, 1992.

² Michael Floyd, Jennifer Martin, Leslie Sharp, and C. Van West, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination - Sparta Residential Historic District*, listed October 21, 1991.

³ Carroll Van West, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination - Oldham Theater*, listed November 11, 1993.

⁴Ibid.

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Community Building
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The Sparta Expositor states that 1935 "saw the culmination of a long cherished dream for a community building for Sparta."⁵ The Community Building is a scaled down version of two larger stat -supported War Memorial buildings, the Dickson County War Memorial Building (NR 1999) and Cocke County Memorial Building (NR 1997), which were built a few years earlier in Dickson and Newport respectively. When it opened in 1935, the local paper stated that the building "stands as a monument dedicated to the fallen heroes from this county in the great World war"(sic).⁶ Six thousand dollars for the building came from the local Red Cross chapter and future owner Post No. 99 provided several hundred dollars for the building fund. In April 1935, the State of Tennessee gave a Charter of Incorporation to Edgar Austin, A.E. Johnson, E.E. Carter, J.M. Taylor, Malcolm C. Hill, Mrs. Veolia Dibrell, Clay Barr, J.R. Tubb, Jr., W.F. Lee, J.V. Snodgrass, P.E. Doran, and Elizabeth Thom as the White County Community Building Association. The group enumerated the purpose of the building to be for the "advancement of the moral, spiritual, physical and general welfare of the community."⁷

The Tennessee Emergency Relief Administration (TERA) took over the programs of the Tennessee State Relief Administration and the Civil Works Administration (CWA) that handled Tennessee's relief work until April 1934. According to historian Carroll Van West, the TERA completed many CWA public works projects and "initiated hundreds of new ones."⁸ In 1935, The Works Progress Administration (WPA) took over and completed TERA's projects. It is known from newspaper accounts that the Community Building was a project of the TERA because the administration's offices were to be located in the building. However, by the time the building was completed, WPA provided labor to construct the building and a sewing room that supplied work for local women.⁹ The projects undertaken by the WPA were planned so that they could meet the needs of the community and employ a large amount of disadvantaged people. Some of these projects included "farm to market" and state roads, school construction and remodeling, five major airports, and research, statistical, and historical records projects.

One of the building's original primary purposes was to serve as a rest area providing women with a place to rest when visiting town. Mrs. Rutledge Smith first proposed the "Ladies Rest Room" idea in Tennessee in 1912 as part of an address to a state convention of homemakers. Smith explained that the "city woman is not necessary to the country woman, but the country woman is absolutely necessary to the existence of the city women."¹⁰

⁵ "A Review of The Past Year Shows Sparta Has Made Good" *The Sparta Expositor*, 2 January 1936.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ *Charter of Incorporation White County Community Building Association*. Sparta, Tennessee, 1935.

⁸ Carroll Van West, *Tennessee's New Deal Landscape* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 18.

⁹ "A Review of The Past Year Shows Sparta Has Made Good" *The Sparta Expositor*, 2 January 1936.

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Community Building
White County, Tennessee

Ladies' rest rooms had an economic benefit, as it was thought if country women felt comfortable coming to town they would return more often and in turn spend more money. Progressive ideals that promoted improving the lives of both country and city women with new consumer products and housekeeping techniques spread across America throughout the teens and 1920s. Since poultry and egg production was an important part of the White County economy, women often brought eggs or chickens to Sparta to sell, but had no place to wait on husbands and children, or simply sit down and rest. Although a late example, the Community Building reflects early twentieth century gender relations and the importance of agriculture in Sparta and White County.

During the Great Depression, the Community Building housed a doctor's office, the local Red Cross office, a WPA sewing room, University of Tennessee Extension workers, and the American Legion Post Service Officer. During World War II, the building was the center for community drills, a bomb shelter, and served as a gathering place for soldiers on maneuvers in the area. According to one local resident, the Community Building was a great service to the area because it was the only place that had enough room to meet the needs of local organizations or social groups.¹¹ Many local civic groups, such as, the Civitians, Rotarians, and American Legion Post No. 99 used the building as a meeting place.

Former World War I officers established the American Legion in 1919 and it gained 840,000 members and national power in its first year. The American Legion felt its greatest popularity in the years following World War II, with over 3,500,000 men belonging to the organization in 1945. Although the 1960s and 1970s saw a decline in membership, the American Legion remained a viable and powerful organization with 2,700,000 members.¹²

Aside from lobbying for national security and veterans benefits legislation on the national level, the American Legion has had a strong influence on local communities with American Legion posts sponsoring Boy Scout troops, Boys' State camps, academic high school competitions, and baseball leagues. The programs at the local level were most often used to instill the doctrine of "Americanism" or patriotism and good citizenship in the younger generations.¹³ Controversial programs sustained by the Legion included schoolbook censorship, a hard fought battle against

¹⁰ Carroll Van West. *Ladies Rest Room, National Register of Historic Places Nomination*, Listed November 29 1995, quoted in Mrs. Rutledge Smith, "Practical Ideals," *Tennessee Agriculture* 1 (January 1, 1913): 414-419.

¹¹ Lewis Teeple, interview by author, Sparta, TN., 29 June 2001.

¹² William Pencak, *For God and County The American Legion, 1919-1941* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989), xii.

¹³ *Ibid.*

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Community Building
White County, Tennessee

Communism that included censorship, and demands of loyalty pledges from teachers. Programs like these and others caused the Legion's critics to label the organization as fascist and reactionary. According to historian William Pencak, the national organization has worked "to instill a culture of patriotism in successive generations" and the Sparta post is an example of this culture on the local level.¹⁴

The Community Building reflects the popularity and influence of the American Legion immediately following World War II. Following the national trend, Post No. 99 also saw the greatest membership increase immediately following World War II and Korea with 320 members in 1947, dropping to 156 the following year, only to grow to nearly 350 by 1953. Post No. 99 purchased the Community Building from the White County Community Building Association in 1946 for \$9,500.

The Sparta Hennessee-Baker Post No. 99 is a part of the Fourth District that included twelve other counties in northern Middle Tennessee. In 1953, the post was the third largest in their district. The Sparta Post No. 99 was founded in 1928, along with a Ladies Auxiliary organization. Post No. 99 or the Hennessee-Baker Post was named for Clayton Hennessee and Joe Baker who were killed in World War I.

Post No. 99 purchased the building with a loan from both the First National and Commerce Union banks. The use and purpose of the building remained the same after the American Legion bought the building in 1946. When the Post bought the Community Building from the White County Community Building Association for \$9,500, it was in need of repair and the county and non-profit lacked the funds. Post 99 also served the White County community by providing office space for the veterans service officer, which every county is required to house. The Community Building was the monthly meeting place for the local post, as well as the auxiliary. Hennessee-Baker Post No. 99 was an active chapter and participated in many of the programs supported by the National Headquarters, and served as the base for much of the civic activity begun by the organization. Post No. 99 hosted district meetings several times throughout the 1940s and 1950s, and supported the national programs on the local level by sponsoring a Boy Scout troop, an American Legion baseball league, and sending delegates to Boys and Girls State. It also supported local veterans by promoting awareness about Veterans Administration benefits, clothing drives, and donating food baskets to poor veterans at Christmas. Annual events like turkey shoots, comedy shows and horse shows were sponsored by the post. In return for their community activism, the activities of Post No. 99 continually were given front-page coverage in the local newspaper.¹⁵

By 1953, the Post No. 99 had the Community Building paid off and all of the offices in the building rented. The second floor continued to be used "by all civic organizations and clubs for the benefit of the community without charge" and the post considered the purchase of the Community Building

¹⁴ Ibid., xi.

¹⁵ *The Sparta Expositor* January 1936-45.

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Community Building
White County, Tennessee

a "profitable investment."¹⁶ Membership for Post No. 99 peaked following the Korean War, however, interest in joining the American Legion waned with the onset of the Vietnam War. The drop in membership was most likely the result of the generation gap between older and newer veterans and the unpopularity of the Vietnam War.

The Community Building continues to play an active role in Sparta. Although the auditorium does not stay as busy as it once did, Post No. 99 still allows Sparta citizens to use it for free. The building continues to house offices that serve the Sparta community including the Red Cross, the Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency, the probation office, the White County Historical Society, and the County Environmentalist. USDA commodities are distributed from the Community Building every two months. The American Legion post gives a ROTC scholarship each year to a student from White County High School, continues to send students to Boys and Girls State, and donates to reading programs and Meals on Wheels. In 1987, the Sparta post hosted the largest presentation of Bronze Stars in the nation, presenting the award to 156 veterans and widows from the surrounding area.

Architecturally, the Community Building is locally significant for its Neo-Classical design that was popular in the United States from 1895 to 1950, using the designs of Classical Antiquity as inspiration. The Columbian Exposition at the Chicago World's Fair was an important impetus for the popularity of the style. Neo-Classical Revival designs are simpler than the preceding Beaux-Arts style, making use of broad plain wall expanses, Greek orders rather than Roman, and linteled windows rather than arched.¹⁷

Evolving over time, the Neo-Classical style was a reaction to the overly decorated late-Victorian architecture. The style provided the aesthetics of the original nineteenth century versions, while allowing for the features many Americans had come to expect such as larger, more flexible floor plans, and large-pane windows.¹⁸ The style was also popular for public buildings through the Great Depression period because the balanced façade, unpretentious scale, and the traditional images it represented reminded Americans of their "proud heritage of orderly government, modesty, and self-sufficiency."¹⁹

¹⁶ Fred Estes, *History of the American Legion, Department of Tennessee 1919-1953* (Nashville: Rich Printing Company), 188.

¹⁷ Maurita Peterson Holland, "Neo Classical Revival" *University of Michigan Architecture Core Team Project* [on-line]; available from <http://www.si.umich.edu/Project/march/styles/neoclassic.htm>; Internet; accessed 14 October 2001.

¹⁸ James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell, *House Styles in America* (New York: Penguin Studio, 1996), 183.

¹⁹ Steve Sadowsky, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination - Cheatam County Courthouse*, listed April 14, 1992.

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Community Building
White County, Tennessee

The White County Community Building Association choose a striking Neo-Classical design for the building that was planned to house many noble undertakings, such as, "a college or university, with powers to confer degrees; an academy; a debating society; lyceum; the establishment of a library; or "the support of a historical society."²⁰ The Community Building, built for use by all citizens of White County, hearkened back to the egalitarian ideals of the classical period.

The Community Building embodies these characteristics, which combined with such design elements as pilasters with Doric capitals, entablature with dentil molding, scrollwork atop the parapet wall, and quoins that surround the central window making the Community Building a representative example of the Neo-Classical style.

The Community Building was the social center for Sparta for many years and the building's role as a ladies rest room and continued association with the American Legion adds to its significance as an important part of the social history of Sparta and White County, Tennessee. It also has an notable association with the New Deal in White County as it was built with WPA labor, housed relief offices, and a WPA sewing room. The Community Building is also significant as an intact local example of the influence of the Neo-Classical style on twentieth century public architecture. On these grounds, the Community Building is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and C.

²⁰ *Charter of Incorporation White County Community Building Association. Sparta, Tennessee, 1935.*

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Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

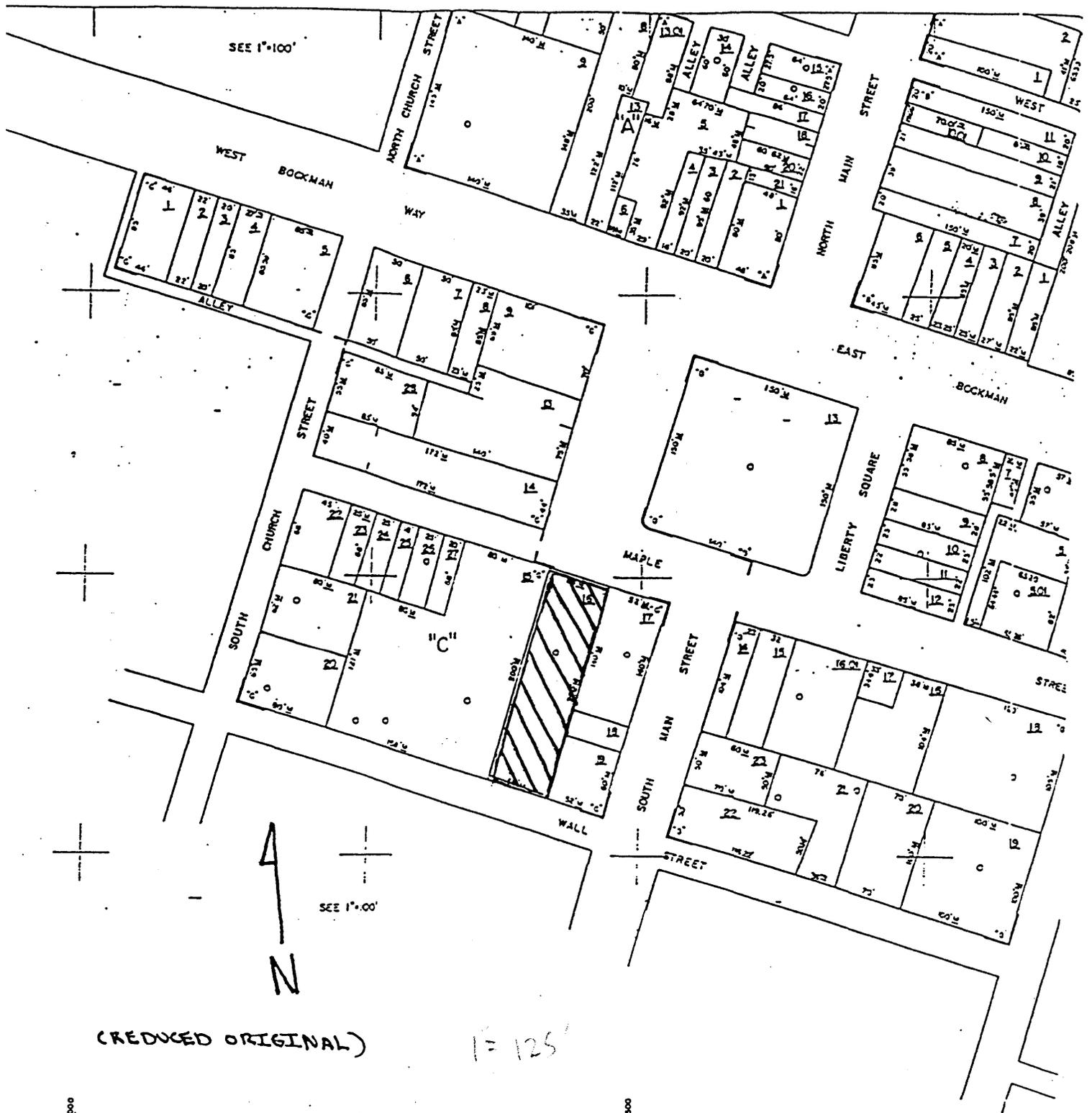
The boundary for the Community Building Community Building is delineated on the accompanying tax map for Sparta, White County, Tennessee, which is identified as city lot C-16. The nominated boundary includes the land containing the building that is historically associated with the Community Building.

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Community Building
White County, Tennessee

Photographs

Photos by: Ted Karpynek
Date: 29 June 2001
Neg: Tennessee Historical Commission

Façade, facing south
#1 of 16

Façade and part of west elevation, facing southeast
#2 of 16

South elevation, facing north
#3 of 16

East elevation, facing west
#4 of 16

Basement hallway, facing south
#5 of 16

First floor lobby, facing northwest
#6 of 16

Detail of first floor staircase, facing east
#7 of 16

First floor hallway, facing north
#8 of 16

Detail of doctor's office, arched window and door, facing north
#9 of 16

Detail of doctor's office, facing south
#10 of 16

Detail of office door
#11 of 16

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Community Building
White County, Tennessee

Service Officer's office, facing southwest
#12 of 16

Second floor lobby doors, facing west
#13 of 16

Auditorium, facing south
#14 of 16

Auditorium, facing north
#15 of 16

Detail of auditorium wall covering
#16 of 16