

## 2000 Most Endangered Historic Places

### **Adrian Brewer Studio – Still In Danger**

Adrian Brewer, his children and his father, have been termed by the director of the Arkansas Arts Center as the “First Family of Arkansas Art”. Brewer’s illustrious career included exhibits of his landscape paintings in major American museums and portraits of prominent political and social leaders including U.S. Vice President John Nance Garner. He established an early professional art school and produced a painting, “Sentinel of Freedom”, which was liberally reproduced and hung in most American schools. Late in his career, he accomplished through his own labor, a highly functional architecturally unique working artist’s studio in the garden of his home, aided by the skills of two prominent Arkansas architects. The design of the studio recalls features of the Arts and Crafts movement as it also blends Post-War modernism and technology. The studio not only provided a livelihood for Mr. Brewer and his family, but it also served as the backdrop for gatherings of nationally artists and writers, including Pulitzer Prize winning poet, John Gould Fletcher. This unique site remains a living record of a master southern artist, the mid-twentieth century studio he hand-built to further his professional career, and a rich coterie of artists and writers who shaped the urban culture of a small southern state during that period.

### **Donaghey Building – Saved**

The Donaghey Building was designed by Little Rock native Hunter McDonnell. It is associated with George W. Donaghey, who served as Arkansas’ governor for two terms. As a contractor, McDonnell built outstanding public buildings, including the 14-story Donaghey Building, the Wallace Building at Markham and Main Streets, and the Walden Building. As governor, Donaghey oversaw the completion of Arkansas’ State Capitol Building. The Donaghey Building was constructed for office space for medical, legal, and other professionals and has been almost fully occupied since its completion in April 1926.

The ground floor serves as a retail shop and cafeteria. The other floors are professional offices housing departments of Arkansas state government, private individuals, and small businesses.

### **Fitzgerald Station Stables – Saved**

The station was built in 1885 by the John Butterfield Overland Mail construction crew. The Butterfield Trail ran from St. Louis to San Francisco and became the nation’s first east to west transportation for passenger and freight service. The Fitzgerald family were appointed to serve as an important stop along the route in Shiloh (now Springdale). The original stables still stand along State Highway 265 in East Sprindale.

The structure was built from native lumber sawed in the area and from field stone picked up from the surrounding fields. It is now used as a stop in the annual Butterfield Trail Run.

### **John H. Johnson House – Saved**

John H. Johnson is the founder and president of Johnson Publishing Company, Inc., the most prosperous African American publishing company in America. His company publishes Black Star, Black World, and Ebony Jr. magazines. Johnson was born in 1918 in Arkansas City. He attended Arkansas City Colored School through the eighth grade. Since there was no schooling available after

the eighth grade, his mother saved enough money to move to Chicago by working two jobs. There, John became one of the most successful entrepreneurs in America. He founded Johnson Publishing Co. in 1942 and launched the Negro Digest, a magazine modeled after Reader's Digest, but aimed toward African Americans. Ebony, first published in 1945, was a breakthrough vehicle for national advertisers. His other corporate interests included radio stations, books, and cosmetics.

### **H. L. Mitchell/Clay East Building – Saved**

In 1934, the American Civil Liberties Union was founded with 18 men, 11 white and 7 black. H.L. Mitchell was one of them; and he convinced Henry Clay East of the position of the Union. Mitchell was the executive secretary for the Southern Tenant Farmer's Union until forced to leave Tyrone in 1935.

The Union was integrated when almost no other institution in America was. It exposed the evils of farm tenancy and the sharecropper system. The Southern Tenant Farmer's Union became a powerful force in American labor, and eventually a prototype for the United Farm Workers of America.

### **Saenger Theatre – Still In Danger**

The Saenger Theatre in Pine Bluff opened in 1924 to replace an earlier theatre on the site that had been destroyed in a fire in 1922. Constructed by Saenger Amusement Company from New Orleans, one of more than 350 Saenger Theatres built mostly in the Southeastern United States. The Pine Bluff Saenger is considered one of the first "first class" theaters the chain built. Designed by the company's chief architect, Emile Weil, for \$350,000. For over 50 years, the Saenger was heavily patronized by the locals and was the scene of Pine Bluff's most glittering social affairs. The theatre held minstrel shows, comedies, lectures, and vaudeville companies. Some of the most famous performers were D.W. Griffith, Norma Talmadge, Tom Mix and his Wonder Horse, John Philip Sousa's Military Band, Will Rogers, Gene Austin, and more recently, Fay Wray, Ruth Warrick, Teppi Hedren, and Cameron Mathison. It has also been rumored but now confirmed that Houdini performed there.

### **White River Bridge – Still in Danger**

Clarendon is a delta town where the ferry for the 1826 Military Road crossed the White River on the trip from Memphis to Little Rock. Before the double-span, Warren truss White River Bridge was constructed, traffic crossed the river by the ferry. The bridge was built by the Austin Bridge Company, and upon its completion on June 11, 1931, it was the longest bridge in southwest.