



A PRESERVE ARKANSAS EVENT



ARKANSAS'S MOST
ENDANGERED
PLACES



2017

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to 2017 Most Endangered Places Selection Committee Members: Sarah Hansen, Chair, Little Rock; Denise Ennett, Little Rock; Tim Maddox, Fayetteville; Tim Nutt, Little Rock; and Paul Porter, Little Rock.

Thank you to Jodi Barnes, Jamie Brandon, Sarah Hansen, Paul Porter, and Kerry Baldwin for participating in the announcement. And a huge thank you to David Ware for his assistance with display boards and the program.

ABOUT THE MOST ENDANGERED PLACES PROGRAM

Arkansas's Most Endangered Places program began in 1999 to raise awareness of the importance of Arkansas's historic properties and the dangers they face through neglect, encroaching development, and loss of integrity. The list is updated each year and serves to generate discussion and support for saving the state's endangered historic places. Previous listings include the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home and Dyess Colony Administration Building, Dyess; Arkansas Mound Sites, Statewide; Rohwer Japanese-American Relocation Center, Desha County; William Woodruff House, Little Rock; Magnolia Manor, Arkadelphia; Thompson Building, Hot Springs; Centennial Baptist Church, Helena; Donaghey Building, Little Rock; Saenger Theatre, Pine Bluff; Rosenwald Schools, Statewide; St. Joseph's Home, North Little Rock; Forest Fire Lookouts, Statewide; Hantz and Durst Houses, Fayetteville; Dunbar Neighborhood Historic District, Little Rock; Carlson Terrace, Fayetteville; and the Woodmen of the Union Building, Hot Springs.

Properties are nominated by individuals, communities, and organizations interested in preserving these places for future Arkansans. Criteria for inclusion in the list include a property's listing or eligibility for the Arkansas or National Register of Historic Places; the degree of a property's local, state, or national significance; and the imminence and degree of the threat to the property.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 19, 2017

CONTACT: Rachel Patton
rsilva@preservearkansas.org
501-372-4757

Endangered Eight: Preserve Arkansas Announces 2017 List of Arkansas's Most Endangered Places

LITTLE ROCK—Preserve Arkansas's 2017 Most Endangered Places list includes neglected or forgotten cemeteries throughout Arkansas, two ice houses, two rural churches, neighborhood schools slated for closure, and two historically African American neighborhoods.

The announcement took place on May 19 in the first floor lobby of the historic Fulk Building at 300 Main Street in Little Rock. Arkansas's Most Endangered Places Program began in 1999 to raise awareness of historically and architecturally significant properties throughout the state that are facing threats such as deterioration, neglect, insufficient funds, insensitive public policy, and inappropriate development. Preserve Arkansas solicited nominations from individuals and organizations throughout the state. The list is updated each year to generate discussion and support for saving the places that matter to Arkansas.

Properties named to the 2017 "Endangered Eight" list are as follows:

- Cemeteries, Burial Grounds, and Graveyards (Statewide)
- Citizens' Electric Company Light and Power Plant, Ice House, and Cold Storage Building (Eureka Springs, Carroll County)
- Old Galatia Church (Norfolk vic., Baxter County)
- Home Ice Company (Jonesboro, Craighead County)
- Little Rock Public Schools Slated for Closure: Franklin Elementary School and Woodruff Early Childhood Center (Little Rock, Pulaski County)
- Pankey Community (Little Rock, Pulaski County)
- Pleasant Street Historic District (Hot Springs, Garland County)
- Wabbaseka United Methodist Church (Wabbaseka, Jefferson County).

Cemeteries, Burial Grounds, and Graveyards

Statewide



Cemeteries, burial grounds, and graveyards are integral features of our cultural landscape. Some are associated with churches, others with communities large or small—and many are simply the province of families or groups of families. They are the resting places of rich and poor, male and female, elderly and infant, and the mosaic of ethnicities that make up Arkansas. They are also among the most valuable of historic resources. They are reminders of the places where people once lived, such as villages, plantations, rural communities, urban centers, and towns. Cemeteries reveal information about historic events, religions, lifeways, and genealogy.

Established by the living, cemeteries preserve memories of the dead; they give places character and definition. Grave markers ornate and plain, large or small, serve as directories of early residents; they index the ethnic diversity and unique population characteristics of a neighborhood. Cultural influences revealed in grave marker design, cemetery decoration, and landscaping contribute to the wide narrative of Arkansas history.

Unfortunately, historic cemeteries are endangered. They can only reveal their stories if their locations are known and protected. State law forbids the desecration of human skeletal remains and associated burial furniture, but many graves are unmarked, forgotten, or neglected. It is estimated that for every known burial ground, another five are lost to living memory. Marked and unmarked graves are threatened by residential and commercial development, agricultural production, natural forces such as weathering and uncontrolled vegetation, and the effects of pollution, vandalism, and theft. Although limited state funding is available for the preservation of historic cemeteries, additional cooperation at the local and regional levels is necessary for the conservation of these sacred places.

Citizens' Electric Company Light and Power Plant, Ice House, and Cold Storage Building (1893)

309 N. Main St., Eureka Springs, Carroll County



The development of public utilities and their delivery to the larger population is one of the great narratives of late nineteenth and early twentieth century America. It is a story that combines elements of finance, technology, markets, and growing public access to such amenities as electricity, year-round ice, and even refrigeration. The Citizens' Electric Company Light and Power Plant, Ice House, and Cold Storage Building in Eureka Springs is a striking artifact of this historical narrative.

The plant was built in 1893 and housed the coal-fired boilers that first generated electricity for the City of Eureka Springs. It was an offshoot of the Eureka Springs Electric Light and Street Railway Company, chartered two years earlier; such associations between tram lines and power generation were common. The company ownership changed in 1900 and shortened the name to the Citizens Electric Railway Company. The new owners diversified—ice-making facilities were added, as well as cold storage lockers, providing community businesses and families with refrigerated storage for perishables. The company also operated a recreational complex, Harmon

Park, and in 1904 became a wholesale bottler and shipper of “Ozarka” spring water.

The old power and ice plant has been dark for many years, and the building has deteriorated significantly. Most of the walls still stand, but there is no roof over the old generating plant, and many trees are growing inside. In the still-covered part of the building, much of the ice-making equipment remains in place. Located in the Eureka Springs Historic District, the building occupies a prominent site on Main Street as you enter downtown Eureka Springs from the north and is well-loved by the local community. It has been for sale for many years, but no one has been able to take on the task of rehabilitation. Although the building is in a deteriorated state, sufficient historic fabric remains for restoration or duplication. The successful rehabilitation of the Citizens’ Electric Company Light and Power Plant would be a boon to the revitalization of North Main Street.

Old Galatia Church (ca. 1900)

Five miles south of Norfolk on Hwy. 5, Baxter County



In the years just before the American Civil War, Euro-American settlers came to an area of rolling hills east of the White River in present-day Baxter County. They named the place Galatia, acknowledging a region of north-central Anatolia perhaps best-known today because of the Apostle Paul's letters to Christian converts living there.

In 1886 Robert Waid Lackey donated 10 acres for a church and cemetery. The first Galatia Church was destroyed by fire in 1900, and the present church was built soon thereafter to replace it. It is hard to overstate the significance of rural churches—they are much more than places of worship. Although affiliated with the Church of Christ at one time, the Old Galatia Church accommodated several denominations over the years. The church was used as a community gathering place. It was the site of meetings and revivals, pie suppers, weddings, and funerals. Generations are buried in the adjacent cemetery, which is still active and very well maintained.

The Old Galatia Church has not been in regular use for many years, although it is occasionally pressed into service. The interior of the church is in good shape, but its exterior needs some repair. The original wood exterior was covered with vinyl siding in the 1980s, and now the vinyl is falling off in places, exposing the original wood. The building was deemed unsafe by the local fire chief, and in 2015 the property was condemned. There is love for this old church and a desire to see it survive, but to ensure this will take funding and a vision of what the Old Galatia Church can become.

Home Ice Company (1907)

700 Cate Avenue, Jonesboro, Craighead County



Located a few blocks east of Main Street in downtown Jonesboro, the Home Ice Company has had many lives.

The building was constructed in 1907 adjacent to the Cotton Belt Railroad to house the Jonesboro Wagon Manufacturing Company, the city's only wagon maker. Then in 1913, encouraged by the Arkansas Peanut Growers Association, local businessmen converted the wagon factory into a peanut processing plant. The

Jonesboro Peanut Hulling Company was the first of its kind in the state and shelled peanuts grown throughout northeast Arkansas at that time. The peanut-shelling operation was short-lived; however, and the building was later purchased by successful Jonesboro businessman A. J. Scott to house his ice cream company. In 1920 Scott hired architect H. A. Lesmeister to remodel the building with a Spanish Colonial Revival-style addition on the front façade. Just before the Great Depression, the building became an ice plant and cold storage facility and continued as the Home Ice Company until a few years ago.

Time has not been kind to the Home Ice Company. After the death of its longtime owner, Sam Rosse, in 2012, the building, already a bit run-down, deteriorated further. It was condemned by the City of

Jonesboro in 2015. The Rosse family has appealed the decision, but the matter remains unsettled. Ice plants from the first part of the twentieth century are rare in Arkansas—especially those that combine intact distinctive architectural features with a long history of successive enterprises and service to the community. Because of its historic and architectural significance, the Home Ice Company was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in April 2017. If listed, the building would be eligible for financial incentives to aid in its rehabilitation.

Little Rock Public Schools Slated for Closure:
Franklin Elementary School, 1701 S. Harrison St.
Woodruff Early Childhood Center, 3010 W. 7th St.



Historic preservation is not just about saving old buildings. It is also about ensuring the health of the neighborhoods in which those old buildings “live and work.” In January 2017, the Little Rock School District announced plans to close four schools in anticipation of the loss of \$37 million in desegregation funds. Schools slated for closure included the Woodrow Wilson and Benjamin Franklin Elementary Schools, William E. Woodruff Early Childhood Center, and W.D. “Bill” Hamilton Academy, the former Southwest Junior High School. More recently, the District announced that Wilson and Hamilton Schools would be repurposed, leaving two of the original four to face an uncertain future.

Both Franklin and Woodruff Schools are significant components of their respective neighborhoods. Built in 1911 and named after the founder and editor of the Arkansas Gazette, Woodruff Elementary School is located in the National Register-listed Stiff Station Historic District. It was designed by Little Rock architect Theo Sanders and featured three bay massing crowned by two brick towers, a clay tile roof, exposed rafter tails, and decorative brickwork. The Woodruff School was built to serve the residents of Stiff's Addition, platted in 1898 by jeweler and civic booster Charles Stiff, as well as subsequent additions platted as Little Rock expanded to the west toward Pulaski Heights.

Built in 1949, Franklin Elementary was constructed to serve Little Rock's Oak Forest neighborhood. Oak Forest experienced a building boom in the mid-to-late 1940s as soldiers returned from World War II. Many homes in the neighborhood belonged to veterans and their young families, necessitating the construction of Franklin Elementary. The school's Mid-Century Modern design included large banks of windows and an asymmetrical entrance flanked by a solid brick panel perpendicular to the façade. Franklin Elementary has not yet been evaluated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, and further study is needed to determine its historic and architectural significance.

The closure of these schools will potentially have a negative impact on the historic buildings themselves if they are allowed to sit vacant. More importantly, their closure will constitute the loss of a vital neighborhood asset. This is the case around the country, according to a recent study by Elaine Simon, co-director of the Urban Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania. She wrote, "When a neighborhood loses its schools, it also loses an institution that builds relationships among local residents and binds generations, while it serves local children. Losing schools makes it all the more likely that these neighborhoods will deteriorate..."

There is extensive community support to retain and continue to use each of these schools. Ideally, they can be retained as schools. If this is not possible, Preserve Arkansas would like the buildings to be adaptively reused in a way that benefits their neighborhoods and respects the historic character of the structures.

Pankey Community

*160 acres along Cantrell Rd./Hwy. 10 from
Crockett St. to Black Rd., Little Rock, Pulaski County*



Imagine a bold visionary, buying up tracts of unimproved land, with the idea of creating a place free of privation and prejudice; land bought with dreams in mind—dreams that hundreds of families might lift themselves out of poverty and become homeowners. Now, imagine that visionary to have been an African American woman of the early twentieth century. Welcome to the Pankey community, the legacy of a remarkable woman, Josephine Irwin Harris Pankey, educator, real estate developer, and philanthropist.

Beginning in 1907, Mrs. Pankey, along with her husband, Samuel C. Pankey, bought nearly 500 acres located in and around Little Rock, starting with an 80-acre tract 13 miles west of downtown Little Rock along present-day Cantrell Road/Highway 10. She subdivided the acreage into 32 blocks/384 lots in 1909. Mrs. Pankey found ways for African Americans to get loans and buy property. By the early 1920s, Mrs. Pankey more than doubled the size of her initial western tract. The Pankey community experienced growth in the late 1920s as it became a safe haven for those seeking higher ground after the Flood of 1927 as well as those who feared mob violence in the aftermath of John Carter's lynching. Along with home sites, Mrs.

Pankey reserved land for parks, churches, and a school. The Pankey community was also home to thriving black-owned shops, cafes, and even an outdoor movie theater. From 1958 to 1965, 200 black children from Pankey and surrounding communities attended Pankey Elementary School.

As Little Rock grew to the west, commercial and residential development got closer and closer to Pankey, leading to the City's annexation of the community in 1979. Today, Pankey has been negatively impacted by highway widening, encroaching development, and youth flight and the consequent aging of its population. Many of its houses are dilapidated, and empty lots are overgrown.

But that is not to say that Pankey is out—just down. Descendants of its original inhabitants live there and keep the flame of pride alive. Significant historic properties, such as the Samuel and Josephine Pankey House and Rocky Mountain Cemetery still survive. Three religious congregations, all operating on land donated by Mrs. Pankey, continue to meet in the community. The onetime site of Pankey Elementary School is now home to the Pankey Community Center. Pankey residents and supporters know that the community is endangered—but they have plans for improvement. They hope that inclusion on this list will build interest and energy toward preserving the legacy of Josephine Pankey and the neighborhood that proudly bears her name.

Pleasant Street Historic District

Pleasant Street from Jefferson to Church streets and adjacent blocks, Hot Springs, Garland County



Located a block east of Malvern Avenue in downtown Hot Springs, the Pleasant Street Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. The district, which includes some 93 buildings, represents the most intact area of the city's historic African American community. In fact, it is the largest African American historic district in the state. The Malvern Avenue commercial corridor and its adjacent residential neighborhood once constituted a thriving mixture of professional offices, stores, music venues, churches, schools, hotels, rooming houses, and single-family residences. Construction dates in the district range from 1900 to the 1950s and reflect a variety of architectural styles.

The district is also significant for its association with John Lee Webb. A graduate of Alabama's Tuskegee Institute, Webb held a certificate in carpentry and enjoyed a successful career as a contractor. He was also active in fraternal organizations, and about 1918 Webb relocated the headquarters of the Supreme Lodge of the Woodmen of the Union from Mississippi to Hot Springs, Arkansas. He went on to superintend construction of the Woodmen of the Union Building at 501 Malvern Avenue as well as several commercial and residential buildings in the Pleasant Street neighborhood. In the 1920s,

Webb remodeled the house at 703 Pleasant Street by adding a red brick veneer and green tile roof. This was his family home from the early 1920s through the 1940s and is now being restored by the nonprofit organization, PHOEBE, which is dedicated to the preservation of African American history in Hot Springs.

While landmarks such as Visitor's Chapel AME Church, the Woodmen of the Union Building, and the John Lee Webb House are being preserved, many buildings in the district suffer from deferred maintenance issues and deterioration. These issues, when left unaddressed for long periods of time, have resulted in condemnation and the eventual demolition of historic resources. The district also suffers because of its prime location adjacent to the Hot Springs Convention Center and within walking distance of the Central Avenue Historic District. In this situation, vacant and/or deteriorating historic buildings are in danger of becoming parking lots.

With this listing, Preserve Arkansas hopes to raise awareness of the Pleasant Street Historic District's significance and provide advocacy and education to help property owners and other stakeholders better understand and preserve this vital element of the city's history.

Wabaseka United Methodist Church (1925)
*U.S. Hwy. 79 and Garrett Ln.,
Wabaseka, Jefferson County*



How does one “save” a church? It might be said that the saving business is supposed to work the other way around—but this time, the usual roles are reversed. Earlier this year, a sign was posted on the doors of the Wabaseka United Methodist Church, advising readers that due to dwindling attendance, the old church was facing a crisis of continuation.

Located in northeastern Jefferson County, the Wabaseka United Methodist Church was organized in 1891 as the Wabaseka Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The present Classical Revival-style church was constructed in 1925 and is the most architecturally significant building in Wabaseka. The church’s history ties it and its congregation to Captain Nathaniel Terry Roberts, one of Wabaseka’s founders. Its other notable historic connection is with Willie Kavanaugh Hocker, a local teacher whose design for the Arkansas state flag was selected to represent the state in 1913. Ms. Hocker was an active member of the Wabaseka Methodist Episcopal Church, South and lived in a small cottage (no longer standing) behind the church. A historical marker was placed near the church

to honor Ms. Hocker's important contribution to our state.

The 1925 construction of this substantial brick church testifies to the congregation's onetime vitality within the community—and it is still a building of substance, a well-preserved reminder of Wabbaseka's prosperous times. The interior of the church retains its original plaster walls, woodwork, pews, and pressed tin ceiling. The window frames are original, although the original glass was replaced at some point by stained glass. The exterior is almost entirely original, apart from a small concrete-block addition. The church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

Like many towns in the Arkansas Delta, Wabbaseka has experienced a decline in population. Its population peaked in the 1970s at over 600; today, the residents number a little more than a third of that. There is no industry and little business, but the town hangs on. The Wabbaseka United Methodist Church has strong historical ties to the community. Its solidity should make it a visual anchor for a town that persists. One might say that the most direct way to "save" a church is to put people in its pews, but absent this, creative thinking is needed to ensure its survival.



ABOUT US

Preserve Arkansas works to build stronger communities by reconnecting Arkansans to our heritage and empowering people to save and rehabilitate historic places.

CONNECT WITH US!

In Person: 201 W. Fourth Street
North Little Rock, AR 72114

By Mail: P.O. Box 305
Little Rock, AR 72203

Online: PreserveArkansas.org

Facebook: [Facebook.com/PreserveAR](https://www.facebook.com/PreserveAR)

Twitter: [PreserveAR](https://twitter.com/PreserveAR)

Flickr: [Flickr.com/preservearkansas](https://www.flickr.com/photos/preservearkansas/)

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 29 - Block on Rock 4th Birthday Bash

4:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

A portion of the proceeds benefits Preserve Arkansas.

Stone's Throw Brewing

402 E. 9th Street, Little Rock

October 14 - Wood Window Workshop

John Lee Webb House

703 Pleasant Street, Hot Springs