

**Walks through History  
Downtown Mountain Home  
September 9, 2017  
By: Rachel Silva  
Revised By: Amy Milliken**



## **Introduction**

Baxter County was formed from part of Fulton, Izard, Marion, and Searcy Counties on March 24, 1873. The county was named after then-Governor Elisha Baxter of Brooks-Baxter War fame (Baxter was Governor of AR from 1873-74; Baxter was a native Unionist ["scalawag"] who fought Joseph Brooks [Minstrel or "carpetbagger"] for the governorship).

Mountain Home was incorporated as a town in 1888, but the original settlement at this location was called Rapp's Barren after an early white settler who established a trading post in the area in the early 1800s. The area

was called “Barren” because it was a tall grass prairie with very few trees, and people thought the soil was infertile. It is said that for every thousand trees we see here today, early settlers saw only one. People settled by springs, rivers, or a creek, and they hunted, trapped, farmed, and traded amongst themselves to make a living. In the early days, cotton and corn were big crops in this region because of the vast prairie land available for cultivation. However, much of the good farmland was flooded when Norfolk and Bull Shoals Lakes were made. Trees began to grow in large numbers here after the land had been cultivated, and the water table changed due to the formation of the lakes.

Colonel Orrin L. Dodd established a plantation at Rapp’s Barren in the early 1850s, and he also owned a plantation down the White River at Augusta. Legend goes that his slaves would brag about their “Sweet Mountain Home,” cooled by mountain breezes, while traveling back and forth between plantations via steamboats. Colonel Dodd worked with Professor John S. Howard to establish the Male and Female Academy here in the 1850s, and the town of Mountain Home grew up around the school. When Baxter County was established in 1873, Mountain Home was named the county seat because of its educational institution. The Mountain Home College opened in 1893, attracting more people to the town.

In the 1890s, there was a mining boom in the region, as iron ore, zinc, and lead were found at Buffalo City. This enticed the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern Railroad to come through Cotter in 1903. Attempts were made in the early 1900s to move the county seat to Cotter or Gassville, but ballot boxes were “misplaced” in one instance and a third story was added to the courthouse in Mountain Home in the other (will be discussed further later).

After several devastating floods, the U.S. government authorized construction of the Norfolk and Bull Shoals Dams to initiate flood control in the White River Basin. The Norfolk Dam was completed in 1944, and the Bull Shoals Dam was finished in 1951. President Harry S. Truman spoke at the dedication ceremony of Bull Shoals Dam in 1952. Ever since the construction of these dams, water recreation and retirement have drawn people to the area. The Baxter Regional Medical Center and the Arkansas State University—Mountain Home campus significantly contribute to the Mountain Home economy as well.

### **Baxter County Courthouse (1941-1943)**

The Baxter County Courthouse was built by the WPA between 1941 and 1943, and it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. Since 1996, the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has awarded \$255,850 toward restoration of the Baxter County Courthouse. The building was designed by Fayetteville architect T. Ewing Shelton in the Plain/Traditional style with minimal Art Deco influences. The building rests on a rough-faced, cut stone foundation and has walls of cut stone with a buff brick veneer. The original windows were multi-paned casement windows with transoms, but they were replaced with aluminum windows in 1986. Although the building lacks intricate detail, it has two marble stringcourses, 6 marble pilasters, a marble cornice with “Baxter County Courthouse” engraved in the frieze, quoins, and scalloping above the entryway. The flat roofline and vertical focus created by the pilasters give the building an Art Deco influence. The brickwork around the second-story windows also features soldier and stretcher courses.

Court was first held in Baxter County in the store and post office at the corner of the Randolph D. Casey House (that building [store] is on the fairgrounds). In the 1870s, a school tax was levied in order to raise money for a courthouse. At that time, the Joe Price Boarding House at the corner of College and Main Streets (Hwy. 62) was purchased for \$600.00 to be used as a courthouse. The first courthouse on the public square was built in 1880 because the boarding house was run-down and no longer suitable for court. Captain Ben F. Bodenhammer was awarded the building contract for the cost of \$1,292. He constructed a wood frame building, but it burned in 1890. Later that year, a two-story brick courthouse was constructed in its place for a cost of \$4,200. During the administration of County Judge G.W. Walker (1908-1912), a third story was added to the building in order to keep the county seat at Mountain Home. You see, an old state law proclaimed that when a courthouse with at least three stories was located in a town, it would remain the county seat. Judge Walker had anticipated a push to move the Baxter County seat to Cotter because of the growth it experienced with the coming of the railroad in 1903. The courthouse remained on this site until 1941, when it was torn down because of extensive fire damage. At that point, the current building was started and reached completion in 1943.

### *Interior*

The jail used to be located on the third floor of the courthouse, but the jail moved out of the building in the mid-1970s. Since then, the third floor has been converted to offices and a conference room. In 1968, Baxter County Sheriff Emmett Edmonds was shot and killed in this building in an attempted jail break. Prisoner Edwin Odus Pittman struggled with Edmonds in the stairwell and managed to get his gun away from him, fatally wounding the Sheriff with his own gun. Pittman was apprehended after a 65-hour manhunt and served a life sentence without parole. Edmonds' widow, Pauline Powell Edmonds, was appointed to fill her husband's term, and their son, Joe, later became Sheriff.

The courtroom was completely remodeled in 2003 and is now used for Quorum Court meetings. All other court proceedings take place at the new county court complex. The original benches are still here though. Elevators were installed in 1982-83. The basement level of the courthouse used to be a bomb shelter under the Civil Defense Program, and there also used to be a vault in the basement where they kept confiscated whiskey (Baxter County did not become a wet county until the 1980s).

### **Commercial Buildings on Courthouse Square**

*Two cut stone buildings on southwest corner of square (across Main St. from Robertson Bldg)*—one on corner was Western Auto in the 1950s, but it was a general store? when it was constructed circa 1910. The building to the south of this one was a Ford dealership in the 1950s, but originally, there was a wood frame building here that housed Douglass Dry Goods and Grocery Store as early as 1910.

#### ***T.E. Robertson Building (1936)***

The T.E. Robertson Building was constructed in 1936 as T.E. Robertson's general store. The slogan painted on the front of the building read "T.E. Robertson, Everything for Everybody." Robertson's store remained in this building until about 1953, and then it became the Ben Franklin Store and Bean's Grocery. Currently, the Baxter County Tax Collector and the Assessor's Office reside in the building. The building is constructed in the early twentieth century standard commercial style with transom windows (covered by awning) and a parapet with an elevated central portion. The building is actually red brick, but it has been painted yellow. A stone panel with "T.E. Robertson" engraved in it is centered in the parapet. The

seemingly simple design boasts some decorative brickwork, including soldier and stretcher courses as well as rows of headers and rowlock bricks (ones that make the square design in the parapet). Before this building was constructed, there was a wood frame building on this site. It housed a post office and J.T. Tipton Doctor's Office circa 1904.

***The People's Bank Building (circa 1904)***

This two-story rough-cut stone building was probably constructed around 1904. It is the only building remaining from a historic photograph of the south side of the square taken around 1904. The building was originally constructed to house The People's Bank?, but it has also housed The Pool Room, a café, Oklahoma Tire and Supply, and today, the Nature's Way Café & Gift Shop. As early as June 1877, Mountain Home's local newspaper, the *Quid Nunc* (means "What Now?") ran advertisements for "Charles H. Anderson, stone cutter and mason." As you can see, the buildings on Mountain Home's courthouse square are constructed in the Rustic style typical of towns in the Ozark Mountain region of the state. The majority of these buildings were probably built with local stone, and the remaining buildings probably had stone shipped in from another quarry in the region. The building lacks much exterior ornamentation, but it does exhibit a slight Italianate influence with its arched window surrounds on the second floor.

***Two stone buildings to east of People's Bank Bldg ("Health Food"—circa 1920)***

These two buildings are constructed with the same rough-cut stone blocks used on the People's Bank Building. Even though they appear to be one structure, they were not built at the exact same time, or they were constructed with a fire wall in between to separate them. You can see the seam between the two structures. These buildings were probably constructed around 1920, and they featured transom windows, coping at the roofline, and a dentiled cornice. By the 1950s, the building on the right housed the Ramey Company, which was a 5 & 10 cent store. The building on the left housed Hardcastle's Dry Goods Store. Before this structure was built, the far right portion was an empty lot and there were two wood frame buildings on the other portion. One of the three frame buildings from here to the corner housed Alec Wolf's General Merchandise. His advertisement in the 1902 newspaper also stated that he sold live stock and was the county treasurer. He established his store in 1890.

***Building on corner (“Mountain Home Floral Company”—circa 1920)***

The building on the corner was probably constructed circa 1920, and it features a combination of rough-cut stone blocks and red bricks. The building has a cut-away entrance and a stepped parapet on its eastern side. The brickwork creates the appearance of quoins on the front eastern corner. This building housed a hardware and appliance store as early as 1951. Before this building was constructed, there was a wood frame building on this corner. The listings from the 1902 newspaper do not give business addresses, but some of the other merchants on the south side of the square included: Combs & Baker, general merchandise; Morris & Sons, farm implements (I think this was also in the post office building located where the Robertson building is now); City grocery, staple and fancy groceries; Baxter Bulletin offices; and H.J. Massey, general merchandise.

***Buildings at southeast corner of square (circa 1920)***

The rough-cut stone building at the southeast corner of the square was probably constructed circa 1920, with the other two buildings to the east of it constructed at a later date (possibly as late as the 1950s). This entire corner was occupied by H.H. Westmoreland’s livery, feed, and sale stable in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The livery served as the place to park buggies and wagons or put your horse up for the night. You could also catch a ride on the Inter-state stage and express line from the building, which made regular trips between Yellville and West Plains, Missouri. The old Mountain Home Methodist Church was located just to the south of the livery stable until it was destroyed by a tornado about 1904. It was a two-story wood frame building with a steeple.

***Stone building on east side of square (circa 1900 or earlier?)***

Although it has three storefronts, this is one structure. You can see that there are no seams between the three sections—the rough-cut stone blocks are continuous between sections. The difference in color is due to the middle section being painted. This building appears in photos from circa 1904, so I am estimating that it was built around 1900 or earlier. It is designed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century standard commercial style. It features transom windows and a dentiled cornice as well as decorative panels which rise above the parapet. Either side of the

façade is punctuated by a decorative stone cap. As early as 1951, this building housed Wiseman's Dry Goods Store and Cooper's Rexall Drug Store.

### ***Three buildings to north of corner building***

The two buildings covered with fieldstone probably date to the 1920s. None of these three buildings were present in a 1912 photograph. The building in the middle with the sandstone veneer has been recovered since the early 1950s. The façade used to be covered in a light-colored brick with a decorative pattern in a darker color brick (possibly old theater?). Again, the 1902 newspaper advertisements do not give exact addresses for the businesses listed, but on the east side of the square, you could find: L.G. Talbert, furniture, undertaking, and barber shop; R.C. and O. Livingston, general merchandise (I think both of these were in the stone building on corner); Sam Wilkes, groceries and feed; East side drug store; and A.J. Trumann, general merchandise, John T. Baker Building.

### ***Two-story red brick building on corner (circa 1912 or earlier)***

The two-story red brick building on the corner dates from at least 1912 because it appears in a historic photograph from that year. The building was designed to have two storefronts, with two windows centered above the right storefront and three windows centered above the left storefront. The building is a good example of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century standard commercial style with a parapet, transom windows, and decorative brick corbelling along the cornice. The parapet steps down along the building's northern and southern elevations. The building had a painted advertisement on its southern elevation in a photograph from the early 1950s. It read "C.S. Woods, Ozarks White River Co., Inc., Real estate office." Charles Woods and his son founded this company and sold lots across north central Arkansas for \$1.25 to \$3.00 an acre. Their company was best known for developing the area around Bull Shoals Dam beginning in 1947.

### ***Building at northeastern corner of square (circa 1920)***

This building is similar to the building on the southern end of the courthouse square, except it is covered in fieldstone instead of rough-cut stone blocks. It was probably built about 1920 because it does not appear in the 1912

photograph. It appears to be a furniture and appliance store in the early 1950s, but there are several listings for the wood frame building that occupied this site in 1877: H.C. Jones, carpenter and joiner; Jesse Mooney, attorney at law; James H. Cole, carpenter and undertaker, special attention given to wagon repairing and coffin making; R.F. Lister, boot, shoe, and harness repair; William Baldwin, blacksmith and wagon maker; James M. Wolf, goods and groceries; and James M. Scroggin, fashionable bootmaker.

### ***Buildings on north side of square***

The buildings on the north side of the square probably date to around 1920, but the only one that has not been altered is the rough-cut stone block building on the western end. The majority of the remaining buildings have been covered with stucco and/or had major window reconfigurations (this was done in the last 10 years). Originally, there was a row of wood frame buildings on the north side of the square. In 1877, some of the businesses on this side included: Wolf and Hopper, blacksmith and Beckett and Hopper; and by 1902, the Baxter County Citizen offices and Russell Brothers, general merchandise and farm implements.

### ***Buildings on the west side of the square***

The block of commercial buildings on the west side of the square was razed in 1999 because they had fallen into severe disrepair. Plaza 2000 now occupies the site. In the 1902 newspaper advertisements, businesses on the west side of the square included: the Mountain Home Bank; Mountain Home Drug Store (both in first floor of the Massey Building); White River Mining and Development Company; R.E. Walden, notary public; M.T. Bush, real estate (all in second floor of Massey Building); Chenoweth, Brown, and Co., practical miners, prospectors, and dealers in real estate; James T. Tracy, general merchandise; R.P. London, jeweler; and C.A. Carr, photographer. By the early 1950s, the Morgan Theater and a drug store were located on the west side of the square.

### ***Old City Hall and Fire Station (1940)*** DELETE FROM TOUR

The building straight ahead of us was built in 1940 and has housed the Mountain Home City Hall, the fire department, revenue office, county library, attorney's office and possibly other things. The building has been altered several times since it was built, but the basic window and door



openings remain the same. An early photo of the building shows it with a stucco veneer and the words “Fire Dep’t City Hall” painted across the front beltcourse (that is now a tan color). There were three casement windows on the upper story, and the door and window on the right side of the first story are in the same place. However, the entrance to the left used to be the garage door for the fire department. This building was constructed by Oscar Baker and sits at the north end of Baker Street, and the J. Asa Baker House sits at the south end of Baker Street. The buildings were constructed in these places on purpose, so that Baker Street would begin and end with Baker buildings. You can look straight down Baker Street from here and see the Asa Baker House on the other end.

### ***Guy Berry Intermediate School (1937-1938)***

The Guy Berry Intermediate School was built by the WPA in 1937-1938. The blonde brick building exhibits Craftsman influences like porches with thick, square brick columns that extend to the floor of the porch, widely overhanging eaves, and decorative brackets. The windows in the building have been replaced, vinyl siding has been added around the windows, and an addition has also been added to the rear of this building. The building is now called the Guy Berry College & Career Academy and it currently houses the ALE Program for grades 5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> for the Mountain Home School System and the SpEd main offices.

The Rapp’s Barren Male and Female Academy was opened in 1853 on this site. It was housed in a white, two-story, wood frame Colonial Revival-style building, but it was burned by Bushwhackers and Jayhawkers (bushwhackers were Confederate sympathizers and jayhawkers were Union sympathizers in the guerilla conflict) during the Civil War. Another building was constructed on this site in 1868. The school building was rebuilt many times during its history. The Mountain Home School, a large two-story brick building, was located on this site as early as 1911-12. The school housed all 12 grades until 1935.

Guy Berry was born in 1905 and died in 1999. Guy Berry graduated from the Mountain Home School and began teaching there the following year. From 1925-31 he served as Dean of Students at what is now Arkansas Tech University in Russellville. In 1931, he became superintendent of schools in Mtn. Home (the old school administration building is now Guy Berry

Intermediate School). He stayed in that position for 8 years, but during that time a new school was built on South College Street to house part of the students. From 1939-47 he was superintendent of schools at Norfolk and Flippin. In 1947, he began working for the State Dept. of Education and began working for the U of A in 1951. He retired in 1973. In 1985, he was honored for his outstanding work as a teacher and administrator by having this school building named for him. Guy Berry is given credit for starting the lunch program in the Mountain Home schools, and he made great strides toward getting children transported so they could attend school.

### *Mountain Home Cemetery*

Mrs. Catherine Carey Paul deeded the first acre of land to be used as the Mountain Home Cemetery in 1874. Her husband, Milas Paul, was supposedly the first person buried here in 1874 (although I have found conflicting dates in the directory compiled within "*Of Grave Importance: The Cemeteries of Baxter County, Arkansas*"). Additional ground has been added several times since then. Mountain Home Cemetery contains the graves of veterans of the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, WWI, and WWII. This is still an active cemetery.

### **Iconography:**

**Grave markers** were usually **rich with personal meaning** and reflected the life of the deceased in an intimate way. Funeral rites were much more personal than they are today. Just by comparing headstones in the historic section of the cemetery to the headstones in the newer portions you can see a difference in the level of detail and use of funerary art.

**Low concrete or brick coping** was common in cemeteries of the South.

**Lambs**: Lambs are usually on the graves of children, especially infants, and symbolize innocence.

**Urns**: Typical decorative devices on tombstones after the Revolutionary War. Unusual because most of them did not contain ashes.

**Draped Objects:** Symbol of reverence or the veil between earth and the heavens.

**Obelisks:** Egyptian Revival architecture form symbolizing a ray of sunlight.

Any **broken columns usually symbolize a life cut short.**

From *Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography* by Douglas Keister (2004)

Example of detail on old headstones: White obelisk with engraving of kneeling child, inscribed with message “Andrew Calhoun, Son of A.J. and M.C. Truman. Died Jan. 12, 1883. Aged 13 ys., 1 m., 4 ds.”

### **Jeremiah Asa Baker House (mid-to-late 1800s?)**

When Jeremiah Asa Baker purchased this land in 1884, there was already a house on this site. It belonged to Professor J.S. Howard, founder of the Mountain Home Male and Female Academy. Mr. Baker built around, and added to, the existing house, and one of his sons did more remodeling in 1939. As of 1988, the exterior façade remained almost the same as it did in 1900.

The right (or southern) portion of the Baker House is the original (or at least it is what was built in the 1880s by Mr. Baker). The house probably consisted of the two-story portion with a side-gabled roof and a one or two-story wing projecting to the north, creating an L-shape. The house’s current H-shape is a more recent development. The north side-gabled wing was probably added in the 1930s remodel? And the middle wing was extended to join the two larger sections. The upper story porch was probably also added at a later date. The front entrance was probably directly behind the Sparks Gamma House sign at one time.

### **J.T. “Jim” Tracy House (1927) DELETE FROM TOUR**

Jim Tracy purchased this property from J.B. Hart in 1911, and it already had a house, cistern, well, barn, and other outbuildings. The Tracy family raised a garden to provide food for themselves and also had a milk cow and a few chickens. In addition, Mr. Tracy owned a cattle farm near the White River, and he would keep his cattle in a lot adjacent to his house in town before

shipping them to market. The family also owned a general store on the west side of the Mountain Home square. However, the original Tracy house was demolished in 1926, and the current structure was built in 1927.

It is a good example of the Craftsman style with its widely overhanging eaves, decorative brackets, and tapered piers on thick, square, brick bases. The multi-paned windows and sidelights are also characteristic of the style.

### **Floyd Baker House at 914 Main St. (“Remember Me”)**

This house was built around 1900 by Floyd Baker, the son of Asa Baker. The building is made out of limestone and chert believed to have been brought to the site by wagon from near Gainesville, Mo. The current owners have restored the building both inside and out. They have enclosed the front porch with glass to protect their sale items, but other than that everything is believed to be original. Floyd and Odra's son, Robert, lives about 15 miles east of Mtn. Home. The house is a good example of the Craftsman style with its front facing gables, large decorative brackets, decorative shingles in the gable end, and porch supported by tapered columns on square piers.

### **Case-Shiras-Dearmore House (1880)** DELETE FROM TOUR

The Case-Shiras-Dearmore House was built in 1880 in the Plain Traditional style with some Craftsman influence in the front porch columns. The wing on the east side of the house has been added, and the windows have been replaced. They were originally four-over-four windows. Obviously, the roof has been replaced with a metal one. It was originally wood shingle. The steel siding is the same width as the original wooden lap siding, and the original wooden window trim has been preserved. An historic photograph shows the porch being supported by thin, wooden spindles, so this Craftsman porch likely resulted from a remodel in the 1920s when the style was very popular. The house also had at least three brick chimneys.

Dr. J.H. and Jennie McFarland Case moved to Mountain Home from Ohio in 1873, but moved to New Mexico in 1875 in search of better fortune during the hard years of Reconstruction and rebuilding in Mountain Home. They returned to Mountain Home in 1878 and built this house in 1880. Dr. Case died in 1889, and Mrs. Case turned the house into a hotel and boarding house for travelers. There were several outbuildings on the property, which encompassed at least 3 acres at that time. Among the outbuildings, there were slaves' quarters and two large two-story barns for the horses, carriages,

and sometimes the stagecoach (also known as the “hack” or small mail and passenger stagecoach that ran between West Plains, Mo. and Mountain Home—last trip made in June 1907). The Cases’ oldest daughter, Mayme, married Tom Shiras in this house, and their daughter, Ethel, was also born here. Tom Shiras purchased the house in 1900, and proceeded to buy the local newspaper, *The Baxter Bulletin*, in 1904. The Shiras family operated the newspaper until the late 1970s. Ethel and her husband, Ben Dearmore, also lived in the house. The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992 for its association with local newspaper publisher Tom Shiras.

### **James Lee Paul/Acton House (1914)** DELETE FROM TOUR

The Paul/Acton House was built in 1914, according to a board with the date August 2, 1914, that was used to construct the house. It was built by B.S. Halbert for J.L. Paul. The home changed hands a few times before being purchased by Dudley and Ruth Acton in 1961. The Actons made a few minor alterations to the interior of the house like lowering the 10 ½ foot ceilings to 9 feet and converting the attic to living space. The exterior remains much the same, with the exception of the enclosed back porch and addition. The house remains an excellent example of the Craftsman style with multiple porches, large, decorative brackets, exposed rafter tails, and multiple square porch supports.

### **Mountain Home College Girls’ Dormitory (1894)**

The Mountain Home College opened on September 20, 1893, and was sponsored by the White River Baptist Association. Due to a larger than expected enrollment in music, art, and elocution (formal speaking, grammar, pronunciation) classes, this rough-cut limestone building was constructed in 1894 as a music hall. The building originally consisted of just the central block without the pediment and columns. The roof was not flat originally either—the building was another ½ story taller with a mansard roof covered in slate and two dormer windows on each side. The original porch was two stories tall, made of wood, and featured Folk Victorian-style spindles. The building was altered in 1920 when the two large wings were added for use as a girls’ dormitory. At this time, a Craftsman-style porch was added to the building and wrapped around the central block. The college reached its high

point in 1927 with an enrollment of 265, 40 acres of land, 12 buildings, and a 7,000 volume library. However, the financial strain caused by the Great Depression forced the Baptist Association to abandon the college in 1929. The school closed its doors in 1933. The main building (also known as Old Main—located to the north of the girls' dormitory) was condemned in 1945 and razed in 1964.

Dr. W.T. Tipton used the dormitory building as a hospital, and by 1937, the building was deeded to H.D. Morton, a former president of the college. Morton used the building as a hotel and dining room. During the construction of Norfolk Dam in the 1940s, workers were housed in the old dormitory. James McClure purchased the property in 1966 and renovated it for use as a funeral home. McClure renovated the building again in the late 1970s for use as apartments (I think that's when the top ½ story was removed and the pediments and columns were added). Charles T. Blackburn moved his real estate offices into the building in 1985. Danny Ponder and his son, Ben, are currently renovating the old dormitory building. They plan to sell or lease the building for office space. The building was listed on the Arkansas Register of Historic Places in 1996 because it is the last surviving building from the Mountain Home College campus.

### **Baxter Smith Halbert House (1896) Guy Berry Intermediate School (1937-1938)**

The Guy Berry Intermediate School was built by the WPA in 1937-1938. The blonde brick building exhibits Craftsman influences like porches with thick, square brick columns that extend to the floor of the porch, widely overhanging eaves, and decorative brackets. The windows in the building have been replaced, vinyl siding has been added around the windows, and an addition has also been added to the rear of this building. The building is now called the Guy Berry College & Career Academy and it currently houses the ALE Program for grades 5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> for the Mountain Home School System and the SpEd main offices.

The Rapp's Barren Male and Female Academy was opened in 1853 on this site. It was housed in a white, two-story, wood frame Colonial Revival-style building, but it was burned by Bushwhackers and Jayhawkers (bushwhackers were Confederate sympathizers and jayhawkers were Union sympathizers in the guerilla conflict) during the Civil War. Another building was constructed on this site in 1868. The school building was

rebuilt many times during its history. The Mountain Home School, a large two-story brick building, was located on this site as early as 1911-12. The school housed all 12 grades until 1935.

Guy Berry was born in 1905 and died in 1999. Guy Berry graduated from the Mountain Home School and began teaching there the following year. From 1925-31 he served as Dean of Students at what is now Arkansas Tech University in Russellville. In 1931, he became superintendent of schools in Mtn. Home (the old school administration building is now Guy Berry Intermediate School). He stayed in that position for 8 years, but during that time a new school was built on South College Street to house part of the students. From 1939-47 he was superintendent of schools at Norfolk and Flippin. In 1947, he began working for the State Dept. of Education and began working for the U of A in 1951. He retired in 1973. In 1985, he was honored for his outstanding work as a teacher and administrator by having this school building named for him. Guy Berry is given credit for starting the lunch program in the Mountain Home schools, and he made great strides toward getting children transported so they could attend school.

### **Mountain Home Cemetery**

Mrs. Catherine Carey Paul deeded the first acre of land to be used as the Mountain Home Cemetery in 1874. Her husband, Milas Paul, was supposedly the first person buried here in 1874 (although I have found conflicting dates in the directory compiled within "*Of Grave Importance: The Cemeteries of Baxter County, Arkansas*"). Additional ground has been added several times since then. Mountain Home Cemetery contains the graves of veterans of the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, WWI, and WWII. This is still an active cemetery.

### **Iconography:**

**Grave markers** were usually **rich with personal meaning** and reflected the life of the deceased in an intimate way. Funeral rites were much more personal than they are today. Just by comparing headstones in the historic section of the cemetery to the headstones in the newer portions you can see a difference in the level of detail and use of funerary art.

**Low concrete or brick coping** was common in cemeteries of the South.

**Lambs**: Lambs are usually on the graves of children, especially infants, and symbolize innocence.

**Urns**: Typical decorative devices on tombstones after the Revolutionary War. Unusual because most of them did not contain ashes.

**Draped Objects**: Symbol of reverence or the veil between earth and the heavens.

**Obelisks**: Egyptian Revival architecture form symbolizing a ray of sunlight.

Any **broken columns usually symbolize a life cut short.**

From *Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography* by Douglas Keister (2004)

Example of detail on old headstones: White obelisk with engraving of kneeling child, inscribed with message “Andrew Calhoun, Son of A.J. and M.C. Truman. Died Jan. 12, 1883. Aged 13 ys., 1 m., 4 ds.”

### **Jeremiah Asa Baker House (mid-to-late 1800s?)**

When Jeremiah Asa Baker purchased this land in 1884, there was already a house on this site. It belonged to Professor J.S. Howard, founder of the Mountain Home Male and Female Academy. Mr. Baker built around, and added to, the existing house, and one of his sons did more remodeling in 1939. As of 1988, the exterior façade remained almost the same as it did in 1900.

The right (or southern) portion of the Baker House is the original (or at least it is what was built in the 1880s by Mr. Baker). The house probably consisted of the two-story portion with a side-gabled roof and a one or two-story wing projecting to the north, creating an L-shape. The house’s current H-shape is a more recent development. The north side-gabled wing was probably added in the 1930s remodel? And the middle wing was extended to join the two larger sections. The upper story porch was probably also added at a later date. The front entrance was probably directly behind the Sparks Gamma House sign at one time.

### **J.T. “Jim” Tracy House (1927) DELETE FROM TOUR**



Jim Tracy purchased this property from J.B. Hart in 1911, and it already had a house, cistern, well, barn, and other outbuildings. The Tracy family raised a garden to provide food for themselves and also had a milk cow and a few chickens. In addition, Mr. Tracy owned a cattle farm near the White River, and he would keep his cattle in a lot adjacent to his house in town before shipping them to market. The family also owned a general store on the west side of the Mountain Home square. However, the original Tracy house was demolished in 1926, and the current structure was built in 1927.

It is a good example of the Craftsman style with its widely overhanging eaves, decorative brackets, and tapered piers on thick, square, brick bases. The multi-paned windows and sidelights are also characteristic of the style.

### **Floyd Baker House at 914 Main St. (“Remember Me”)**

This house was built around 1900 by Floyd Baker, the son of Asa Baker. The building is made out of limestone and chert believed to have been brought to the site by wagon from near Gainesville, Mo. The current owners have restored the building both inside and out. They have enclosed the front porch with glass to protect their sale items, but other than that everything is believed to be original. Floyd and Odra's son, Robert, lives about 15 miles east of Mtn. Home. The house is a good example of the Craftsman style with its front facing gables, large decorative brackets, decorative shingles in the gable end, and porch supported by tapered columns on square piers.

The Baxter Smith Halbert House was built in 1896, and was probably originally a Folk Victorian-style house with spindlework columns on the porch. The current column style is probably a replacement. Baxter Smith Halbert built this house shortly after moving to Mountain Home from Marion County in 1895. He lived here until his death in 1938. He owned a grist mill on East Sixth Street and was also a builder and contractor. If you remember, he built the Acton House circa 1910. He also had a carpenter shop, operated an ice plant, and made and sold caskets. The house was restored in 1987 to house the law offices of Richard S. Paden. The house is currently being used as a hair salon.

### **Joseph Edward Lee Cooper House (1904)** DELETE FROM TOUR

The Joseph Edward Lee Cooper House was built in 1904 by Mr. and Mrs. Allen Trimble. In 1910, Mr. Trimble sold the house to Tom and Enness Shiras and their mother. The Shiras brothers purchased and operated the *Baxter Bulletin* and Tom later married Mayme Case (the Dr. Case property backs up to this one). Claude and Georgia Alley bought the house in 1911, and Mr. Alley practiced law here until 1926 when he sold the house to Joseph Edward Lee Cooper, a teacher in the Mountain Home School, and his wife Nellie Cooper, who served for many years as Baxter County Clerk. The Coopers established the Baxter County Abstract Company, and Mr. Cooper was well-known for his gun collection. The house has been altered from its original appearance—the front porch has been enclosed with a sandstone veneer and decorative half-timbering has been added to the exterior walls of the house. It was probably originally wood lap siding on the exterior walls with a Folk Victorian-style front porch.

**T. Murphy Davis House (1902)** DELETE FROM TOUR

The T. Murphy Davis House was built around 1902 and belonged to the owner and editor of the *Baxter County Citizen*, an early local newspaper. At one time, Davis owned this entire block. After their children moved out of the house, Mr. Davis and his wife rented rooms to students at the nearby Mountain Home College. The 1 ½ story home looks much like it did in the early 1900s. Artificial siding and shutters have been added to the exterior of the home, which was originally wood lap siding with wooden window surrounds. There was originally a small recessed porch area a little wider than the current door, but it has been closed in as part of the house. The Craftsman-style porch has also been added.

**Henry Aylor/Conley House (circa 1920)** DELETE FROM TOUR

The Aylor/Conley House was built around 1920 for Henry Aylor and his new bride Elva Sanford Aylor. However, several prominent Mtn. Home families have lived here, including the Conleys, Gustafsons, Chambers, Hacklers, Lahars, Bakers, and Fisks. The house still has the original high ceilings, a woodburning fireplace, native stone trim, and porches. Although several well-known citizens have lived there, the most notable was Virgie McClure (mother of James McClure—who renovated Mountain Home College Girls' Dormitory into funeral home and then apartments). She and her husband, O.B., operated the funeral home for many years. She was still mowing her own yard at age 93 and used a push mower as long as she could before finally switching to a riding mower.

