



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1343

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 Block 35 Cobblestone Alley

other names/site number Site #PU8447

2. Location

street & number West of the north end of Rock Street

not for publication

city or town Little Rock

vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Pulaski code 119 zip code 72201

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.)

Cathie Matthes  
Signature of certifying official/Title

11/18/08  
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson W. Beall

1-22-09

Block 35 Cobblestone Alley  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas  
County and State

**5. Classification**

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

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

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

Contributing                      Noncontributing

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
1	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	_____	Total

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

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)/highway

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)/highway

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other OTHER – Cobblestone Surfacing

**Narrative Description**

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B.** removed from its original location.
- C.** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

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

Local  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Transportation  
Engineering  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

c.1889-1959  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

c.1889  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Block 35 Cobblestone Alley  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one.

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>567031</u>	<u>3845372</u>	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>15</u>	<u>567119</u>	<u>3845357</u>	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 Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date September 9, 2008

street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9787

city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

#### 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 \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### SUMMARY

The Block 35 Cobblestone Alley in downtown Little Rock is a cobblestone surfaced alley. The alley is straight and cuts Block 35 of the City of Little Rock in half. The cobblestone pavement was laid c.1889 when an effort was underway to improve Little Rock's streets. The alley retains its original width of 30 feet.

### ELABORATION

The Block 35 Cobblestone Alley is approximately 300 feet long and begins at the north end of Rock Street and proceeds in a northwesterly direction before ending at the historic north end of Cumberland Street. (The alley now ends just short of its intersection with La Harpe Boulevard, which curves to the northwest at this point.) The alley is flat and straight and cuts Block 35 of the City of Little Rock in half.

The Block 35 Cobblestone Alley has a width of approximately 30 feet. The pavement is composed of rectangular cobblestones laid in a running bond pattern perpendicular to the direction of travel. The north and south edges of the alley are bordered by square cobblestones.

### Integrity

Overall, the Block 35 Cobblestone Alley has excellent integrity. The pavement on the alley was laid c.1889 when there was an effort to improve Little Rock's streets, and it retains its original dimensions. Additionally, the area around the alley retains its urban character. To the south of the alley, it is lined with commercial buildings, many which date back to the late 1800s or early 1900s. The north side of the alley is more open and now has an area of parking and Little Rock's Riverfront Park. However, Sanborn maps indicate that historically this was an industrial area and was not as densely developed as the south side.

Although the cobblestones have settled in some places throughout the segment, it is still possible to recognize the original materials, which are in excellent condition, and the pavement retains its original dimensions. As a result, it is still easy to recognize the alley's historic construction.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

### SUMMARY

The Block 35 Cobblestone Alley is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** for its engineering. The Block 35 Cobblestone Alley is an extremely rare surviving nineteenth-century cobblestone alley in downtown Little Rock. The Block 35 Cobblestone Alley, which is approximately 300 feet long, still retains its original c.1889 cobblestone pavement. The alley illustrates early efforts in the nineteenth century to upgrade Little Rock's streets and make them easier to travel. As a result, it is therefore eligible for nomination under **Criterion A** for its association with the development of better streets and infrastructure in nineteenth-century Little Rock.

### ELABORATION

Settlement in the Little Rock area began shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century. Although surveying land and offering it for sale did not begin until 1815, a few settlers were in the area prior to then. Edmund Hogan, for example, who was originally from Georgia and came to Arkansas via Missouri, was living on the north bank of the Arkansas River opposite Little Rock where he operated a ferry by 1812. Another distinguished early settler was Wright Daniel who settled at the base of Big Rock Mountain prior to 1814 and opened a gristmill in 1815. When the Arkansas Territory was created in 1819, the state's first capital was at Arkansas Post. However, it was not the best location since it often flooded and was far away from the majority of the territory's population. In 1820, a new centrally-located site for the capital was chosen on the south bank of the Arkansas River at the Little Rock.<sup>1</sup>

Initial settlement and development in Little Rock was focused on the river. The original plat of Little Rock consisted of 88 square blocks stretching south from the river to what is now Eleventh Street. By the 1860s, however, the city began to expand beyond the original plat, notably with the platting of the Woodruff's and Masonic additions on the city's east side, the Wright's Addition on the south side, and the Capitol Hill Addition on the west side. Apparently, building sites on the city's west side were popular. An announcement in the November 21, 1872, issue of the *Arkansas Gazette* stated that "This property consists of twenty-seven full and fractional blocks, overlooking the Cairo and Fulton railroad as it leaves the city. ... This is a fine property, and from its geographical position, will soon become a portion of the city. Upward of one hundred lots in the addition have already been disposed of, and are at this time being improved."<sup>2</sup>

As the population of Little Rock grew and new neighborhoods were platted and added to the city, it was necessary to expand and improve the city's infrastructure. In July 1886, for example, the Sanborn map indicated that "The Pump Ho. & Stand Pipe located at the foot of Ringo St. are to be abandoned as soon as new Plant about 2 miles west of State Ho. Shall have been completed." Not only would the new water

<sup>1</sup> Roy, F. Hampton, Sr., and Charles Witsell, Jr., with Cheryl Griffith Nichols. *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City*. Little Rock: August House, 1984, pp. 12-14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 19, 104.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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system expand the water capacity, but it would also solve the problem of the water being of an inferior quality.<sup>3</sup> In addition to improvements to the water system, the late 1870s and 1880s also saw the introduction of electricity, a sewer system, and telephone service.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to improving public works during the 1870s and 1880s, efforts were undertaken to improve Little Rock's transportation infrastructure, notably its streets. Prior to the paving of Little Rock's streets, the city's thoroughfares were either very dusty or quite muddy, depending on the weather conditions. In fact, after heavy winter rains, city residents joked that the streets should be declared navigable streams. At one intersection, a sign often appeared that stated "Ferry privilege to let at this crossing. Inquire of our City Fathers."<sup>5</sup>

The first section of Little Rock street to be paved was a nine-block section of West Markham that was paved with Richardson pavement in 1872 and 1873. Richardson pavement consisted of wooden blocks coated with tar. Although this was a small start to improving Little Rock's streets, it was not until the 1880s that the first substantial amount of street paving took place.<sup>6</sup>

Paving districts were established in Little Rock in 1886, and substantial progress was made quickly. The January 25, 1888, *Arkansas Gazette*, reported that "Lately extensive improvements have been made on the principal business streets, many blocks have been and more are being laid with first-class granite pavement, the blocks for which are mainly quarried from our own granite in the Fourche mountains within two miles of the city. The pavement...is being laid as fast as men and money can do it. The intersecting streets will be soon improved, and on these the Telford macadam will be used to a great extent."<sup>7</sup> *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Central Arkansas* also noted the paving that was occurring in Little Rock, stating that "the streets are being paved with granite taken from the extensive quarries only a mile and a half distant."<sup>8</sup>

The use of stone pavement was nothing new by the time that the Block 35 Alley was paved c.1889. Roman roads, notably the Via Appia, were paved with stones thousands of years ago. Even in the United States, paving of streets was occurring in the seventeenth century. (The first recorded paved street, which was

<sup>3</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Little Rock, Arkansas, July 1886, Sheet 1.

<sup>4</sup> Lester, Jim, and Judy Lester. *Greater Little Rock*. Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, 1986, p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> Roy, F. Hampton, Sr., and Charles Witsell, Jr., with Cheryl Griffith Nichols. *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City*. Little Rock: August House, 1984, p. 137.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Central Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing co., 1889, p. 386.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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completed in 1625, was in Pemaquid, Maine.) However, cobblestones represented an important paving material, since many streets were first paved with the material.<sup>9</sup>

By 1900 almost fifty miles of Little Rock's streets had been improved and paved, either with gravel, brick, macadam, or granite. Although this represented less than one-quarter of the city's streets, it represented a tremendous improvement over a few decades before when all of the city's streets were dirt.<sup>10</sup>

Although using granite made for a very durable pavement that was well suited to the use of horses and wagons (the horses could get good traction on the blocks), it also had its drawbacks. It was very labor intensive, from quarrying the blocks to cutting them and fitting them together. In addition, once automobiles became the favored mode of transportation, granite pavement provided a rough ride. As a result, types of pavement, specifically brick and macadamized pavements, became much more popular and prevalent in the first part of the twentieth century, and cobblestone pavement fell out of favor.

Today the Block 35 Cobblestone Alley is still used to provide access to the rear of the buildings on the north side of President Clinton Avenue, and is clearly visible between Rock Street and La Harpe Boulevard (Cumberland Street historically). It is also still possible to drive the entire length of the alley. Remarkably, the entire alley retains the original c.1889 cobblestone pavement.

Many of Little Rock's alleys have been upgraded to asphalt surfacing, especially as utility work has been done over the years. Alleys that retain nineteenth-century cobblestone pavement are extremely rare in the city – in fact, this may be the last remaining example. As a result, the Block 35 Cobblestone Alley remains an extremely intact example of early street design and construction, and a tangible reminder of early travel in Little Rock.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Block 35 Cobblestone Alley is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** for its engineering. The Block 35 Cobblestone Alley is an extremely rare surviving nineteenth-century cobblestone alley in downtown Little Rock. The Block 35 Cobblestone Alley, which is approximately 300 feet long, still retains its original c.1889 cobblestone pavement. The alley illustrates early efforts in the nineteenth century to upgrade Little Rock's streets and make them easier to travel. As a result, it is therefore eligible for nomination under **Criterion A** for its association with the development of better streets and infrastructure in nineteenth-century Little Rock.

<sup>9</sup> Information on pavement types found at: [http://training.ce.washington.edu/WSDOT/Modules/01\\_introduction/01-2\\_body.htm](http://training.ce.washington.edu/WSDOT/Modules/01_introduction/01-2_body.htm) and information on street surfacing found at: <http://www.hammondindiana.com/cobblestone.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Roy, F. Hampton, Sr., and Charles Witsell, Jr., with Cheryl Griffith Nichols. *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City*. Little Rock: August House, 1984, p. 137.



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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

*The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Central Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing co., 1889.

Information on pavement types found at:

[http://training.ce.washington.edu/WSDOT/Modules/01\\_introduction/01-2\\_body.htm](http://training.ce.washington.edu/WSDOT/Modules/01_introduction/01-2_body.htm).

Information on street surfacing found at: <http://www.hammondindiana.com/cobblestone.html>.

Lester, Jim, and Judy Lester. *Greater Little Rock*. Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, 1986.

Roy, F. Hampton, Sr., and Charles Witsell, Jr., with Cheryl Griffith Nichols. *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City*. Little Rock: August House, 1984.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Little Rock, Arkansas, July 1886.

Block 35 Cobblestone Alley

Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas

County and State

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

## **National Register of Historic Places**

### **Continuation Sheet**

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#### **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Beginning at the center of the Rock Street and Block 35 Alley intersection, the Block 35 Cobblestone Alley proceeds west to the Block 35 Alley and La Harpe Boulevard intersection. The width of the boundary includes 15 feet on either side of the alley centerline.

#### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

This boundary contains the most intact portion of the Block 35 Cobblestone Alley in Little Rock.



BLOCK 35 COBBLESTONE ALLEY

PULASKI COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILCOX

JULY 2008

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR

VIEW LOOKING WEST



BLOCK 35 COBBLESTONE ALLEY

PULASKI COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILCOX

JULY 2008

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR

PAVEMENT DETAIL



BLOCK 35 COBBLESTONE ALLEY

PULASKI COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILCOX

JULY 2008

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR

VIEW LOOKING EAST