

Property Number: entered by HPD  
LA Numbers(s):  
HCPI Number(s):

**APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION  
NEW MEXICO STATE REGISTER OF CULTURAL PROPERTIES**

Historic Preservation Division  
Bataan Building  
407 Galisteo Street, Suite 236  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501  
(505) 827-6320

- 
1. **Name of Property:** Lovington Commercial Historic District  
Other Name(s) for Property: N/A
2. **Location of Property:**  
County: Lea Congressional District: 2  
Municipality: Lovington Vicinity of: N/A  
Address or Rural Location: Roughly bound by Madison Avenue on the north, the alley between Love Street and East Street on the east, Avenue B on the south, and Second Street on the west.  
Not for Publication: Zip:
3. **Ownership of Property:** (Check one or more as appropriate)  
Private:  State:  Federal:  Multiple:   
Name: List of property owners with Historic Preservation Division  
Name: (See attached list)  
Address: Zip:  
Occupant, Tenant, Manager, or Contact:  
Name: N/A  
Address: Zip:
4. **Accessibility of Property:**  
Open to the Public:  Not Open to the Public:  Visible from a Public Thoroughfare:
5. **Location of Legal Description for Property:**  
Courthouse, Deed Registry, etc.: Lea County Courthouse, Assessor's Office  
Street and Number:  
City, Town, Zip Code: Lovington, NM
6. **Category of Property:**  
District:  Buildings:  Structure:  Site:   
Object:  Collection:  Other (Specify):   
Historic District:
7. **Present Use of Property:** (Check one or more as appropriate)  
Agricultural:  Governmental:  Museum:  Scientific:   
Commercial:  Grazing:  Park:  Transportation:   
Educational:  Industrial:  Residential:  Work in Progress:   
Entertainment:  Military:  Religious:  Other (Specify):

8. **Present Condition of Property:** (Check one or more as appropriate)

Excellent:  Deteriorated:  Altered:  Moved:   
Good:  Ruins:  Unaltered:  Date Moved:   
Fair:  Unexposed:  Vandalized:

9. **Present and Original Physical Appearance of Property:** Provide a detailed description of the archaeological and/or architectural features present, include construction dates, dates of significant alterations, extent of any vandalism, etc. **See continuation sheets.**

10. **Summary of Property Data:**

Period of Significance: circa 1908 - 1960

Significant Dates: 1918 (Commercial Hotel); 1928 (Lea County State Bank & Johnson's Dry Goods); 1931-1932 (Lister Building); ca. 1941-1948 (Lovington Fire Station, Lea Theater, Danglade Office, & Lovington National Bank)

Culture/Period/Phase: N/A

Architect/Builder: N/A

11. **Thematic Classification** (Check one or more as appropriate)

Archaeology- Prehistoric: <input type="checkbox"/>	Economics: <input type="checkbox"/>	Philosophy: <input type="checkbox"/>
Archaeology- Historic: <input type="checkbox"/>	Education: <input type="checkbox"/>	Politics/ Government: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agriculture: <input type="checkbox"/>	Engineering: <input type="checkbox"/>	Religion: <input type="checkbox"/>
Architecture: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Exploration: <input type="checkbox"/>	Science: <input type="checkbox"/>
Art: <input type="checkbox"/>	Industry: <input type="checkbox"/>	Sculpture: <input type="checkbox"/>
Commerce: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Invention: <input type="checkbox"/>	Settlement: <input type="checkbox"/>
Communications: <input type="checkbox"/>	Landscape- Architecture: <input type="checkbox"/>	Social/ Humanitarianism: <input type="checkbox"/>
Community- Planning: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Law: <input type="checkbox"/>	Theater: <input type="checkbox"/>
Conservation: <input type="checkbox"/>	Literature: <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation: <input type="checkbox"/>
	Military: <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify): <input type="checkbox"/>
	Music: <input type="checkbox"/>	

12. **Significance of Property:** Trace significant archaeological or historical trends, developments, events, or historically significant persons associated with property, reference documentary sources, etc. **See continuation sheets.**

13. **Bibliographical References:** See continuation sheet.

14. **Geographical Information:**

Map Reference: (USGS 7.5' Quad) Lovington, NM Quad

Legal Description: (Describe to the nearest 1/4 1/4 1/4 Section (10 acres))

Township:	Range:	Section:	Subdivision:
Township:	Range:	Section:	Subdivision:
Township:	Range:	Section:	Subdivision:
Township:	Range:	Section:	Subdivision:

Lot:            Block:            Plat: Original Lovington Townsite & South Addition

Acreage of Property: +/- 24 A

UTM Coordinates:

1. 13 654250 3646000	2. 13 654570 3646000
3. 13 654585 3646300	4. 13 654130 3646300

15. **Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description:** (Describe the boundaries of the property) **See continuation sheet.**

**Verbal Boundary Justification:** (Explain why the boundaries were selected) **See continuation sheet.**

16. **Photographs:** (Provide a log of archival B&W photographs submitted with nomination) **See continuation sheet.**

17. **Future Research Questions:** (If applicable, develop a list of questions that could be pursued by future researchers)

- Future researchers may identify additional information regarding architects and builders.
- Additional research in the period newspapers may reveal further details on construction dates and building information.

18. **Application Submitted By:**

Name: Heather Barrett

Date: September 10, 2011

Organization: New Mexico MainStreet

Address: 945 Hess Terrace, Las Cruces, NM

Zip: 88005

Phone: 575.523.1289

Inventory Data By: Heather Barrett (Documentation completed for NM MainStreet) Date: June 2009

19. **National Register Eligibility:**

Yes:  No:

Criteria A:  B:  C:  D:

Area of Significance: Community Planning and Development; Architecture.

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This Space for Cultural Properties Review Committee Use Only

Date Application Received: Complete:  Incomplete:

Committee Action:

State Register:  Tabled:  Date:

National Register Recommendation:  Rejected:

Approved:

Committee Chairman:

Date:

Comments:

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

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**Section: 9 Page: 1**

**Lovington Commercial Historic District**  
**Lea County, New Mexico**

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**DESCRIPTION**

Lovington, the Lea County seat, is situated in the High Plains of southeastern New Mexico. The county is bordered on the east and south by Texas. A central courthouse square anchors the small rural town, which is located approximately twenty miles northwest of Hobbs, New Mexico and sixty miles east of Artesia, New Mexico. State Highway 18 and U.S. Highway 82 converge in Lovington, and Highway 18 becomes Lovington's Main Street through downtown. Today, Lovington has a population of just over 10,000 people. The area of the state is known for its ranching, agriculture, and oil and natural gas production.

The Lovington Commercial Historic District encompasses approximately twenty-four acres and is roughly bound by Madison Avenue on the north, the alley between Love Street and East Street on the east, Avenue B on the south, and Second Street on the west. The majority of the commercial resources in the district were constructed between 1918 and 1960. Of the 72 resources within the district, 52 buildings are considered contributing. Of those 52 historic resources, one is on the State Register and three are listed in the National Register.

Centered on the courthouse square, the original townsite was developed on a flat grid system with eighty-foot wide streets, eventually including sidewalks and curbs, some of which are stamped "WPA 1940." Most blocks are divided by a twenty-foot alley in the center, running north-south, providing service areas for employee parking, trash collection, and utilities. The commercial lots measure approximately 25 to 50 feet wide by 140 feet deep. Today, there is a combination of diagonal and parallel parking in front of most businesses.

The nominated area encompasses four historic buildings that are already listed in the State (SR) and/or National (NR) Registers including: the Lea County Courthouse (#87000880, NR); the 1918 former Commercial Hotel, now the Lea County Museum (#1882, SR); the Lovington Fire Department Building (#08000574, NR); and, the Lea County Theatre (#06001571, NR). In addition to these significant structures, the district historically contained a variety of other businesses and institutions that provided conveniences and amenities to this small rural town, such as pharmacies and drug stores, "mom and pop" groceries, local car dealerships, and multiple banks. Some of Lovington's important extent buildings include: the Lister Grocery (ca. 1931-1932); the Lea County Motor Company (ca. 1940); the Lea County State Bank (ca. 1928); the Lovington National Bank (ca. 1950); and, the City Drug Store (ca. 1930).

**PRESENT AND ORIGINAL PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF DISTRICT**

Anchored by its courthouse square with numerous heritage evergreen and deciduous trees, the compact Lovington Commercial Historic District retains its early twentieth and mid-twentieth century building stock, its historic feeling, and associations with ranching, function as a county seat, and later, with the oil and natural gas industry of southeastern New Mexico. The commercial streetscape is defined by one to two story buildings, mostly brick, hollow clay tile, and concrete construction. The architectural styles of the district include the Decorative Brick Commercial style, Art Deco, and Moderne styles, as well as a fine collection of Modernist buildings dating to the late 1940s, including

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Lovington Commercial Historic District  
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the Lovington National Bank and the adjacent office of Senator Frank Jack Danglade at the north end of the district. These contemporary buildings share similar details and likely the same architect.

The following section highlights some of the contributing buildings and includes architectural descriptions for each. These historic resources along with all other contributing and non-contributing buildings are detailed in the address chart at the end of this section, as well as on the boundary sketch map. Seventy-two percent of the resources contribute to the district. The non-contributing resources are randomly scattered throughout the district and do not detract from the district as a whole.

**Lee County Motor Company, 223 South Main Street**

This circa 1940 building once housed an automobile dealer and service shop known as the Lea County Motor Company—a use that fits with the style and detailing of the industrial structure. The company advertised Chrysler and GMC Trucks in the 1957 City Directory.<sup>1</sup> Located at the southern end of the district, this Quonset-hut building is largely constructed with hollow clay tiles, but the façade and first quarter of the side elevations are buff-colored brick in running bond. Expansive plate glass window openings resting on brick sills frame a single-leaf modern paneled door on the façade, which faces west. The windows are currently boarded with plywood. A large metal canopy supported by posts extends from the front elevation, creating a space big enough to drive a vehicle through. The façade includes a curvilinear parapet, evocative of the Mission Revival style, and a rectangular signage panel.

The south elevation includes: large steel casement windows, partially boarded, that rest on brick sills; a service bay; and swamp coolers mounted to the side of the building. The east elevation includes a service bay that has been filled with concrete block. Here the hollow tile reads “ACMA TILE.” The north elevation has no openings. The corners of the building and the surrounds of the openings are brick. The roof is covered with rolled asphalt composition. A vacant lot is located to the north.

**Commercial Building, 110 South Main Street (Photo 1)**

Likely dating to the 1930s, this handsome one-story buff brick building with dark brick accents reflects the Decorative Brick Commercial style of the period. The storefront includes a deeply recessed single-leaf entry door framed by sidelights, a transom, and large display windows. A transom panel with frosted glass set in wood surrounds caps the storefront. A rectangular signage panel outlined in brick is located on the upper façade, and a stepped parapet caps the building. This building stands in a row of intact commercial, brick-faced structures that date between the mid-1930s and circa 1950, creating one of the most complete streetscapes in the district.

**Lovington General Hospital, 215 North Main Street**

The former hospital is an Art Deco-influenced building that dates to 1936. The building, which currently serves as a residence, is brick construction covered with white stucco. Engaged pilasters divide the elevations into bays. The pilasters appear to be covered with wood, creating a fluted column effect with

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<sup>1</sup> Lovington City Directory, 1957.

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Lovington Commercial Historic District  
Lea County, New Mexico

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a geometric band at the top that serves as a “capital.” Decorative details include terracotta tile that are set at diagonals and glass block openings. The rear of the building is similarly detailed with pilasters defining bays and numerous steel casement windows. There is a large freestanding brick chimney at the rear elevation, and the building rests on a concrete foundation. Likely built in the late 1940s, a small addition faced with formstone with glass block and metal casement windows stands at the front of the lot, and likely served as the reception or office area.

**Lea County Courthouse (National Register #87000880), 100 North Main Street (Photo 2 & 3)**

Completed in 1937, this Art Deco-style courthouse serves as the centerpiece of the Lovington district, and is the second courthouse constructed in the town (State Register # 1275). Sitting back on its slightly terraced site and landscaped with towering evergreens, pines, and shrubs, the courthouse presides over the town and county. Architect O.R. Walker designed the impressive five-story, rectangular blond brick building embellished with ornamental concrete bas-relief panels with abstract Indian motifs, and W.S. Moss served as its builder. The building cost \$179,000 to erect.

The interior features terrazzo floors, marble wainscoting, and plaster walls. Although the third floor has been converted into offices, the original jail was located there.

**Lea County State Bank Building, 101 North Main Street (Photo 4)**

The former Lea County State Bank, one of Lovington’s tallest structures aside from the courthouse, is a three-story building that is three bays wide and five bays deep. The original façade included a central entrance framed by massive two-story columns with capitals that supported a plain entablature. The bank had a tall open lobby, essentially taking up two stories. The columns have been partially demolished (the lower section), and would need to be reconstructed. The lower section at street level has also been altered with a late 1940s entry, fixed plate glass windows, and paneled glass tiles.

The windows on the second story on the façade are filled with block, but historic photographs reveal that these openings mirrored those on the third floor, which are paired one-over-one double hung windows that rest on concrete sills. A belt course delineates the third floor on the public facades (east and south).

Most bays of the south elevation, which front West Central Avenue, have glass block openings on the first and second stories with rectangular panels located between the openings. There is some replacement material in the fourth and fifth bays on this elevation. The third floor on this side also retains its one-over-one double hung sash windows. The rear elevation has an exterior chimney. A molded cornice crowns the building.

This building has what is termed “fragile integrity,” as the first floor east elevation has been significantly altered. An article in the *Lovington Press* entitled “Lea County State Bank Getting Glass Tile Front” suggests that some of the visible changes may date to the late 1940s.<sup>2</sup> This building is one of the

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<sup>2</sup> “Lovington National Bank to Move January 15<sup>th</sup>,” *Lovington Press*, 23 December 1948.

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Lovington Commercial Historic District  
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oldest in Lovington, and is significant to the community. The current owner is interested in restoring the façade based on documentary evidence, including the bottom section of the columns, which would need to be reconstructed.

**Jake's Pharmacy, 123 North Main Street (Photo 5 & 6)**

Jake's Pharmacy was housed in a one-story building that reflects the Decorative Brick Commercial style of the 20s, 30s, and 40s. The building contains several commercial spaces marked by single-leaf aluminum and glass doors framed by large plate glass windows. Ceramic tile – mint green and pale blue with cream—serves as the base below the windows on the east elevation. This detail would have likely been found on the north elevation as well, but the area is now stucco. A curved glass block window rounds the corner at the intersection of Washington Avenue and Main Street. Decorative brickwork includes basket weave patterns in the upper facades, and rowlock and soldier courses that define edges and openings. An engaged metal awning projects slightly over the sidewalk on the east and north elevations and also rounds the building corner. Some of the shop fronts have been boarded on the north elevation, and the rear elevation reveals hollow clay tile construction and metal casement windows.

**City Drug Store, 201 North Main Street**

Located on the opposite corner of Washington Avenue and Main Street, this expansive one-story brick commercial building includes various retail spaces with the majority of the space occupied by the Main Street Café today, formerly the City Drug Store with soda fountain. The building reflects the Decorative Brick Commercial style of the early twentieth century. All street-facing elevations include expanses of plate glass windows and a basket weave brick pattern in the upper portion of the facades. At intervals, the roofline is broken with stepped parapets. The south elevation includes two retail spaces, one vacant. The vacant space is very small and retains an early wood and glass door and display cases in the windows. This elevation has been partially filled with formstone. The Main Street Café has a corner entrance comprised of double-leaf aluminum and glass doors.

**Office of Frank Jack Dangle, 219 North Main Street (Photo 7)**

The former office of Frank Jack Dangle, a prominent oilman who came to Lovington in 1928 and Lea County's first state Senator between 1952 and his death in 1959, was located in this one-story Modernist brick building. Dangle also served on the Lovington National Bank Board of Directors.<sup>3</sup> The bank, which is located immediately north, likely shared the same architect and was constructed a short time after this building in the late 1940s (see next entry). The architect's name has yet to be uncovered.

The base of the Dangle building is 6:1 common bond red brick with blond brick above. The façade includes a band of glass block that serves as a "window" and curves inward to a recessed entry. The

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<sup>3</sup> Gil Hinshaw, *Lovington: Survivor on the High Plains*, (Virginia Beach, Virginia: The Donning Company Publishers, 2007), 139. Published recently, this book provides the most comprehensive overview of the town's history and is relied upon heavily for the nomination.

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Lovington Commercial Historic District  
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glass block rests on a projecting concrete sill. As the block and corner curve, the brickwork changes to all headers to make the transition. An engaged, slightly protruding, metal canopy functions as a lintel above the glass block and serves to offer some shelter to the door. The mahogany door has a large central light, stainless steel push rails, and kickplate. Mid-Century Modern lettering that announces the Danglade office and street address is located beside the door. Concrete coping caps the building, and the rear elevation reveals 6:1 common bond terracotta-colored brick construction.

**Lovington National Bank, 221 North Main Street (Photo 8)**

When this architect-designed building was constructed in 1948, it was promoted as a progressive addition to downtown Lovington with its modern letters and attractive neon sign across the entrance of the business.<sup>4</sup> The building has a red brick base with blond brick sections above, which create a parapet that pierces the flat roofline. The upper portion of the façade projects slightly and is divided into squares by a recessed course that creates a shadow line. A similar treatment is found on the north elevation. The storefront, which faces east, consists of a double-leaf aluminum and glass door framed by fixed plate glass windows, some of which are boarded up. According to historic photographs and the architect's rendering, which was continually pictured in the *Lovington Press* in 1948, the storefront is a later alteration, likely dating to the period of City Drug occupancy. Unfortunately, the plethora of articles never identified the architect by name.

Using only headers, the building curves at the corner of Adams Avenue. A band of concrete coping accentuates the roofline on all elevations. There is a teller/pickup window and canopy at the rear elevation, and the ghost mark of "City Drug" is visible here. The building is currently vacant.

**Johnson's Dry Goods & Grocery (also known as the Beverly Building), 118-120 East Central Avenue**

The Johnson's Dry Goods & Grocery is a one-story commercial building with a stucco exterior that was built in 1928. It is divided into two retail spaces. A multi-light transom panel surmounts both storefronts, which include original single-leaf wood and glass doors framed by plate glass display windows. The display windows have hardwood platforms to exhibit merchandise. Large recessed rectangular panels for signage are located above the storefronts, and steel hooks project from the façade, indicating earlier awnings. Projecting coping caps the building.

The interior has wood parquet floors, pressed tin ceilings with decorative cornice, and original skylights. The shared interior brick wall down the center has two archways that connect the spaces. Large "Bs" for Beverly's are stenciled on the interior walls, signifying a past clothing store tenant. A mezzanine is located at the rear of the space on the left.

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<sup>4</sup> *Lovington Press*, 23 December 1948.

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Lovington Commercial Historic District  
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**Lister Drug Store, 112-116 East Central Avenue (Photo 9)**

Similar in detail to its neighbor and dating to roughly the same period, the Lister Building (circa 1931-1932) is a two-story commercial structure constructed of concrete with a stuccoed façade. Centered on the façade is an early double-leaf wood and glass door that leads to the second story. It is flanked by two large commercial spaces that include single-leaf wood and glass doors surmounted by transoms and flanked by large plate glass windows marking each separate storefront. A transom panel with large frosted panes of glass caps each side. A *Lovington Press* article indicates that the interior of the west half of the building was being finished for an auto store and the "modern plate glass front" was installed in 1946. The article noted that the west section of the building had been closed since initial construction in the early 1930s.<sup>5</sup>

The second story has a horizontal band of one-over-one double-hung windows set in wood surrounds. Above the windows, there are decorative inset circles with crosses in the middle. A stepped parapet tops the building.

The west elevation has multiple layers of material, including a portion of hollow clay tile block, stucco, and concrete, perhaps indicating attempts to consolidate older materials underneath. The second story of this elevation has paired one-over-one double hung windows (replacements of originals). The east elevation joins the Beverly Building and several original one-over-one double hung windows appear to be intact on the second story. The rear elevation, which backs to a service alley, is mostly concrete with replacement windows and two sets of hollow core doors.

The interior of the second floor is highly intact with original room divisions for numerous offices, which were occupied by accountants and lawyers, many of whom worked at the courthouse across the street. Deep skylights, high baseboards, and five-paneled wood doors that retain original surrounds, transoms, and hardware survive. All wood is pine.

**Lea County Theatre (National Register #06001571), 106 East Central Avenue (Photo 10)**

Completing this block of historic buildings, the Lea County Theatre, a large building measuring 50 x 140 feet, opened on September 30, 1948 with the film *Tap Roots* starring Van Heflin and Susan Hayward.<sup>6</sup> The building, which replaced the Mesa Theater, is constructed of brick, and the façade features pale yellow, terracotta, and rust-colored ceramic tile and a recessed entry with rounded ticket booth flanked by paired double-leaf wood doors with three lights each. A triangular marquee with blade sign announces the *Lea* and each movie run. A stepped parapet outlined with brick coping and further accentuated by applied stars and decorative vertical molding, masks the shed roof that tops the building. The side elevations are red brick, but the upper façade is faced with blond brick.

In the weeks preceding the opening, the *Lovington Press* ran numerous articles noting that the interior was "artistically decorated with modernistic painted walls, drapery and the latest lighting equipment." The building originally included a large lobby with restrooms, a smoking room for the men, and a

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<sup>5</sup> "New Firm Leases Lister Building," *Lovington Press*, 3 January 1946.

<sup>6</sup> *Lovington Press*, 22 September 1948.

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Lovington Commercial Historic District

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Lea County, New Mexico

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women's lounge or cry room for mothers with small children. The newspaper reported that no expense was spared to make "the new Lea one of the most modern theatres to be found in this section (of the state)."<sup>7</sup> The original floor plan remains fairly intact with some updating on the interior.

**Commercial Hotel (State Register #1882), 100 South Love Street (Photo 11)**

Constructed of reinforced concrete, the former Commercial Hotel (# 1882, SR) dates to 1918, making it one of the oldest commercial buildings in the district. Today, the building houses the Lea County Museum. It is a two-story rectangular building with a hipped roof. The building's front and north elevations are covered with rough stucco, while the east and south elevations reveal the original concrete construction. The building retains original wood one-over-one double hung windows that rest on cast stone sills on each elevation. The façade includes a porch, later enclosed, with three arched openings supported by sturdy square columns.

The interior features a generous lobby with original wood paneled desk and key cubby, as well as the two-run staircase with paneled newel post, square balusters, and molded handrail. The first floor included a kitchen, manager's suite, and several sleeping rooms. For the most part, the second floor maintains its early configuration with a double-loaded corridor lined with sleeping rooms, which are now used as themed rooms displaying artifacts from Lea County history.

Located immediately south of the museum are several early Lovington and Lea County buildings that have been moved to the property, including a 1908 homestead dugout, the 1908 Love House, the 1913 Caprock Store, the 1913 MacDonald Store, a 1913 store/post office, the 1914 Baker School, and the 1950 Reed House.

**Lovington Fire Station (National Register #08000574), 209 South Love Street (Photo 12)**

Built in 1941 as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project, the Lovington Fire Department was housed in this one-story stucco building at the northeast corner of Love Street and Avenue A. The façade is divided into three sections with the central portion projecting slightly. Two vehicle bays and a drive are located in the center. Above each bay door is a recessed rectangular panel with "Fire Dep't" painted in the center. Flagpoles flank the drive. Each side section on the façade has steel casement windows sheltered by metal awnings and a single-leaf door. The casements rest on concrete sills. A stepped parapet caps the façade.

The south elevation has another entrance, metal casements, and two additional roll-up doors towards the rear of the building. An addition was added to the back of the building with additional service bays there. The north elevation includes several metal casement windows as well, and a concrete block wall extends from this elevation at the front.

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<sup>7</sup> "New Lea Theatre to Open Thursday, September 30," *Lovington Press*, 16 September 1948.

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**Lovington Commercial Historic District  
Lea County, New Mexico**

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**NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**

The district contains 20 non-contributing resources. Many of those buildings relate to the period of significance, but have received incompatible additions or materials that diminish their historic integrity. A few resources within the boundary were constructed after 1960, the end of the period of significance. One example is the Reed-McCrory commercial building, which was constructed circa 1970, at 303 North Main Street (Photo 13). The brick building has a one-story commercial space fronting Main Street that steps back to a two-story section that includes a variety of office space. Another example can be found at 8 West Central Avenue (ca.1935-40), which recently received a new stucco exterior and windows that alter its original fenestration pattern.

**Registration Requirements:**

1. Built or modified between circa 1900 and 1960.
2. Period massing and form are unaltered, or if the building received additions, they do not overly detract from or mask the original form.
3. The character-defining details of a building's architectural style are intact or clearly evident even if modifications have occurred.
4. The majority of replacement windows are fitted to original openings. Overall, the façade retains original proportions of wall to openings.
5. Alterations must not substantially alter the setback and relationship of façade to street.

**APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION**

**FORM**

**A**

**NEW MEXICO STATE REGISTER OF CULTURAL PROPERTIES**

**Revised**

**05/18/07**

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**Lovington Commercial Historic District**  
**Lea County, New Mexico**

Street Address	Const. Date – Property Name (If known)	Style	C/NC Status – Photo #
102 South Main Street	Ca. 1950	Commercial	C
104-106 South Main Street	Ca. 1950	Commercial	C
105-111 South Main Street	Ca. 1945	Commercial, Altered	NC
108 South Main Street	Ca. 1935	Decorative Brick Commercial	C, Photo #1
110 South Main Street	Ca. 1935	Decorative Brick Commercial	C, Photo #1
112 South Main Street	Ca. 1935	Decorative Brick Commercial	C, Photo #1
114 South Main Street	Ca. 1950	Commercial	C, Photo #1
116 South Main Street	Ca. 1950	Commercial	C, Photo #1
118 South Main Street	Ca. 1950	Commercial	C, Photo #1
119 South Main Street	Lovington Public Library, Ca. 1990	Modern Const.	NC
201 South Main Street	Chamber of Commerce, Ca. 1985	Modern Const.	NC
200-202 South Main Street	Ca. 1950	Commercial, Altered	NC
206 South Main Street	Ca. 1950	Commercial	C
212 South Main Street	Ca. 1950	Commercial	C
220 South Main Street	Ca. 1990	Commercial, Modern	NC
223 South Main Street	Ca. 1945	Quonsot Hut, Industrial	C
100 Block of North Main Street	Lea County Courthouse, 1936-1937	Art Deco	NR, Photo #2 & 3
101 North Main Street	Lea County State Bank, 1928	Neo-Classical	C, Photo #4
105 North Main Street	Ca. 1960, later canopy	Commercial, Altered	NC*
107 North Main Street	Ca. 1960 remodel	Commercial	C
109 North Main Street	Ca. 1960-1965 remodel	Commercial, Altered	NC
111 North Main Street	Ca. 1928	Commercial	C
113-113 ½ North Main Street	Ca. 1950 remodel	Commercial	C
115 North Main Street	Ca. 1935-1940	Commercial	C
117 North Main Street	Ca. 1957 remodel	Commercial	C
119 North Main Street	Ca. 1935-1940	Commercial	C
121-123 North Main Street	(former) Jake's Pharmacy, Ca. 1935	Decorative Brick with Art Deco	C, Photo #5 & 6
201-207 North Main Street	(former) City Drug Store, Ca. 1935	Decorative Brick Commercial	C
215 North Main Street	(former) Lovington Hospital, Ca. 1936	Art Deco	C
217 North Main Street	Ca. 1945-1950	Commercial	C, Photo #7
219 North Main Street	Frank J. Dangle Office, Ca. 1946-1950	Modernist	C, Photo #7
221 North Main Street	(former) Lovington National Bank, Ca. 1948	Modernist	C, Photo #8
303 North Main Street	Reed-McCrory Building, Ca. 1970	Contemporary Commercial	NC, Photo #13
317 North Main Street	Ca. 1950	Commercial	C
319 North Main Street	Ca. 1950	Commercial	C
321 North Main Street	Ca. 1950	Commercial	C
407 North Main Street	First United Methodist Church, Ca. 1954 Associated House, Ca. 1910	Hipped Box Vernacular	(2) C
10 West B Avenue	Carpet Barn, Ca. 1960	Commercial	C
19 West Avenue A	Garage, Ca. 1950	Commercial	C

**APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION**

**FORM**

**A**

**NEW MEXICO STATE REGISTER OF CULTURAL PROPERTIES**

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**Property:**  
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**Lovington Commercial Historic District**  
**Lea County, New Mexico**

Street Address	Const. Date – Property Name (If known)	Style	C/NC Status – Photo #
109 West Avenue A	Ca. 1950	Vern. Res. turned Commercial	NC
112 West Avenue A	Ca. 1970	Commercial	NC
Avenue A (121 South Second)	Ca. 1970	Commercial	NC
123 West Avenue A	Avenue A Drug Store, Ca. 1940	Commercial	C
106 East Central Avenue	Lea County Theater, 1947-1948	Art Deco	NR, Photo #10
112-116 East Central Avenue	Lister Building, Ca. 1931-1932	Commercial	C, Photo # 9
118-120 East Central Avenue	Johnson Store or Beverly Building, Ca. 1928	Commercial	C
122-124 East Central Avenue (Also 104 South Love)	Pam Lackey CPA, Ca. 1980 remodel	Commercial, Altered	NC
8 West Central Avenue	Ca. 1935-1940, Ca. 2010 remodel	Commercial	NC
10 West Central Avenue	Ca. 1935-1940	Decorative Brick Commercial	C
16-24 West Central Avenue (Labeled 22 on sketch map)	Lovington Mini Mall, Ca. 1980s remodel	Commercial	NC
23 West Central Avenue	Ca. 1940	Decorative Brick Commercial	C
101-107 East Washington Avenue	Ca. 1955-1960, Upper façade covered later	Commercial	NC*
113 East Washington Avenue	Ca. 1945	Commercial, Altered	NC
115 East Washington Avenue	Ca. 1945	Commercial	C
117 East Washington Avenue	Ca. 1945	Commercial	C
119 East Washington Avenue	Ca. 1950	Commercial	C
121 East Washington Avenue	Ca. 1950	Commercial	C
201-211 East Washington Avenue	Ca. 1950	Territorial	C
19 West Washington Avenue	First American Bank, ca. 2000	Commercial, Modern	NC
107 West Washington Avenue	Lea County Electric, Ca. 1960	Commercial	C
18 West Adams Avenue	Western Commerce Bank, ca. 1960	Commercial	C
120 North Love Street	Ca. 1965-1970	Commercial	NC
122-126 North Love Street (Also 202-208 East Washington)	Ca. 1945	Decorative Brick Commercial	C
212 North Love Street	Western States Insurance, ca. 1960	Commercial	C
103 South Love Street	Commercial Hotel, 1918		C (SR), Photo #11
200-202 South Love Street	Lea County Abstract & Title, ca. 1960	Modernist	C
209 South Love Street	Lovington Fire Station, 1941 (WPA)	International	C (NR), Photo #12
214 South Love Street	City Hall, ca. 1960		C
102 South First Street	Darden's Supermarket or B&J Drug, Ca. 1945	Commercial	C
110 South First Street	Papa's Barn, ca. 1970 facade	Commercial, Altered	NC
124 South First Street	Ca. 2010-2011	Residential Mobile Home	NC

**Note:** Entries with an asterisk indicate the potential for change in status if later canopies, awnings, or coverings are removed from upper facades.

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Property:  
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Lovington Commercial Historic District  
Lea County, New Mexico

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Ranching and agriculture, the railroad, and the oil fields of Lea County have all influenced the development and growth of Lovington – “The Queen City of the Plains.” With the courthouse square functioning as the town center, Lovington’s identity is both physically and historically tied to its service as the county seat of government. Of note, this is the only central courthouse square in New Mexico whose town remains compactly situated around it, evidence of the town’s predominantly Southern Anglo-American roots.<sup>8</sup> Unlike its southern neighbor of Hobbs, Lovington was never identified as an oil town, although it has certainly benefitted from the industry.

The period of significance for the Lovington Commercial Historic District begins in 1908, the year the town was founded, and ends in 1960, the fifty-year mark. Of the resources in the district, 72% are considered contributing. One of the earliest buildings in the district is the Commercial Hotel, now the Lea County Museum, which opened in 1918 as the town’s first “modern” hostelry. The majority of Lovington’s landmark buildings were constructed between 1925 and 1950. A few buildings that fall within the boundary were updated in the 1950s, but most retain an appropriate scale and architectural detail that complement the district. The district is eligible for listing in the State Register of Cultural Properties under Criterion A for Community Development and Planning as a courthouse town, as well as Criterion C for Architecture for its collection of early to mid-twentieth century commercial, public, and religious buildings that convey integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and associations.

## HISTORIC CONTEXT &amp; DEVELOPMENT

Situated in the vast Llano Estacado or High Plains region of eastern New Mexico and northwestern Texas, Lovington was among many frontier towns, including Prairieview, Crossroads, Tatum, and Gladiola, which established area settlements around the turn-of-the century. Poetically referred to as the Llano Sea of Grass, the harsh conditions of the Plains made for a hard-won existence that required much perseverance. The days of open-range ranching were waning, and small-scale ranching operations and farms soon replaced the larger enterprises. With overgrazed and depleted land, cowmen from west Texas began entering the New Mexico Territory by the early 1900s. Roughly two hundred homesteaders and farmers laid claims in and around present-day Lovington during this period.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1890s, the Love brothers – Robert (Florence) and Jim Love helped their brother George drive his cattle to the Territory. Two years later, Jim returned to run cattle for the Mallet and Hat Ranches near present-day Lovington, while Florence stayed in Texas to ranch and begin a family. Having seen firsthand that the High Plains lacked a mercantile and ranch supply center, the Love brothers turned their sights to community building, and in 1903, Florence Love filed a claim on land that he would soon transform into the townsite of Lovington.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> David L. Minton and John W. Murphey, Commercial Hotel State Register Nomination, August 4, 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Hinshaw, *Survivor on the High Plains*, 23.

<sup>10</sup> Hinshaw, *Survivor on the High Plains*, 23-25.

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Lovington Commercial Historic District  
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In 1907, Florence Love deeded forty acres of his original claim to Charles M. Burks, who was essentially charged with promoting the sale of town lots. Love also deeded Wesley McCallister, a U.S. land commissioner from the area, another section later known as the East Addition. McCallister surveyed and mapped both sections, laying out streets, blocks, and lots. After some debate regarding the naming of the new town, the Lovington Post Office was established on September 12, 1908 with Jim and Florence Love serving together as the first official postmasters.

The following month, Jim began construction of the first mercantile store, known as the Lovington Grocery, thus issuing in official commerce. The grocery, which was located on the site of the Lea County State Bank, stocked necessities such as salt pork, beans, coffee, canned goods, stick candy, boots, jumpers, and bolts of fabric.<sup>11</sup> Florence Love later purchased this store from his brother and combined it with a similar business serving the homesteaders and ranchers that Charles Burk had opened.<sup>12</sup>

As with the building of any town, the construction of the first school, financial institution, newspaper office, hardware store, and churches served as important signs of progress. By 1909, Lovington's first one-room school was built on donated land with money, labor, and materials contributed by residents. To boost numbers, town lots were offered for free to families with children.<sup>13</sup> In historic photographs of Lovington, the town was still the quintessential "western" frontier town with frame structures with board and batten fronts even in the late teens. There were few substantial brick or adobe two-story buildings.

As early as 1910, prominent residents envisioned Lovington as the county seat of a newly formed county, and Emory and James Caudill and John Dunn deeded one square block as a gift for the purposes of a courthouse square.<sup>14</sup> Seven years later in 1917 – a mere five years after statehood – these plans came to fruition with the forming of Lea County from lands from neighboring Eddy and Chaves counties. After a great deal of debate and feuding over where to locate the county seat, the small community of Lovington became the center of government and with that came a building campaign, including the construction of the first courthouse, a three-story frame building with crenellated corner towers, and the 1918 Commercial Hotel that offered modern amenities to visitors on county business, travelers passing through town, and later, those wanting to capitalize on the oil boom.

Due to its isolated nature, a severe drought, and a fire that destroyed the power plant, Lovington's growth was slow in the early twentieth century. Inadequate transportation and roads made it continually difficult to move commodities and goods. In 1926, U.S. 380 through Tatum was improved with gravel, and in 1928, Lea County approved a bond issue for the grading of State Highway 18 through Lovington.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Hinshaw, *Survivor on the High Plains*, 34-36.

<sup>12</sup> Gil Hinshaw, *Lea, New Mexico's Last Frontier*, (Hobbs, New Mexico: Hobbs Daily News-Sun, 1976), 166.

<sup>13</sup> Hinshaw, *Survivor on the High Plains*, 41-44.

<sup>14</sup> Hinshaw, *Survivor on the High Plains*, 64.

<sup>15</sup> Hinshaw, *Survivor on the High Plains*, 78.

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Lovington Commercial Historic District  
Lea County, New Mexico

Development picked up in the late 1920s and early 1930s due to the increased attention garnered by the Lea County oil fields and the arrival of the railroad in Lovington and Hobbs.<sup>16</sup> In December 1928 an application to add another 71 miles to the Texas-New Mexico Railroad, which would take the tracks through Jal and Hobbs to Lovington, was submitted to the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), a regulatory body charged with overseeing the railroads and later trucking. By 1930, the Texas and New Mexico railway had reached Lovington, and was met by great celebration. In response to these important events, several significant buildings, such as the Johnson's Dry Goods & Grocery, the Lister Building, and the Lea County State Bank, were built between 1928 and 1932. All of these buildings still line the streets around the courthouse square.

Ranching and agriculture, including cotton, hay, and other feed crops for livestock, formed the backbone of the early economy. The native grasses of the Plains made stock farming profitable and provided reliable income for Lea County farmers and ranchers. By the mid-1930s, wool shipments totaled over a million pounds per year, and dairy and beef cattle were abundant. Dry farming methods allowed grain sorghums and some corn to be grown, and irrigation provided farmers with opportunities for alfalfa, onions, sweet potatoes, and peanuts.<sup>17</sup> In a 1920s issue of the *Farmer and Ranchman*, the writer stated: "He (the New Mexico farmer) is using the cotton crop with other crops and livestock to increase the farm returns."<sup>18</sup>

In 1949, the principal crops of Lea County included: 3,052 acres of corn; 14,663 acres of sorghum; 857 acres of wheat; 2,093 acres of alfalfa; and 53,387 acres of cotton. Lea County recorded 750 farms with an average size of 3,495 acres in 1950. That year, 41% of the farms grew cotton and 36% maintained livestock. In comparison, Eddy County, its neighbor to the west, registered 752 farms with an average size of 1,202 acres; 53% grew cotton and 16% raised livestock. In contrast, Curry County farmers to the north did not grow any cotton in 1950, while 63% grew grain and 12% sustained livestock.<sup>19</sup>

By the late 1970s, the total number of Lea County farms had declined to 467, and 76% were considered small in size – those with sales under \$40,000 a year. During that period, the "Southeast Livestock Region," which included Lea, Eddy, Chaves, and parts of other surrounding counties, was the state's most important sheep-producing area.<sup>20</sup>

The *Lovington Press* described the early symbiotic relationship between the railroad and the region's agriculture, noting that most lines maintained their own agriculture departments to support local farmers, farm agents, and related organizations. The newspaper wrote: "It's a case where the farmers need the railroads, the railroads need the farmers, and cooperation is profitable for all."<sup>21</sup> In the late 1940s, the newspaper reported that a new farmers contracting office was opened to assist Lovington

<sup>16</sup> David Myrick, xvii.

<sup>17</sup> May Price Mosley, "Little Texas" Beginnings in Southeastern New Mexico, (Roswell, NM: Hall-Poorbaugh Press, Inc., 1973), 52.

<sup>18</sup> "The Future of Cotton Raising in New Mexico," *The Farmer and Ranchman*, April 1924, page 7.

<sup>19</sup> Marlowe M. Taylor, *Selected statistics relating to agriculture in New Mexico*, Research Report 21, (Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico State University, Agricultural Experiment Station, 1959), 1-41.

<sup>20</sup> Clyde Eastman, *New Mexico Small Farms: A Socioeconomic Profile*, Research Report 407, (Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico State University, Agricultural Experiment Station, 1979), 8,

<sup>21</sup> *Lovington Press*, 8 April 1948.

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Lovington Commercial Historic District  
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and Lea County farmers with preparing their lands for cultivation, stating that the area benefitted from the largest shallow water belt in the country and was the “future grain and bread basket of the southwest.”<sup>22</sup> Commerce, ranching, agriculture, and later oil and gas production sustained the local economy – all benefitted from the railroad’s arrival.

**LEA COUNTY OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION**

Lovington was never regarded as an oil town like Hobbs, its neighbor to the south, but oil and gas production have been an important part of its history and the livelihood of its residents, especially following World War II. In the 1920s, major oil discoveries in the Permian Basin of Lea County included: the Maljamar pool; the Lynch pool; the Monument-Eunice pool; the Cooper Jal pool; and, the Hobbs pool.<sup>23</sup> On June 13, 1928, the Midwest Refining Company (later Amoco) drilled a discovery well in the Hobbs field, leading to what some call “the most important single discovery of oil in New Mexico.”<sup>24</sup> Soon thereafter, the Humble-Bowers well, another big discovery, was drilled in the Hobbs field. Together, these events are credited with launching the oil boom in Lea County, and within a few short months, the homestead of James Isaac Hobbs became an oil camp of over 10,000 people.<sup>25</sup>

For the most part, Lovington kept its distance from the oil discoveries of the 1920s, even showing great disdain for the life of the oilman and the scars left on the grassy Plains; however, the news attracted the interest of two important men – Powhatan Carter, a local rancher and businessmen, and Frank Jack Dangle, who arrived in Lovington in 1928 and began buying land leases and royalties for oil companies.<sup>26</sup>

That long-held opinion of the industry would change after WWII however. In 1948, the McAlester Fuel Company, a subsidiary of Magnolia of Arkansas, drilled a deep well on the J.M. Denton Ranch, twelve miles northeast of Lovington. Known as the Sawyer Discovery Well, the pool led to nearly 100 additional wells, producing 21,000 barrels a day by 1950.<sup>27</sup>

The 1950s yielded another significant discovery with the exploration of the Abo Formation, an ancient coral reef that separated the Delaware Basin around Carlsbad from the “lagoonal environment” of the northern sections of the Permian Basin in New Mexico. In 1951, the Lovington Abo field resulted from drilling an older, shallow well down to 8,000 feet. This well spurred further exploration near Artesia, which led to the prolific Empire Abo discovery well in 1957.<sup>28</sup>

Between 1946 and 1953, Lovington experienced growth, construction, and development, probably like no other period in its history.<sup>29</sup> Surviving buildings dating from this period provide tangible evidence of

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<sup>22</sup> “Farmers Contracting Co. Opens Local Office,” *Lovington Press*, 22 April 1948.

<sup>23</sup> Paige W. Christiansen, *The story of oil in New Mexico*, (Socorro, NM: New Mexico Bureau of Mines & Mineral Resources, 1989), 21.

<sup>24</sup> Christiansen, 26.

<sup>25</sup> Christiansen, 29.

<sup>26</sup> Hinshaw, *Survivor on the High Plains*, 101.

<sup>27</sup> Hinshaw, *Survivor on the High Plains*, 105.

<sup>28</sup> Christiansen, 40.

<sup>29</sup> Hinshaw, *Survivor on the High Plains*, 108.

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Lovington Commercial Historic District  
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the oil industry's influence on the built environment in this small town. In 1948, J.W. Allen of A & Y Lumber Company in Lovington told the *Lovington Press*: "I have never seen anything like it. We are having scores of interested people make inquiries daily about a rent house, a home, or a business building."<sup>30</sup>

**MODERNIZATION IN LOVINGTON: POST-WORLD WAR II TO 1960**

Many towns across New Mexico witnessed the trend of modernizing facades and interiors in the decades following World War II. As evidenced by period newspapers, there was a definite building boom in Lovington at this time as a result of increased revenues generated from oil and gas production in Lea County during the War. Between 1940 and 1950, Lovington's population had doubled, and the County's population grew by 38%.<sup>31</sup> The proposed district's period of significance ends in 1960, allowing for the incorporation of several buildings that were either constructed or updated in the mid-twentieth century and still convey the aesthetic qualities and materials of that period.

In Lovington, new buildings such as the row in the 200 block of North Main (west side), including the small concrete block building at 217, the office of Frank J. Danglede, and the Lovington National Bank, were constructed in the mid-to-late 1940s, as were the three buildings found in the next block at 317-321 North Main. The *Lovington Press* continually highlighted new construction projects or updates to downtown. One newspaper article entitled, "Sign of Time Tell(s) Story of Progress," noted that Howard & Hatch Hardware on the east side of the courthouse square acquired a new neon sign and that "all four sides of the square will reflect the modern trend of our city" with additional signs.<sup>32</sup>

Another building that was altered during this period is the one-story commercial building at 113 and 113 ½, whose facade likely dates to the 1950s. The base of the building is cream brick with integrated panel work above. The building is divided into two small retail spaces. The space on the left has a single-leaf aluminum and glass door flanked by a built-in window display case. The other space simply has a single-leaf door with a fixed-pane horizontal window. A projecting metal awning spans the façade, and an armature for a sign is mounted above and the word "Abstracts," in period lettering, remains. It is these kinds of updates that signified the changing times and were signs of progress.

**BUSINESSES AND SERVICES OF LOVINGTON**

For the most part, the extant commercial buildings of Lovington date from 1918 through the 1960s. The historic enterprises included pharmacies, groceries, barbershops, restaurants, department stores, auto shops, and a theatre – all provided the necessities and conveniences of everyday life in a small rural town.

The site of the Lea County State Bank at the corner of Central and Main was originally occupied by the Lovington Grocery, the first mercantile opened by Jim Love. The current bank building, which replaced

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<sup>30</sup> "Largest Building Boom in History Kicks Lid Off Housing Shortage," *Lovington Press*, 22 July 1948.

<sup>31</sup> "Lea County gains 38% in Population," *Lovington Press*, 21 October 1948 and *LP*, 4 November 1948.

<sup>32</sup> "Sign of Time Tell Story of Progress," *Lovington Press*, 25 March 1948.

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Lovington Commercial Historic District  
Lea County, New Mexico

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the grocery, was erected in 1928. In addition to banking, the Elliott-Waldron Abstract Company occupied a portion of the building. The bank opened with \$25,000 in capital stock, and early stockholders included: Warren M. Snyder, Seth Alston, J.R. Reed, Will Terry, Henry Record, D.C. Berry, J.S. Eaves, and J. E. Simmons – the movers and shakers of early Lovington. According to city directories, the building still housed the bank in 1957, but by the early 1960s, City Directories do not list this address. Of note at the southeast corner of the building, there is a brass U.S. Coast Guard Geodetic Survey emblem dated 1948.

Another important landmark, the Beverly Building at 118-120 East Central Avenue, originally housed Johnson's Dry Goods and Grocery with H.R. Johnson as owner. An early photo in the 1940 Lovington High School yearbook shows the building with a sign mounted on the front, reading "*Pause...Drink Coca-Cola*." Andrea Burt ran a clothing business here for thirty-two years, from 1976 to 2008. In 2009-2010, this building was renovated for museum and town use.

Immediately west of the Beverly Building at 112-116 East Central Avenue, the Lister Building was built in the 1930s, and originally functioned as the Lister Drug Store, which advertised "drugs, drug sundries, kodaks, candies and a complete line of Guaranteed jewelry." Unfortunately, Mr. Lister died before seeing the building completed. The second floor is very intact with original room divisions for numerous offices. Over the years, accountants and lawyers, many of whom worked at the courthouse across the street, as well as Dr. Alva McDaniel, who practiced medicine in Lovington for thirty-five years, and several realtors occupied the numerous offices located on the second floor. The Lea County Museum purchased the building in 2008, and plans to use the rooms for various vignettes that relate to the history of the county.

In 1936, Dr. Hilton W. Gillett opened Lovington General Hospital at 215 North Main Street. The original building cost \$27,000, and was staffed by Gillett and two additional physicians—William Badger and Demarius Badger, as well as four nurses. The 1957 City Directory still shows Lovington General Hospital at this location, but by 1965, the building is referred to as the H.W. Gillett Clinic.

Originally housing City Drug and Cobb's Department Store, the large building at 201 to 205 North Main Street reflects the Decorative Brick Commercial style. City Drug had several taglines, including "Your Prescription Druggist" and "We Feel Your Needs," and was known for its soda fountain and as a "hang-out" for local teenagers. Cobb's Department Store advertised Stetson Hats, Curlee Clothes, Bobby Brooks, Dotty Dan, and Buster Brown Children's Wear. By 1962, City Drug had moved a block north into the former Lovington National Bank building, and today the building houses the Main Street Café.

Billed as having the latest features in modern architecture and movie technology, the Lea County Theatre opened on September 30, 1948 with a parade, speakers, and a first-run film.<sup>33</sup> Like other downtown businesses during the 1940s, the theatre installed a neon blade sign and marquee to advertise and announce the movies.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> "New Lea Theatre to Open Thursday," *Lovington Press*, 16 September 1948.

<sup>34</sup> "New Theatre Sign Erected Wednesday," *Lovington Press*, 1 July 1948.

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Today, Lovington retains its small-town feel with streets of predominantly one and two-story commercial buildings centered on a fine landscaped square with its imposing Art Deco-style courthouse. The town's economy is still driven by historic industries of cattle and sheep raising, stock farming, and oil and gas production. In 1997, the market value of Lea County agricultural products, including dairy, cattle, cotton, hay, and other feed crops, surpassed \$60 million.<sup>35</sup> With the town's preservation of its early and mid-twentieth century commercial buildings that reflect its growth and development over the past century, the Lovington Commercial Historic District warrants listing in the State Register of Cultural Properties.

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<sup>35</sup> Lea County website: [www.leacounty.net/about.html#History](http://www.leacounty.net/about.html#History)

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**Lovington Commercial Historic District  
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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundaries of the nominated district are delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked on the accompanying USGS map.

1) 13/654250/3646000 2) 13/654570/3646000 3) 13/654585/3646300 4) 13/654130/3646300

See Boundary Sketch Map for more details.

**VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The Lovington Commercial Historic District is roughly bound by Madison Avenue on the north, the alley between Love Street and East Street on the east, Avenue B on the south, and Second Street on the west. The boundary is not a perfect rectangle and jogs slightly to include the core commercial buildings that represent the significant historical themes and property types of Lovington. Beyond these boundaries, the integrity of the commercial resources declines, becomes too spread out, or transitions into residential or industrial areas. See the USGS Map or Sketch Map for further details.

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**Lovington Commercial Historic District  
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**Photograph Log**

*The following information pertains to all photographs unless otherwise noted:*

Name of District: Lovington Commercial Historic District  
Location: Lovington, New Mexico  
Photographer: Heather Barrett  
Date taken: December 2010  
Location of Negatives: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, Santa Fe

Photo 1 of 13  
Streetscape, 100 Block of South Main Street (west side)  
Facing southwest

Photo 2 of 13  
Lea County Courthouse with Lister Building in background  
Facing southeast

Photo 3 of 13  
Close-up of Lea County Courthouse, north and west (front) elevations  
Facing southeast

Photo 4 of 13  
Lea County State Bank, south and east (front) elevations  
Facing northwest

Photo 5 of 13  
Jake's Pharmacy, east (front) elevation  
Facing west

Photo 6 of 13  
Jake's Pharmacy, east (front) and north elevations  
Facing southwest

Photo 7 of 13  
Streetscape, Frank Danglade Office, 217 North Main Street, and portion of 215 North Main Street  
Facing southwest

Photo 8 of 13  
Former Lovington National Bank, Danglade Office, 217, and 215 North Main  
Facing southwest

Photo 9 of 13  
Lister Building, north (front) and west elevations  
Looking southeast

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Photo 10 of 13  
Lea Theatre, east and north (front) elevations  
Facing south

Photo 11 of 13  
Commercial Hotel, north and west (front) elevations  
Facing southeast

Photo 12 of 13  
Lovington Fire Department, west (front) and south elevations  
Facing northeast

Photo 13 of 13  
McCrary Building, east (front) and south elevations  
Facing northwest