

THE NATIONAL GUARD OLD ARMORY
9th Street at Mulberry & Maple
Amory, Mississippi
Monroe County

(Former) National Guard Armory 095-AMR-0022-ML

Construction 1940 (est.) Completed in 1942 Open House August 9, 1942

Architect Overstreet, N.W., & Town, A.H.

Builder/Contractor WPA

Designated a Mississippi Landmark 10/10/2002 Recorded 11/12/2002

Book/Volume Number: Instrument #20027603 ⁽¹⁾

Location : 101 9th Street S between Maple Street & Mulberry Street

The National Guard Old Armory (former) was just one of the many creations of the Works Progress Administration that is still functional and in existence today. Multiple relief programs were created by President Herbert Hoover and President Franklin D. Roosevelt to attempt to relieve some of the stress and misery brought about by the influx of poverty and loss of the stock market crash of 1929. One of the great successes from these many attempts to support and assist citizens during these most troublesome times was the creation of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). It was established by executive order May 6, 1935 as the Works Projects Administration. The name was later changed in 1939 to the Works Progress Administration. This was the largest project spawned from the New Deal program created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and provided employment to millions of Americans during the troublesome times of the Great Depression. ² The WPA was under the direction of Harry Hopkins, an ex-social worker, and was an adventurous program that created landmarks and roads across the country and works of art through United States Post Offices across the country and in various other buildings. The WPA was responsible for the creation of 2,566 murals and 17,744 sculptures which are now located throughout the United States at various public buildings and landmarks. ⁵ The WPA employed musicians, artists, writers, actors, and directors in large arts, drama, media, and literature. ³ The WPA also encouraged education in literature and the arts by citizens through the WPA Federal One Project. ⁶ The WPA employed women for many projects including the overseeing of libraries, sewing projects, distribution, and artistic projects. The careers of novelists and photographers were supported and nourished by this program as well. The Historical Records Survey under this program created a vast library of history of families, cities, court houses, cemeteries, churches, and businesses along with historical narratives of slaves, immigrants, and Native Americans that genealogists still value today. Every community throughout the United States of America benefited from this

program. The program was liquidated in 1943. By the liquidation of the program the total funding for the project reached \$13.4 billion and created eight million jobs.⁴ In Amory, the WPA operated a sewing room, assisted in payment for streets, sewers, drainage, created a community garden, and created a canning center for the citizens.

The Public Works Project aspect of the WPA created buildings, bridges, roads, and structures throughout America. This is the project title that oversaw the creation of four National Guard Armory buildings in Mississippi. Amory, Aberdeen, Starkville, and Meadville were cities that saw the creation of similar armories designed by N.W. Overstreet. In 1937, N.W. Overstreet designed the National Guard Armory in Amory.⁷ One “blanket” set of blueprints was created with no specification as to which blueprint was for what city. The City of Amory is the only reputed city to have immediate access to the original blueprints including the architect’s and builder’s notes. This building was a replacement to the original home for Amory’s National Guard unit which was located on North Main Street north of Vinegar Bend. In the years between 1937 and 1940, there a great deal of public demand for a new armory to be constructed. Lt. K.I. Allen recruited many military and government leaders to come to Amory and speak to the city board and citizens.¹⁰ The growth of the Amory National Guard was the direct cause of the needed additional space. By July 1, 1937, the number of those serving in our guard rose by 752 officers and men.⁸ Lt. Allen campaigned the citizens for the building as a place to house and train officers as well as to create a place for the community to use as a gymnasium, auditorium, and community center. There was a movement for the facility to be named the Talmage B. Tubb Armory to pay tribute to the Amory National Guard’s deceased captain who organized the guard unit.¹⁰ Civic clubs in Amory were also great supporters of this project. The Young Business Men’s Club, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, and the American Legion Post were just a few of the organizations that supported Lt. Allen in his plea to the citizens and government of Amory to create a larger building that would serve as a multifunctional facility for citizens for years to come.¹¹ An election was ordered to be held April 30, 1940, to decide the fate of the new armory. Citizens were asked to vote on a bond issue that would not exceed \$20,000. The proceeds of the sale of the bonds together with funding from the WPA were to be used to purchase land in the City of Amory and create an armory building.⁹ The citizens of Amory strongly supported the bond issue and voted 495 to 23 to approve the bond issue of a city share of \$20,000 to pair with the WPA contribution toward the total projected cost of \$53,000 for the Armory Building. The building was to be 133 feet by 172 feet with a drill hall 80 by 100 feet located on a 200 square foot lot.¹² The project was initially estimated to take twelve months to complete and would hire at least 44 men.¹³ The City of Amory minutes of record from May 7, 1940 indicate use of the building. The minutes state:

- (1) That the auditorium Armory building shall be managed and the use thereof decided and directed by the municipal authorities of the City of Amory by and through such means and agency to be appointed by said authorities of the City of Amory as the said authorities shall be determined, but such agency, committee, or management as may be appointed or designated by such authorities shall not be any private, public, or quasi-public organization but shall be some specific commission or agency created by said municipal authorities or some officer holding an office created by the said municipal authorities, such officer to be appointed by such authorities for

the specific purpose of carrying out such rules and regulations for the use and conduct of said building as may be determined by the governing authorities of the City of Amory,

- (2) That said municipal auditorium armory building shall always be used for the benefit of the general public and any and all organizations composed of the members of the general public without discrimination in favor of or against any group of citizens composing such organizations and said building is to be used under such terms, conditions, and regulations as the municipal authorities may from time to time establish and ordain.⁴⁵

In November of 1940, Security Bank of Amory deeded lots seven, eight, twenty-three, and twenty four of Block A in the Edgewood Subdivision to the City of Amory. Arch Dalrymple, Jr. deeded lots three, four, five, six, nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, and twenty-two in Block A to the City of Amory, D.C. Howell deeded lots twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven, and twenty-eight of Block A, and Mrs. E. O. Brannan deeded lots nine, ten, eleven, and twelve in Block A to the City of Amory for construction of the National Guard Armory.¹⁹ Once the land sales and new deeds were recorded in the Monroe County Tax Assessors books, construction could begin. It began in December of 1940.¹⁴ Mayor C.D. Rowan received approval from the City of Amory Board of Aldermen to enter into contract with Mr. Jas. B. Lawson, engineer, to work up plans and specifications for the Armory and other improvements. By January 9, 1941, there were 45 men employed on a daily basis erecting the armory building. A basement and rifle range were already under construction and near completion by this time.¹⁵ On August 9, 1942, there was an open house celebration held at the armory, and the citizens of Amory were invited to tour the new building.¹⁶ Ironically, the official opening of the National Guard Armory in 1942 coincided with the National Guard Unit in Amory reporting to assignment.

The National Guard Armory was used by the guard as a training and storage facility as well as for offices for over 30 years. The City of Amory turned the entire management of the Armory Building over to the City of Amory Schools system on September 5, 1951. The school system was granted sole authority for the control of the building in any matter that may arise. The City of Amory Board of Aldermen made a motion that the city add \$250 to the school treasury for the assistance in the paying of utilities and operation of the Armory Building for the year July 1, 1951 to July 1, 1952. After that time, the responsibility should lay completely with the City of Amory School System for operation and cost of physical damage along with any other expenses that could arise in the operation of the Armory Building. The City of Amory assumed all major maintenance and normal depreciation of the building.²⁴ The July 1954 Amory School District budget was the last budget to make mention of the Armory. That budget had no allotted money to accommodate expenses and operation of the Armory Building.²⁵ The City of Amory and National Guard Unit were still using the building for various purposes. With the growth of the electric department, more office space was needed. The Red Cross and Veterans Service Officer were, at the time, using office space at the electric department. During the July 6, 1954 board meeting a motion was made to have them move into the offices available at the Armory Building.²⁶ The Red Cross chose to not move to the Armory Building, as the Veterans Service Officer did, but to move to the Price Building instead.²⁷ In November of 1955, the movement began to expand the room that the National Guard Unit had by creating a

new armory. Mayor Crump and City Attorney Fred Wright traveled to Jackson to discuss with National Guard officials the prospects of Amory getting a new Armory building.²⁸ No action was taken and no further discussion of a new building to replace the Armory Building was pursued with great ferocity until the 1970's. In December of 1955, after a discussion with Superintendent Dungan and Amory School trustees, a committee was formed consisting of Park Commissioner O. W. Hadaway and Mr. Dungan to work out regulations for operation of the Armory building with Major Joe F. Peeler.²⁹ The committee changed after the February 7, 1956 city board meeting. Major Joe F. Peeler appeared before the Mayor and board to discuss the handling of the Armory Building by the National Guard. Aldermen O.W. Hadaway and W. E. Coyle, together with Major J. F. Peeler, were appointed as a committee to work out a satisfactory plan with the Amory School Authorities for the future handling of the Armory Building.³⁰ On March 6, 1956 the city funded and performed work on the roof of the Armory Building as requested by the National Guard and Amory School System.³¹ By February 5, 1957, the City of Amory assumed all insurance on the Armory Building.³² As part of the agreement on use of the Armory the National Guard Unit and the City of Amory agreed to work together to paint the interior of the Armory Building in July of 1957. The National Guard Unit furnished 175 gallons of paint, and the City advertised for bids to perform the labor needed to paint the interior.³³ In September of 1957, the City of Amory employed painters at a rate of \$1.25 per hour to paint the Armory Building along with other public buildings.³⁴ The school was still involved in the operation of the Armory Building in 1957 although there was no budget allotment in the Amory School budget. November 2, 1957, the City of Amory board members agreed to pay the \$100 cost to sand the Armory Building floors as needed by the Amory School System.³⁵ By September of the year 1958, the City of Amory was approached by Major J. F. Peeler who requested that the city of Amory take over payment of utilities on the Armory Building because the Amory School System no longer used the facilities.³⁶ This was the only recorded mention in city record that stated that the school no longer held any interest in the building.

The National Guard Armory on 9th Street served many functions for the citizens of Amory as those who campaigned for its success had once hoped. One of the first community functions held at the armory building was the annual invitational meet of basketball teams. The annual Amory High School Invitational Basketball Tournament was held in January of 1943 in the gymnasium of the National Guard Armory building. Nettleton, Wren, Egypt, Okolona, Smithville, Greenwood Springs, Hatley, and Amory all participated in the event.¹⁷ Throughout the era of World War II the National Guard Armory was used as a place of storage, a training facility, offices for officers in the National Guard, and when not in use by officers, it was used for entertainment and fund raising. During the Cold War era the space was used for much the same purpose with the addition of use as a place of security for citizens. The National Guard Armory became a bomb shelter as did other federal and government owned buildings in Amory. World War II was fully engulfing the Pacific and all men and women able to fight and work were being called upon to support their country. Celebrations were held here at home to raise money for support of the troops and to fund war-time projects. Square Dance Jamborees were promoted by the Frisco Square Dance group and people attended these events held in the National Guard Armory from Mobile and Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Jackson, Mississippi, Memphis, Tennessee, and all around northeast Mississippi. Wrestling events were held featuring Sid

Nabors of New Albany, Rex Mobley of Texas, Chief Apache of Arizona, and Joe McCarthy of Illinois. The local Gavin Lamon VFW Post held many of these events to raise money for various war-time efforts. The Amory Lions Club also hosted dances including a Charity Jamboree featuring Buck Turner and his "Buckaroos" with Gene Steele (the singing salesman). As the war began to near a close, more dances and celebrations were held. The American Legion Dance featuring Kelly Hoyle and band, President Roosevelt's Birthday Dance featuring the Mississippi State College Orchestra, and, of course, a huge Welcome Home Party for the men and women of the armed forces was held during the year 1945. Throughout the rest of the 40's various activities and functions happened at the National Guard Armory. Jack Pennington's Garrett's Varieties with Gene Steele (the singing salesman) led dances and orchestras, The Columbus Rhythm Kings played at the VFW dance, and Freddie "Boy" Burns (formerly Bob McKnight) and The Ranch Boys played at many dances. There were always large Armistice Day Celebration dances featuring the Mississippians, dinners, beauty reviews, and victory parades. Amory Merchant's Harvest Trade Festivals were held annually. Tony Wald and his all girl orchestra headlined VFW dances. Old Time Fiddler's Contests sponsored by the Amory Lions Club were also held at the Armory. Throughout the 50's the National Guard Armory was used for many VFW dances and celebrations. In 1955, the Armed Forces Day Open House celebrated with a fly over by eight T-33's from the Greenville, MS Air Force Base.²⁰

Perhaps the most widely known and celebrated artists to ever perform at the National Guard Armory in Amory were Johnny Cash and Carl Perkins in November of 1955 for a Country and Western Jamboree and Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, and Elvis Presley in December of 1955. The December 12th and 13th performance was one of the only two occasions where the three played together in concert and the last time Carl Perkins and Elvis Presley performed together.⁴² They played together November 17, 1955 in Texarkana, Arkansas as well as in December in Amory.²¹ November 24, 1955 was the first date that Johnny Cash and Carl Perkins performed in Amory at the National Guard Armory, and Johnny Cash's performance listings show him in Amory, MS at the National Guard Armory December 12 and December 13, 1955.⁴³ There was no mention made before or after the concert in the local paper. Only flyers were distributed locally by a local radio station and promoter of events in Amory, Mr. Charlie Boren. There are two stories as to how the three artists came to be on the same bill in December of 1955. One account holds that a local deejay for WTUP in Tupelo, Bobby Ritter, booked Elvis for the show as he had done before for other local shows. Another account is that Mr. Charlie Boren, station manager of WAMY in Amory, paid for the appearance that night of all three artists. Mr. Boren had also worked in Tupelo at a sister station to WTUP and knew Elvis Presley very well.²³ The two were known to help promote things together as well. Mr. Charlie Boren was, as is widely remembered in Amory, a great promoter and entertainer. He made sure the people of Amory had access to the most current talent just as bigger cities did. He was a great promoter of Rockabilly and Gospel style talent.⁴²

It is believed that the song "Blue Suede Shoes" rose to its future success due to the appearances of these artists in Amory in November and December of 1955. The night of the November 24, 1955 concert in Amory it is rumored that while conversing pre-show Johnny Cash shared a story of an airman he met while he was serving in the military who referred to his military issued shoes as "blue suede shoes." Mr. Cash told Carl Perkins that he should record the song that he had been working on about those shoes.³⁸ Some accounts indicate that the

conversation between Johnny Cash and Carl Perkins happened in Amory before a Jackson, Tennessee show where Carl Perkins saw firsthand the importance of “shoes” to young men of the time, and some accounts indicate that the conversation happened after the Jackson, Tennessee concert. According to a documentary video created for the Amory Regional Museum via a grant through the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Carl Perkins and his band performed at a dance at Tommy’s Drive Inn shortly after the November Amory, MS show in Jackson, Tennessee. While playing, Carl noticed a young man and lady dancing near the front stage. Carl Perkins stated that the gentleman seemed more worried about his footwear than he did the lovely girl dancing with him. In a 1992 NBC interview, Carl Perkins stated that the young man kept saying, “Don’t step on my suedes.”⁴² In the interview, Carl Perkins says that he sat down that night and penned the words Blue Suede Shoes on the top of a brown paper bag. This snippet of the interview can be seen in the documentary video created for the Amory Regional Museum.

Mr. W. S. “Fluke” Holland, drummer for Carl Perkins and one of the Tennessee Three, remembers driving back from the November Amory concert home to Tennessee and hearing Johnny Cash tell Perkins of his idea. “John had his foot on the back of the front seat with his toe in the air and said to Carl that he should write a song about shoes...maybe about blue suede shoes,” said W. S. “Fluke” Holland.⁴² In Johnny Cash’s autobiography Man in Black: God’s Superstar Tells His Own Story in His Own Words, Johnny Cash recants a variant of the same story.

“Backstage in Amory, Mississippi, on the Friday night two weeks later (referring to the impromptu session at Sun Studios that included Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley, and Jerry Lee Lewis in 1955), I sat talking with Carl Perkins. He and I had already performed, and Elvis was on stage. ‘I thought they were going to tear your clothes off out there tonight, Carl. I believe you encored about nine times, didn’t you?’ I said. ‘I’ve been here before, and they’re always good to me, John,’ Carl said. ‘I watched you tonight,’ I said, ‘and you really have a feel for the “bop” kind of song. Why don’t you record one?’ ‘I’ve sung that kind of music all my life, John, the rhythm and blues and gospel songs with the beat, but I haven’t come up with the right song yet.’ ‘Carl,’ I said, ‘when I was in the Air Force, there was this black staff sergeant from Virginia named C.V. White who was the live wire of the organization. He was funny; he always had a laugh and smile for everybody. He’d dress up as sharp as a tack with his uniform pressed, his cap cocked on the side of his head, and he’d come into my room saying, “How do I look, man?” I’d say, “Mighty spiffy, C.V.” He’d say, “Just don’t step on my blue suede shoes, man,” and he’d trip out the door snapping his fingers. “Hey, C.V.!” I’d yell. “Those are Air Force regulation shoes, not blue suede.” “Tonight when I get to town they’re gonna be blue suede, man” C.V. would yell back at me with a smile.’ ‘That’s a great idea for a bop song!’ Carl said. ‘That’s why I told you,’ I said. ‘With the feel you have for that kind of music, you’re the man who should write it.’ Carl grabbed a pencil and a piece of brown paper sack and started writing. Before Elvis came offstage, he had written *Blue Suede Shoes*. ‘I’ll sing it for you in Gladewater Sunday night,’ Carl said as I left Amory for home.”⁴⁴

“Blue Suede Shoes” was recorded in December of 1955 and released January 1, 1956 with “Honey Don’t” on side B by Sun Records.⁴¹ During the December 1955 performance in Amory, a version of the song (originally there were three different versions recorded of the song) was performed multiple times. The song proved to be a hit with the citizens of Amory in the National Guard Armory that night. The song had been cut by the time of the December performance, but it had not been released. Local entertainers and citizens remember the show as well. In the documentary for the Amory Regional Museum, local entertainer Jimmy Roby recounts his backstage experience with a nervous and blond haired Elvis Presley. According to the accounts from people who attended the shows, the price of admission was \$1.00 to get in the door and \$2.00 for reserved seating. There still exist flyers from the November 24, 1955 performance. The Country and Western Jamboree featured Johnny Cash and The Tennessee Two (later the Tennessee Three), Carl Perkins and Band, Poor Ole Richard from WMPS, Memphis, The Jenkins Family Singers, Gene Simmons and the Dixie Playboys, The Bill Williams Show, Buck & Buddy, Little Jimmy Roby, and Bob Ritter. The flyer for the November performance states that over forty people performed on stage that night. The December flyers are not as readily available. There are numerous forgeries online and sold at stores with dates that are incorrect or pictures from different shows. One thing remains a constant for those who were witness of the performances and for those who were told later of these great performances, the song “Blue Suede Shoes” found its beginnings in Amory, Mississippi at the National Guard “Old” Armory. Whether or not the song was written in Amory, the night it was played in Amory, Mississippi was surely the first night that Elvis Presley heard rumblings of the song that would one day be one of his best known hits. From the first functions hosted in the building, through historic Rockabilly moments, and until it was deemed unsafe for use by the public in 2002, this building saw many celebrities and brought great enjoyment to the community of Amory and surrounding Monroe County.

During the next few decades many different events were held at the (Old) National Guard Armory. Circuses, fairs, wrestling matches, and more were hosted in this building. In May of 1990, the City of Amory Aldermen voted to close the National Guard Old Armory to open public use. Residents who lived near the building complained that the building was too accessible to the general public. Teens and adults were entering the building throughout the day and night. The building was called a public nuisance and a violation of peace by neighbors and the community surrounding it. The reason for this, it was discovered, was the lack of locks on the doors and lack of any supervision. There was no presence of locks or locking mechanisms. Windows had been busted out so that youth could crawl through them and onto the roof. During this time the building’s front offices were used as a justice court facility, and the back portions of the building, including the stage, gymnasium, and various small storage rooms, were used by the City of Amory Parks and Recreation Department for recreational purposes. During the May 16, 1990, City of Amory regularly called board meeting, the motion was made and passed to close the armory for recreational purposes. The recreational purposes of the building were meant to be for basketball and an indoor walking track for adults and youth. Due to the lack of supervision, youth had all but demolished the basketball area. Skateboard ramps were brought in and built from the stage and up and down the bleachers. This did irreparable damage to the bleachers and floor. An architect was consulted in regards to turning the Armory into a civic center. It was determined that over \$500,000 needed, and,

therefore, the project was deemed not feasible.⁴⁶ The National Guard Old Armory was used to house the Justice Court offices for Amory until 1999. It also hosted church yard sales, school functions, and is currently used to host Monroe County and Amory city elections. In the year 2002, city planner Frank Peeler along with other city officials sought the recognition of Mississippi Landmark status. The Mississippi Landmark status was awarded to the building October 10, 2002 and recorded in the Mississippi Department of Archives and History November 12, 2002.¹ The city deemed the Armory Building unsafe for public use after many years of the maintenance and responsibilities falling upon the park and recreational department and school system. The facility was no longer needed as a place for the Amory National Guard Unit. Construction began on a new National Guard Armory in April of 1975. This new building would be owned by the National Guard on City of Amory property. The new building would have an assembly hall similar in size to the old armory but have 3,700 square feet of office space in addition to a large classroom, kitchen, and indoor rifle range.¹⁸

Once the Old National Guard Armory became a Mississippi Landmark, the building became eligible for funding assistance. In July 2010, the bid for reroofing the Armory building was awarded to Accurate Roofing Company of Potts Camp, Mississippi. Architecture South, the City of Amory, and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History worked together to restore and replace the roof of the Armory Building. All guidelines for historical buildings were followed and were closely regulated by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. The Amory (Old) National Guard Armory Re-roofing Project included a complete tear-off all of the original roofing, wood trim, metal trim, gutters, and downspouts of the building. The original building included an entry area of three separate roofs with a membrane roof system and parapet walls on the west side of the structure. The remainder of the original building was occupied by a large gymnasium with a barrel vault with the same membrane roof system in the east wing of the structure. Damaged wood decking was replaced as needed. A small percentage of wood (2x) joists were "sistered" to original joists to achieve structural stability of the roof system as recommended by a structural engineer. A vapor barrier, rigid insulation, and a white TPO (thermoplastic) membrane roof were added above the decking and structure. The insulation and white TPO would prove to be an added advantage for energy consumption to the building. Metal parapet wall caps and coping were added to stabilize water penetration at the tops of the concrete parapet walls. Thru-wall scuppers, gutters, and downspouts were replaced with materials and designs provided by the original blueprints. One downspout boot that was missing was replaced with a specially casted boot to match the surviving boots. Additionally, a small piece of wood molding was added to the trim work of the barrel roof. This wood molding did not exist on the building prior to roof replacement, but its existence was provided by findings in the original blue prints. The rear of the barrel roof contained a board and batten siding exterior east wall that was replaced as per details in the original blueprints with the added protection of new insulation and a vapor barrier. All exposed wood and metal trim were painted in a bronze palette as prescribed by MDAH (Mississippi Department of Archives and History). The project totaled at over \$190,000. In late 2011, another project began to prepare the Armory Building for future events and uses. The City of Amory and Mississippi Development Authority installed a new HVAC system in the Armory. This project had a total cost of over \$118,000.³⁷

In November of 2012, an agreement was reached with The Dalrymple Old Armory Foundation, LLC for the complete restoration of the Armory Building. The Armory was neglected for many years, and damage from years of roof leaks caused deterioration in floors and joists. Martha Dalrymple of The Dalrymple Old Armory Foundation, LLC made plans to restore the interior of the structure as close to the original state as possible. Flooring was replaced with hickory where it was either rotten or damaged. Countersunk screws and hickory plugs replaced the nails on the existing floors. Floor joists were also replaced. Plywood flooring was replaced with durable vinyl surface over the existing plywood flooring for easier maintenance. Where possible, tongue and groove maple flooring was used to replace rotten and damaged boards. All hardwood floors and windows were sanded and refinished as part of the scope of work. Windows were refurbished by replacing existing damaged glaze and panes where needed, metal bars were repaired where they had previously been cut for window air conditioning units, and windowsills were primed and painted. Added partition walls were removed as well as drop ceilings. Ceilings were replaced with like period materials to their original height except in cases where the replacement of wiring made it necessary to have a small area to house the wiring. Flooring added after the original construction was replaced, restored, or recovered where needed. Wiring was checked and replaced and brought up to current state code by the City of Amory. Light fixtures were specifically chosen to closely match the 1940's era. Doors were replaced with heavy hickory doors or metal safety exit doors. Bathrooms were enlarged where possible and made handicap accessible. The original sliding doors that once existed in the drill hall or ballroom had been replaced in years past with roll-top doors. Doors were built in accordance with the original wooden doors and placed on a sliding track just as they were original to the building. Some of the original installations were deteriorated and deemed unsafe. The basement, filled with heating and cooling duct work, had no renovation.³⁹ In August of 2013, the chain link fence and posts around the Armory Building were removed and replaced with a wrought iron fence and posts to help in the beautification of the building's exterior.⁴⁰

In the fall of 2013, Mississippi State University contacted the City Clerk's office in regards to the original blueprints for the National Guard Old Armory. In years past, efforts had been made to obtain the blueprints from the City of Amory and have them archived in the Mississippi State University Library and Archive Department. The City Clerk's office reached out to MSU in an attempt to have the blueprints digitally copied and preserved for the City of Amory in 2012. Mattie Abraham the Manuscripts Coordinator for the Special Collections department of the MSU Libraries contacted the City Clerk's Office to request to borrow the original blueprints for the National Guard Armory. Her research into the architecture of the four National Guard Armories built by N.W. Overstreet led her to Amory to the only existing blueprints. MSU Libraries paid for Jackson Blueprint to digitally copy the blueprints and all architect and contractor notes on the blueprints. The MSU Libraries department also preserved the blueprints in sleeves for the City of Amory. There is now an existing copy of the blueprints at the MSU Library for everyone to enjoy. Through this partnership, the MSU Library provided the City of Amory with a digital copy of the original artist's rendering of the National Guard Armory.

The Amory (Old) National Guard Armory has, and will continue to be, home for the voting precinct for city elections, various support group meetings, school fundraisers, meetings

for local churches and church groups, class reunions, school sponsored proms and banquets, and a venue for various school and civic events. The Armory building has always been viewed as a community building where the community gathers to rally around each other and support each other. The Armory was used in the recovery and relief efforts for Monroe County tornado victims. The Armory served as a “drop-off” station for the Salvation Army, local churches, and local groups for non-perishable items used to aid those in our community affected by the April 27th, 2011 EF5 tornado and other storms tracked from this disastrous tornado. The functionality of the building as it pertains to the local schools could prove endless due to its size. There is no other public use facility in Amory as large as this building. Formal events, weddings, school dances, proms, reading fairs, science fairs, fall festivals, continuing education classes, job fairs for local businesses, and other various functions that would require a large facility would be easily accommodated at the Old National Guard Armory. The local hospital could make use of the building through health fairs, health seminars, and career fairs. Local businesses will be able to rely on The Armory as an event center to host events indoors when weather does not permit for outside functions. As a historic landmark, historic documents, photographs, and items can be placed on display for the community to enjoy. The Armory would serve as a museum for past events such as performances by Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash, and a young Elvis Presley just as he began recording with RCA. It will also serve as a place for new memories to be created for future generations to come.

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