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Flanagin Law Office Constructed Prior to Civil War

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HISTORY

QUESTIONS? Contact Editor Jamal Brown at jbrown@siftingsherald.com

CLARK COUNTY CHRONICLE

Flanagin Law Office constructed prior to Civil War

By Wendy Richter
For the Siftings

Today, many visitors to the downtown Arkadelphia vicinity may not realize the historical significance of one of the buildings across the street from the Clark County Court House.

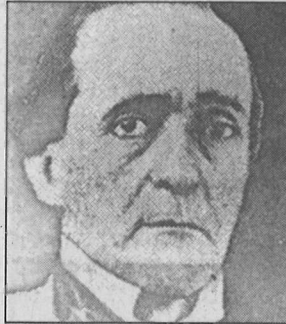
The structure known to some as the “Flanagin Law Office” was constructed prior to the Civil War and served as an office for a number of different attorneys, including Arkansas Governor Harris Flanagin of Arkadelphia. Flanagin became governor in 1862 and held the office during some of the most tumultuous years in American history.

Attorney J. L. Witherspoon likely constructed the law office sometime between 1855 and 1860. J.H. O’Baugh, a local brickmaker and builder,

noted in his account book a \$70 amount owed to Witherspoon. Another entry in the account book details the sale of 13,900 bricks to Witherspoon in 1855. Local lore tells that O’Baugh built the office to settle the debt.

Harris Flanagin was born in New Jersey in 1817. He moved first to Pennsylvania and then to Illinois before settling in Greenville (then the seat of Clark County) in 1839 to begin practicing law. In 1841, he became a deputy sheriff, and in 1842, was elected state representative and served one term. In 1848, he was elected to the state senate.

Flanagin married Martha Nash of Washington (Hempstead County) in 1851, and the couple had three children—Duncan, Nash, and Laura. Following Arkansas’s secession from the Union in



Governor Harris Flanagin

1861, Flanagin joined the Confederate cause and saw a great deal of active service.

Arkansas’s new constitution provided for the election of a governor in 1862. Even though he continued to serve in the military and was out of the state, Harris Flanagin was elected governor, defeating incumbent Henry Rector.

However, Flanagin’s time at the helm of state government was not an



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Flanagin Law Office in 1992.

easy one. Following the occupation of Little Rock by Union forces in September 1863, he moved state operations to Washington in southwest

Arkansas. The war ended in 1865, and while Flanagin received a presidential pardon, he remained disfranchised for a number of years.

Flanagin and Witherspoon both practiced law after the Civil War, and used the small building

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