

NR LISTED

AUG 14 1998

AHPP

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

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1. Name of Property

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Historic Name: Wynne Post Office

Other Name/Site Number: CS0022

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2. Location

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Street & Number: 402 E. Merriman Avenue

Not for Publication: NA

City/Town: Wynne

Vicinity: NA

State: AR County: Cross Code: 037 Zip Code: 72396

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Public-Federal

Category of Property: Building

Wynne Post Office

Name of Property

Cross County, Arkansas

County and State

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 1 </u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: Arkansas Post Offices with Section Art

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Wynne Post Office
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In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Cathy A. Statu
Signature of commenting or other official

3-2-98
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

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5. National Park Service Certification
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I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain):

Signature of Keeper Date
of Action

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6. Function or Use
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Historic: GOVERNMENT Sub: Post Office

Current : GOVERNMENT Sub: Post Office

Wynne Post Office

Name of Property

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

Art Deco

Materials: foundation Concrete roof Asphalt
walls Brick other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

SUMMARY:

The Wynne Post Office is a one-story, brick masonry structure designed in a restrained interpretation of the Art Deco style and featuring a full basement. The building is built on an essentially square plan, but features a 1971 addition that projects from east side of the structure and the east end of the building's rear; this addition is relatively unobtrusive, however, and the building retains sufficient integrity to warrant its inclusion in the National Register. The entire building is surrounded with a projecting cornice and has a flat, built-up asphalt roof with parapet.

ELABORATION:

The Wynne Post Office is a one-story, brick masonry structure designed in a restrained interpretation of the Art Deco style and featuring a full basement. The building is built on an essentially square plan, but features a 1971 addition that projects from east side of the structure and the east end of the building's rear; this addition is relatively unobtrusive, however, and the building retains sufficient integrity to warrant its inclusion in the National Register. The entire building is surrounded with a projecting cornice and has a flat, built-up asphalt roof with parapet.

The front, or south, facade centers around twin aluminum doors; a set of concrete stairs with simple metal rails provides access to these doors. A

flat shed roof projects above the doors and the stoop; there is a recessed panel above that and then a carved concrete panel with a "head-on" image of a small, single-engine airplane above that. The door arrangement is flanked by twin, double-hung, three-over-three windows. A carved panel depicting a "head-on" view of a locomotive between two telegraph poles tops the west window arrangement, while a carving of a "head-on" view of a large ocean-going vessel completes the east arrangement. These in turn are each flanked by another double-hung, three-over-three window. Raised aluminum letters between the top of the parapet and the cornice line read: UNITED STATES POST OFFICE/WYNNE ARKANSAS 72396. A handicapped-access ramp runs along the west front of the building, terminating at the stoop. The cornerstone is located on the east corner of the original building. It reads: HENRY MORGENTHAU JR/SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY/JAMES A FARLEY/POSTMASTER GENERAL/LOUIS A SIMON/SUPERVISING ARCHITECT/NEAL A MELICK/SUPERVISING ENGINEER/1936. The 1971 addition protrudes from the east side of the building's front, inset significantly from the front facade of the original building; it is fenestrated by a single, double-hung, three-over-three window.

The east facade of the building is fenestrated by two widely separated double-hung, three over three windows.

The rear, or north, facade, begins with the rear of the eastern addition, an unfenestrated brick expanse with a shed roof shielding a long loading dock. The end of this section cuts sharply southward at its terminus and rejoins the rear of the original building. There is a single door in this cutback section. The rear of the original building features a pair of swinging doors, a single door, and a multi-pane window. A shed roof protrudes above the loading dock; it is supported on its east side by a stand-alone brick wall.

The west facade of the structure, from north to south, features a blank brick section, then five nine-over-nine, double-hung windows. Air-conditioning units are located beside the building on this facade.

Significant interior features include the original wooden vestibule, marble wainscoting, and a 1940 mural titled "Cotton Pickers" by Ethel Magafan.

Despite the 1971 alterations to the building, the Wynne Post Office retains a large degree of historic integrity and is in fact one of the least-altered of the surviving post office structures with Section artwork. As such, it remains eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places with local significance.

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8. Statement of Significance
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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Statewide.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): NA

Areas of Significance: Politics/Government

Period(s) of Significance: 1936-40

Significant Dates: 1936-40

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: L
Farnsworth Construction Co., New Orleans,
Builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

SUMMARY:

The Wynne Post Office is associated with the historic context Arkansas Post Offices with Section Art as a U.S. Postal Service structure containing a mural financed through the U.S. Treasury Department's Section on Fine Arts. As such, it is eligible with statewide significance for its association with

Wynne Post Office

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the Section's efforts to employ Depression-era artists and place art in post offices around the country.

ELABORATION:

On September 28, 1935, the *Wynne Daily Star Progress* reported that a lot on Merriman Avenue was picked as the site of a new post office for Wynne. Post Office Inspector Floyd Elliot recommended the location, and the Department of the Treasury paid Mrs. Lizzie Collins \$6,000 for the property.

A January 10, 1936, article noted that a cap of \$65,000 was placed on construction costs of the structure, projected to be a one-story structure with a basement. Though the January article predicted a swift beginning to construction, it was summer before work began. An August 19 *Star Progress* article quoted construction superintendent C.W. Saffell of the Farnsworth Construction Company of New Orleans as saying the building would be ready for occupancy by the first of the year. This proved a bit ambitious: a December 31 article said interior plaster work was just beginning and that Wynne Postmaster Clarence Coffin was hoping to move into the new structure in late February or early March. Ultimately, the building did not open until late April, a delay ameliorated in part by a decision to keep the new building open until 7 p.m. each night instead of closing at 6 p.m.

The original specifications for the Wynne Post Office included a \$560 allocation for a 12' by 4'6" mural above the postmaster's door. On August 5, 1938, Section chief Ed Rowan invited Ethel Magafan of Colorado Springs, Colorado, to submit designs for the Wynne structure "on the basis of the merit of the design [Magafan] submitted ... in the Fort Scott, Kansas Competition." Magafan accepted the commission in a September 12 letter, pledging to "go to Wynne at the end of this month" to seek inspiration for the mural.

On January 5, 1939, Magafan submitted two pencil sketches "using the theme of negro cotton pickers" for the Wynne post office. The Section deemed a sketch of workers in a cotton field as "the most interesting," Rowan wrote on January 16, adding that "the need, however, of the same type of penetrating observation which you brought to bear on the Auburn, Nevada mural is felt in proceeding with this design and I trust that you will be able to authenticate this work in the same convincing manner." Magafan replied on March 5 that "when I was in Arkansas the negroes were picking cotton. I made many sketches of them at work, and also have done research on the subject. I hope to make

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my Wynne, Arkansas mural as convincing as the Auburn, Nebraska mural."

By early June, Magafan submitted the required 2" color sketch of her mural proposal. Rowan noted one figure with a disproportionately small head and a male figure "which does not seem entirely realized," but accepted the work. The Section released Magafan's first payment of \$150 on June 27, 1939.

On October 26, Rowan notified Magafan that arrangements were complete for her to install the mural in the Wynne Post Office. Magafan wrote Rowan on November 8 that she was "very anxious to install it immediately and would appreciate it if you would wire me collect if it meets your approval." The next message from Rowan, dated December 2, was a terse note reading: "ON YOUR VISIT WYNNE ARKANSAS DID POSTMASTER APPROVE COTTON SUBJECT MATTER." Magafan replied on the same date that Rowan's telegram left her "a wee bit bewildered as to why there is any discussion about the cotton as subject matter. Upon arriving at Wynne, I discovered there were fields of cotton on all sides as far as I could see. When I visited the Postmaster I naturally asked about the crops and things of importance in Wynne. About all the Postmaster could suggest was orchards and cotton. As he himself suggested cotton I took for granted he approved of it." Rowan's next telegram, dated December 6, read simply: THANKS LETTER DECEMBER SECOND EXPLANATION SATISFACTORY PROCEED INSTALLATION FIRST CONFERRING WITH POSTMASTER RELATIVE CONVENIENT DATE ACCOUNT HOLIDAY RUSH". Her second payment of \$150 was approved on December 13.

Magafan installed the mural around the first of the year in 1940, writing Rowan on January 3 that "the Postmaster and his crew were pleased with it and the local people seemed very interested, although some of them didn't even know the meaning of the word mural." Postmaster Coffin notified Rowan on January 15 that the mural "seems to be satisfactory, we have had numerous compliments on the work." Coffin enclosed an undated *Star Progress* clipping noting the installation of the work by Magafan and her twin sister, Jenne. Magafan is quoted on her inspiration for the work: "When I was here last year I made many sketches of the negroes at work and found that your landscape here offered much interesting material for an artist to use ... I was very interested in negroes at work in the fields and thought it would make good subject material for a mural." The Section approved the final payment of \$260 on January 29.

In addition to the Wynne and Auburn, Nebraska, murals, Magafan's work was also featured at postal facilities in Madill, Oklahoma, and at the South

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Denver Branch, proving her a prolific and popular Section collaborator. Ethel Magafan's mural "Cotton Pickers" remains the centerpiece of the Wynne Post Office nearly 60 years after its installation. It is, unfortunately, deteriorating and is in need of conservation work.

The Wynne Post Office is associated with the historic context Arkansas Post Offices with Section Art as a U.S. Postal Service structure containing a mural financed through the U.S. Treasury Department's Section on Fine Arts. As such, it is eligible with statewide significance for its association with the Section's efforts to employ Depression-era artists and place art in post offices around the country.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Wynne Daily Star Progress, September 28, 1935; January 10, March 24, May 9, June 2, August 19, and December 31, 1936; April 17, 20, 24, and 26, 1937.

U.S. Treasury Department Section on Fine Arts materials in National Archives.

Falk, Peter Hastings, ed. *Who Was Who in American Art*. Madison, CT: Soundview Press, 1985.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

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Primary Location of Additional Data:

State historic preservation office

Other state agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other -- Specify Repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A 15 701220 3899940 B _____

C _____ D _____

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the northern edge of Merriman Avenue with a perpendicular line running parallel with the building's eastern elevation and located approximately 50 feet to the south thereof, proceed northerly along said line for approximately 200 feet; thence proceed westerly along a perpendicular line for approximately 200 feet; thence proceed southerly along a perpendicular line for approximately 200 feet to its intersection with the northern edge of Merriman Avenue, thence proceed easterly along said edge to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

This boundary contains all of the properly historically associated with this resource that retains its integrity.

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11. Form Prepared By
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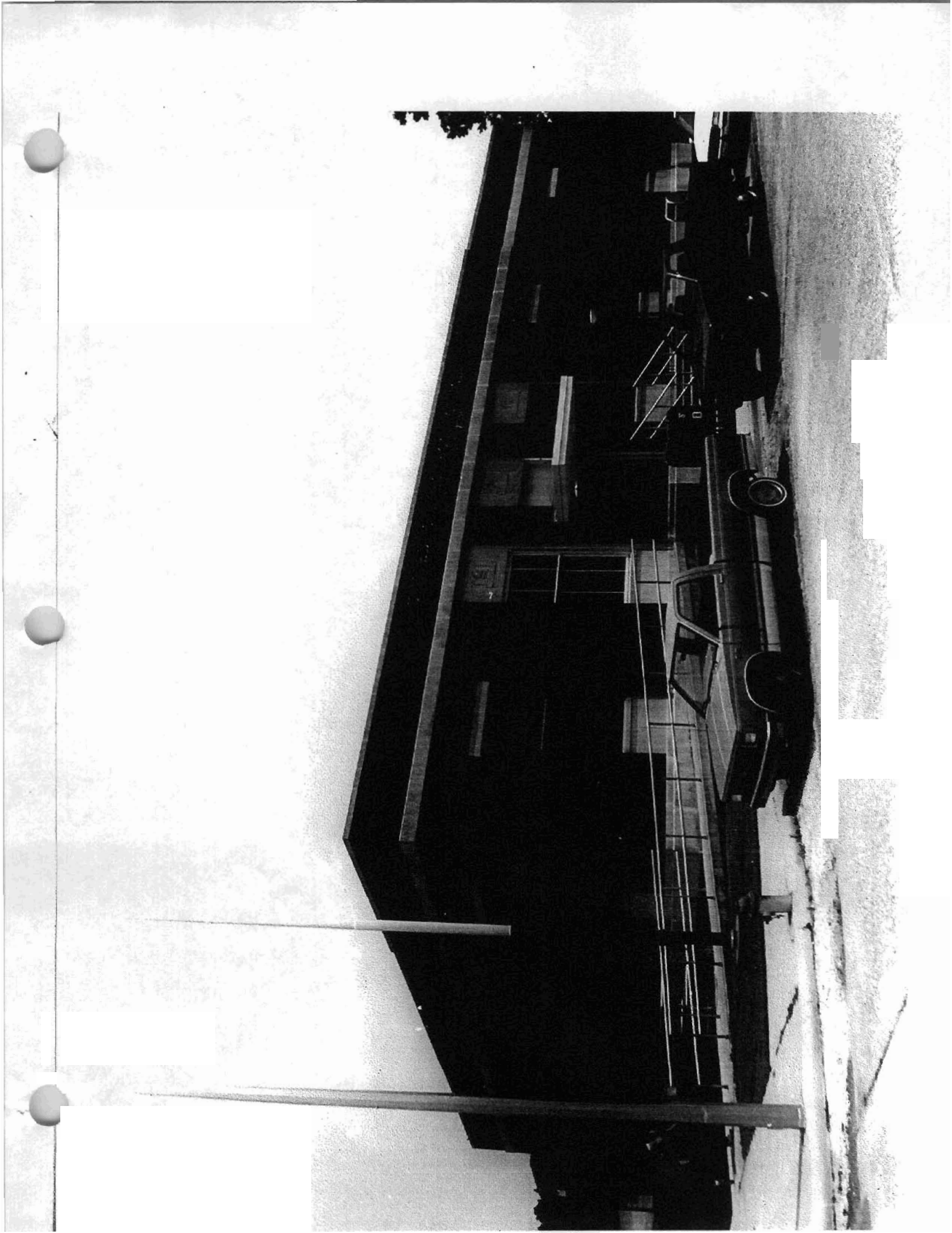
Name/Title: Mark Christ/Community Outreach Coordinator

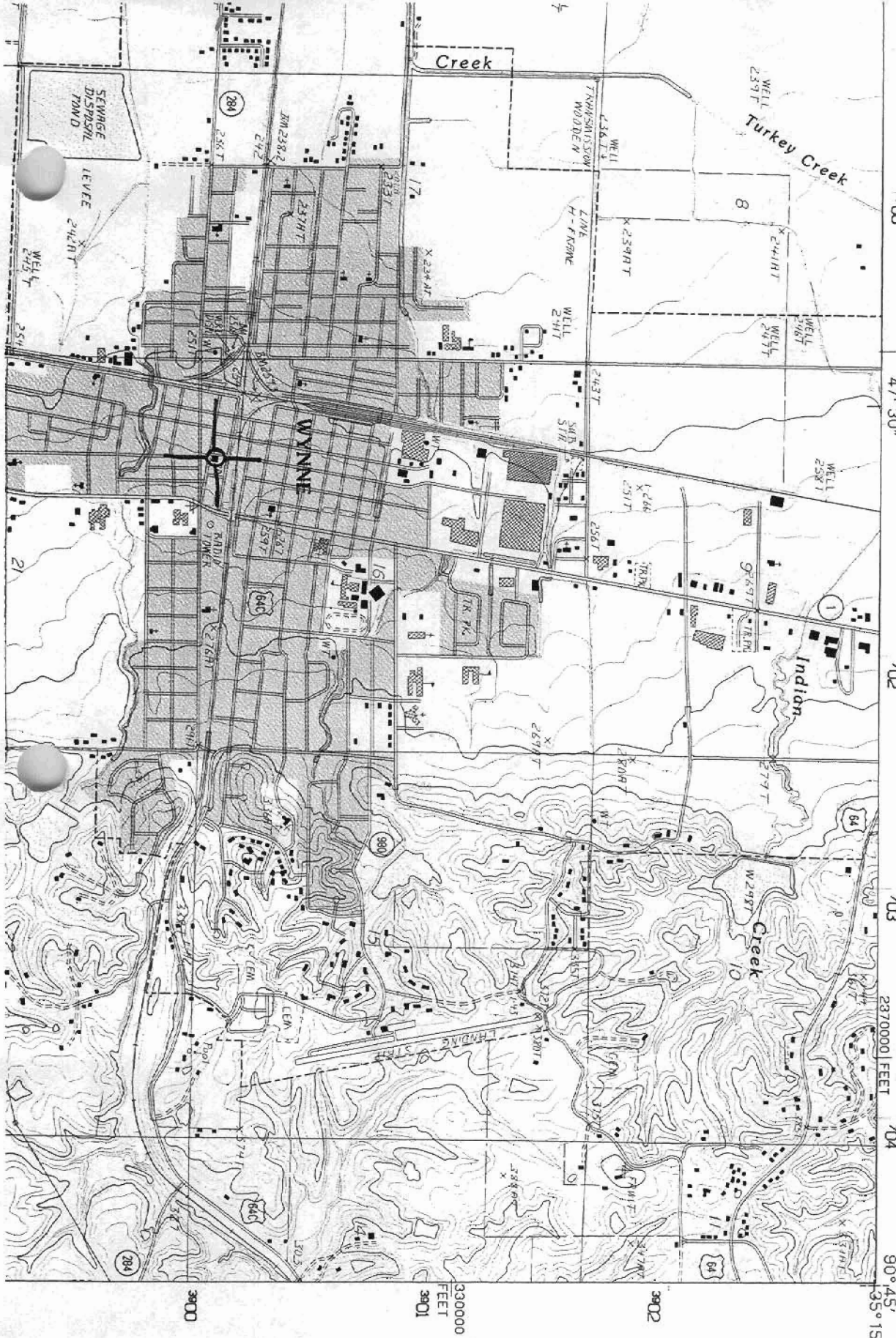
Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 1/14/98

Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg., 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201







WYNNE QUADRANGLE
 ARKANSAS
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Wynne Post Office
 Wynne, Ark. - Arkansas
 15/701220/3899940