

NR Listed 11/22/2000

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Wittsburg Store and Gas Station

other names/site number CS0037

2. Location

street & number County Road 739

not for publication

city or town Wittsburg

vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Cross code 037 zip code 72396

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

I, the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant

nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cecilia Matthews
Signature of certifying official/Title

9/28/00
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program/Department of Arkansas Heritage
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Wittsburg Store and Gas Station
Name of Property

Cross County, Arkansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
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1		buildings
_____		sites
_____		structures
_____		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965

Number of Contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/department store

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Plain Traditional

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls Weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other _____

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

8. Statement of Significance

Eligible National Register Criteria

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

- Criteria A, B, C, and D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c. 1930 to 1950

Significant Dates

c. 1930

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Wittsburg Store and Gas Station

Name of Property

Cross County, Arkansas

County and State

9 Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 709340 3899460
 Zone Easting Northing

2 _____

3 _____
 Zone Easting Northing

4 _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Part of East Half of Private 2379 Survey.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

This boundary contains all the property historically associated with the Wittsburg Store and Gas Station.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Amy Bennett/Survey Historian

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date August 18, 2000

street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9880

city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Wittsburg Store, a weatherboard clad building, is located in the once flourishing town of Wittsburg on County Road 739. The c.1930 L-shaped building is the only extant historic commercial building located in the Wittsburg community. According to Paul Sides (long time resident of Wittsburg and current occupant of the building) the store and residential sections were constructed at the same time.

ELABORATION

The building rests on a pier foundation protected from view by corrugated metal. Fenestration throughout the buildings is composed of one-over-one, double-hung wood windows. An interior chimney pierces the gable roof line on the northwestern elevation marking the junction of the commercial section and the residential section.

The front facade, or southwestern elevation, of the commercial section of the building is composed of a single leaf door with a single light, flanked by a pair of large double-hung windows. The door is shielded from the weather by an original screen door and a porch. Four wooden posts braced against the wooden floor support the porch's shed roof. Above the porch the parapet is clad in the same weatherboard siding as the rest of the building. A rectangular wood louvered vent pierces the center of the parapet. On the northwestern elevation, a single awning style window accomplishes fenestration of the store. A pair of windows near the northern corner provides light to the residential section on this elevation.

The gable roof ell extension contains the majority of the residential section of the building. A screened-in shed-roofed porch covers the southwestern façade of the ell. Beneath the porch fenestration is composed of four double-hung windows. A door, also located beneath the porch allows access to the commercial portion of the building. A single window lights the southeastern elevation of the ell extension. The rear of the building contains three evenly spaced windows, two of which are covered by a screened-in shed roof porch. Also protected from the elements by the porch are three single leaf

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doors one leading to the residential section, another to the store, and the third to an enclosed storage area.

Alterations to the residential section of the Wittsburg Store include the enclosure of a section of the rear elevation porch, the addition of beaded board to the southwestern residential façade. Only slight alterations have been made to the store section. The floor of the front porch has been replaced with wood planks instead of tongue-and-groove boards; the square porch supports are new but mimic the look of the original supports. The original porch roof remains intact. Currently the leftover boards from the repair are stored on the front porch.

Contributing to the building are a concrete storm cellar located to the northwest of the building, and a gas pump located to the southeast of the building.

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SUMMARY

The Wittsburg Store is located at point where Arkansas Highway 163 ends and Cross County Road 793 begins. It is the only extant commercial building in a community that was once a thriving town. The dual function store/residence dates from the 1930s and was in continuous use from its construction until the 1980s.

ELABORATION

Cross County was created in 1862 as Arkansas's first Confederate county from portions of Poinsett, St. Francis and Crittenden counties. Although there are differing historical accounts as to whom the county was named for, *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Eastern Arkansas* attributes the name to Colonel David C. Cross who owned "... a large tract of land in Cross' present limits' (approximately 85,000 acres in both Poinsett and Cross Counties at the outbreak of the Civil War) and was the commanding officer of the 5th Arkansas Infantry regiment. Richard L. Hartness, Sr. in Wittsburg, Arkansas, elaborates on Goodspeed's account and states that in February, 1862, Cross, citing asthma difficulties, returned to his home in what was then Poinsett County. Later in the year, he led a local delegation from the tri-county area to Little Rock to petition the Fourteenth General Assembly for the creation of a new county. The effort was successful and on 15 November 1862, "an act to establish the county of Cross..." was signed into law by the acting governor. Hartness notes that the 20 November 1862 edition of the Little Rock Civil War weekly, *Arkansas Patriot*, reported "[a] new county has been created... it is named Cross, in compliment to Colonel David C. Cross... former Colonel of the Fifth Arkansas Volunteers."

Dallas T. Herndon in the Centennial History of Arkansas asserts that "all the historical writers (apparently excluding Goodspeed) state that it was named for Edward Cross, who served as territorial judge, was one of the incorporators of the Cairo & Fulton Railroad Company, served in Congress from 1839 to 1845, and was then elected associated justice of the Supreme Court."

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Wittsburg was a prosperous river boat town that was first chosen by the General Assembly as the temporary seat of justice for Cross County in 1865. After the Civil War and an aborted attempt to move the county seat to the proposed site of a new town named Cleburne, Wittsburg again became the county seat of Cross County.

After the completion of the Knobel to Helena branch of the Iron Mountain Railroad in 1882, Wittsburg began to decline in importance, and in 1886 the county seat was moved to the new railroad town of Vanndale, where a two-story brick courthouse was constructed. Still, the presence of the county's first courthouse built expressly for that purpose was not enough to keep the seat of government in Vanndale for long. By the early 1890s Vanndale had been eclipsed by a more vibrant railroad town to the south, Wynne, located at the junction of two branches of the Iron Mountain railroad. Consequently, the county seat was moved to Wynne.

Faced with a dying town some of the prominent Wittsburg families had their houses dismantled and moved to Wynne (e.g. the Issac Block House NR listed 07/15/98) and many others left their homes to move to more prosperous towns. Wittsburg struggled with the memory of its river port hey-day and finally surrendered into becoming a sleepy little town on the St. Francis River. According to an article in the *Ozark Mountaineer* December 1954, "It takes quite a bit of imagination to visualize the busy county seat of the [18]70s when you visit the place today. The single store and a few scattered homes are late comers."

The Wittsburg Store served as a general store that provided for the basic consumer needs of the community including gasoline and sandwiches from the 1930 until the 1980s.

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The c. 1930 Wittsburg Store possesses a strong sense of integrity as its location remains that of a small community and it exhibits significance as the community's only extant commercial building. The dual function building displays the workmanship, design features, and materials common to vernacular buildings of this

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type. The distinctive features of the building are its parapet wall, large front entryway and its ell extension that serves to house a residence. The small alterations to its exterior do not detract from the overall historic feeling of this building. In addition the small gas pump that sits to the southeast of the building adds to the historic feeling of the building. Presently the store part of the building is used for storage. The Wittsburg Store is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criterion C. Placed at point where Arkansas Highway 163 ends and Cross County Road 793 begins, the Wittsburg Store played an integral part in the automotive needs of local residents who had to commute to more prosperous towns. For this reason the Wittsburg Store is being nominated under Criterion A and is being submitted as a contributing resource to the historic context "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965."

Wittsburg Store and Gas Station

Name of Property

Cross County, Arkansas

County and State

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

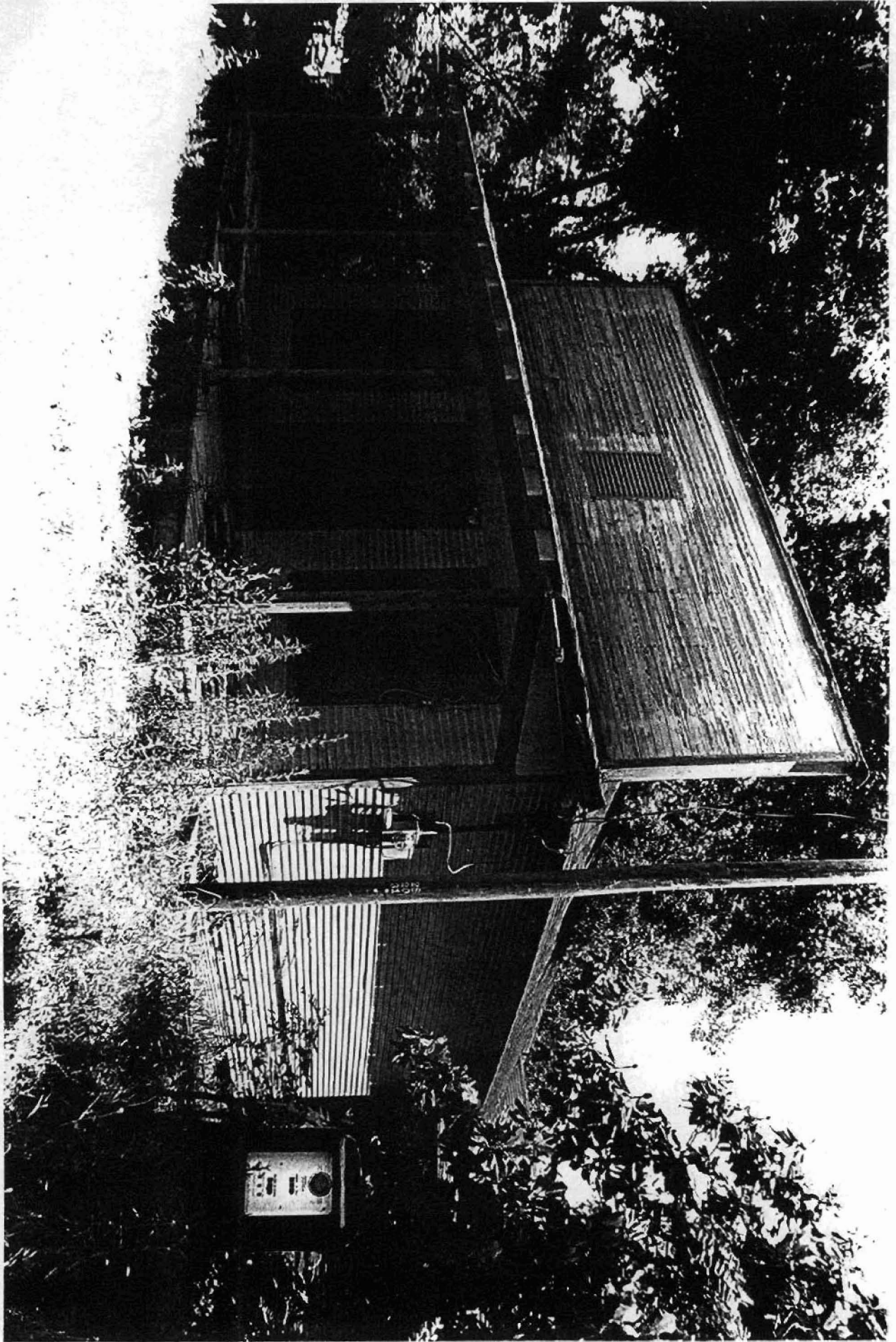
Chowning, Robert W. *History of Cross County, Arkansas*. Wynne, Arkansas: The Wynne Progress, 1955.

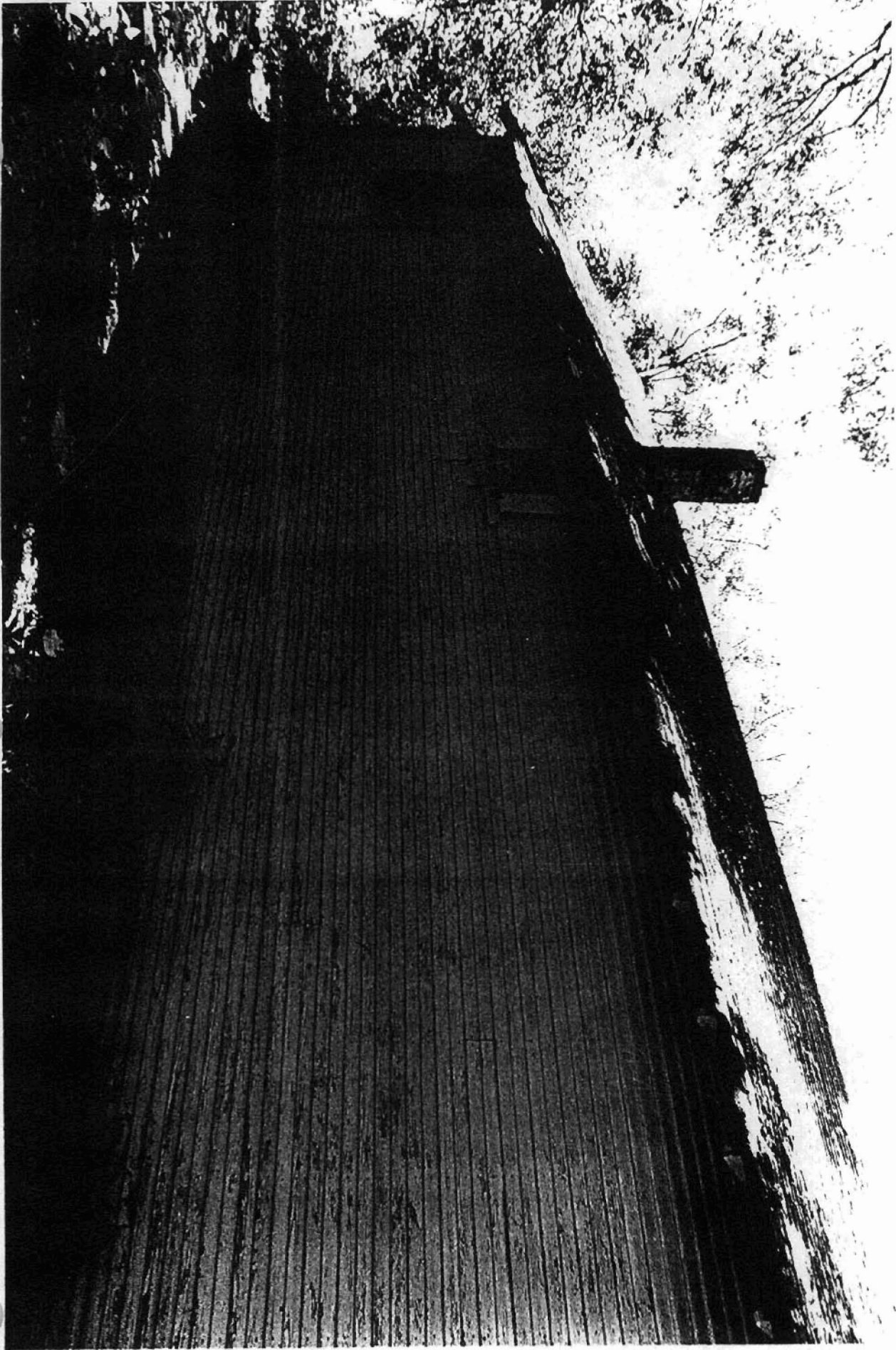
Hartness, Richard L., Sr. *Wittsburg, Arkansas: Crowley's Ridge Steamboat Riverport 1848-1890*. Little Rock, Arkansas: Rose Publishing Company, 1978.

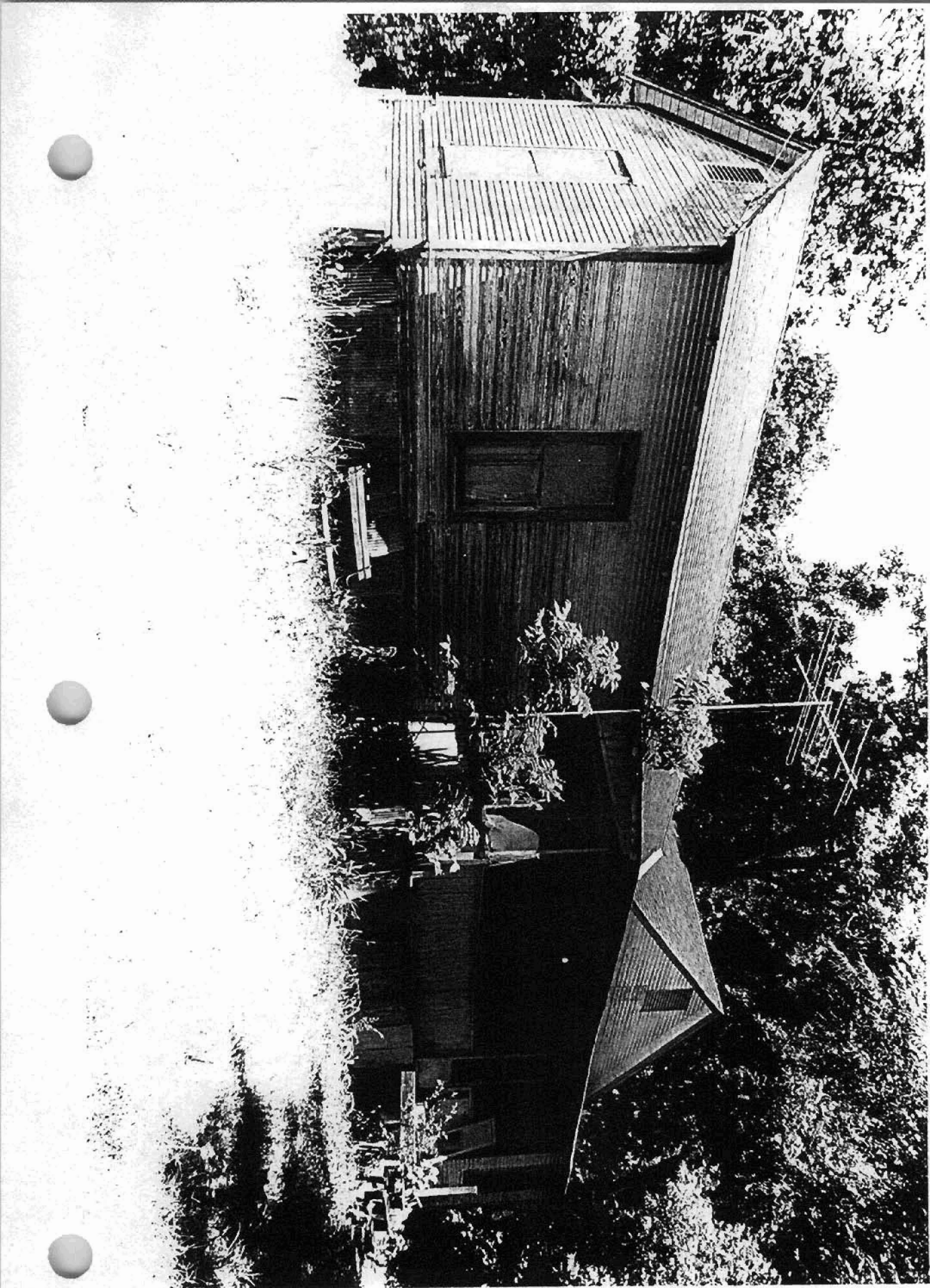
Herndon, Dallas T. *Centennial History of Arkansas*. Chicago-Little Rock: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1922. Vol. I.

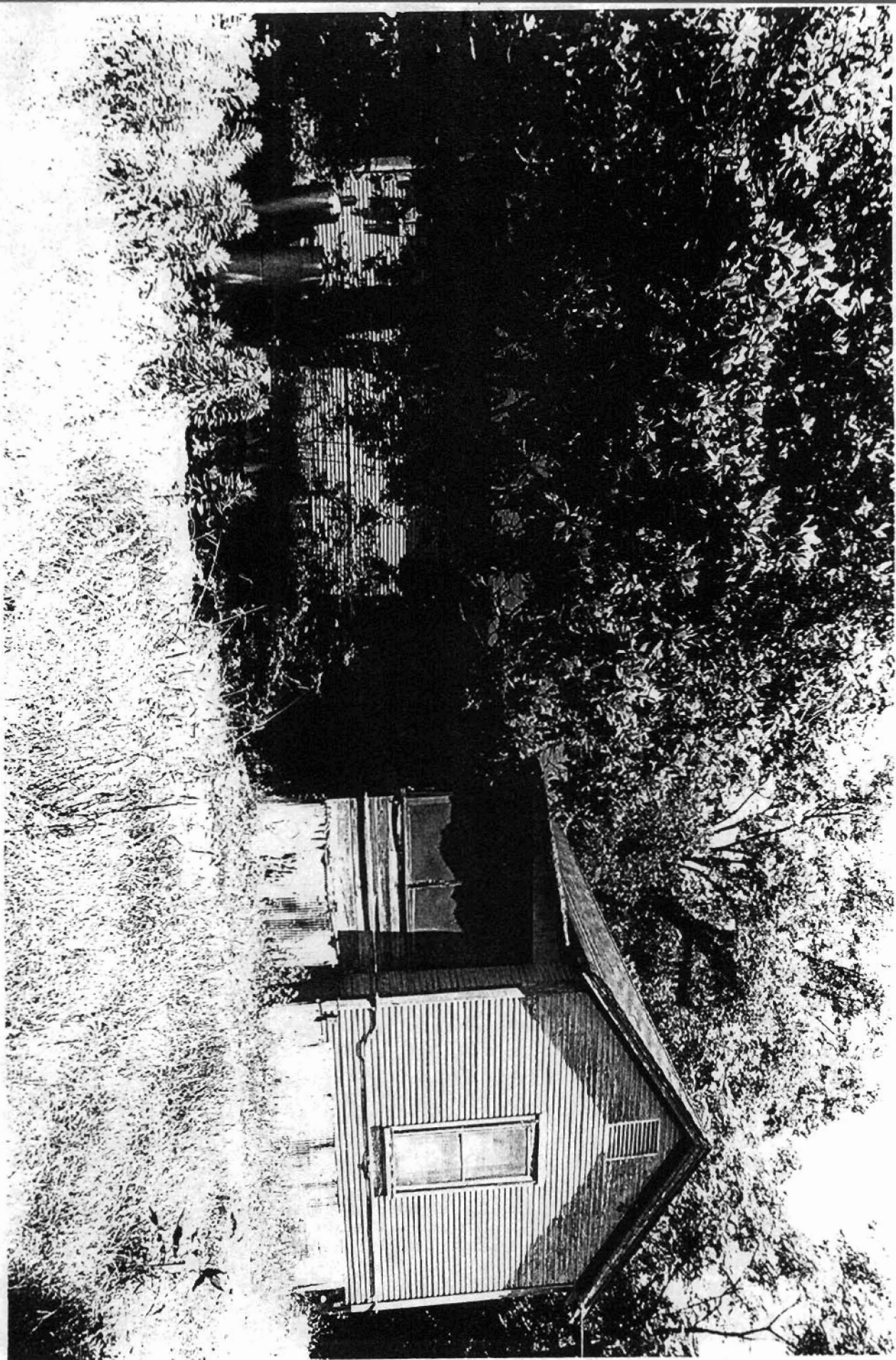
Information provided by Paul Sides in a telephone interview, 22 July 2000.

The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Eastern Arkansas. Chicago, Nashville, St. Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing co., 1890.









Wittsburg Store and Gas Station
Cross Co., AR
UTM Reference:
15/709340/3899440

