

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NR Listed: 10-04-02

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 Phoenix Hotel
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 108 Main Street not for publication
city or town Rison vicinity
state Arkansas code AR county Cleveland code 047 zip code 71665

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As 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.)

Cathie Matthews 7/31/02
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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

	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
I hereby certify that the property is:		
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain): _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Phoenix Hotel
Name of Property

Cleveland County, Arkansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	
	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

TWENTIETH-CENTURY COMMERCIAL STYLE

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation LIMESTONE

walls BRICK

roof OTHER

other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

LOCAL

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1913-1952

Significant Dates

1913

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hugh Ogletree, builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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: _____

Phoenix Hotel

Name of Property

Cleveland County, Arkansas

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Table with 4 rows and 3 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing. Row 1: 15, 574766, 3757808. Row 2: blank. Row 3: blank. Row 4: blank.

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date July 29, 2002
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9787
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Danny Powell
street & number PO Box 533 telephone (870)818-5914
city or town Rison state AR zip code 71665

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Phoenix Hotel
Rison, Cleveland County
1913

Summary

Located at 108 Main Street in Rison, the Phoenix Hotel is a two-story, brick masonry commercial building with a single story rear addition. Although some alterations have occurred, the hotel is the most architecturally significant building in downtown Rison.

Elaboration

Located on Main Street in Rison, the Phoenix Hotel is a two-story, brick masonry commercial building constructed in a style popular for such early twentieth century buildings. Completed in 1913, the building is distinguished from the surrounding brick commercial buildings by its parapet with corbels, brick quoins, and its eye-catching basket-handle arch that frames its recessed porch. The second story porch is believed to be an early addition to the building, though over the years its appearance has been changed and vinyl siding added to the upper level. The fenestration of the building is composed of single or paired double-hung windows each with concrete sills and lintels. Two nine-over-one windows on the second story remain, but are in deteriorated condition. Most of the original windows have been replaced by aluminum framed one-over-one windows that fully fill the openings unless otherwise noted. With its single story rear projection, the L-shaped building is covered by a tar built-up roofing system and rests on a continuous stone foundation.

The southwestern or front elevation is dominated by a basket handle archway on the lower story. The keystone of the arch is imprinted with the word "Phoenix" though the second story porch obscures this detail from all but the careful observer. Surmounting the arch and projected from the second story is a partially enclosed porch supported on brick columns. Above the storefronts the façade is further organized by two pairs of double-hung windows, flanking a second story porch. Protected from the elements by the shed-roof porch is a single leaf door flanked by nine-over-nine double-hung wood framed windows. The parapet is corbeled and a concrete plaque inset into the center states: "1913/Ackerman." Both the northwest and southeast elevations are connected to single story brick buildings and bear no distinguishing details. The northeastern or rear elevation contains a single story shed addition. The first story contains an L-shaped porch that shields various modern windows and doors. Above in the second story of the rear elevation, the fenestration is composed of six windows and one door. The interior contains many original doors, tin ceiling, and wood floors. At some point, the stairway was enclosed and some of the spaces were reconfigured. Water damage is apparent but the roof has been repaired. Overall, the Phoenix Hotel is in good condition.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

The Phoenix Hotel is being nominated with **local significance** under **Criterion C** for its commercial style architecture and also with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its association with the commercial development of Rison since its original construction in 1913. The interior and exterior of the building shows only minor alterations and the addition of a kitchen area at the back of the building.

Elaboration

The city of Rison, home of the Phoenix Hotel, is located in Cleveland County. Cleveland County was created in 1873, and originally named Dorsey County in honor of Stephen W. Dorsey, a republican U. S. Senator from 1873 until 1879. On March 5, 1885, it was renamed Cleveland for the newly elected president, Grover Cleveland.

The city of Rison, the county seat, was incorporated on September 1, 1890, and became the financial and trade center for the county. With the coming of the railroad in 1883, huge tracts of virgin pine and hardwood timber were cut into lumber and marketed by a wide variety of local sawmills. The timber boom lasted until the 1920's, at which time much of the cut over timber land was converted to farms.

The city's population reached its peak in 1910 with approximately 1400 people. The current population is about 1200 and has remained constant for the last several years.

Prior to the incorporation of the city of Rison in 1890, Toledo, a community approximately three miles south of Rison was the county seat. Toledo was a commercial center and served as a distribution hub for goods and services shipped into and out of the area from Camden and Pine Bluff. Toledo had a large wagon yard that went out of business when the railroad was built in Rison in 1883. Toledo also had three hotels: the Harrison, the Treadway, and the Orton. After Rison's incorporation all three of Toledo's hotels were moved to Rison.

The Harrison Hotel remained in operation for several years. It became a boarding house and closed about 1950. The Treadway Hotel was bought by W. J. Stanfield, an attorney, who had the building torn down and re-erected as his residence.

Early in the twentieth-century R. E. Harrison constructed a new large frame hotel building about a block northwest of the Cotton Belt depot. The original Harrison Hotel was then known as the Orton Hotel. It had a plank walk extending from the hotel almost to the depot. The City Hotel on Main Street was built by John

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White and was known for a while as the "White Hotel." Mr. White bought the hotel on September 17, 1888, from C.D. Niven for one hundred and sixty dollars.

On May 17, 1894, W. B. White conveyed the property to his wife Niota. On October 31, 1894, Niota White and her husband sold the property to Bettie Niven for three hundred dollars. On July 8, 1905, Bettie Niven and Cora Wattwood sold what had then become the "City Hotel" to A. K. Williams and his wife Ida. They sold it in 1907 to J.J. Ray and his wife Ethel for the sum of seven hundred and twenty-five dollars. On May 24, 1907, J.J. Ray and his wife sold the "City Hotel" to Mrs. M. C. Ackerman, wife of Dr. T. H. Ackerman for the sum of sixteen hundred dollars. On January 1, 1908, M.C. Ackerman and T.H. Ackerman mortgaged the property to the Bank of Rison.

In 1913, Dr. T. H. Ackerman moved the old building to the rear of the lot and erected a brick hotel building in its place. The name was changed to the Phoenix, as it has remained since that date. In the April 24, 1913, issue of the *Cleveland County Herald* it was reported that Dr. T. H. Ackerman had died on the previous Tuesday. His obituary stated that at the time of his death he had just completed the Phoenix Hotel. The Phoenix Hotel then became the property of M. C. Ackerman, his widow, and their son, L. C. Ackerman, a local druggist. It is believed that the original contractor for the building was Mr. Hugh Ogletree of Little Rock, Arkansas. George Ackerman, M.D., a current resident of Pulaski County, relates that in the middle 1940's, possibly 1945, he was a member of the Rison High School Band on a trip to Little Rock. While the band was on a rest break at a local park, an elderly man approached the Band Director saying that he noticed the Rison School name on the bus and wanted to know if anyone named Ackerman was on the bus. The band director summoned George who said that the man said his name was Hugh Ogletree and that he had built the hotel in 1913 for George's grandfather, Dr. T.H. Ackerman of Rison.

Hugh C. Ogletree was born May 22, 1870, at Hamburg, Arkansas. The 1870 U. S. census for Cleveland County shows him two years of age and residing with his parents. The 1900 U. S. census places him in Fordyce, Arkansas, as a "carpenter-houses." The 1910 census shows him in Little Rock, Arkansas, as a "contractor-buildings." The 1920 census revealed that he was living at Stuttgart, Arkansas, and listed his occupation as "contractor-concrete." Mr. Ogletree died July 22, 1952 at age eighty-two.

To date no evidence has emerged as to when actual construction began on the Phoenix. Dr. T.H. Ackerman's obituary in April of 1913 stated that at the time of his death, Dr. Ackerman had just completed the Phoenix. Also, there is no account in the *Cleveland County Herald* about the completion and opening of the hotel. It is believed that construction began in the latter part of 1912 and was completed early in the year of 1913. The property remained in the name of M.C. and L.C. Ackerman until her death in 1933 when it became the

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property of L.C. Ackerman and his wife, Eunice. On November 18, 1936, L.C. and Eunice Ackerman sold it to George Holmes, Sr., and his wife Alleen. Upon his death in 1970, the property went to his heirs with George Holmes, Jr., as the administrator of the estate. On May 7, 1973, the heirs of George Holmes, Sr., sold it to Joe Tucker and his wife Donna. The Tuckers sold it to Danny Powel in December 2001.

Although the hotel has had only a few owners in its 89-year history, it has had literally dozens of different operators. In 1913 Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Whyne, who had been operating a hotel on the north side of the railroad, became the first proprietors of the Phoenix. They remained until Mrs. Whyne's death in 1915. Others who have been in charge of the Phoenix include: Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Wattwood, Mr. and Mrs. Estrada, Mrs. Baker and her daughter, Mrs. Ferguson, Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Harrison, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Strait, Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Bussey, Blanche Knickerbacker, Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Harrison, and Mr. and Mrs. Mack Thurman.

In 1926 C. L. Garner was elected Mayor of Rison. He hired Henry McDaniel (Mack) Thurman of Kingsland as town marshal. Mack Thurman and his wife Mary managed the hotel. They remained in charge of it until 1929 when they moved from Rison. After Henry Mack and Mary Thurman left, J. E. Harrison who had previously managed it returned for a second time as proprietor. In 1937 C.Y. May was the manager. He was replaced by Mr. and Mrs. John Holmes who had recently moved from Pine Bluff to Rison. They were relatives of George Holmes, Sr. On November 27, 1937, an ad appeared in the *Cleveland County Herald* announcing that the Holmes were the new managers. The ad stated that they would provide family style meals, short orders and sandwiches with hot biscuits for breakfast, dinner, and supper.

John C. Rawls, currently a resident of Cleveland County, related that his mother Mabel Gracie Rawls rented the hotel from George Holmes, Sr., in the winter of 1943. They lived in the apartment in the hotel on the ground floor. His mother and his siblings operated the hotel while his father ran their farm two miles south of Rison. He stated that most of the travelers were businessmen who gathered in the lobby in the evening and sat around a large wood heater, smoking cigars and discussing the events surrounding World War II. According to John, the dining room had a long counter with stools and a large table that served family style meals. At the time, food was rationed and it took quite a bit of improvising by his mother to keep the dining room supplied with a suitable menu. They served three meals per day, seven days per week. They had a garden that provided vegetables and much of the meat was supplied locally.

On the upper floor, one bathroom served all the guests. During this time the hotel also provided room and board to single and widowed elderly men. Mr. Vandermark, a long-time widowed resident of Cleveland County stayed there.

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By the late 1940's, Mrs. Mary Pittman, a widow, became the manager. She continued to serve meals and rent rooms. The hotel was a favorite gathering spot for local young people. Mrs. Pittman had several teenage children who interacted with their peers, many times at the hotel.

From about 1953 through 1955 Mrs. Juanita Davis Selby, now 82 years of age and currently a resident of Rison, ran the hotel mainly as a restaurant. She continued to rent rooms only on a sporadic basis. At the time she operated it, there was a construction project on the Saline River five miles south of Rison. Many of the workers ate and lodged at the hotel. During this time, Juanita Davis met her second husband who was one of the construction workers.

Walter Flynn ran the hotel in the middle 1950's. Howard Williams operated it in the late 1950's. Woody and Angie White ran a restaurant in the hotel in the early sixties. They rented rooms through 1960 and perhaps longer. In the late 1960's, Tonia Lindsey operated the hotel. She had a pool table and a juke box in the lobby. It was a gathering place for teenagers and was known as the "Wildcats Den" in honor of the Rison High School Wildcats athletic teams. It was noted for its hamburgers.

Ms. Annalee Garner a longtime resident of Rison, now in her eighties, remembers when as a teenager in the 1930's she and her group of friends occasionally held dances in the hotel lobby. The hotel owned a piano and sometimes they played records on a Victrola.

It is believed that rooms were rented until the early 1960's when it closed. It remained vacant for seven or eight years until it was bought from the George Holmes, Sr., estate by Joe and Donna Tucker in 1973.

From the early 1930s through the 1950s, a part of the hotel on the south side was used as a barbershop operated by Mr. Hillyard and others.

Throughout its significant historical period through 1952 and later The Phoenix served a very useful purpose beyond its role as a food and lodging establishment. Not only was it a favorite eating and gathering place, it was the center of social, cultural, and economic activities in Rison, and Cleveland County. For these reasons, it is being nominated with **local significance** under **Criterion A**. As an architecturally significant building in downtown Rison, it is also being nominated with **local significance** under **Criterion C**.

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Major Bibliographical References

- Newspapers Cleveland County Herald
April 24, 1913
September 20, 1926
October 21, 1926
November 10, 1937
November 24, 1937
December 26, 1968
January 1, 1969
July 18, 2001
- Pine Bluff Commercial
February 7, 2002
- Personal Interviews Dr. George Ackerman
February 2002
March 2002
- Anna Lee Garner
April 2002
- Juanita Davis Selby
April 2002
- Publications Morrison, Steve, et al.; 1980 Rison City Directory, Cleveland County Courthouse,
Rison, Arkansas
- U.S. Census Records 1870
 1880
 1890
 1900
 1910
 1920
 1930

Phoenix Hotel
Name of Property

Cleveland County, Arkansas
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

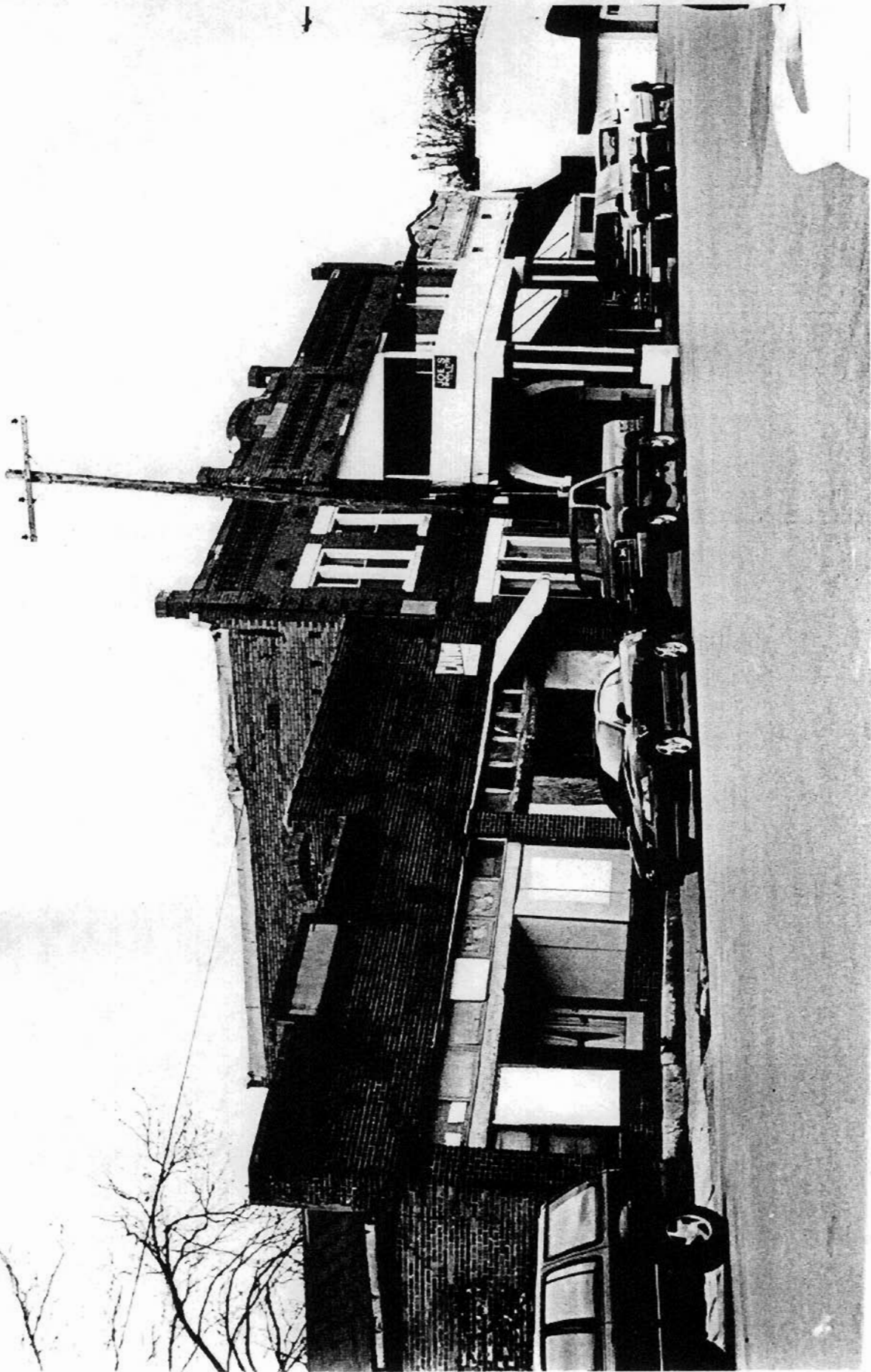
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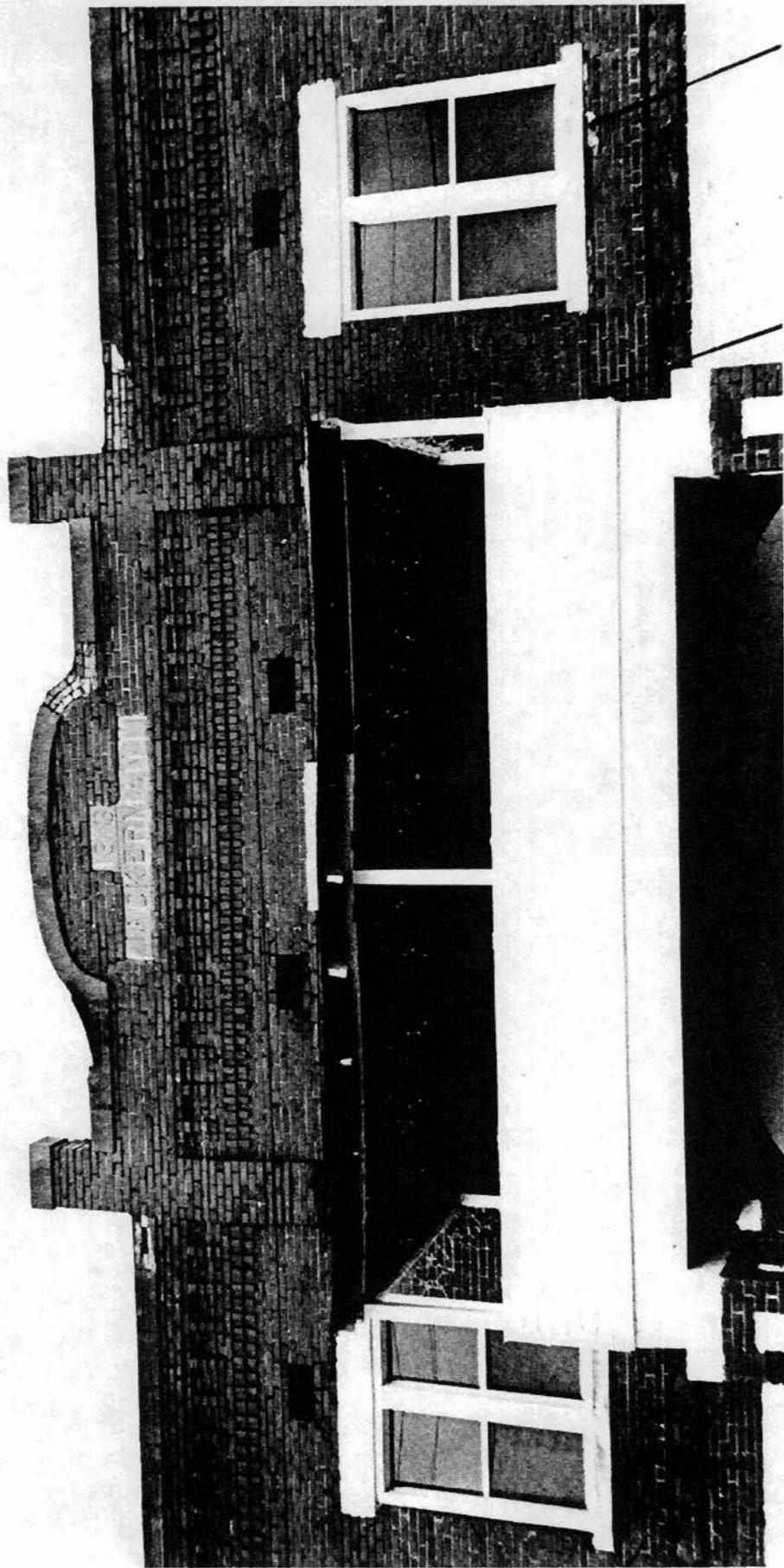
Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description: Lot 5 and 17 feet of Lot 4, Block 10 in the original Town of Rison, Cleveland County, Arkansas.

Boundary Justification: This boundary contains all the property historically associated with the Phoenix Hotel that contains its historic integrity.









573 12' 30"

574

PINE BLUFF 21 MI.
4 MI. TO ARK. 212

7552 II SW
(KEDRON)

576

R. II W. 10'

R. II

