

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NR LISTED

AUG 14 1986

AHPP

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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Historic Name: Piggott Post Office

Other Name/Site Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Location

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Street & Number: 119 North Third Street

Not for Publication: NA

City/Town: Piggott

Vicinity: NA

State: AR County: Clay Code: 021 Zip Code: 72454

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Public - Federal

Category of Property: Building

Piggott Post Office

Name of Property

Clay 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



Van Buren Post Office  
Van Buren, Crawford County, Arkansas  
15/377500/3921990



SALLISAW OKLA. 23 MI.  
FORT SMITH 3.9 MI.

7154 IV NW  
(FORT SMITH)

3920  
25'  
19N  
18N

CRAWFORD CO  
SEBASTIAN CO  
NORMAL POOL ELEVATION 382

32

400

Piggott Post Office  
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6. Function or Use

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Historic: GOVERNMENT Sub: Post Office

Current : GOVERNMENT Sub: Post Office

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

Colonial Revival

Materials: foundation Concrete roof asphalt  
walls brick other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance:  
SUMMARY

The Piggott Post Office is a one-story, rectangular, brick masonry structure built atop a continuous concrete foundation and featuring a full basement and flat roof with parapet. It is designed in a simplified treatment of the Colonial Revival style of architecture and is in excellent condition.

ELABORATION

The Piggott Post Office is a one-story, rectangular, brick masonry structure built atop a continuous concrete foundation and featuring a full basement and a flat roof with parapet. It is designed in a simplified treatment of the Colonial Revival style of architecture and is in excellent condition.

The front, or east, facade centers around an aluminum door featuring flanking sidelights; the door arrangement is located within a Colonial Revival-style entrance accented with a semi-circular fanlight. A keystone protrudes from the top of the semi-circular brickwork surrounding the fanlight. Above the fanlight hang black letters spelling: UNITED STATES POST OFFICE; to the left of the fanlight are bronze letters spelling PIGGOTT, and to the right of the fanlight are bronze letters spelling ARKANSAS 72454. The door is flanked on both sides with two eight-over-12, double-hung windows. A handicapped access ramp is located to the south of the entrance stoop and twin lamps flank the stairs. A sunken area providing window space for the basement area is surrounded by a simple metal railing that is mirrored in the rail around the handicapped-access ramp. The cornerstone reads as follows: HENRY MORGENTHAU JR./SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY/JAMES A. FARLEY/POSTMASTER GENERAL/LOUIS A. SIMON/SUPERVISING ARCHITECT/NEAL A. MELICK/SUPERVISING ENGINEER/1937.

The northern facade features four fenestrations: from east to west, they are a double-hung, eight-over-twelve window; a set of twin-frame, double-hung, four-over-six windows; another double-hung, eight-over-twelve windows, and a second set of twin-frame, double-hung, four-over-six windows. A set of stairs at the eastern end of the facade leads to the basement area, which features from east to west a double-hung, three-over-three window, a wooden door with a stationary four-pane window topped by a transom, and a four-pane stationary window topped by a two-pane transom.

The west, or rear facade, is fenestrated at its northern end with twin, side-by-side, eight-over-twelve, double-hung windows. Immediately south of these, and adjacent to the tall brick chimney, the building juts to the west with a small "t" that feeds into the loading dock; the northern facade of the "t" is fenestrated with a single, double-hung, six-over-six window. The rear of the "t" is fenestrated with a similar six-over-six window flanked with a twin, swinging door offering access to the loading dock; the southern end of the "t" features a door with an eight-pane stationary window topped by a four-pane transom. The south side of the "t" is fenestrated with another six-over-six, double-hung window. The south side of the west facade features another double-hung, eight-over-twelve window.

The south facade is fenestrated with four eight-over-twelve, double-hung windows. A small sunken area at the eastern end provides access to basement windows; it is surrounded by a simple metal railing.

Noteworthy interior features include the original wooden vestibule, doors and

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wainscoting, as well as the 1941 Section mural "Air Mail" by Dan Rhodes. The Piggott Post Office is in good condition and continues to serve its community as a U.S. Postal Service facility.

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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: 1937-41

Significant Dates: 1937-41

Significant Person(s): N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Name of Property

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

#### SUMMARY

The Piggott 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 under Criterion A with statewide significance for its associations with the Section's efforts to employ Depression-era artists and place art in post offices around the country.

#### ELABORATION

Construction on the new Piggott Post Office was 73 percent complete as of November 1, 1937, leading the U.S. Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture to seek permission to commission a mural for the northeast Arkansas building. According to a December 17, 1937, memo from the Section to the Director of Procurement, \$57,400 had been obligated for the post office; as of December 13, \$4,522.37 remained unexpended, and \$700 of that was reserved for mural production. The memo was stamped approved on January 5, 1938.

Based on the merits of a design submitted for a post office in Ames, Iowa, Ed Rowan, superintendent of the Section of Painting and Sculpture invited Iowa artist Lowell Houser to submit designs for the Piggott Post Office on August 20, 1938. Houser, who had moved from Iowa to California, accepted the Piggott commission in a September 25 letter to Rowan in which the artist explained that he was also teaching at San Diego State College and designing sculptural panels for the Bankers Life Building in Des Moines. "However," Houser wrote, "I should be able to work up the sketches for a mural ... and to paint it within the following six months."

It was to take far more than six months. Correspondence between Rowan and Houser show delays in submitting the initial sketch, though the artist did conceive of a mural that would have portrayed the turn-of-the-century change of Piggott's economy from a lumber to an agricultural base, titled "The Forests Give Way to the Fields." It was nearly a year after the initial invitation before an actual contract was signed and approved. On June 13, 1940, House sent another letter to Rowan, explaining that family obligations



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had caused him forget the date of the contract and requesting that the document be nullified. "If this is not possible, then I will make every effort to complete the color sketch and complete the painting during this summer vacation," Houser wrote. "I could do this with a three month extension of the time limit." His patience apparently at an end after nearly two years of delays, Rowan replied on June 17 that the contract would be nullified and that another artist would be invited to prepare the Piggott mural. (Houser apparently did no further work for the Section. *Who Was Who in American Art* credits him only with the Ames, Iowa, mural and, mistakenly, with the Piggott mural.)

Rowan turned to another Iowan, Dan Rhodes, who in addition to Piggott painted post office murals for Glen Ellyn, Ill., Clayton, Mo., Marion, Ia., Storm Lake, Ia., and the Navy Building in Washington, D.C. Rhodes agreed on August 21, 1940, to submit a design, which he did on November 4. "As you will note, I have chose as subject matter the Air Mail. I feel the Air Mail is of unusual significance to the smaller and more isolated community, linking them as it does with the most distance centers," the artist wrote to Rowan. "I have tried to convey the sense of stream-lined power which is behind the mail service." Karal Ann Marling, in *Wall-to-Wall America*, found that Rhodes's "image of flight had an almost purely symbolic significance for Piggott in any case. Rhodes's aircraft bore a striking resemblance to the new DC-3, the first airliner to turn a profit on passenger service without dependence on federal mail contracts; the DC-3 rarely touched down in the northernmost corner of Arkansas." However, she noted, "Streamlined power was justification enough for painting a futuristic phoenix arisen from the ashes of the Depression."

In any event, Rowan found Rhodes's subject matter "excellent," though he had a few suggestions for improving the proposed mural's balance. The official contract is dated November 18, 1941 and Rhodes received his first \$150 payment on the \$700 job on January 22, 1941. A second payment of \$225 was authorized on February 6, the same day Rhodes received permission to install the mural in Piggott.

Rhodes experienced difficulty in sending Rowan the requisite 8 x 10 negative of the installed mural, explaining in a February 22, 1941 letter that "no photographer in the region of Piggott has equipment to take an 8 x 10 negative." The artist instead submitted a smaller photograph. Piggott Postmaster Ralph McNiel wrote Rowan on March 11, 1941, that the mural was both satisfactory and installed, but complained that "the molding around the

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mural has not been painted; and the wall surface between the decoration and bulletin boards is somewhat soiled, the same having been done while the surface was being cleaned for the proper installation of the mural." The mural was pictured in the March 11, 1941, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, a clipping of which was enclosed in McNiel's letter.

On March 25, 1941, Rhodes was paid the \$325 balance due on his contract, ending the more than three-year effort to place a mural in the Piggott Post Office. The mural remains there today, in a building that retains virtually all of its original character.

The Piggott 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 under Criterion A with statewide significance for its associations 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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U.S. Treasury Department's Fine Arts Section materials, National Archives

Marling, Karal Ann, *Wall-to-Wall America: A Cultural History of Post-Office Murals in the Great Depression*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

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 751840 4029920 B \_\_\_\_\_  
C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal Boundary Description:

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

Boundary Justification:

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

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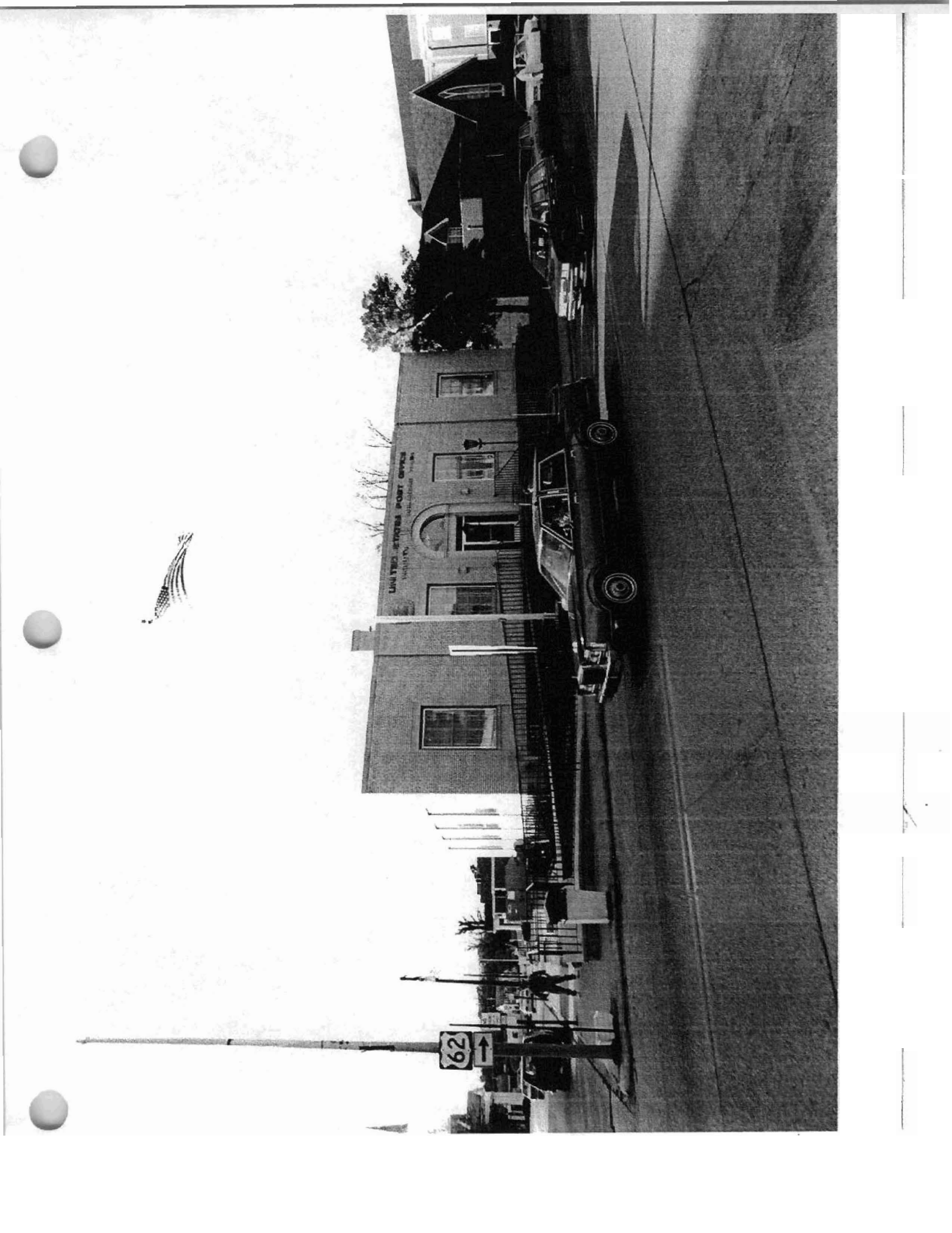
=====  
**11. Form Prepared By**  
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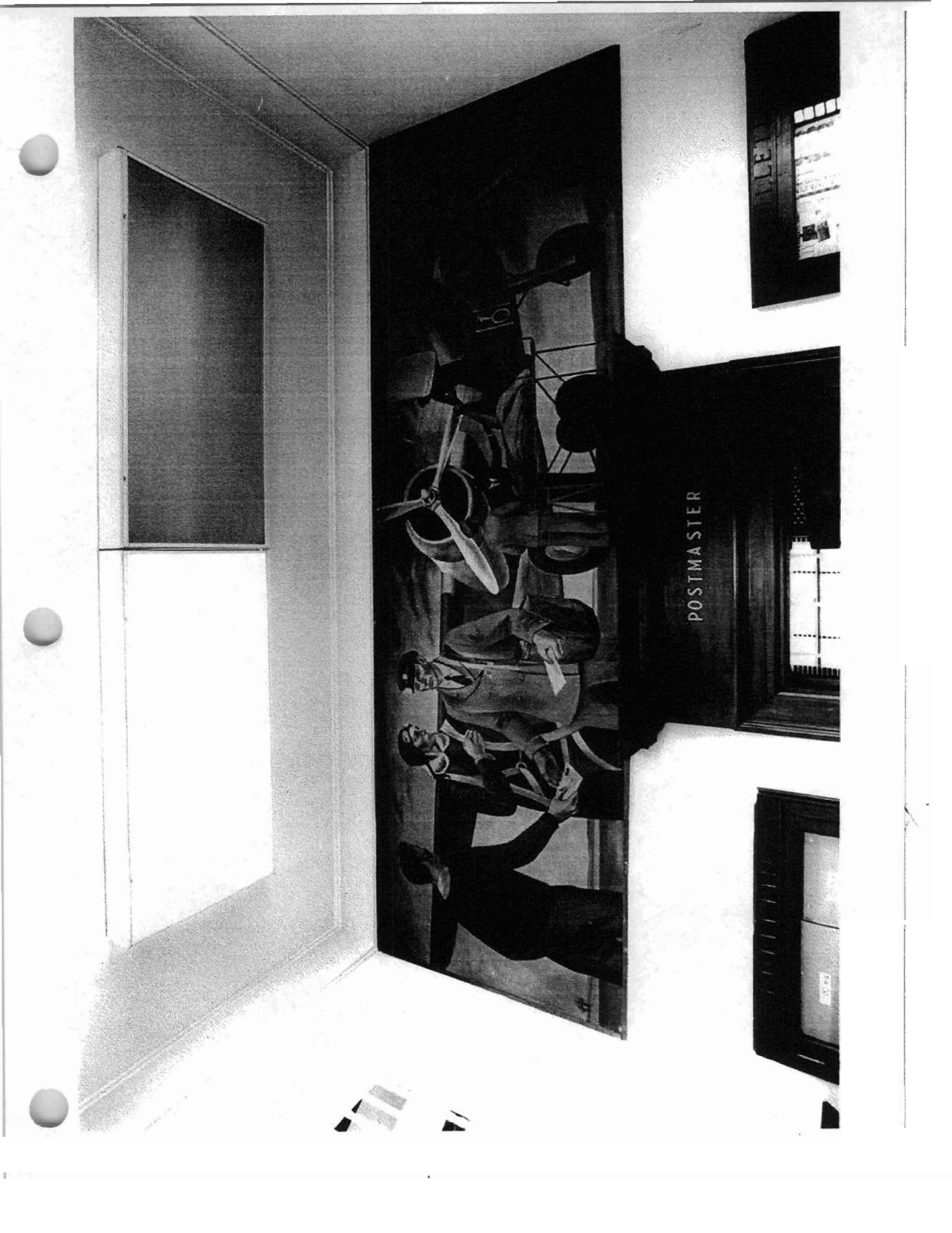
Name/Title: Mark Christ/Communications and Development Director

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: November 4, 1997

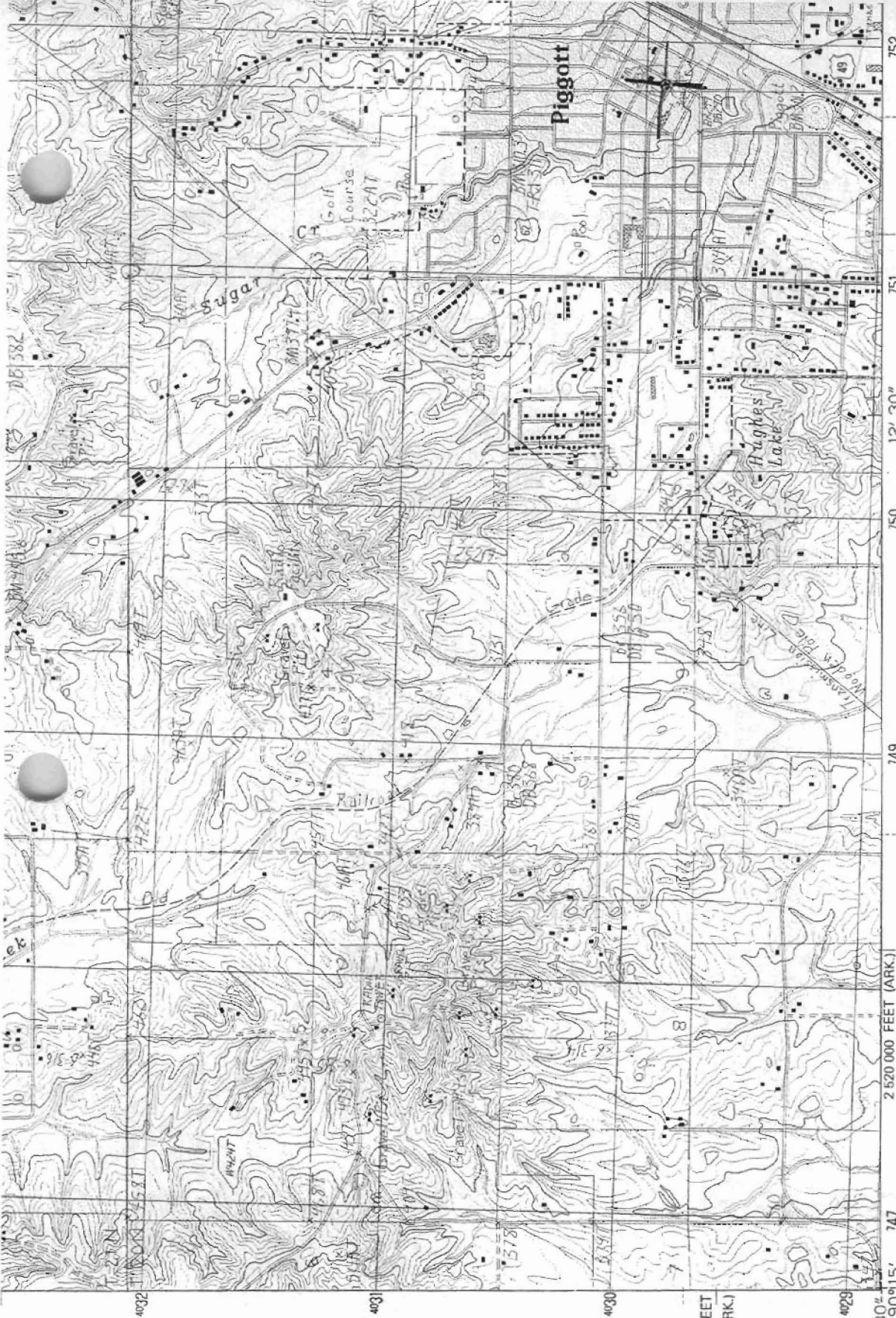
Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg., 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

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









SCAI  
 1800 0 1000 2000 3000 4000  
 1800  
 CONTOUR  
 SUPPLEMENTAL CONTROL ELEVATIONS & OTHER ELEVATIONS:  
 To convert feet To convert meter

PROVISIONAL MAP  
 Produced from original

PRODUCED BY THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
 CONTROL BY... USGS AND NOS/NOAA  
 COMPILED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN... 1980  
 FIELD CHECKED... 1982. MAP EDITED... 1984  
 PROJECTION... LAMBERT CONFORMAL CONIC  
 GRID: 1000-METER UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR... ZONE 15  
 10,000-FOOT STATE GRID TICKS... ARKANSAS, NORTH ZONE  
 AND MISSOURILEAST ZONE  
 UTM GRID DECLINATION... 1°40' EAST  
 1984 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION... 3°00' EAST  
 VERTICAL DATUM... NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
 HORIZONTAL DATUM... 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM  
 To place on the predicted North American Datum of 1983,  
 move the projection lines as shown by dashed corner ticks  
 (5 meters south and 9 meters east)  
 Federal and State Reservations shown on this map

Piggott Post Office  
 Piggott, Clay County, Arkansas  
 15/751840/4029920