

NR Listed: 10-04-02

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 Eastern Star Lodge 207 F&AM

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Approximately one and one-half miles west on CR 336 then approximately one-half mile south on CR 347 not for publication

city or town St. Francis vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Clay code 021 zip code 72464

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
Signature of certifying official/Title

8/13/02
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
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

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Name of Property

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	0	buildings
	0	0	sites
	0	1	structures
	0	0	objects
	1	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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social: Meeting Hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social: Meeting Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Plain-Traditional

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

roof Asphalt

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.)

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Architecture

Period of Significance

1947-1952

Significant Dates

1947

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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):

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, landmark, survey, engineering.

Primary location of additional data:

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State Agency, Federal Agency, Local Government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property One Acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 753151 4037538
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 the Northeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter (NE 1/4 SE 1/4) of Section Fourteen (14) in Township Twenty-One (21) North, Range Eight (8) East of the Fifth Principal Meridian, more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the Southeast corner of the said quarter quarter section aforesaid and running thence North along the East line thereof a distance of Five Hundred Forty-three (543) feet thence West four hundred thirty-seven (437) feet to the east line of the right-of-way of Chalk Bluff and Gainsville Public Road, thence South along with said road to the point where it intersects with the South line of said quarter quarter section, thence east along and with said South line to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses all land associated with the building.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne Winchester and Zac Cothren

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

date 6/10/02

street & number 323 Center Street Suite 1600

telephone 501-324-9880

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 _____

street & number _____

telephone _____

city or town _____

state _____

zip code _____

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.)

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

Eastern Star Lodge 207 F&AM is a Plain-Traditional style two-story block building that was constructed in 1947. It is located approximately one and one-half miles west of St. Francis, Arkansas, on County Road 336, then approximately one-half mile south on County Road 347. The symmetrical building is constructed from concrete blocks and rests upon a concrete foundation. It has a gable roof that is covered with shingles and sheathed with wood siding in the gable end.

ELABORATION

Eastern Star Lodge 207 F&AM is a Masonic hall located approximately one and one-half miles west of St. Francis on County Road 336, then approximately one-half mile south on County Road 347. St. Francis is located in the northeast corner of Clay County in Northeastern Arkansas. The lodge was built in 1947 by local volunteers, who were lodge members, brother Masons from other lodges and individuals from the community. The building is an excellent example of Plain-Traditional architecture. It is constructed from concrete blocks and lies on a concrete foundation. The building is the only lodge building located in the vicinity of St. Francis.

West Elevation

The building faces west and is fenestrated by two six-over-six windows on the upper level. The glass in the left window has been painted over white. Entry to the building is gained through a wooden door. A gable-roofed porch supported to two wooden post shelters the entrance. To the right of the entrance was once a separate entry that was enclosed with blocks shortly after the building's construction. A black and white metal sign with the lodge's name is hung on the exterior wall and had a light at top.

South Elevation

The south elevation is fenestrated by five six-over-six windows. Three of the windows are located on the building's upper level and two are located on the bottom. There was originally a side door located on the first floor, but it was sealed off at an unknown date. A second story entryway has also been infilled and a flight of stairs that accessed the entrance was also removed.

East Elevation

The east elevation is fenestrated by four six-over-six windows, two on each story. The top two windows contain air conditioning window units. On the ground, approximately four feet from the exterior wall, is a concrete structure that served as the covering for a cistern that was dug in the 1960's. The cistern was never used and due to its construction date is a non-contributing resource.

North Elevation

The north elevation is fenestrated by six six-over-six windows; three on each story. There is also an exterior brick chimney located slightly west of center on the elevation.

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Interior

The interior has been altered extensively on the first floor. It serves as a combination kitchen/dining room used for meals and other public functions. The second story is used for Masonic meetings and is quite remarkable. The alter and pillars are from the original lodge hall, a Presbyterian Church in existence from the turn of the century but which disbanded in the 1940's. Seating is vintage cinema seats with intricate detailing. The original charter hangs on the wall as well as the jewels of the state Grand Master Webb Magee, the lodge's longest serving Worshipful Master.

An area outside the main meeting hall contains numerous photos of past Worshipful Masters, special Masonic awards, a wooden cabinet to hold jewels and aprons, large plywood board that have been painted with the names of all the Worshipful Masters and the years they served.

Integrity

Since construction in 1947, the lodge hall has undergone minor alterations, mostly for weatherization and protection of the building itself. It has continued to be used as a Masonic Hall since its completion in 1947. Although a couple of doors have been infilled, the alterations have done little to impact the workmanship employed in construction or the appearance of the building. The setting of the nearby area remains much the same as it did in 1947 with the building still located in the countryside in the vicinity of a small town.

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Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

Eastern Star Lodge 207 F&AM, located in the St. Francis (Clay County), Arkansas, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** for its **local significance** as the best extant example of a Plain-Traditional style two-story lodge hall building in northeastern Clay County. The lodge is also being nominated under **Criterion A** for its association with Masonic activities in northeast Clay County.

ELABORATION

Development of the area near St. Francis and Eastern Star Lodge 207 F&AM began following the Civil War when the land was covered with dense Delta forests and swampland. The clearing of timber created economic prosperity in the timber and river trade. Farming opportunities were created when land was cleared of timber and the swamps were drained. Many of the people settled in the Chalk Bluff Community near the St. Francis River. Chalk Bluff was the site of numerous Civil War skirmishes and battles.

The post-war settlers arriving in the area were lured by the fertile farmland. Many were Civil War veterans in search of a better life. They and their families had deep religious faith that included the belief and membership of the Masonic Order and Order of the Eastern Star. This is reflected by numerous headstones in the nearby Gravel Hill and Hall cemeteries that are etched with both Masonic and Order of the Eastern Star emblems. Many of these settlers were farmers from Tennessee, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, and elsewhere in Arkansas. Cotton was the crop of choice.

Eastern Star Lodge 207 F&AM was organized on Dec. 27, 1867, with 30 charter members. It was chartered on Nov. 18, 1868, and is now Clay County's oldest Masonic lodge. The lodge first met at the Chalk Bluff Church, which was Presbyterian. It then moved to Star School, a small rural schoolhouse, and then to one-story Hall Church that was newly constructed. The lodge received permission to construct a second story for use as a meeting hall around 1906.

In 1946, the lodge purchased the rights to Hall Church, which had disbanded. Local volunteers constructed the present lodge hall in 1947. The cornerstone for the new lodge hall was laid in the northeast corner on May 6, 1947. Included in the cornerstone were a written history and a coin taken from the cornerstone of the Hall Church.

The lodge has been located in three counties, never more than one mile from its present location - first in Greene County, then Clayton County and finally Clay County. Clay County was formed from Greene County in 1873 and was first called Clayton County before the name was changed to Clay County in 1875.

Lodge officer installation and other public functions, such as open house and "dinner on the grounds," were once a significant part of the social activities in the area. Many were held during summer months and were celebrations in themselves.

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Since its inception, the Eastern Star Lodge 207 F&AM has had approximately thirty-four 50-year members with 16 living to date. Of the 16, two are 60-year plus members - Vaughter Irwin of Pollard (Clay County), Arkansas, Master Mason in April 1938, and Ernest Hanna of St. Francis, Master Mason on May 19, 1938.

Today the building still functions as a Masonic Lodge. For many years, the lodge hall was also the meeting location for the Order of the Eastern Star. That chapter has merged with the chapter in Piggott (Clay County), Arkansas.

Significance

Eastern Star Lodge 207 F&AM is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** with **local significance** as the best extant example of Plain-Traditional architecture in the St. Francis area of Clay County. It is also being nominated under **Criterion A** for its association with Masonic activities in Clay County, Arkansas.

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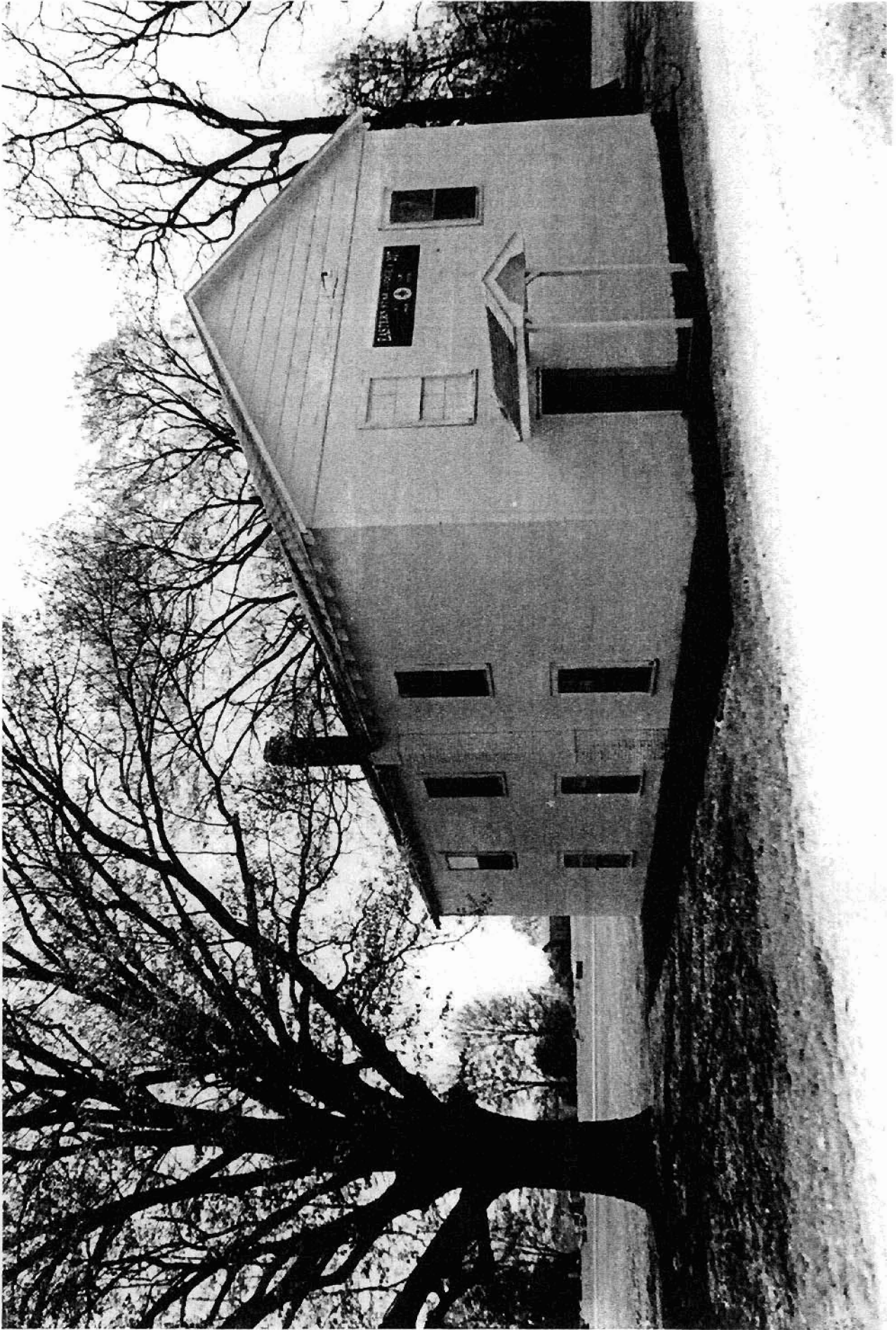
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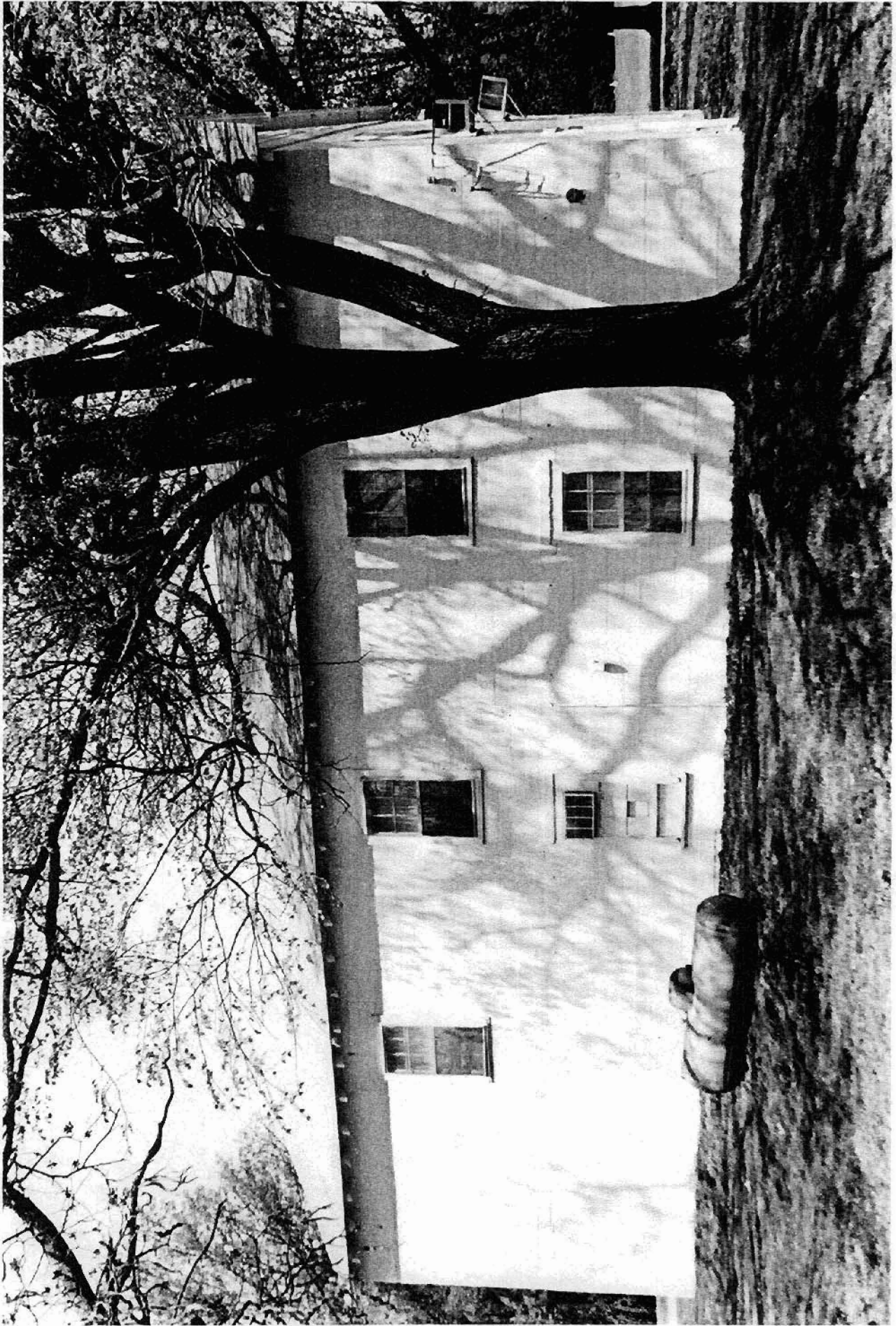
Bibliography

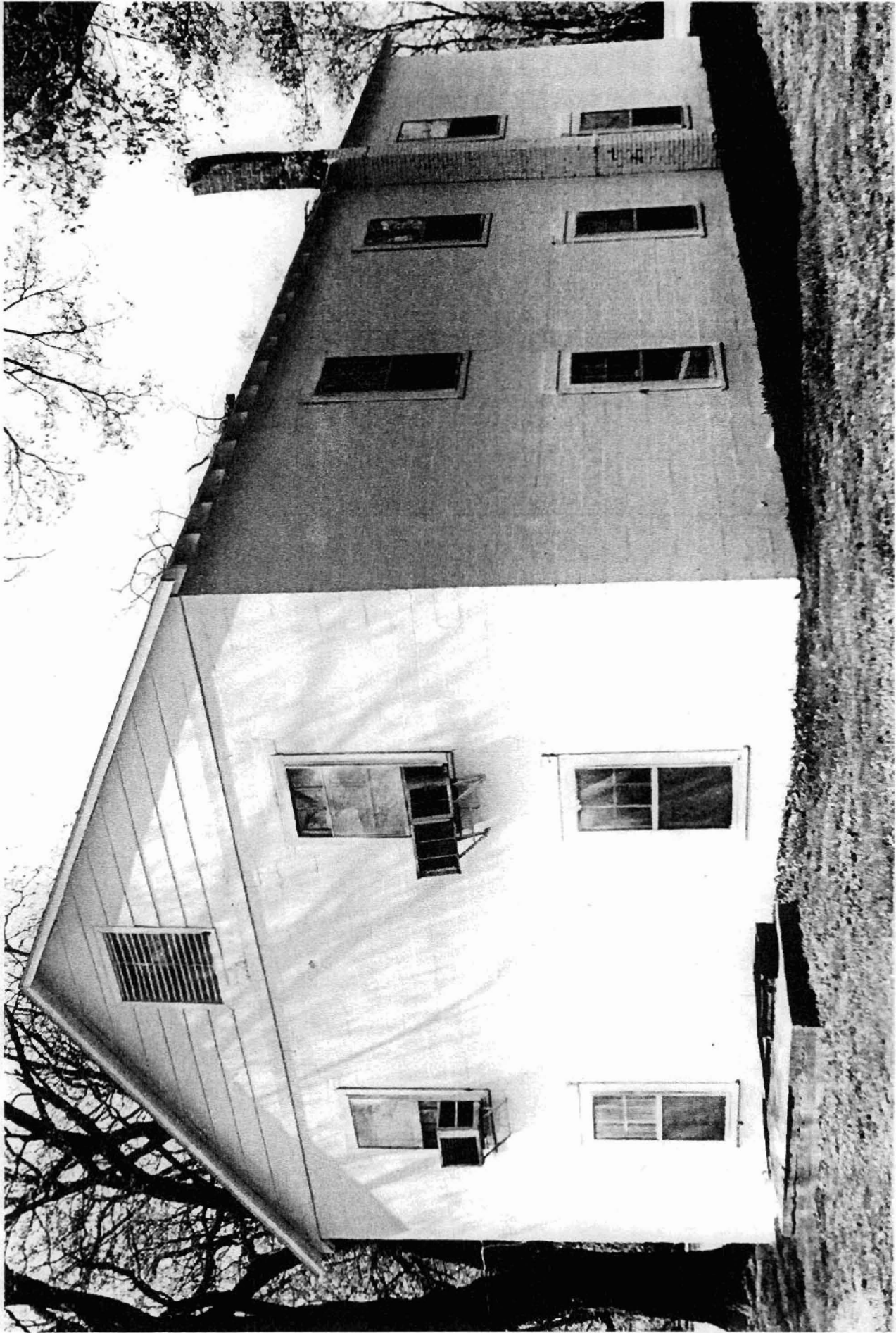
"Eastern Star Lodge is Oldest in Clay County" by Anne Winchester, Piggott Times, Nov. 15, 2000

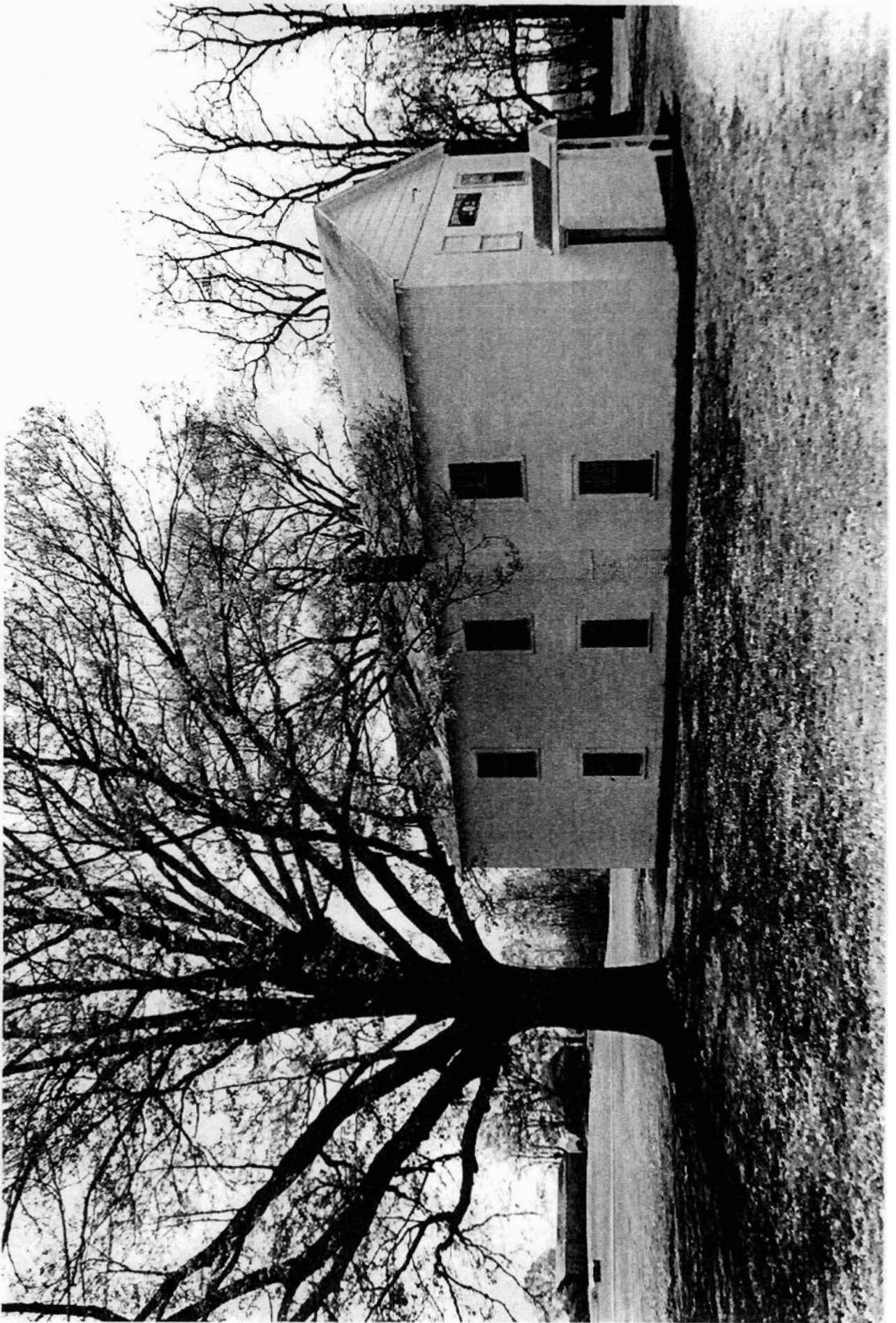
Lodge history prepared by A.O. Langley and updated by J.D. Wagster from lodge records. Wagster served as lodge secretary for 30 years.

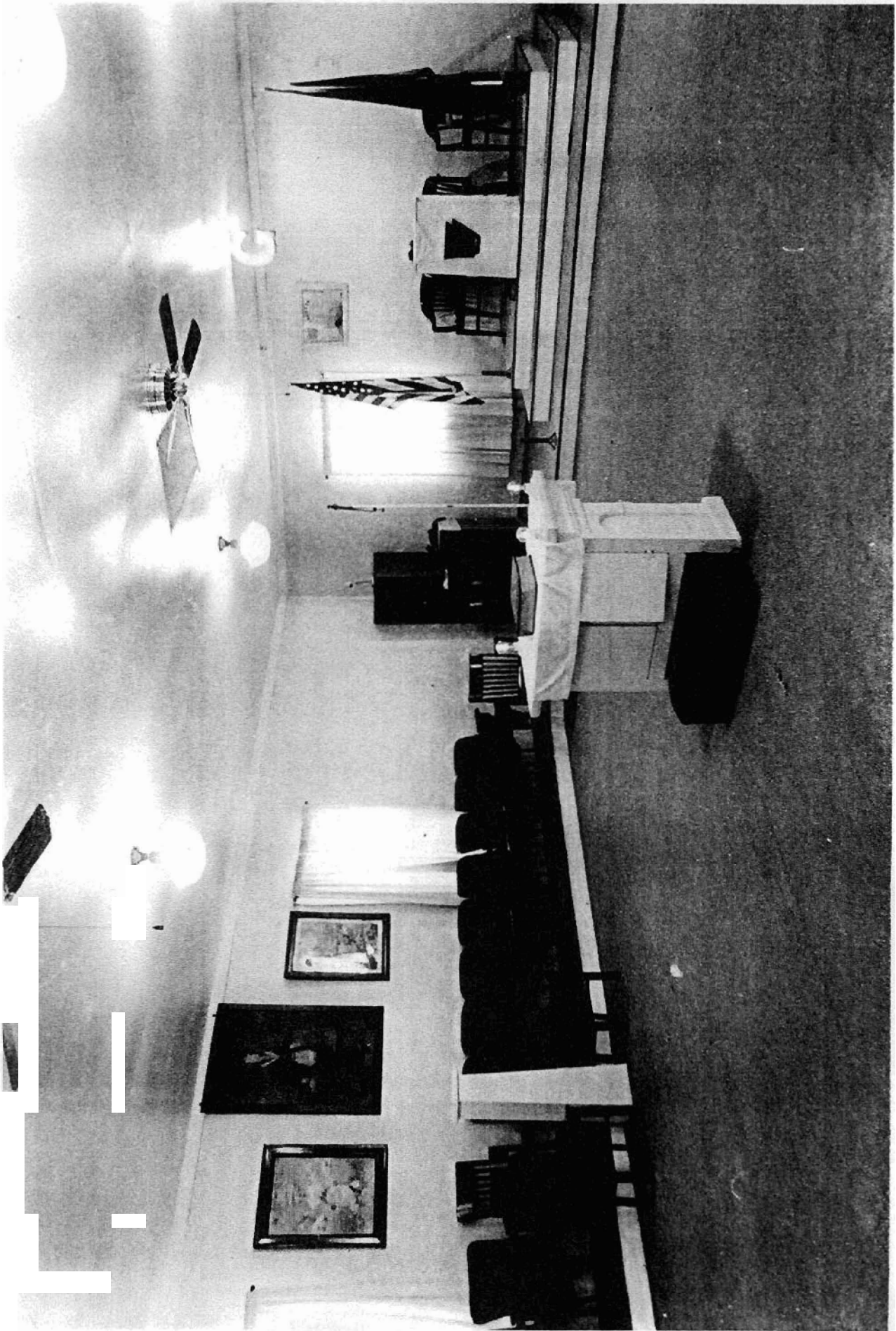
www.rootsweb.com/~arclay/ -- genealogical web site for Clay County, Arkansas











Eastern Star Lodge 207 F 1 A M
St. Francis Vic, Clay co., AR
UTM: 15/753151/4037538

