

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NR 5/29/08

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 Charleston Commercial Historic District

other names/site number FR0010, FR0215-FR0236, FR0239

2. Location

street & number Main Street roughly from Hwy. 217 to Tilden Street

not for publication

city or town Charleston

vicinity

state Arkansas

code

AR

county Franklin

code

zip code

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 Matich

3/14/08

Signature of certifying official/Title

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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	
17	6	buildings
	4 (vacant lots)	sites
		structures
		objects
17	10	Total

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

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- Commerce/Trade-business
- Commerce/Trade-financial institution
- Commerce/Trade-specialty store

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- Commerce/Trade-business
- Commerce/Trade-financial institution
- Commerce/Trade-specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

- Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century-Commercial Style
- Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals-Classical
- Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals-Romanesque

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Brick, cast concrete
- walls Brick, stone, synthetic
- roof Built-up tar, composition shingle, metal
- 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 of property significance.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions of property characteristics.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

- Architecture, Community Planning and Development, Commerce

Period of Significance

1900-1958

Significant Dates

1900-1958

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/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):

- Criteria for previous documentation on file (NPS) with checkboxes.

Primary location of additional data:

- Criteria for primary location of additional data with checkboxes.

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately 2.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Table with 4 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing. Rows 1-4. Includes a checkbox for '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 11/27/2007
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 Multiple Ownership
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.)

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 20503

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### Summary

Located along E. Main Street in Charleston, the Charleston Commercial Historic District encompasses the historic commercial core of the town. The district reflects development in Charleston during its years of greatest growth from 1900-1940. The architecture represented in the district is typical of 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial structures in small towns. Several notable exceptions are the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Franklin County Courthouse, and the Bank of Charleston. Although the majority of structures represent a typical early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial style, the wide use of field stone in structural walls and cut stone on facades represents a local adaptation on prevailing trends.

### Elaboration

The Charleston Commercial District contains the historic commercial core of the community along E. Main Street between Highway 217 and Tilden Street. The block between Highway 217 and Logan Street represents the earliest commercial area in Charleston, with the block between Logan and Hancock primarily from a later period. The Franklin County Courthouse, built in 1923, sits on its own block set back from the street. The Methodist Episcopal Church sits on the east side of Tilden Street separated by a vacant block from the courthouse.

#### 1900-1909

The two oldest structures in the Charleston Historic District date to first decade of the twentieth century and were both originally constructed as banks. The structure at 504 E. Main Street has design cues from the Richardsonian Romanesque style of the prior century with a large round arch and rough cut stone blocks on the façade. The Bank of Charleston building at 510/512 E. Main Street draws upon Neoclassical influences with a pediment corner entry. This structure also has a decorative metal parapet with dentils and white glazed bricks with red striations in a faux marble pattern.

#### 1910-1919

Three buildings in the district were constructed between 1910 and 1919. These structures reflect the shift from commercial styles of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to those of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The property at 430 E. Main draws more upon the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the rough textured cut stone also seen at 504 E. Main from the previous decade. The properties at 415 and 420 E. Main reflect the minimal adornment and brick construction more prevalent in structures from the 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial aesthetic.

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1920-1929

Ten buildings in the Charleston Historic District were constructed in the 1920s and reflect the period of greatest growth for the community. The Franklin County Courthouse (NR 10-18-76) was constructed in 1923 along with the Methodist Episcopal Church at 715 E. Main St. The Franklin County Courthouse features Classical details and the Methodist Episcopal Church features a front gable and arched windows throughout the chapel. The First Presbyterian Church at 322 E. Main Street is a stucco building built in a simplified version of the Gothic Revival style with its lancet-shaped vents and tower with octagonal steeple. The building's fenestration consists mainly of one-over-one, double-hung wood-frame windows. The other structures from this decade are built in an early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial style with brick facades and minimal elaborations, primarily recessed panels and dentils in the parapet. The Hiatt and Sherman Building at 503/505 E. Main Street is the most notable example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial architecture. The Hug Chevrolet building at 407 E. Main Street is significant for its continuous use as a car dealership since its construction.

1930-1940

Two structures in the district were built between 1930 and 1940, both related to the rise in prominence of the automobile. 526 E. Main is a three-bay garage structure with design elements in common with the majority of the structures from the prior decade—a brick façade with minimal elaboration in the form of recessed panels and dentils in the parapet. The building at 614 E. Main is a service station featuring multiple garage bays under a gambrel roof with a historic addition of parapet front.

Of the twenty-two (22) structures in the Charleston Commercial Historic District, seventeen (17) were determined to be contributing structures that represented the period and areas of significance. Six (6) were determined to be non-contributing to the significance of the district due to irreversible alterations or insufficient age. Most of the structures in the Charleston Commercial Historic District are in good condition and continue to be used for commercial purposes. The district also contains four vacant lots, which have been counted as non-contributing sites, and one individually-listed property.

The Charleston Historic District retains high integrity as a representation of Charleston's period of greatest development from 1900-1940. Non-historic additions or modifications include wood shingle awnings, blocked or bricked openings, and replaced windows or storefronts with all but the latter being largely reversible. The district continues as the commercial heart of Charleston, despite later commercial development to the east and south of the district.

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Resource #	Address	Historic Name	C/NC
FR0215	715 East Main Street	Methodist Episcopal Church	C
FR0010	607 East Main Street	Franklin County Courthouse	IL
FR0216	521 East Main Street	Simmons First National Bank	NC
FR0217	511 East Main Street	Building at 511 East Main Street	C
FR0218	507-509 East Main Street	Building at 507-509 East Main Street	C
FR0219	503-505 East Main Street	Hiatt & Sherman Building	C
FR0220	501 East Main Street	Building at 501 East Main Street	C
FR0221	415 East Main Street	Building at 415 East Main Street	C
FR0222	407 East Main Street	Building at 407 East Main Street	NC
FR0223	418 East Main Street	Building at 418 East Main Street	NC
FR0224	420 East Main Street	Building at 420 East Main Street	C
FR0225	426 East Main Street	Building at 426 East Main Street	NC
FR0226	430 East Main Street	Building at 430 East Main Street	C
FR0227	504 East Main Street	Building at 504 East Main Street	C
FR0228	506 East Main Street	Building at 506 East Main Street	C
FR0229	508 East Main Street	Building at 508 East Main Street	C
FR0230	510-512 East Main Street	Bank of Charleston	C
FR0231	516 East Main Street	Building at 516 East Main Street	NC
FR0232	520 East Main Street	Building at 520 East Main Street	C
FR0233	524 East Main Street	Building at 524 East Main Street	C

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Resource #	Address	Historic Name	C/NC
FR0234	526 East Main Street	Building at 526 East Main Street	C
FR0235	604 East Main Street	Building at 604 East Main Street	NC
FR0236	614 East Main Street	Building at 614 East Main Street	C
FR0239	322 East Main Street	First Presbyterian Church	C



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### Summary

Charleston lies in the west central area of Arkansas, east of Fort Smith and the Arkansas-Oklahoma border, in the southern half of Franklin County. Franklin County was formed in December 1837 from part of neighboring Crawford County. Charleston was first settled between 1843 and 1844, incorporated in 1874, and experienced minimal growth until 1885. In that year, Franklin County, bisected by the Arkansas River, established a second judicial district to the south of the river. In 1901, Charleston was designated as a second county seat south of the river. Charleston's period of greatest growth came in the first two decades of the twentieth century with the founding of several coal mines in the area. The Charleston Commercial District reflects primarily the growth from this period.

### Elaboration

The Charleston Commercial District is comprised of 24 structures along a stretch of three city blocks of E. Main Street. One property within the district boundaries was previously listed in the National Register of Historic Places: the Franklin County Courthouse (NR 10/18/1976). The district has a strong historic character and integrity as evidenced by the high number of contributing structures.

Franklin County was formed in December 1837 from part of neighboring Crawford County. Straddling the Arkansas River, travel in the large county was made difficult by the broad waterway. Charleston was settled between 1843 and 1844 by Charles Kellum and J.B. and R.C. Thaxton, and the settlement was named for Kellum. During the Civil War, several skirmishes occurred in Franklin County at Mulberry Springs, Ozark, Moffat's Station, and in Charleston itself. In 1863, Federal scouts burned nearly all of Charleston to the ground save for two residences. Charleston was rebuilt after the war and became an incorporated town in 1874.

In 1885, Franklin County was divided into two judicial districts due to the difficulties of travel across the Arkansas River. Charleston became the center of the southern district, and was later established as a second county seat in 1901. Charleston's new designation as county seat coupled with the coming of the railroad in 1898 created a swell in Charleston's population to 650 people at the beginning of the twentieth century. Franklin County's wealth of mineral resources led to the establishment of several coal mines in the area in the first two decades of the twentieth century. In 1900, the *Charleston Express* replaced *The Vindicator* as Charleston's newspaper, owned and operated by P. Carter and Bert McCausey. The offices of the newspaper remain on Main Street today. The new jobs created and wealth generated by the coal industry further swelled Charleston's population and generated a building boom along Charleston's Main Street.

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By 1920, Charleston's population had increased to 734 and by 1923 a new courthouse had been constructed once the older courthouse had been outgrown. Dale Bumpers, resident of Charleston and former governor of Arkansas and U.S. Senator, led an effort to restore the Franklin County Courthouse in the mid-1960s. The Pendergrass Ford dealership opened on Charleston's Main Street around 1920 and became the primary dealer of the new automobiles in the southern half of Franklin County. The dealership later changed to a Chevrolet dealership and moved to a new location on the south side of Main Street, then became Pendergrass-Hug Chevrolet, and today Hug Chevrolet continues to operate out of the same structure. Between 1920 and 1940, Charleston continued to grow steadily. The population in 1930 had risen to 850 and hit 1000 in 1940. Charleston is also notable as the first town in the former Confederacy to integrate its public schools in 1954.

The Methodist Episcopal Church at 715 E. Main Street was erected in 1923 with J.M. Fryar as the head of the church and C.B. Ford, D.A. Carroll, Arthur Smith, W. Floyd, and H.S. East on the building committee. However, the Methodist Church was not the only church in the district built in the 1920s. The First Presbyterian Church congregation was organized in 1881 with C. Kraus as the clerk. The current building was built in 1921 in a very simple version of the Gothic Revival style. The manse was added on in 1946 and Davis Hall was added on in 1957.

The property at 511 E. Main Street once housed drugstore operations, first Pure Drugs, then Crescent Drugs, and is now the office of the *Charleston Express* newspaper. The property at 503/505 E. Main Street was a City Market grocery store and now houses City Hall. The property at 407 E. Main Street was a Post Office that later became a car dealership in the 1930s and has remained so since. Originally the Bond Brothers Chevrolet dealership, it later became Pendergrass Chevrolet, then Pendergrass-Hug Chevrolet, and today is the Hug Chevrolet dealership. The property at 526 E. Main Street once housed Charleston's first car dealership, Pendergrass Ford. When Pendergrass changed to a Chevrolet dealership and moved locations, the property continued to be owned by the new dealership. In the 1970s it became the town fire station with city offices in the rear.

Today, the Charleston Commercial District along Main Street continues to be the commercial heart of the community with the majority of structures remaining from its period of greatest growth between 1900 and 1920.

### Significance

The Charleston Commercial District remains an intact representation of Charleston's growth and development towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The architectural styles represented in the district are typical of early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial architecture in smaller communities with several notable structures exhibiting high styles popular during the period of significance. The Charleston Commercial Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** for its representation of the growth and development of Charleston in the late nineteenth and

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first half of the twentieth centuries, and most notably the defining period of greatest growth following its establishment as a second county seat and the coal "boom" between 1900 and 1940; and under **Criterion C** for its extraordinary array of various architectural styles embodying distinctive characteristics representative of the periods of construction and development. It is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration A** because of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches.

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### Bibliography

*Charleston, Arkansas Centennial Yearbook: A Time of Change.* City of Charleston. 1974.

Ervin, Mary Belle. E-mail to Mark Christ of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. 25 February 2008.

Henry, George M. *History of Franklin County, Arkansas.* Master's Thesis, University of Wyoming. Laramie. 1940.

Shropshire, Lola. *Images of America: Franklin County.* Arcadia Publishing, Inc. Charleston, SC. 2000.

*The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, s.v. "Franklin County"

<http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=768> (accessed November 16, 2007)

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### Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the intersection of E. Main Street and Highway 217, the boundary runs west along the centerline of Main Street to the west edge of the First Presbyterian Church property. The boundary then turns north and follows the west edge of the Presbyterian Church property to the north edge of the Presbyterian Church property. The boundary then turns east and follows the north edge of the Presbyterian Church property to the centerline of Highway 217. The boundary then turns south along the centerline of Highway 217 to Northway Alley. The boundary turns east along the centerline of Northway Alley to its terminus at Hancock Street. The boundary then turns south to the centerpoint of the intersection of Hancock Street and E. Main Street. The boundary then runs east along the centerline of E. Main Street to the northeast corner of 715 E. Main. The boundary turns south following the eastern property boundary of 715 E. Main Street to the southeast corner of the property. The boundary then turns west following the southern property boundary of 715 E. Main. The boundary runs due west until it reaches the centerline of Logan Street. The boundary then turns north and follows the centerline of Logan Street to the intersection of Logan Street and Southway Alley. The boundary then follows the centerline of Southway Alley until its terminus at Highway 217. The boundary then turns north following the centerline of Highway 217 to the point of boundary origin at the intersection of Highway 217 and E. Main Street.

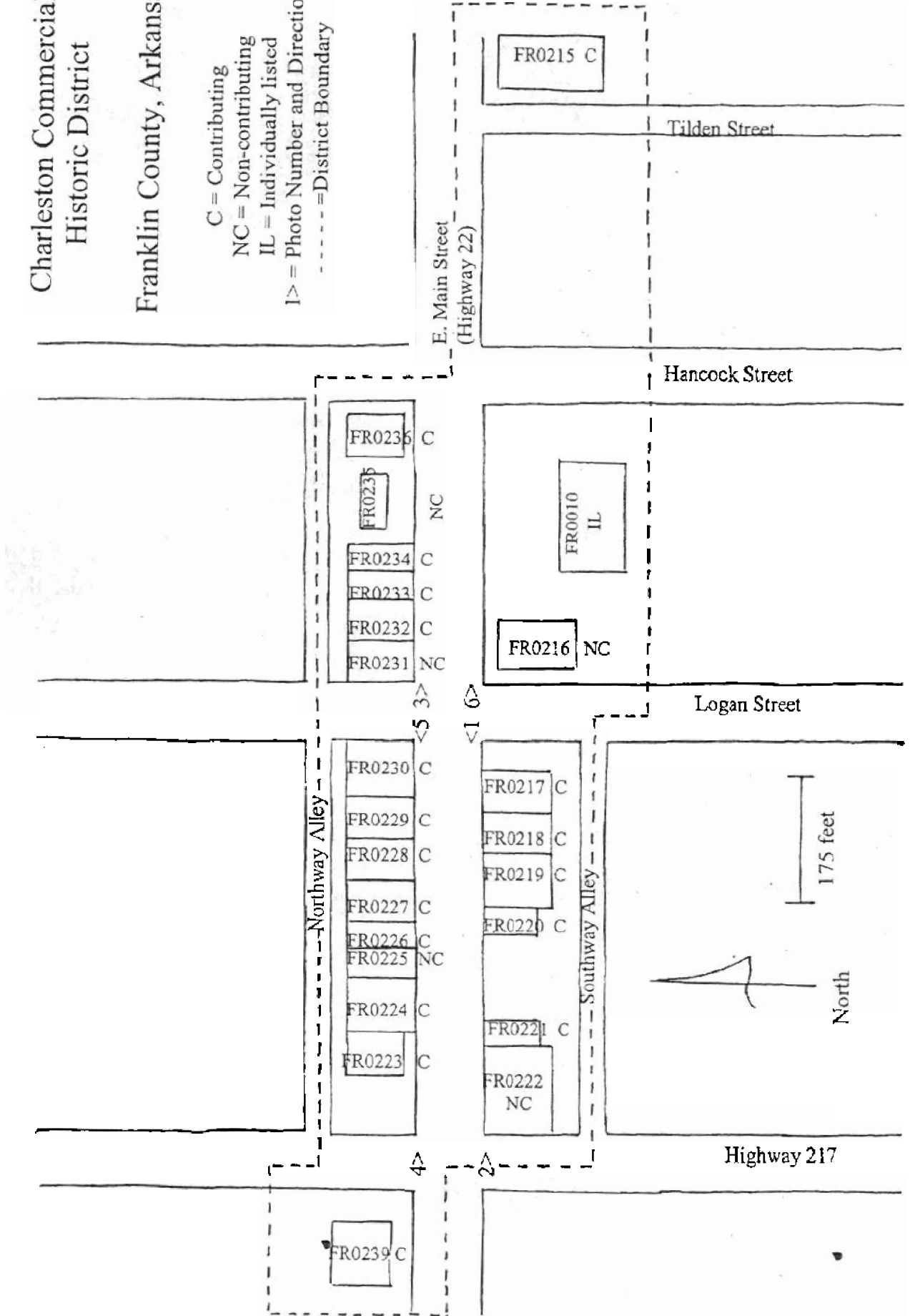
### Boundary Justification

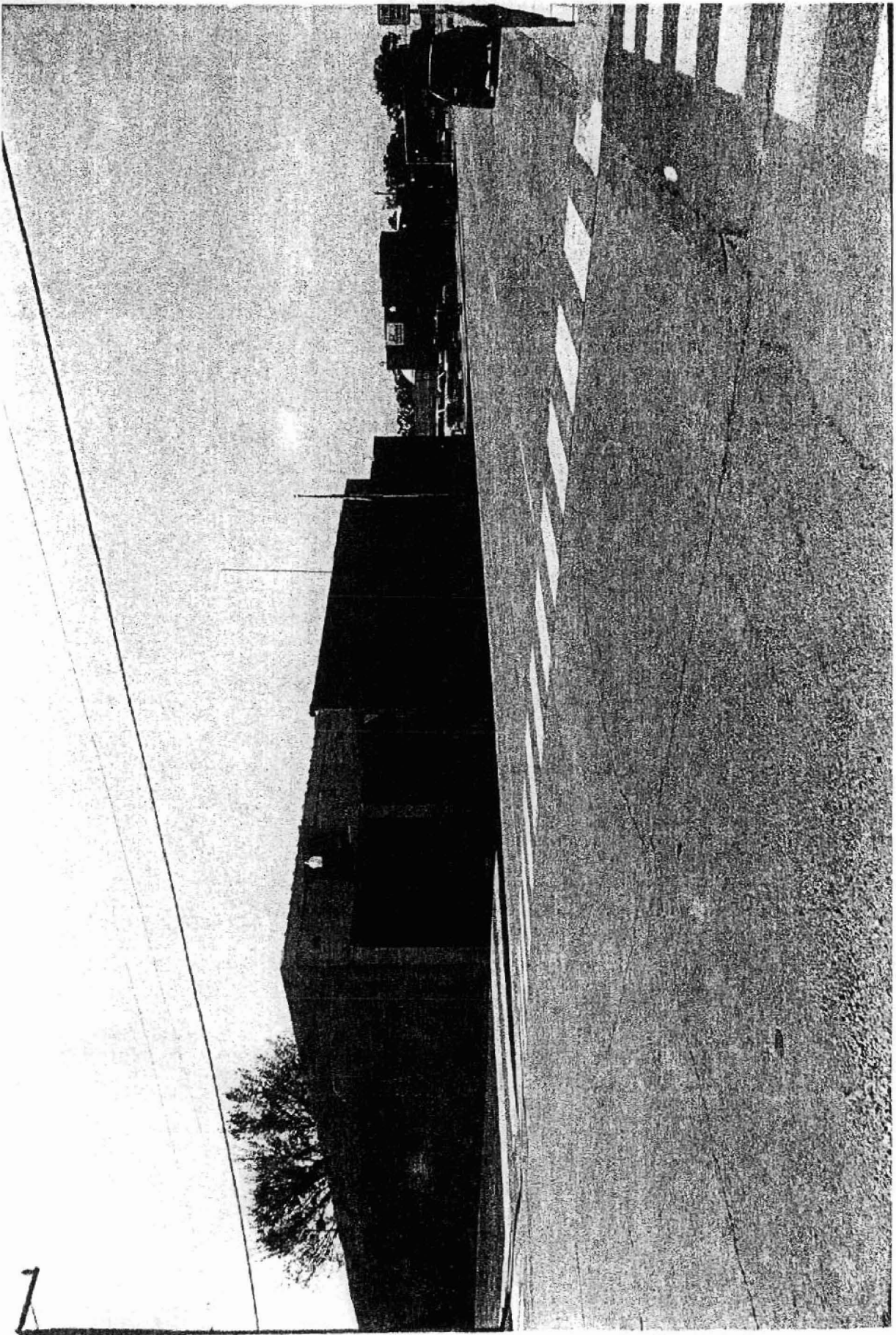
The boundaries of the Charleston Commercial Historic District were derived from an initial visual survey by the staff of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (AHPP) and from a comprehensive architectural resource survey conducted by an architectural historian contracted by AHPP. The area surveyed was determined by AHPP staff and the contracted surveyor to be the primary and most important fabric of the historic downtown commercial district. AHPP staff through a determination of eligibility process reviewed each property in the surveyed area with input from the consultant who conducted the survey. The boundaries of the proposed district were determined to be the most concentrated and contiguous portion of the surveyed area. Areas to the east and north reflected residential development, while areas to the west and south reflected residential and late twentieth century commercial development.

Charleston Commercial  
Historic District

Franklin County, Arkansas

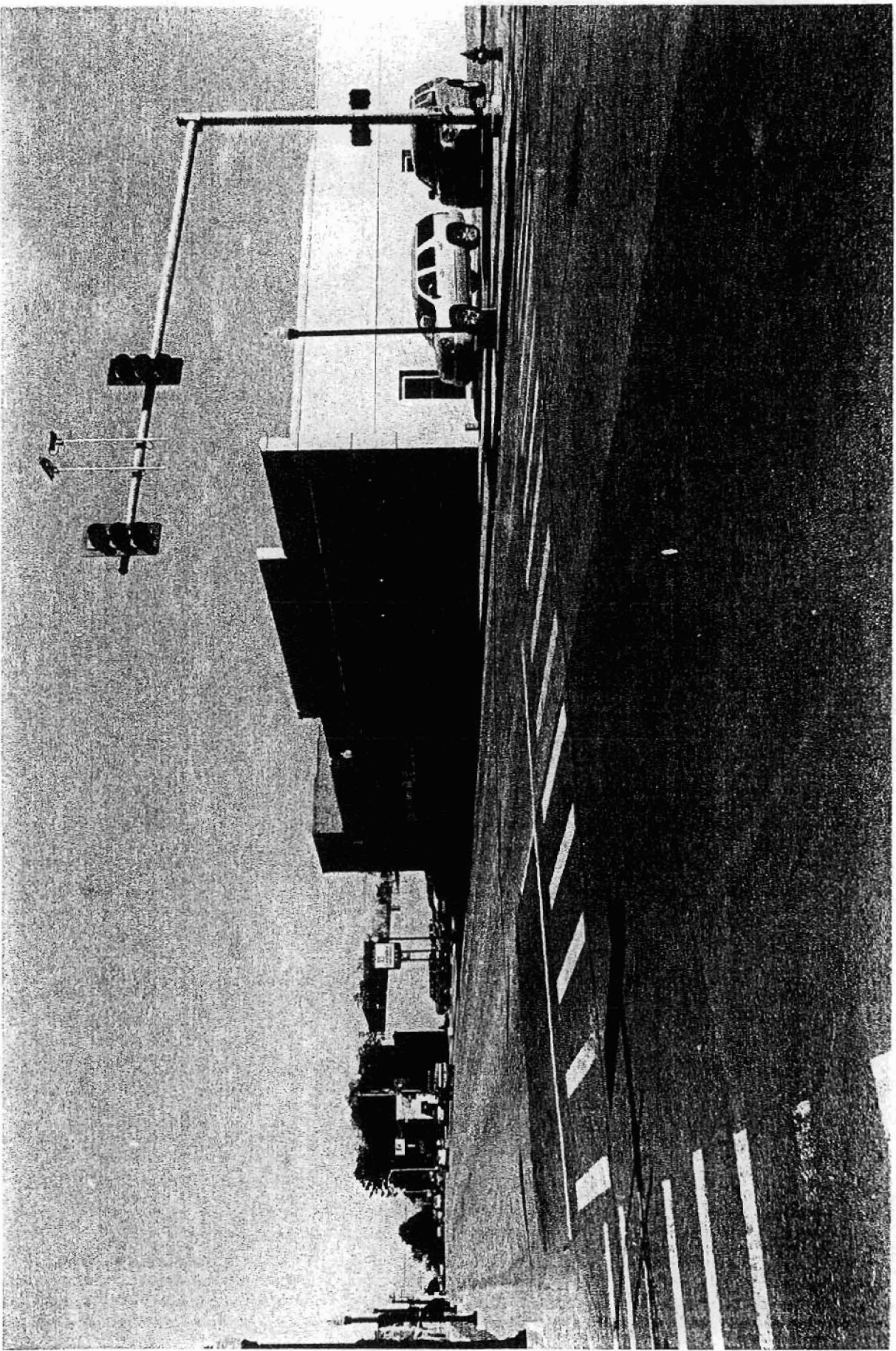
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- NC = Non-contributing
- IL = Individually listed
- !> = Photo Number and Direction
- - - - - = District Boundary



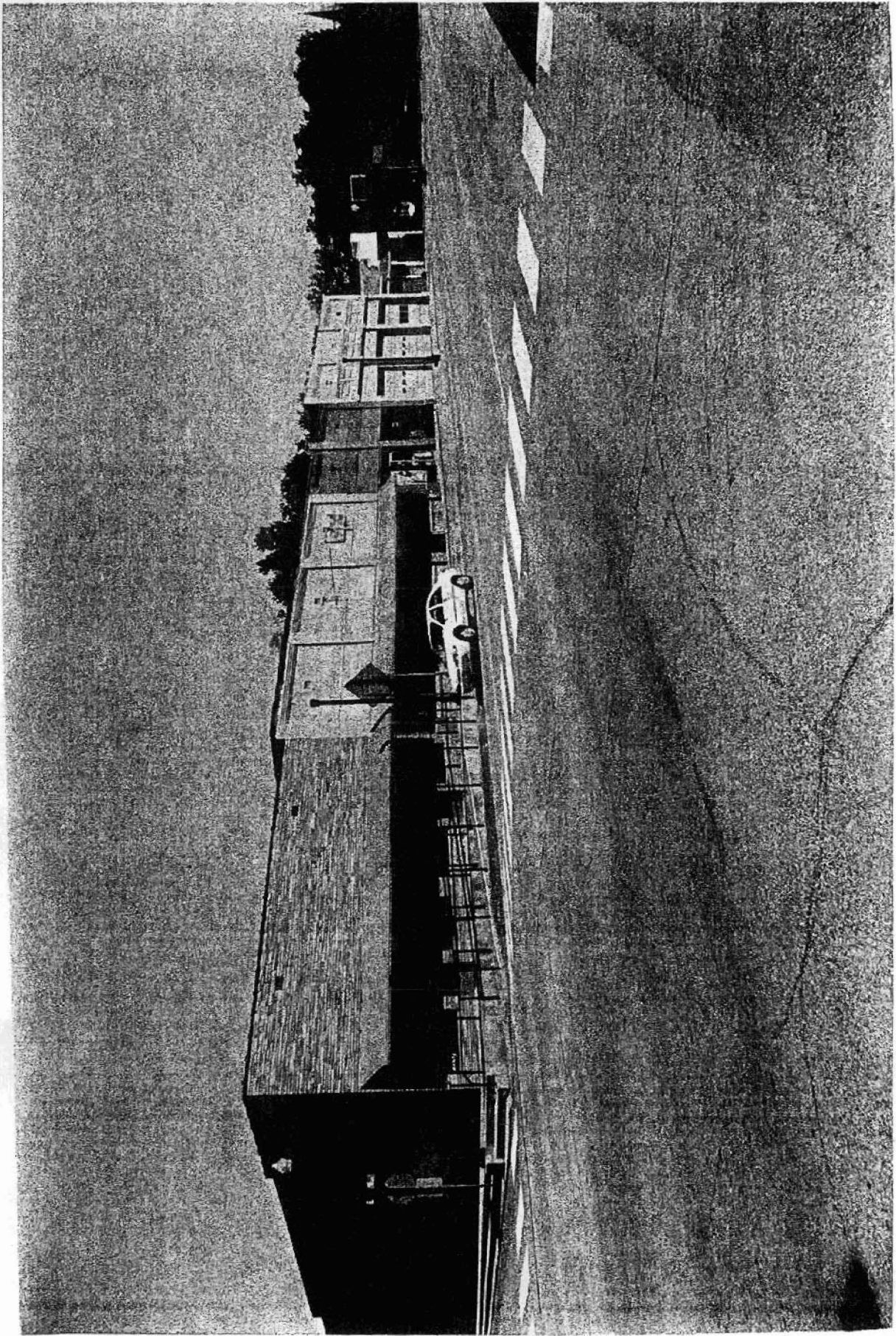


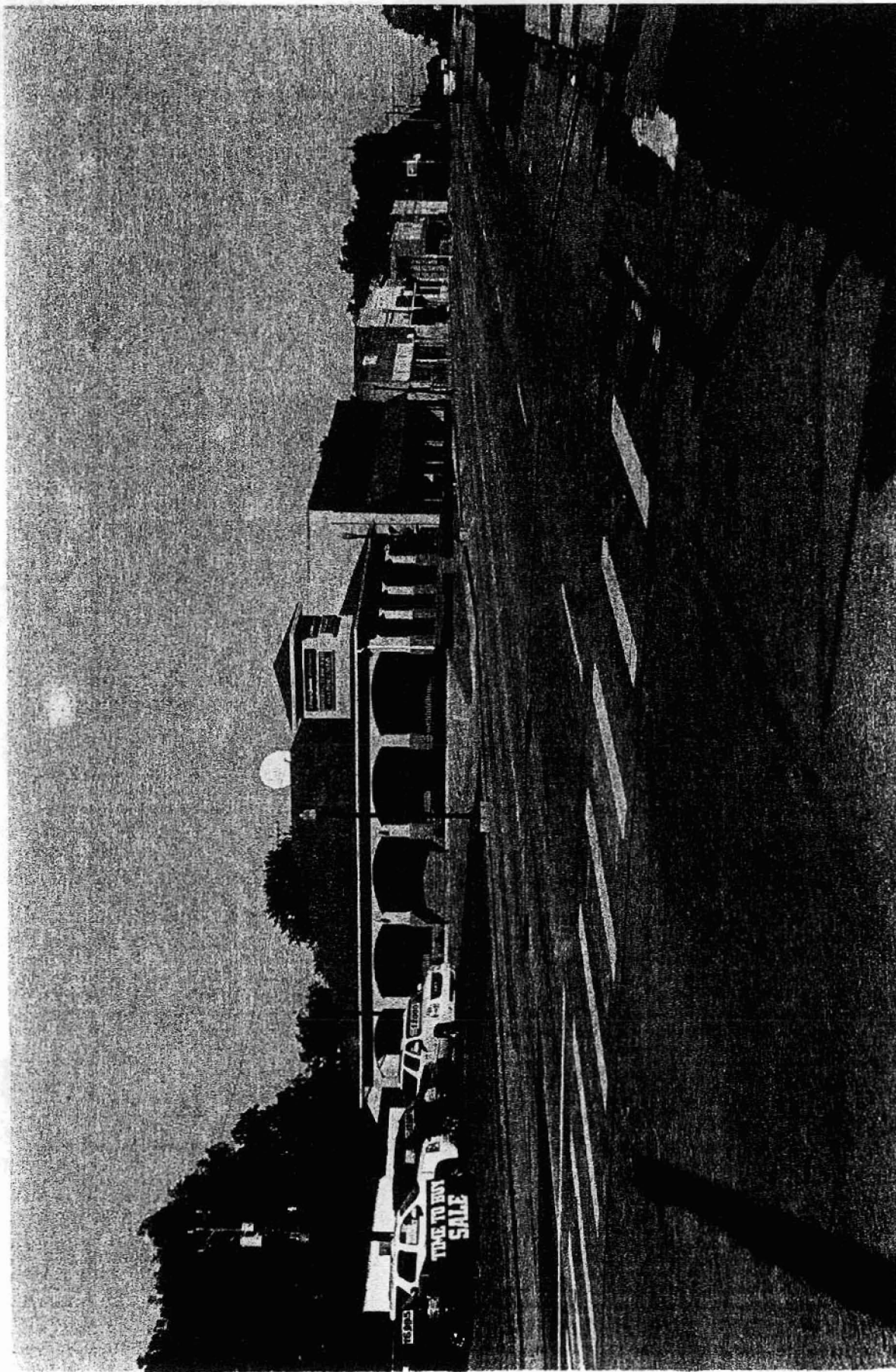
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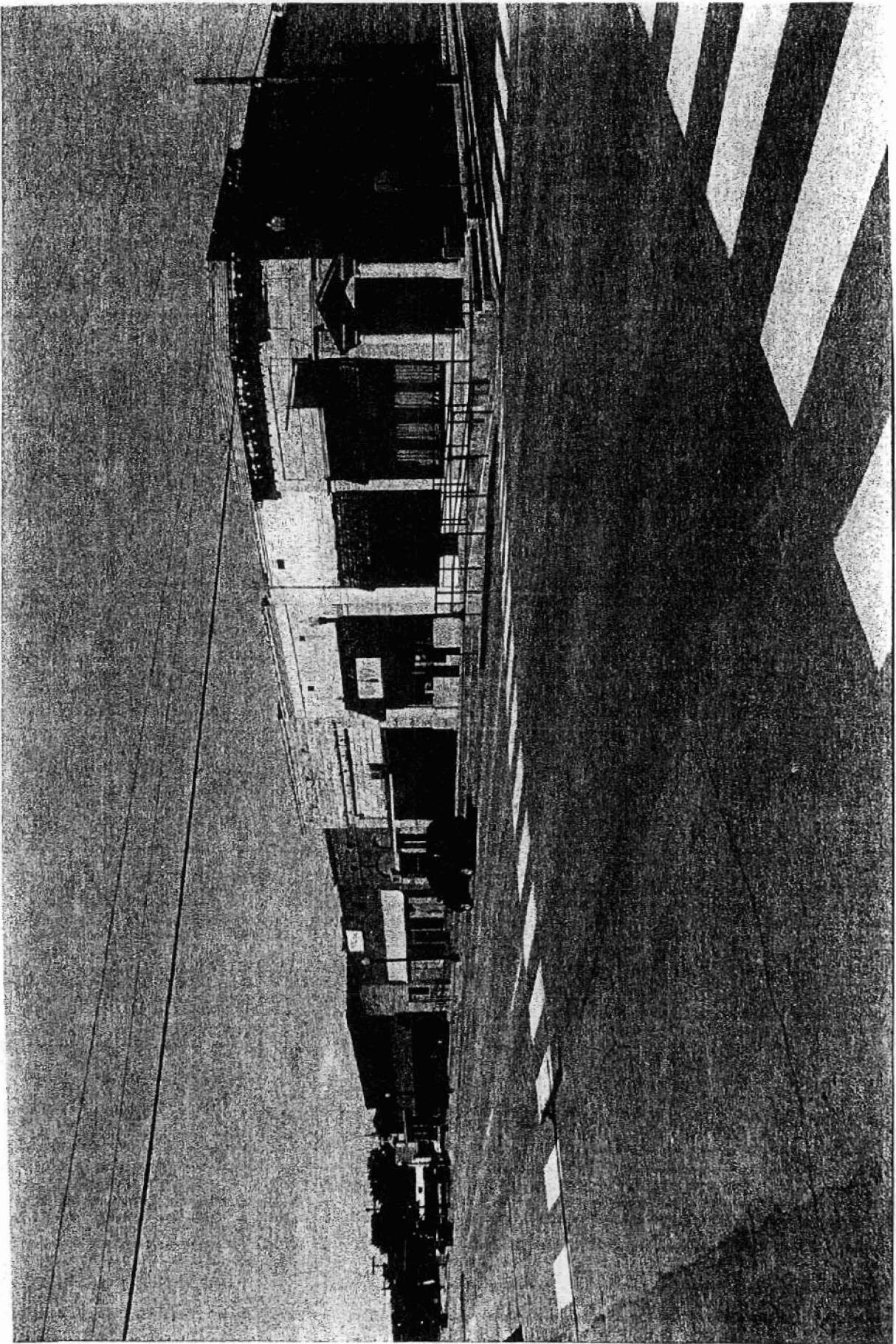


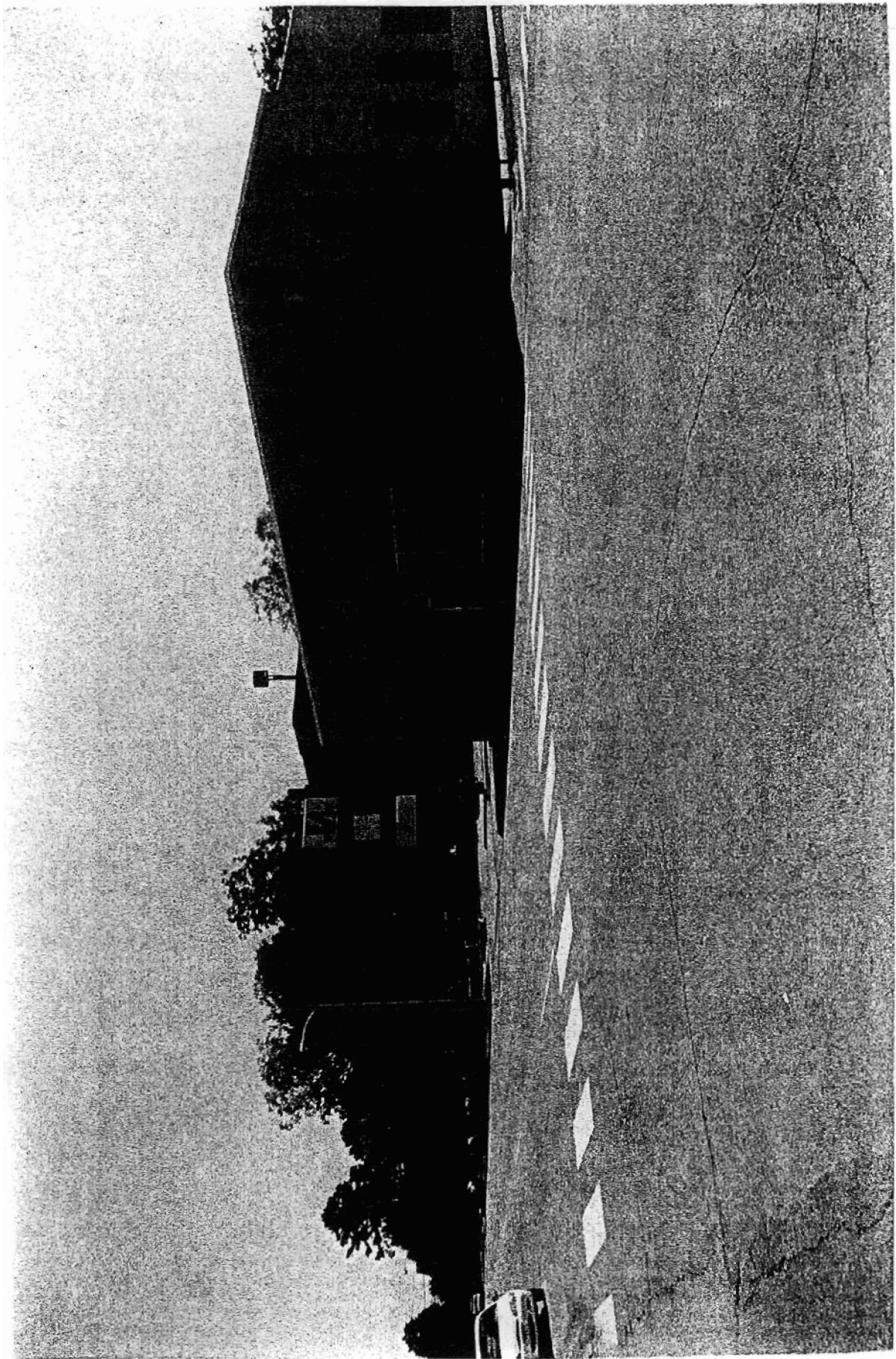




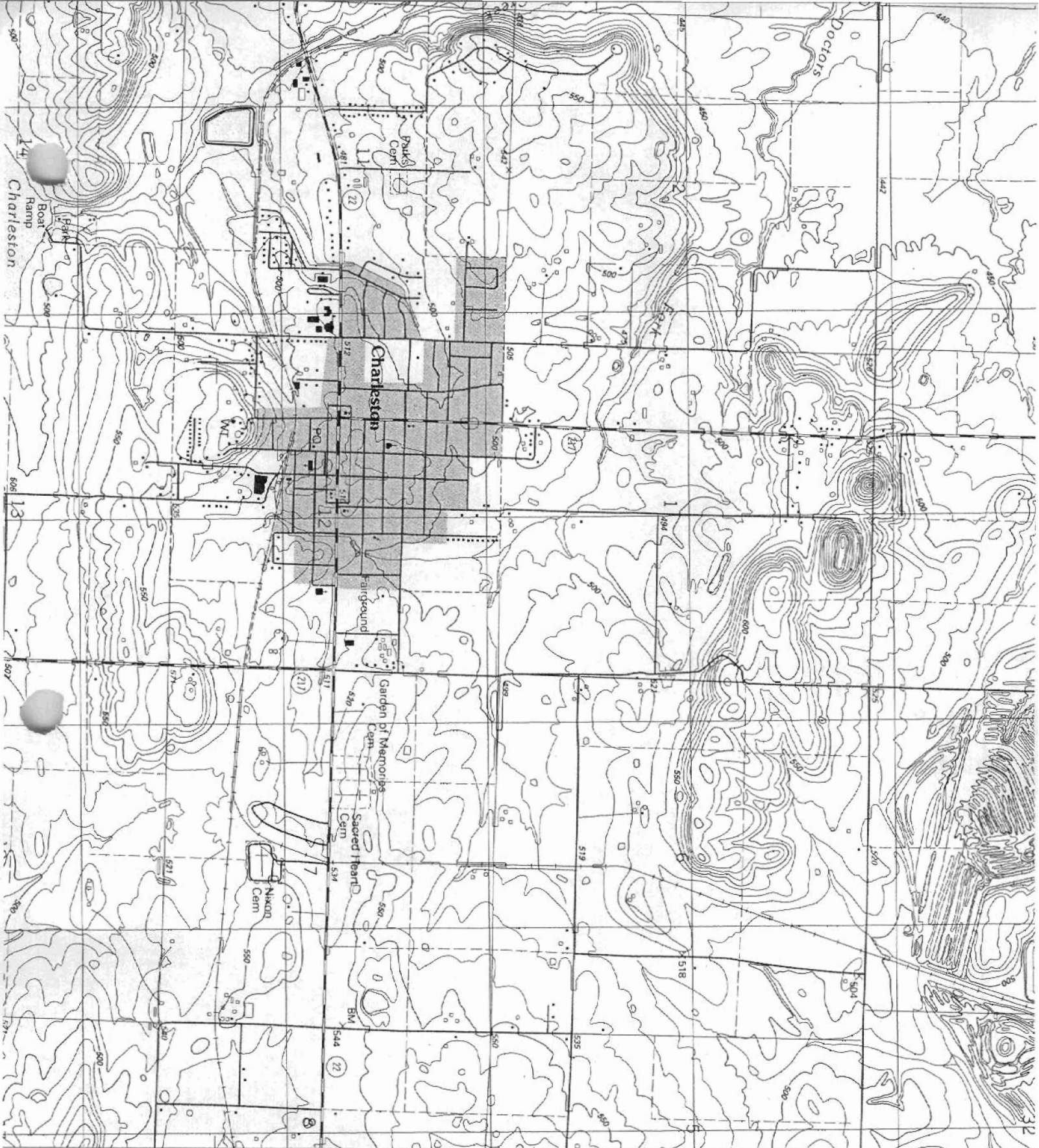












Charleston

13

3905

17 30'

BRANCH 2.7 MI.  
PARIS 15 MI.

UTM:  
15QST3192000

3907

CHARLESTON CENTER  
CHARLESTON, MISSOURI

(BRANCH)  
7254 IV SW

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