

NR listed 10/15/92

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

historic name: Rix, Charles N., House

other name/site number: N/A

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2. Location

street & number: 628 Quapaw Avenue

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Hot Springs

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Garland

code: AR 051

zip code: 71901

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3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	sites
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	structures
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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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.

Carolyn A. Byrd  
Signature of certifying official

9-8-92  
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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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**5. National Park Service Certification**  
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I, hereby certify that this 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 Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
of Action

=====  
**6. Function or Use**  
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Historic: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling

Current : Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification:

Colonial Revival
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Description: American Foursquare \_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundation Brick \_\_\_\_\_ roof Asphalt \_\_\_\_\_
walls Vinyl \_\_\_\_\_ other Brick \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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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: Local \_\_\_\_\_.

Applicable National Register Criteria: B \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Significance: Commerce \_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: c. 1907- 1927 \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates: N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person(s): Rix, Charles N. \_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder: Unknown \_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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X See continuation sheet.

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:

- X 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

Table with 4 columns: A, B, C, D. Values include 15, 494470, 3818090.

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Lot number four in Block number ninety-nine of the Hot Springs Reservation in Arkansas, according to the official plat of said Reservation returned to the General Land Office by the Commissioners appointed under the Acts of Congress above referred to.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes all of 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: Patrick Zollner, National Register Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 09/09/92

Street & Number: 225 E. Markham, Suite 300 Telephone: (501) 324-9346

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

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### Summary

The Charles N. Rix House is a two-story frame residence constructed c. 1907 as an American Foursquare with Colonial Revival detail and trim. A 1920's two-story shed-roof Craftsman addition, and a 1950 single-story addition at the rear of the house provide additional living space without compromising exterior detail.

### Elaboration

The Rix House is a two-story frame residence constructed c. 1907 as an American Foursquare with Colonial Revival detail and trim. Local tradition maintains that the house was constructed in 1891, the year Charles N. Rix purchased the property. This is unlikely, however, as the Colonial Revival style did not generally become prevalent in Arkansas until after the turn of the century. The Prairie-style, geometric-patterned windows on the front elevation, which appear to be original, also point toward a c.1900 or later date. The c. 1907 construction date was derived from deed abstracts which record 1908 as the first year in which the property was occupied.

A continuous brick foundation supports balloon-frame walls, which were sheathed originally with weatherboarding. The house is currently covered with vinyl siding that is of a wider width than the original weatherboarding but is still considered "narrow" by artificial siding standards. Cross gables on the northeastern and southwestern elevations accent the maroon-colored composition-shingled hipped roof; however, the most prominent roof feature is the gable-roof wall dormer positioned asymmetrically to the northeast of the center on the front, or southeastern, elevation. The dormer is outlined by a projecting boxed cornice with returns and features a classic Palladian window. There is one interior brick chimney and an exterior brick chimney constructed in the 1950's on a rear addition. The house contains a partial basement that was originally built to house a coal-fired boiler.

The front, or southeastern, elevation is dominated by the aforementioned wall dormer and a full-facade, one-story porch. Four round, non-fluted Ionic columns, connected by a turned-spindle balustrade, support the porch, which is covered by a hipped roof. A large brick stoop accesses the porch between the last two columns on the northeast. The front entrance, single-leaf with a transom, is asymmetrically placed to the left of the stoop. The doorway is flanked by a rectangular leaded glass window to the northeast of the doorway and a large one-over-one double-hung window, with a small leaded-glass upper sash, to the southwest. All of the windows on the house are covered with a stationary single-pane storm window. The second story is distinguished by a three-sided bay located underneath the wall dormer. This bay is composed of

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four double-hung windows with a geometric-patterned nine-pane upper sash over one. An identical window is positioned to the southwest of the bay.

On the southwestern elevation, a three-sided bay is found on the first story near the southwest corner of the structure. Two narrow windows, of the sash type used in the second story of the front elevation, are placed in the beveled sides of the bay, while a much wider window with a different geometric-patterned upper sash is placed in the center. The remainder of this elevation is fenestrated by various conventional one-over-one windows.

The rear, or northwestern, elevation consists of a two-story, shed-roof Craftsman addition with a second story sleeping porch that was apparently added in the 1920's. The porch is fenestrated by 29 three-pane casement windows that extend around all three elevations. A second-story single-leaf glass door was originally accessed by a staircase from the garage area. It now opens onto the roof of the single-story shed-roof den addition that was built in the 1950's. This addition contains a large exterior brick chimney on the southwestern elevation. Two double-leaf French doors at the rear, or northwestern elevation, of the addition are connected by covered walkways to a modern carport constructed behind the house in 1986-87 when artificial siding and storm windows were added to the rest of the house.

Assorted one-over-one double-hung windows compose the northeastern elevation, which is devoid of decorative detail. Several basement windows are evident on this elevation, and the original coal chute door remains.

The living room features a beamed ceiling, a Colonial Revival-style mantel, and the original horizontal-board wainscoting. An arched closet utilizes the space underneath the staircase, the banister of which is composed of long, delicate, turned balusters. Other decorative elements include the original crystal chandelier in the dining room, carved cornice moldings in the dining room, double-leaf French doors with a multiple-pane transom between the living room and the dining room, and a six-foot bathtub taken from the Pythian bathhouse before it was demolished. The bathtub is located in a first-story bathroom that was added in 1988.

There are no historic outbuildings extant.

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### Summary

The Charles N. Rix House is being nominated under Criterion B with local significance for its association with Charles N. Rix, a prominent early Hot Springs banker who contributed significantly to the tourism industry and the general development of the resort city.

### Elaboration

Charles N. Rix was born in Kalamazoo County, Michigan on May 28, 1843 and raised on a farm. As a boy, Rix became interested in mechanics and carpentry and aided his father in the construction of a new house. When his father, who had served as sheriff of the county for two terms, suffered a financial reverse, Charles began working as a carpenter to help support the family while still managing to graduate from high school at nearby Dowagic, Michigan. Charles continued to work as a carpenter after his family had moved to Kansas soon after the Civil War began.

With the outbreak of war, Rix enlisted in the Union Army on September 21, 1862. Through the influence of his father, he obtained a position as regimental quartermaster sergeant for an American Indian regiment of mounted infantry recruited at Fort Scott, Kansas. Rix served at various posts in southern Kansas, Missouri, the Indian Territory, and Texas. By the time of his discharge in July of 1865, he had been promoted to captain. Rix, however, remained in government employ for two more years as a paymaster clerk. After saving some money, Rix moved to Kansas City and purchased a quarter interest in a wholesale grocery and commission business of the former sutlers of his regiment. The business supplied freighters who were traveling westward. Unfortunately, the store was destroyed by fire, and, as the fire insurance policies had been violated by his partners, Rix lost all of his invested capital. The disaster ultimately proved beneficial to Rix, who became a bookkeeper in a bank in Topeka that had recently been established by a paymaster whom Rix had formerly served under in government service. Rix eventually attained the office of vice president, a position he held until he resigned in 1879.

In the early 1870's, Rix had visited the small town of Hot Springs, Arkansas to bathe in the hot, supposedly curative, water in hope of obtaining relief from an aching war wound. Apparently impressed with the economic potential of Hot Springs, Rix decided to move there in 1879. He first established the Hot Springs Bank and Safe Deposit, which was reorganized in 1882 as the Arkansas National Bank. Rix was a partner in this endeavor with four other men, John B. Roe, William J. Little, Ed Hogaboom, and M. C. O'Bryan. Roe served as the first president of the bank, while Rix was employed as the cashier. A new two-story



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bank building was constructed at the corner of Central Avenue and Interior Court Street in 1883 to house the growing institution. An 1884 *Cutter Guide* to the city commented on the new commercial structure:

The Arkansas National Bank building is one of the best brick blocks erected in the city, and was built by the bank from which it derives its name. The corner suite of rooms is occupied by the bank and the store-room, extending the full length of the building and back of the bank to the side street, is occupied by Farmer and Broaddus, the leading family grocery firm in the city. The structure is well-built and is another important improvement to the south part of the valley. The upper story is arranged for offices.

The building survived until 1977 when it was destroyed to make room for the new four-story First National Bank building designed by Edward Durrell Stone.

Rix assumed the bank's presidency in 1896 and held that position until his death in 1927. His reputation as a dependable and sound banker helped to avert several "runs" during the early years of the bank. Rix also served as the third president of the Arkansas Bankers Association during the great money panic of 1893. Apparently his leadership was sound, for both Rix and the association survived the financial scare.

Although the bank was always Rix's chief concern, he engaged in numerous other business ventures after his arrival in Hot Springs. In 1881, Rix individually financed one complete long distance telephone circuit from Hot Springs to Little Rock, the first long distance line in the state. He sold the exchange the next year to the partnership of Keller and Root. Rix also had business ties with the City Ice Company, an essential public utility before the advent of electric refrigeration. In 1886, Charles Rix and Ida Adamson speculatively constructed a commercial building at the north end of the 500 block of Central Avenue. The building is still extant and is listed as a contributing structure in the Hot Springs Central Avenue Historic District. As one of the associates responsible for the establishment and construction of the Imperial Bathhouse before the turn of the century, Rix became more directly involved with the tourism industry that spurred the development of the town.

In 1906, Rix decided that the wooden observation tower on the crest of East Mountain (now called Hot Springs Mountain) should be replaced with a much higher and more substantial steel structure. The 1910 *Cutter Guide* described the new tower as 165 feet tall with a 41 square foot base and a 22 square foot top, which was accessed by 270 leg-weakening steps or by the fluid ease of an Otis elevator. The observation tower, constructed by the Texas Steel Bridge Company at a cost of \$20,000, was opened to the public on May 4, 1906. Rix

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actively promoted the tower, which was visited by 15, 222 people in its first year of operation.

Charles Rix served as president of the Business Men's League (the name was changed to the Chamber of Commerce in 1923) from 1904-1912, the longest tenure held by anyone in that position. During his presidency, a new building was constructed on Benton Street (now Convention Boulevard) to house the organization. Funding was largely provided through exhibition games played by major league baseball teams wintering in Hot Springs. Rix was also influential in organizing and maintaining an annual Arkansas State Fair at the Oaklawn Jockey Club grounds. The fair attracted thousands of people, including dignitaries such as ex-president Theodore Roosevelt in 1910, to the resort town each year.

In the political arena, Rix acted three times as chairman of the Republican state convention and was a delegate to the Republican national convention on four occasions.

Charles N. Rix's significance in the history of Hot Springs lies primarily in his role as the foremost banker of the town from the 1880's until his death in 1927. His other business and civic ventures, primarily his involvement with the Imperial Bathhouse, the financing and promotion of the observation tower, and the organization of the annual Arkansas State Fair, contributed greatly to the burgeoning tourism industry which fueled the town's growth as a nationally known resort spa. In his obituary, the *Sentinel Record* assessed his significance to the community:

For a period of 40 years or more Captain Rix was looked upon as the most outstanding business and financial leader in the city of Hot Springs and through his influence and sage advice contributed more to the civic welfare of this city and section than any other figure in public life.

The land where the Rix House now stands at 628 Quapaw was first deeded to Jeremiah Fenton in 1884. In 1890, Charles N. Rix and John B. Varnado are recorded as the owners, but in the following year Rix is listed as the sole owner. Local tradition attributes the year 1891 as the date of construction for the house; however, the property abstracts do not show a resident at that address until 1908, when Thomas J. Petit is listed as the occupant. It can not be proven whether Charles Rix ever actually resided in the house that he owned until his death. An 1883 city directory reveals that Rix was living at the Avenue Hotel in that year, while both the 1887 and 1908 directories credit his residence at what is now 502 Quapaw. Rix probably constructed the house circa 1907 as a rental property or, perhaps, he had originally intended the house for a son or

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grandson. One theory suggests that Rix purchased the property because it contained a hot water spring, and he wished to have private use of the water to soothe his old war wound. This hypothesis is refuted, however, by the original deed abstract, which clearly states that the December 16, 1878 act of Congress prohibits ". . . the purchaser of the land, his heirs, or assigns, from ever boring [sic] thereon for hot water." After Charles Rix's death in 1927, the property was owned by his grandson, Fred N. Rix, until 1941. Numerous people have owned the property since that time.

Despite some questions regarding the exact construction date of the 628 Quapaw House and whether or not Charles Rix ever actually resided there, it is certain that Rix constructed the house and owned it until his death in 1927. The house is significant under Criterion B as the best extant structure associated with the productive years of Charles Rix's residency in Hot Springs, 1879-1927. His residence at 502 Quapaw was demolished some years ago to make room for the current YWCA building. The Imperial Bathhouse, the Arkansas National Bank Building, and the steel observation tower have also since been destroyed. The Rix-Adamson commercial building, built solely as a speculative venture by Rix and Adamson, is still standing on Central Avenue. It is a contributing structure in the Central Avenue Historic District for its *architectural* merits and not for its association with Rix. For these reasons, the Charles N. Rix House at 628 Quapaw is being nominated under Criterion B with local significance.

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### Bibliography

Brown, Dee. *The American Spa, Hot Springs, Arkansas*. Little Rock: Rose Publishing Co., 1982.

Hudgins, Mary. "Charles N. Rix: Hot Springs Citizen Extraordinary," *The Record*. Hot Springs: Garland County Historical Society, 8th edition, 1967. pp. 2-7.

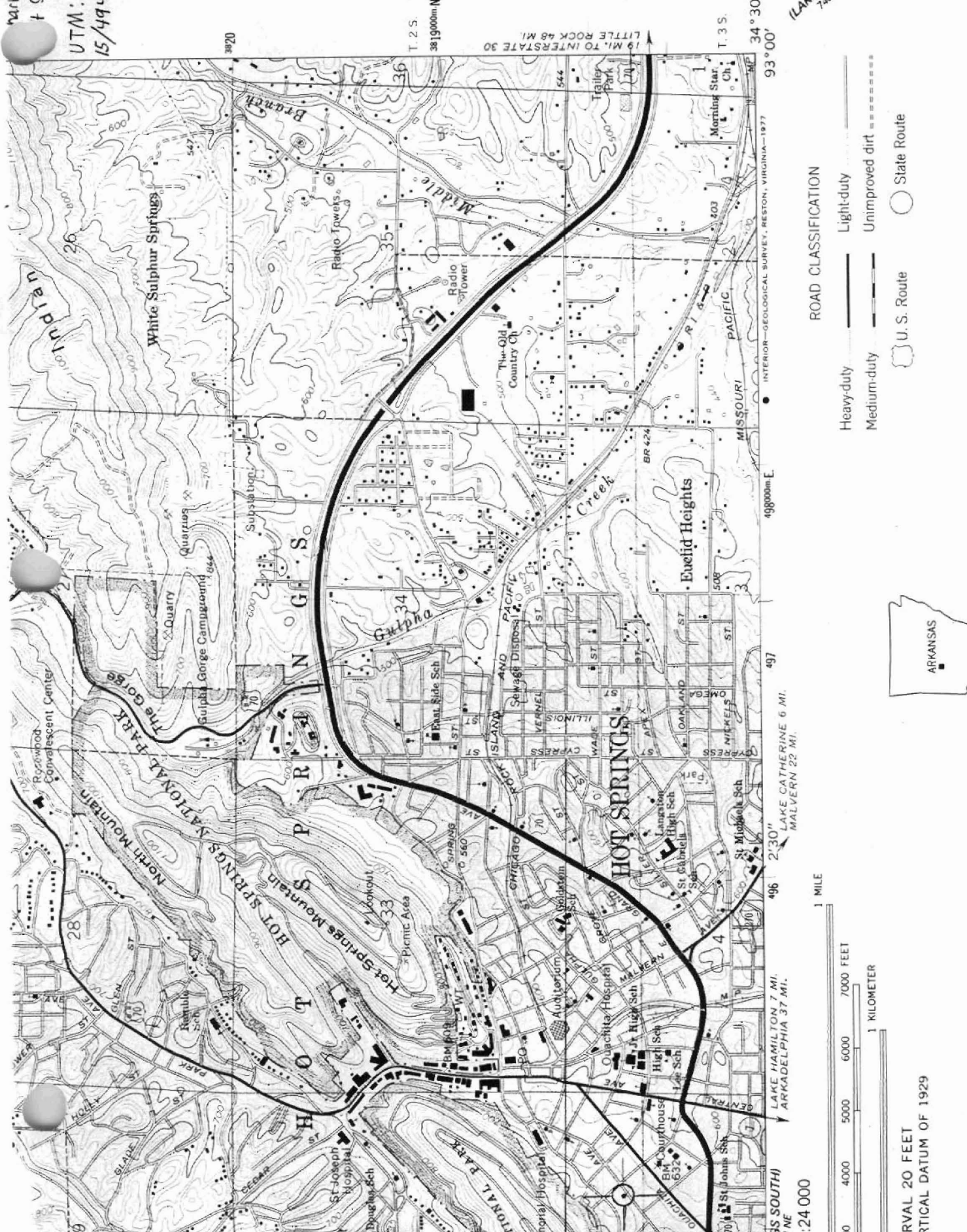
Information supplied by Janie Evans, December 27, 1989.

Information supplied by Deborah Phillips, October, 1991.

Moore, Maurice. "C.N. Rix: A Yankee, Who Became A Southern Gentleman Helped Shape Hot Springs' Future as Bank President." *Sentinel Record*, November 11, 1969.

"Pioneer Hot Springs Banker Dies." *Sentinel Record*, September 2, 1927.

Pages 11, 12, 13, 14, 15  
 Hot Springs, Arkansas  
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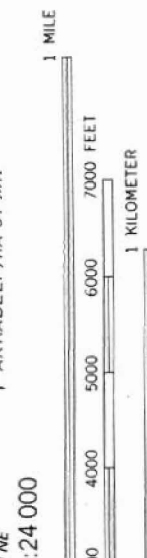
(LAKE CATHERINE)  
 7462 IV NW



**HOT SPRINGS NORTH, ARK.**  
 N3430—W9300/7.5  
 1966

NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
 FOR COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
 FOR LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72204  
 AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929



LAKE HAMILTON 7 MI.  
 LAKE CATHERINE 6 MI.  
 MALVERN 22 MI.

496 2'30" 497 498 499

34° 30' 34° 00'

T. 3 S.

T. 2 S.  
 3819000m N.

19 MI. TO INTERSTATE 30  
 LITTLE ROCK 48 MI.

Pages 11, 12, 13, 14, 15  
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