

NR listed 12/10/92

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Newport American Legion Community Hut

other name/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number: Rommel Park, north of Rommel Avenue

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Newport

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Jackson code: AR 067 zip code: 72112

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

=====
4. State/Federal Agency Certification
=====

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.

Cathryn H. Byford _____ 11-2-92
Signature of certifying official 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

=====
5. National Park Service Certification
=====

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
=====

Historic:	<u>SOCIAL</u>	Sub:	<u>Meeting Hall</u>
	<u>SOCIAL</u>		<u>Civic</u>
	<u>DOMESTIC</u>		<u>Single dwelling</u>
Current:	<u>SOCIAL</u>	Sub:	<u>Meeting Hall</u>
	<u>SOCIAL</u>		<u>Civic</u>
	<u>DOMESTIC</u>		<u>Single dwelling</u>

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification:

Other

Other Description: Rustic

Materials: foundation Concrete roof Asphalt
walls WOOD/Log other Asbestos

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

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Locally.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: SOCIAL HISTORY
ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1933-1942

Significant Dates: 1934

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Martin, Willis and Curry
Morrow, Franklin H.

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

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

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:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: _____

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreage of Property: Approximately 1.5

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>656220</u>	<u>3940860</u>	B	___	___	___
C	___	___	___	D	___	___	___

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ___ See continuation sheet.

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the eastern right-of-way of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad with the northern edge of Rimmel Avenue, proceed easterly along said edge for a distance of approximately 100 feet to its intersection with a roughly perpendicular line formed by the western edge of the unnamed park access road; thence proceed northerly and easterly (following the same edge as the road turns easterly) for a distance of approximately 100 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel with the building's eastern elevation; thence proceed northerly along said line for a distance of approximately 250 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel with the building's northern elevation; thence proceed westerly along said line for a distance of approximately 200 feet to its intersection with a line running along the eastern right-of-way of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad; thence proceed southerly along said line for a distance of approximately 300 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification: ___ See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes the two contributing structures and a representative portion of the surrounding undeveloped land that has historically been associated with the occupation and use of these buildings.

=====

11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Kenneth Story, Architectural Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: October 29, 1992

Street & Number: 323 Center Street, 15th Floor Telephone: (501) 324-9880

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Summary

The Newport American Legion Community Hut is a single-story, horizontal and vertical log construction meeting hall building designed in a variation of the Rustic style that became popular during the Great Depression of the 1930's. Its fundamentally rectangular plan is augmented only by an original shed roof, central front porch and the later addition of one small room that projects from the western or rear elevation near its southern end and another small room that was added to the northern end of the original western shed, bringing its northern wall flush with that of the main, gable roof structure. A small, gable roof log outbuilding was built at the same time as the main structure, and is included in the nomination. Both buildings are located at the southwest corner of Rimmel Park (the city park that adjoins Newport Lake), just north of Rimmel Avenue and to the west of the unnamed access road leading northward from Rimmel Avenue into the park.

Elaboration

The Newport American Legion Community Hut is a single-story, horizontal and vertical log construction meeting hall building designed in a variation of the Rustic style that became popular during the Great Depression of the 1930's. Its fundamentally rectangular plan is augmented only by an original shed roof, central front porch and the later addition of one small room that projects from the western or rear elevation near its southern end and another small room that was added to the northern end of the original western shed, bringing its northern wall flush with that of the main, gable roof structure. Two large, exterior end stone chimneys rise through the center of the opposite gable ends, and a smaller stone chimney rises through the western slope of the gable roof near its intersection with the shed roof that covers the original rear shed section. The asphalt shingle, gable roof is supported upon the chinked log walls and a continuous cast concrete foundation.

The eastern or front elevation is symmetrically composed of four sets of triple windows that are placed flanking the central, double-leaf entrance that is covered with the shed roof porch. The porch's shed roof is supported upon two large, vertical logs placed at each of the exterior corners. Each of the windows is of the four-pane casement type, built of wood. The wooden doors are each fenestrated with four stationary panes in the upper half.

The northern and southern elevations are quite similar, as both are composed of the gable end of the main hall with the shed roof section attached to the west. The southern elevation is

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

constructed entirely of logs and is dominated by the central stone chimney rising through the gable peak. It is flanked by two pair of four-pane casement windows on the first floor and in the upper half-story, though these windows are smaller than those below. The wall of the shed roof section to the west is fenestrated only by another small pair of identical casement windows. The northern elevation features a gable end of identical configuration to the one opposite, and the later shed wall section to the west is covered with asbestos plate and accessed via a single-leaf door placed closer to the log section than to the western wall.

The western elevation is composed primarily of the original shed roof section, all of which is constructed of logs, and the two additions. The southern addition consists of a single room projecting from the log wall that is fenestrated with a single horizontal pane aluminum window on this elevation and a single-leaf door accessing its southern wall. The northern addition projects only slightly from the wall of the original shed roof section and continues its roofline. This non-historic addition effectively adds another room to the original shed, which ended several feet short of the northern elevation of the main hall. It is fenestrated by a single central window.

As is typically the case for buildings designed and constructed in the Rustic style, the significant exterior details are limited to the natural surface textures created by the vertical and horizontal logs, and the rough-hewn stone of the chimneys.

The interior is remarkably intact, as the log rafters, posts and bracing all survive in their original condition, as do the exposed wall logs, the original windows, and the stone fireplaces at each end of the hall. Other noteworthy features include the plaque inset on the southern fireplace that proclaims the name of the American Legion Post ("Neill Griffin Post No. 47"), the year ("1934"), and the initials "F D R," and the original, framed photographic portrait of President Roosevelt.

Also included in the nomination is a single-story, gable roof, V-notched log storage building that was constructed at the same time as the main building. It is contributing.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Summary

The American Legion Community Hut, built in 1934 and designed by the brothers Willis and Curry Martin, both Newport residents (with the living quarters section designed by the Arkansas Registered Engineer Franklin H. Morrow in that same year), stands as the best example of the Rustic style of architecture that became popular for public works projects during the Great Depression. It is also significant for its direct associations with the American Legion, of which the Neill Griffin Post, Unit No. 47 both provided the labor that built it and held meetings within its walls between 1934 and 1942.

Elaboration

The American Legion was founded in France during the relatively quiet and uneventful days that followed the signing of the armistice that ended World War I. American enlisted men from all three of the principal branches of the service then in existence -- the Army, Navy and Marine Corps -- were billeted in various locations for the purpose of maintaining a military presence while the negotiators worked out the details of the treaty that would outline the political future of much of Europe for the next decade. These servicemen found life during the occupation uneventful and boring, and this only compounded the frustration felt by many at not being allowed to return home to family and friends. A small group of officers -- and especially Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. and Lieutenant Colonel George A. White -- met to discuss the possibility of establishing a veterans' organization which would include all branches of the military and which would serve the immediate purpose of providing an outlet for some of the energy and frustration felt by the occupation forces but which would also set as its larger goal the establishment of a nationwide veteran's organization that would provide its members with both a social organization and a vehicle for voicing their collective concerns about such issues as national defense, subversive activity, radical thought, domestic social programs and veterans' affairs.

Successive meetings over the course of the next several months in both Europe and America further defined the Legion's mandate and purpose. However, it was the shooting of four Legionnaires during an Armistice Day parade in the lumber town of Centralia, Washington in 1919 by socialist IWW organizers and the subsequent coverage of the trial that followed -- in which the Legionnaires were portrayed as the aggressors -- that both galvanized and tempered the Legionnaire spirit. Both the public and the Legion press recognized the dangers of extremism by any party while admitting the need for responsible vigilance against any activity that

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

threatened the democratic form of government. The American Legion began to grow steadily thereafter through an organization that elected officers on the national, state and local levels and provided a voice for its members regarding a variety of national concerns. During the Depression the American Legion distinguished itself in particular through the expansion of local programs targeted at youth. Of particular note were the founding of American Legion Junior Baseball, the American Legion Oratorical Contest and Boys' State.

Newport, Arkansas was first settled around 1832, when Rowland Tidwell operated a ferry across the White River from here. A town site was formally laid out by 1837, though the town remained small and relatively unpopulated until the arrival of the Cairo & Fulton Railroad (later the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern, then the Missouri-Pacific, now known as the Union Pacific line). Thereafter the town grew rapidly, quickly eclipsing nearby Jacksonport (located just to the north and also on the White River) as the major regional rail and shipping port. The town's growth and more central location within the county eventually resulted in its being voted the county seat in 1892, after which the "new" courthouse was constructed (NR-listed 11-18-76).

The Newport chapter of the American Legion was chartered as the Neill Griffin Post, Unit No. 47 on August 22, 1919 with a total of fifteen members. The post was named for Neill Griffin, a Newport native and U.S. Army soldier (Company E, 154th Infantry) who was killed in action at the Argonne Forest in France on October 18, 1918. He was Jackson County's first fatality in World War I. The post apparently met without an official "hut" until 1933, three years after the incorporation of the Rammel Park Playground Association, the private, non-profit corporation that formed to operate and maintain the newly-created city green space known as Rammel Park. Named after Harmon Liveright Rammel, a noted Newport resident, businessman and politician who donated the largest portion of the open, unimproved land to the east of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific railroad grade (formerly the White and Black River Valley Railroad) for the creation of the park, Rammel Park was conceived and designed to serve the general public of Newport as a common park and recreation site. The Newport American Legion Community Hut was so-named as it was always intended to serve both the American Legion and the general community as a social function and performance space, thus contributing to the public nature of the park.

The Newport American Legion Community Hut was initially designed in 1933 as a gable roof, single-story social meeting hall consisting of but one large room with a fireplace at each gable end. However, soon after the completion of this design the building committee, consisting of Mr. S.L. Burkett, Mr. W.R. Pratt and Cy O'Neal, decided to modify the plans to include a caretaker's apartment, and this modification was incorporated into the final building by the time

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

it was completed in 1934. The selection of log construction, typical of American Legion huts of this decade, required the local builders to solicit instructions for such construction from the Forestry Department of the University of Wisconsin; the raw materials were donated by local residents (though money for paying local laborers to complete the construction of this building was provided by the newly-created Public Works Administration -- one of President Roosevelt's earlier federal agencies that provided funds for the employment of American citizens to perform public service projects -- their involvement in this project was limited to this funding and did not include the recruitment of enrollees, the provision of architectural plans, or the on-site supervision of construction. These early federal public works agencies had not yet developed the more elaborate educational and administrative organization that would direct all aspects of such later Depression-era public works efforts as the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps. As such, the involvement of the PWA in this project was minimal, and therefore not of itself significant). Upon completion, the building served the local American Legion Chapter as its meeting hall and function space, but it was also extensively used by the broader Newport community for various social functions, including dances, musical and theatrical performances, and reunions. It remained the principal shelter for such events in the entire city of Newport through the Second World War, and for some years thereafter. The building continues to be owned by the Remmel Park Association, a private, non-profit corporation, and is leased by the local American Legion chapter.

The Newport American Legion Community Hut is significant by virtue of its direct associations with the American Legion, the national veterans' organization that came to prominence among American veterans during the 1920's and which embarked on a statewide campaign of building during the 1930's, when an increase in membership and chapter activity combined with the availability of public works money to allow construction of a network of chapter meeting halls (frequently called "huts"). It is also significant by virtue of its status as the finest (and probably the only extant) example in the community of Newport of the Rustic style that became nationally-popular for public works projects during the Depression. Of particular note is the use of both horizontal and vertical logs to give the exterior an aesthetic dynamism and texture that is unusual for buildings designed in this style. It is thus eligible under Criteria A and C with local significance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

Centennial History of Newport, Arkansas 1875-1975, James Logan Morgan, ed., Jackson County Historical Society, Newport, Arkansas; 1975.

Gregory, Mildred Minor, "This Was A First," *Newport Daily Independent*, Friday, October 26, 1984, p. 1.

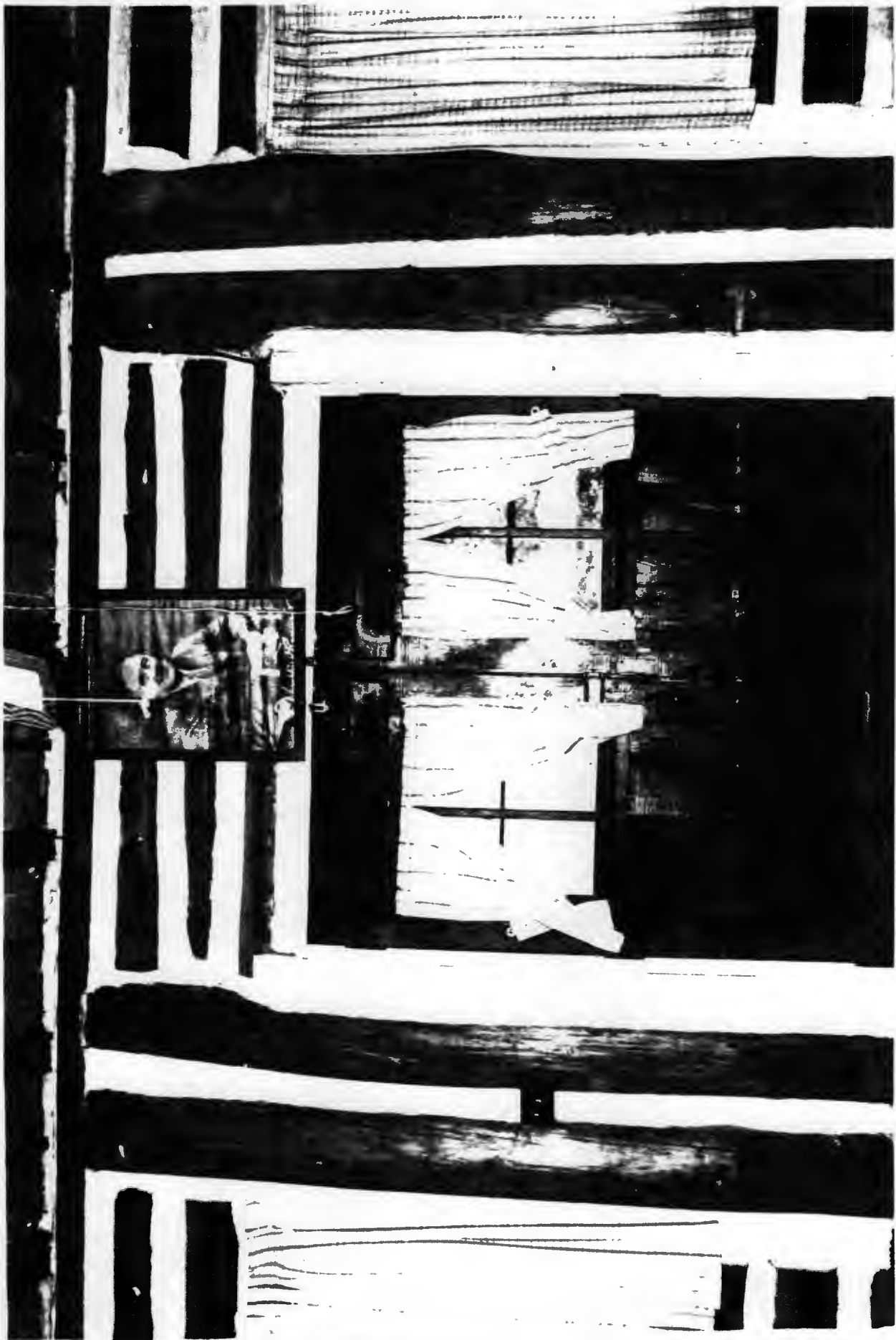
Holmes, P.K., "A History of Rammel Park, Part I," *The Stream of History*, Vol. XXIV, No. 4, Winter, 1987, pp. 2-4.

_____ "A History of Rammel Park, Part II," *The Stream of History*, Vol. XXV, No. 1, Spring, 1988, pp. 13-16.

_____ "A History of Rammel Park, Part III," *The Stream of History*, Vol. XXV, No. 2, Summer, 1988, pp. 18-20.

_____ "A History of Rammel Park, Part IV," *The Stream of History*, Vol. XXVI, No. 3, Fall, 1988, pp. 2-5.

Morrow, Franklin H., *Plans for Newport Community Hut or American Legion Hut, Newport, Ark.*, 1934; Lockwood Burkett, W.R. Pratt and Cy O'Neal, Building Committee.



INTERIOR ENTRANCE DETAIL
WILSON, VERNON P.
PHOTOGRAPHS BY P. 20
MARCH 1992
N.E. T.E. AT APP
INTERIOR ENTRANCE DETAIL



ACCOUNT NUMBER ERON BIRDSON
VICTOR, WATSON ANNISAS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLLNER
MARCH, 1992
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT APP
MANTEN DETAIL



REPORT AMERICAN LEGION
NEWPORT, VERMONT, APR
PHOTOGRAPHED BY D ZOLLIN
MARCH, 1992
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHP
VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST OF OUTBUILDINGS



REPORT AMERICAN LIGNON HUT
REPORT, VANTSON Co, AMERICANS
PHOTOGRAPHERED BY P. ZOLLNER
MARCH, 1992

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPD
VIEW OF OUTBUILDING FROM SOUTHEAST



NEWPORT AMERICAN LEADON HUT
NEWPORT JACKSON B. ARKANSAS
PHOTOGRAPED BY D. ZOLLNER
MARCH, 1992
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AAPP
VIEW FROM EAST

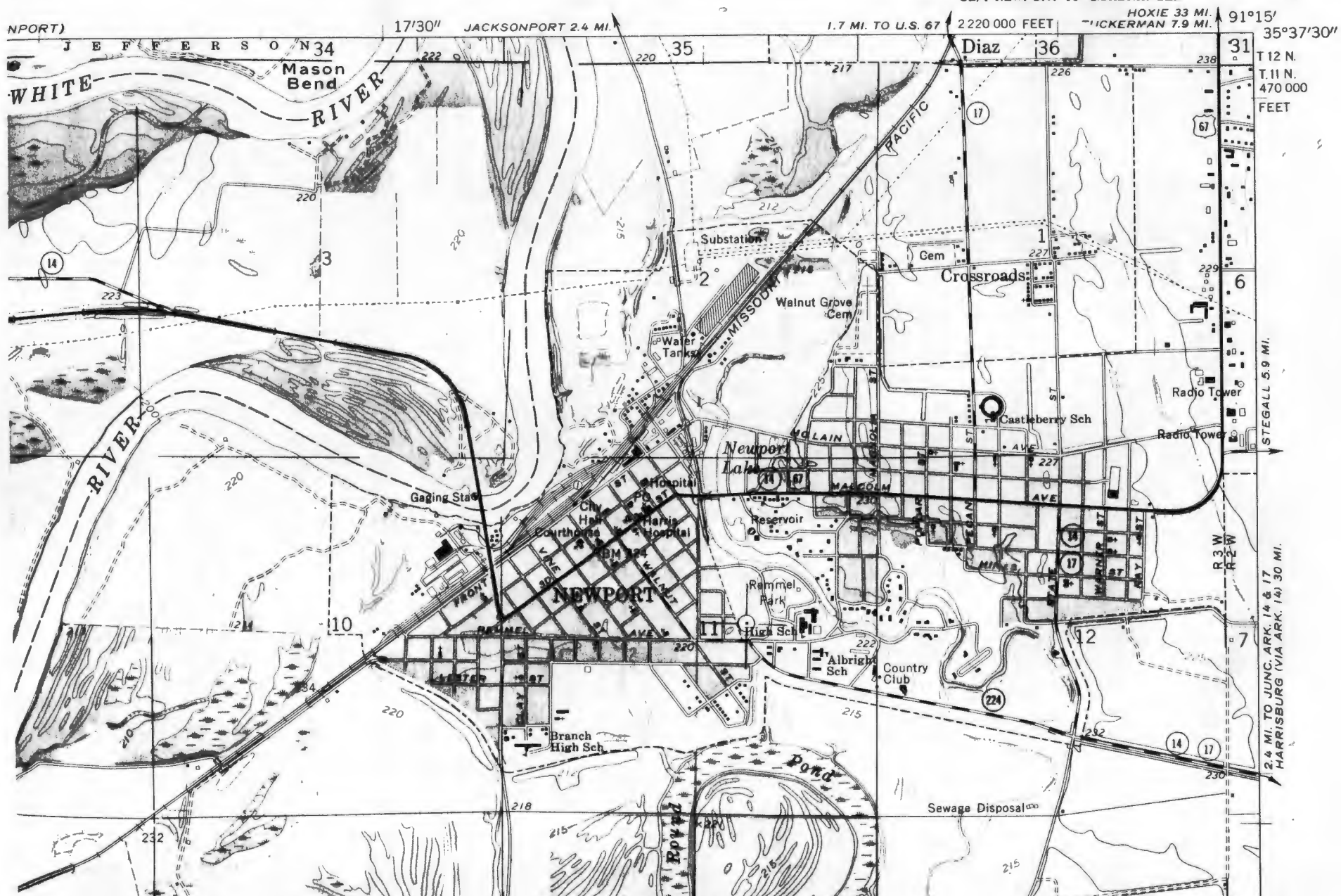


NEWPORT AMERICAN DESIGN HUT
NEWPORT, VIRGINIA, ACCIDENTS
INVESTIGATED BY P. ZOLLNER
MARCH, 1992
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHP
VIEW FROM NORTHEAST

NEWPORT
 15/656220/59-2855

NEWPORT QUADRANGLE
 ARKANSAS
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
 SE/4 NEWPORT 15' QUADRANGLE

(TUCKERMAN 1:62,500)



STEGALL 5.9 MI.

2.4 MI. TO JUNC. ARK. 14 & 17
 HARRISBURG (VIA ARK. 14) 30 MI.

JEFFERSON 34 17/30" JACKSONPORT 2.4 MI. 1.7 MI. TO U.S. 67 2220 000 FEET HOXIE 33 MI. TUCKERMAN 7.9 MI. 91°15' 35°37'30"

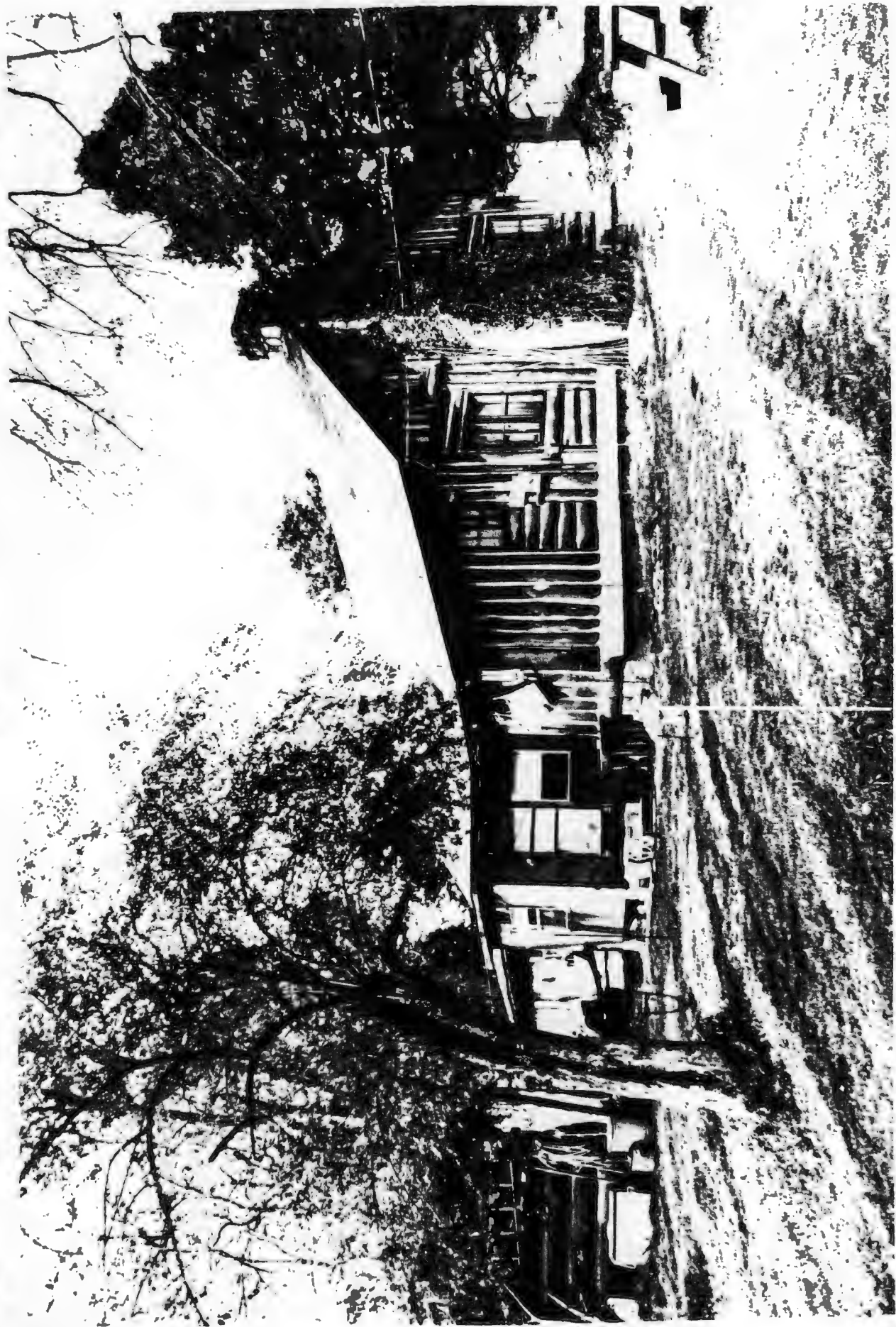
WHITE RIVER Mason Bend DIAZ 36 31 T 12 N. T. 11 N. 470 000 FEET

NEWPORT
 Gaging Sta.
 City Hall
 Courthouse
 Hospital
 Branch High Sch.
 Rammel Park
 High Sch.
 Albright Sch.
 Country Club
 Sewage Disposal
 Reservoir
 Newport Lake
 Walnut Grove Cem.
 Water Tanks
 Substation
 Cem.
 Crossroads
 Castberry Sch.
 Radio Tower
 Radio Tower
 R 3 W
 R 2 W
 R 1 W
 14 17 10 12 7 6 1



Handwritten notes at the top of the page, partially illegible.

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP
INTERIOR VIEW



NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPD
VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST
11 MARCH, 1992
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOUWIK
NEWPORT, VICTORIA Co., BRITISH
COLUMBIA



NEWPORT AMERICAN LEGION BUI
NEWPORT JACKSON O, ARKENS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLNER
MARCH, 1992
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP
VIEW FROM SOUTH