

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NR 6/01/05

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 Pine Bluff Civic Center

other names/site number Site #JE0591

2. Location

street & number 200 East 8th Avenue

not for publication

city or town Pine Bluff

vicinity

state Arkansas

code AR

county Jefferson

code 069

zip code 71601

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.)

Cedric Nantz

3/18/05

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

Pine Bluff Civic Center

Name of Property

Jefferson County, Arkansas

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Choose as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Choose only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal, building(s), district, site, structure, object

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, 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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- GOVERNMENT/city hall, GOVERNMENT/correctional facility, GOVERNMENT/fire station, GOVERNMENT/courthouse, EDUCATION/library, LANDSCAPE/plaza

- GOVERNMENT/city hall, GOVERNMENT/correctional facility, GOVERNMENT/fire station, GOVERNMENT/courthouse, EDUCATION/library, LANDSCAPE/plaza

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/other

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

roof OTHER/tar built-up

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.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B.** removed from its original location.
- C.** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Statewide

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance

1963-1968

Significant Dates

1963-1968

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Edward Durell Stone, architect

Edward Durell Stone, Jr., landscape architect

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):

- 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

Name of repository:

University of Arkansas Library Special Collections, Fayetteville

Pine Bluff Civic Center
Name of Property

Jefferson County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately 10 acres.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>591929</u>	<u>3787187</u>	3	<u>15</u>	<u>592076</u>	<u>3786938</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>15</u>	<u>592061</u>	<u>3787192</u>	4	<u>15</u>	<u>591924</u>	<u>3786943</u>

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 January 10, 2005
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 City of Pine Bluff
street & number 200 East 8th Avenue telephone _____
city or town Pine Bluff state AR zip code 71601

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 20303.

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SUMMARY

The Pine Bluff Civic Center, which was built in 1963-1968 and designed by the Arkansas-born architect Edward Durell Stone, is located in the heart of downtown Pine Bluff, two blocks east of Main Street. The complex consists of three buildings located on a raised podium. In addition, the complex includes a communications tower, a colonnade that connects the buildings, and landscaped courtyards. Reed & Willis served as the associate architects, Harmon Construction Company, Inc., was the builder, and Edward Durell Stone, Jr., was the landscape architect.

ELABORATION

The Pine Bluff Civic Center, which was built in 1963-1968 and designed by the Arkansas-born architect Edward Durell Stone, serves as the administrative hub of the city. Sitting atop a brick podium that houses underground garage space, the complex includes the library, art and sciences building, city hall, and courts and police/fire station buildings, all of which are built of buff brick with flat roofs. All of the buildings, along with three landscaped courtyards, are connected by a cast-concrete colonnade. The courtyards have a variety of designs and plantings, and one also includes a fountain. Finally, the complex also contains a communications tower, located just to the north of the city hall building. The Civic Center is surrounded by open greenspace, sidewalks, and parking lots.

City Hall

Front/North Façade

The front façade of the building has a central entrance with two metal-framed glass doors on the first floor. Above the main entrance are two rectangular black-glass panels that fill up the rest of the first floor area. In between the two floors are two small rectangular black glass panels with two large, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows above on the second floor. All of the glass in the building is treated to be mirrored.

The central entrance is flanked on each side by two panels of windows that are evenly spaced along the length of the façade. Each window panel consists of two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows on the first floor. As with the entrance, in between the two floors are two small rectangular black-glass panels with two large rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows above on the second floor.

At the top of the façade, in between the wall plane and the colonnade in front of the building, is a cast-concrete grillwork that projects from the façade and approximates a cornice. Above the grillwork, the façade is spanned by a cast-concrete cap with rectangular indentations.

Side/East Façade

Like the front façade, the east façade of the building has a central entrance with two metal-framed glass doors on the first floor. Above the entrance are two rectangular black-glass panels that fill up the rest of the first

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floor area. In between the two floors are two small, rectangular, black-glass panels with two large rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows above on the second floor.

The central entrance is flanked on each side by two panels of windows that are evenly spaced along the length of the façade. Each window panel consists of two large, rectangular single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows on the first floor. As with the entrance, in between the two floors are two small, rectangular, black-glass panels with two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows above on the second floor.

At the top of the façade, between the wall plane and the colonnade in front of the building, is a cast-concrete grillwork that projects from the façade and approximates a cornice. Above the grillwork, the façade is spanned by a cast-concrete cap with rectangular indentations.

Rear/South Façade

The south façade is fenestrated by five panels of windows that are evenly spaced along the length of the façade. Each window panel consists of two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows on the first floor. In between the two floors are two small, rectangular, black-glass panels with two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows above on the second floor.

At the top of the façade, between the wall plane and the colonnade in front of the building, is a cast-concrete grillwork that projects from the façade and approximates a cornice. Above the grillwork, the façade is spanned by a cast-concrete cap with rectangular indentations.

Side/West Façade

Like the south façade, the west façade is fenestrated by five panels of windows that are evenly-spaced along the length of the façade. Each window panel consists of two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows on the first floor. In between the two floors are two small, rectangular, black-glass panels with two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows above on the second floor.

At the top of the façade, between the wall plane and the colonnade in front of the building, is a cast-concrete grillwork that projects from the façade and approximates a cornice. Above the grillwork, the façade is spanned by a cast-concrete cap with rectangular indentations.

Library

Front/West Façade

The west façade of the library, like the north façade of the city hall building, has a central entrance with two metal-framed glass doors on the first floor. Above the entrance are two rectangular black-glass panels that

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fill up the rest of the first-floor area. Between the two floors are two small, rectangular, black-glass panels with two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows above on the second floor.

The central entrance is flanked on each side by four panels of windows that are evenly spaced along the length of the façade. Each window panel consists of two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows on the first floor. As with the entrance, in between the two floors are two small, rectangular, black-glass panels with two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows above on the second floor.

At the top of the façade, between the wall plane and the colonnade in front of the building, is a cast-concrete grillwork that projects from the façade and approximates a cornice. Above the grillwork, the façade is spanned by a cast-concrete cap with rectangular indentations.

Side/North Façade

The north façade of the library building contains three pairs of closely spaced windows oriented towards the center of the façade. The windows in each pair are comprised of a single narrow, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed window. As with the other fenestration on the buildings, between the two floors is a small, rectangular, black-glass panel with another narrow rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed window above on the second floor.

At the top of the façade, between the wall plane and the colonnade in front of the building, is a cast-concrete grillwork that projects from the façade and approximates a cornice. Above the grillwork, the façade is spanned by a cast-concrete cap with rectangular indentations.

Rear/East Façade

The east façade of the building has nine evenly spaced panels of fenestration spanning the façade. Beginning at the south end of the building, the first, third, and seventh panels have entrances with two metal-framed glass doors on the first floor. Above the entrances are two rectangular black-glass panels that fill up the rest of the first-floor area. Between the two floors are two small, rectangular, black-glass panels with two large, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows above on the second floor.

The rest of the panels along the façade have two large rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows on the first floor. As with the entrances, between the two floors are two small, rectangular, black-glass panels with two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows above on the second floor.

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At the top of the façade, between the wall plane and the colonnade in front of the building, is a cast-concrete grillwork that projects from the façade and approximates a cornice. Above the grillwork, the façade is spanned by a cast-concrete cap with rectangular indentations.

Side/South Façade

Like the north façade, the south façade of the library building contains three pairs of closely spaced windows oriented towards the center of the façade. The windows in each pair are comprised of a single narrow, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows. As with the other fenestration on the buildings, in between the two floors is a small rectangular, black-glass panel with another narrow rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed window above on the second floor.

At the top of the façade, between the wall plane and the colonnade in front of the building, is a cast-concrete grillwork that projects from the façade and approximates a cornice. Above the grillwork, the façade is spanned by a cast-concrete cap with rectangular indentations.

Court Building

Front/East Façade

The east façade of the court building, like the north façade of the city hall building, has a central entrance with two metal-framed glass doors on the first floor. Above the entrance are two rectangular, black-glass panels that fill up the rest of the first-floor area. Between the two floors are two small, rectangular, black-glass panels with two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows above on the second floor.

The central entrance is flanked on each side by four panels of windows that are evenly spaced along the length of the façade. Each window panel consists of two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows on the first floor. As with the entrance, between the two floors are two small, rectangular, black-glass panels with two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows above on the second floor.

At the top of the façade, between the wall plane and the colonnade in front of the building, is a cast-concrete grillwork that projects from the façade and approximates a cornice. Above the grillwork, the façade is spanned by a cast-concrete cap with rectangular indentations.

Side/South Façade

The south façade of the court building contains three pairs of closely spaced windows oriented towards the center of the façade. The windows in each pair are comprised of a single narrow, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows. As with the other fenestration on the buildings, between the two floors

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is a small, rectangular, black-glass panel with another narrow, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed window above on the second floor.

At the top of the façade, between the wall plane and the colonnade in front of the building, is a cast-concrete grillwork that projects from the façade and approximates a cornice. Above the grillwork, the façade is spanned by a cast-concrete cap with rectangular indentations.

Rear/West Façade

The west façade of the building has nine evenly spaced panels of fenestration spanning the façade with the third panel from the right containing an entrance. Each window panel consists of two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows on the first floor. As with the entrance, between the two floors are two small, rectangular, black-glass panels with two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows above on the second floor.

At the top of the façade, between the wall plane and the colonnade in front of the building, is a cast-concrete grillwork that projects from the façade and approximates a cornice. Above the grillwork, the façade is spanned by a cast-concrete cap with rectangular indentations.

Side/North Façade

Like the south façade, the north façade of the court building contains three pairs of closely spaced windows oriented towards the center of the façade. The windows in each pair are comprised of a single narrow, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows. As with the other fenestration on the buildings, between the two floors is a small, rectangular, black-glass panel with another narrow, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed window above on the second floor.

At the top of the façade, in between the wall plane and the colonnade in front of the building, is a cast-concrete grillwork that projects from the façade and approximates a cornice. Above the grillwork, the façade is spanned by a cast-concrete cap with rectangular indentations.

Communications Tower

Located just to the north of city hall and to the west of the court building, the communications tower is constructed out of concrete and sheathed in pre-cast panels. Each of the four sides of the tower, near the top, have three narrow slits, and a buttress exists at each corner of the tower, which reaches up the full height of the tower. The tower and is 100 feet tall and 10 feet square. Additional communications antennae have been placed on the tower's top.

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Podium

The three buildings, communications tower, colonnade, and courtyards are all built on top of the podium, which measures 360 feet east to west and 312 feet deep north to south. It is built out of buff brick with a cast-concrete top. Plantings are also located around the top of the podium. A narrow indented panel is built into the podium's brick wall approximately every 8 feet.

On its east side, towards the southern end, a concrete staircase with metal railings provides access to the podium's top. In addition, underneath the library building, the podium has an entrance towards the building's southern end followed by six evenly-spaced panels of windows. Each window panel consists of two large, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows with two small, rectangular, single-pane, stationary, metal-framed windows above. A garage door exists at the northern end of the library building.

On the north side, the podium is much lower than the other three sides. A monumental concrete staircase with metal railings is located at the podium's center to provide access to the top. Towards the east and west ends of the podium are newer concrete enclosures that project out from the podium. Although they are built out of the same color brick, they do not have the narrow indented panels seen in the rest of the podium.

The west side of the podium has a row of nine garage doors that provide storage for emergency vehicles with entrances into the court building on the right- and left-hand sides. As on the east side, towards the southern end, a concrete staircase with metal railings provides access to the podium's top.

On the south side of the podium is a driveway that provides access to the area under the city hall. Two concrete staircases with metal railings, one towards the east and west ends, provide access to the top of the podium.

Colonnade

The colonnade is comprised of 130 cast-concrete "umbrellas" that have exposed Arkansas white quartz aggregate. Each umbrella is made up of two parts, a cap that is 16 feet square, 4 feet 6 inches deep, and weighs 33,500 pounds, and a column that is 12 inches square, 19 feet high, and weighs 2,850 pounds. The colonnade forms a border around the podium as well as around the buildings and courtyards on top of the podium.

Courtyards

In addition to the three buildings, colonnade, and communications tower, the top of the podium houses three courtyards, one at the southeast corner, one at the southwest corner, and one centrally located on the northern edge of the podium. The southwest courtyard contains scattered concrete planters with trees in them and the paving in the courtyard is comprised of concrete scored in a rectangular pattern. Based upon historic

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photographs, when the southwest courtyard was originally designed, it also had a fountain in the center with what looked like a pile of boulders. However, the fountain has been removed at an unknown date.

The southeast courtyard features a raised, circular, cast-concrete fountain in the center. Immediately surrounding the fountain is a narrow band of cobblestone paving followed by cast concrete and brick paving laid in a swirl pattern. Cubical cast-concrete benches are placed around the edge of the paving. Also, around the outer edge of the paving is a grass strip with trees planted in it.

The northern courtyard is the largest of the three courtyards and also the most highly altered. Originally, the courtyard consisted entirely of a reflecting pool that also surrounded the communications tower. On the western edge of the pool there were three evenly spaced cast-concrete planters measuring 21 feet in diameter. Each planter was to have one contorted Hankow Willow with a bed of evergreen ground cover. Although the northern and southern planters did have the plantings, it is unknown if the center one ever did. (Photographs illustrating the planters during the complex's dedication show that the center planter was used as a platform for events.)

Currently, the northern courtyard has a modified diagonal line of concrete paving going from the southwest corner to the northeast corner. Trees surrounded by low groundcover are scattered throughout the paving. Two planting beds are also present in the courtyard, one at the northwest corner that contains the International Friendship Garden (planted in 1987), and one at the southeast corner with some trees and other low plantings in it.

Due to the magnitude of the alterations to the courtyards, especially the northern one, and the fact that they do not reflect the younger Stone's original design intent, the courtyards are considered to be non-contributing objects to the nomination.

Landscape

Part of the significance of the original design of the Civic Center was the landscape plan completed by Edward Durell Stone, Jr. The Civic Center project was the only time that the father-and-son team collaborated on a design in Stone's native state. The Civic Center was part of a much larger landscape plan that encompassed the area roughly bounded by 8th Avenue on the north, Main Street on the west, 12th Avenue on the south, and Missouri Street on the east. The landscape, which was to feature a variety of large shade trees, small flowering trees, narrowleaf evergreen trees, and groundcover, was to be planted around the Civic Center, commercial and office buildings in the area, the Federal Building, a proposed armory, a motel, and a municipal park and amphitheater.

Around the Civic Center complex itself, the landscape plan called for large shade trees to border the block on the west, south, and east sides. The sloped banks around the podium would be covered in groundcover, and

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groundcover was to surround four rows of small flowering trees planted on axis from the main steps up to the podium on the north side out to 8th Avenue. Scattered large shade trees and narrowleaf evergreen trees were to be planted to the east and west of the four columns of flowering trees.

At the base of the steps on the north side of the podium, an entry court was planned where the large concrete pad is today. The court was to have light gray concrete scored in six-foot squares bordered on each side with gray brick laid in a flat basket weave pattern. A round area with groundcover and stepping stones leading to a flagpole was to be placed in the center.

On top of the podium, the southern two courtyards were to be sunken and contain walkways of gray brick laid in a flat basket weave pattern surrounding the planting beds. All planting beds were specified to have flowering trees, and the outer beds were to be covered in groundcover, while the inner beds were to have white marble chips over water-bound macadam. A square pool was to be placed in the center of each of the two courtyards. The northern courtyard was to consist entirely of a reflecting pool that would also surround the communications tower. On the western edge of the pool were three evenly-spaced cast-concrete planters measuring 21 feet in diameter. Each planter was to have one contorted Hankow Willow with a bed of evergreen ground cover. In addition to the courtyard plantings, round fiberglass planters were to be evenly-spaced on the white marble chip border areas around the buildings, and a planter went around the podium's outer edge.

Apparently, very little of the younger Stone's plan was ever carried out. Although the podium's northern courtyard followed his plan originally, it was altered later on and now has a modified diagonal line of concrete paving going from the southwest corner to the northeast corner. Trees surrounded by low groundcover are scattered throughout the paving. Two planting beds are also present in the courtyard, one at the northwest corner that contains the International Friendship Garden (planted in 1987), and one at the southeast corner with some trees and other low plantings in it. As built, the southern two courtyards also did not follow the younger Stone's plan, although their current design is original to the time of the Civic Center's construction, based upon photographs from the dedication in 1968. In addition, although the planter around the podium's edge was built, there is no evidence that the round fiberglass planters were ever installed.

The area due south of the Civic Center approximates the younger Stone's design with the placement of the sidewalks and the benches, even though the plantings are different than what he intended. This small rectangular park area is the only portion of the area, other than the Civic Center itself, that exhibits any of the younger Stone's influence, and it is included within the boundaries of the nomination. It also houses the Strengthen the Arm of Liberty Monument (NR listed 11/01/00). Although the park area southwest of the East 10th Street and State Street intersection also contains the curvilinear sidewalks, they do not follow the younger Stone's design.

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In front of the complex, the entry court was never carried out. According to photographs from the dedication in 1968, when the Civic Center was completed large square concrete planters, which still remain, were placed around the border of the concrete area. In addition, a row of low bushes was planted along the north side of the area, and a row of trees went north along the west side of the west sidewalk and along the east side of the east sidewalk. Rows of trees were also planted along the north and south sides of the sidewalks that went east and west from the proposed entry court area. However, all of these trees and low bushes have been removed. The trees that were to border the block on the west, south, and east sides were apparently never planted.

The landscape of the Civic Center is considered to be a non-contributing site to the nomination. Even though parts of the landscape design do date from the time of the complex's dedication in 1968, as completed, the landscape of the complex did not follow the original intent of the younger Stone. Additionally, many changes have occurred to the landscape since it was finished that have compromised its integrity as originally planted.

INTEGRITY

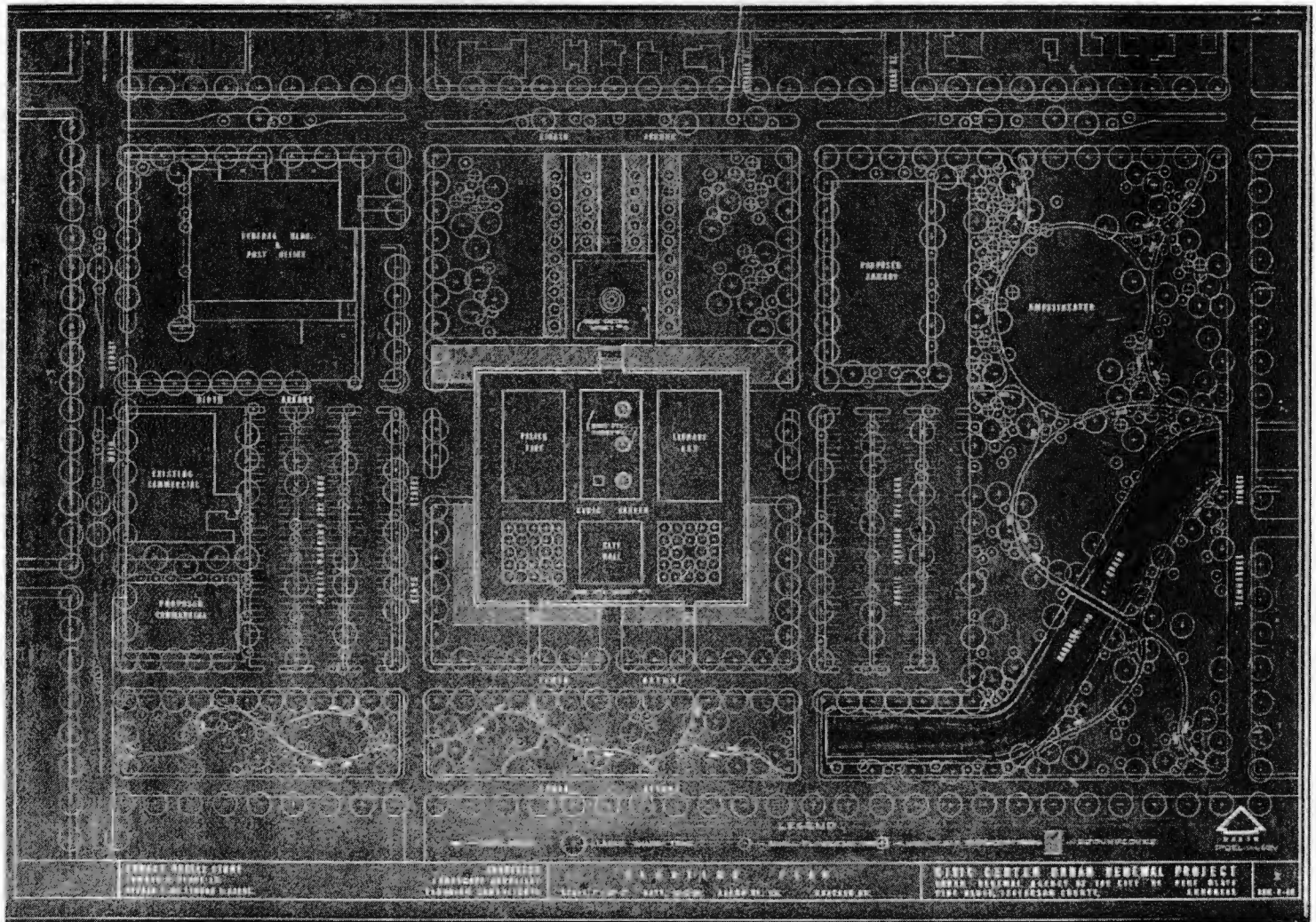
The buildings and structures of the Pine Bluff Civic Center have had few alterations since they were completed in 1968, and still reflect Edward Durell Stone's original design. The courtyards and landscape, on the other hand, have been altered and do not reflect Edward Durell Stone, Jr.'s, original design or the way that they were ultimately constructed. With respect to the courtyards, the northern courtyard, which was finished according to the younger Stone's design, has been altered, and no longer reflects its original appearance. The two southern courtyards, although they reflect their 1968 appearance, were not carried out in accordance with the younger Stone's plans. The overall landscape of the Civic Center, which was not completed as designed by Stone, Jr., has also lost integrity since it was finished.

Even though the integrity of the landscape has been compromised, the Pine Bluff Civic Center still reflects the design characteristics that Stone used that propelled him onto the international scene. These characteristics, which include the podium with parking underneath, colonnade, and courtyards, were borrowed from the American Embassy in New Delhi, India. As a result, it is still easy to recognize the complex as a design by Stone that reflects the high point of his design philosophy. Additionally, the setting around the Civic Center, with its mixture of residential, commercial, and office development, still reflects the area from the time of the Civic Center's completion in 1968.

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October 12, 1964, Planting Plan for the Pine Bluff Civic Center

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SUMMARY

Constructed between 1963 and 1968, the Pine Bluff Civic Center was Edward Durell Stone's only commission for a civic complex in his native state of Arkansas. The complex, which includes three buildings, a communications tower, a podium, three courtyards, a colonnade and landscape designed by Edward Durell Stone, Jr., contains several characteristics that Stone first used on the American Embassy in New Delhi, India, which propelled him onto the international scene as an architect. Due to the fact that the complex represents the zenith of Stone's design philosophy and is the only civic complex that he designed in Arkansas, it is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion C**.

The Civic Center is also significant for its associations with the role of urban renewal in Pine Bluff. The Civic Center was built on a formerly swampy area that had been occupied by substandard housing. The construction of the Civic Center represents the pivotal role of urban renewal in modernizing and revitalizing Pine Bluff's downtown in the 1960s. As a result, the Pine Bluff Civic Center is also being nominated to the National Register under **Criterion A**. Since the Pine Bluff Civic Center is the premier example of Stone's trademark design philosophy in his native state of Arkansas, it meets the "exceptional importance" requirements of **Criteria Consideration G: Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years**.

ELABORATION

Edward Durell Stone, who became one of the major figures in twentieth-century architecture, was born in Fayetteville, Arkansas, on March 9, 1902. By the time Stone was born, his father, who was in his mid-50s, was in semi-retirement after being a merchant in Fayetteville. His mother, whose maiden name was Johnson, had come to Fayetteville from St. Louis to teach English at the University of Arkansas. Stone described his years growing up by saying that, "I never knew very strong discipline; I was allowed to do as I pleased, and had a very happy, carefree boyhood."¹

Stone was a good student in grammar school, and he enjoyed spending time outdoors in his spare time, whether it was fishing or looking for arrowheads with his father, swimming, or looking for birds' nests, since the superintendent of his grammar school got him interested in ornithology. Even as a young child, Stone had awareness of what an architect was, due to the fact that his brother, Hicks, decided to be an architect after visiting the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904.²

¹ Edward Durell Stone. *The Evolution of an Architect*. New York: Horizon Press, 1962, pp. 16, 18-19.

² Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, pp. 18-19.

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As a child, Stone was also very creative. He wrote, "I loved to build things and had all sorts of projects; and my mother, who was talented in the arts, encouraged my interest in building, in drawing, in anything creative. She gave me a room upstairs in our house, where I had my own carpentry shop and built furniture, boats and bird-houses."³ It was even as a young boy that Stone won his first architecture competition, and he "jokingly blamed my becoming an architect on Senator J. William Fulbright, a boyhood playmate, whose family owned the local paper."⁴ He described the competition by writing:

The local lumber company, with the cooperation of the Fulbright paper, had a competition for a birdhouse, open to the boys of two counties... I elected to build a bluebird house. I made a wooden box and surfaced it with sassafras branches cut in half, so that it had the appearance of a log cabin. ... So it was a very functional job with rustic charm. As somebody said, the design might have been influenced by Maybeck or Greene & Greene or some of the very early Wright houses. ...

I won the first prize, two dollars and fifty cents, and it was announced in the daily paper. I was also the newsboy and delivered the papers, heralding my success. The prize was the first money I had ever earned and, when I found that I could do exactly what I liked best, have recognition and make money, it was my undoing.⁵

Stone began his higher education in the art department at the University of Arkansas shortly after the death of his mother. Miss Galbraith, who was one of the two teachers in the University's art department at the time, took an interest in Stone's talent, and wrote to his brother, Hicks, that he should be encouraged. In 1923, Stone moved to Boston and Hicks was able to get him a job as an office boy in the architectural firm of Strickland, Blodgett & Law.⁶

While Stone was living in Boston, he began formal architectural education at the Boston Architectural Club. Stone's education at the Club focused on drawing, and it was centered around classical orders and details. Stone had his work critiqued by architects in the Boston area as well as by professors at both the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard. It was while Stone was studying at the Boston Architectural Club that he met and was hired as a draftsman by architect Henry R. Shepley, whom Stone called his "first patron." Even though Stone went to work for Shepley, he continued his education in the evenings.⁷

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, pp. 19-20.

⁶ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, pp. 20-21.

⁷ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, p. 22.

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In 1926, Stone entered a competition to win a special scholarship to Harvard, and was awarded first prize, a year's tuition. He ended up completing two years of architectural study in the year's time, and then transferred to MIT for his fifth year of study. He had been lured to MIT because Jacques Carlu, a professor there, was beginning to experiment with modern design, something in which Stone was interested. Stone's study of modern architecture would get a big boost in 1927 when he won the Rotch traveling scholarship, an award of two years of study and travel in Europe.⁸ Although Stone did study historic architecture in Europe, he, like other students, was becoming enamored with modern design. He wrote, "Le Corbusier's first books were being published and in nearby Dessau the Bauhaus was founded, all heralding the arrival of the new machine age. Those ideas were contagious and we students spent our time redesigning the United States on marble-topped café tables."⁹

After studying in Europe, Stone returned to the United States, landing in New York in November 1929, which Stone said was "probably the least auspicious time in history to start an architectural career." However, he was able to begin a career, slowly at first, by working on projects under other firms. Most notably, Stone worked on the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel under the firm of Schultze and Weaver and on the Radio City Music Hall and Center Theater at Rockefeller Center as the chief designer under the firms of Hood and Fouilhoux; Corbett, Harrison and MacMurray; and Reinhard and Hofmeister.¹⁰

Stone became an architect in his own right with the design of the Mandel House in Mt. Kisco (Westchester), New York, in 1933 (NR listed 03/01/96). The house was the first modern house in the eastern U.S., and was a concrete and steel building designed in the International style. Although the modern design created large amounts of excitement in the architectural community, the excitement was not shared by all. When another house in the style was built in the area, it "created such a flurry in the community that the zoning ordinances were changed to prevent further shocks to their sensibilities."¹¹

Much of Stone's architecture in the 1930s employed characteristics of the International style and other modern architecture that he had seen in Europe. Features such as simple geometric forms and large windows marked his architecture during the period, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the A. Conger Goodyear House in Nassau, New York (NR listed 04/12/03), illustrate his design style. He also became successful enough in the 1930s that he was able to establish his own firm, Edward Durell Stone & Associates

⁸ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, pp. 23-24.

⁹ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, pp. 24-25.

¹⁰ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, pp. 29-30.

¹¹ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, p. 32.

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in 1936 in New York.¹² (Over the years the firm would expand to include Edward Durell Stone, Inc., Hicks Drafting Corporation, and Torch Realty.¹³)

Although Stone's architecture of the 1930s was centered around the International style and the architecture that he had seen in Europe, his style would take a drastic turn in 1940 when he took a trip across the country to California. Stone had already begun to question the International style because the "style did not win general acceptance in this country: they were too sparse, too arid, too cold," but a visit to Frank Lloyd Wright's home, Taliesin, in Wisconsin turned Stone away from the style. Stone wrote: "Taliesin was a contrast to my previous concepts of residential design. The architecture was attuned to the natural beauty of the site; its natural materials, wood and stone indigenous to the countryside, seemed to remain so even in the structure itself. It was the first time I had ever walked through one of Mr. Wright's buildings and I was overwhelmed by its beauty."¹⁴

Stone's architecture through the 1940s, particularly his residential designs, would show a tremendous amount of Wright's influence with the use of natural materials and the use of an open floor plan, allowing the various spaces to flow and merge into one another. Stone further wrote:

My 1940 trip awakened me to the architecture we had created in our own country with indigenous talent and materials. I had been oriented towards European ideas because I had actually seen more of Europe than of my own country, but this was the beginning of my repudiation of the International style, and it led to a period of several years during which I expressed this new respect for natural materials in a series of wood houses in the east and in my native state of Arkansas.¹⁵

The visit to Taliesin cemented the friendship between Stone and Wright, and Wright would play a dual role in Stone's life as a "friend and personal hero" until his death in 1959.¹⁶

Like many Americans, Stone had his life interrupted by World War II. Although Stone was too old to fight at the time, he did seek out a general in Washington who was looking for architects and engineers to design buildings and other facilities for the Air Force. Stone found that military life was a "frustrating, slow-moving, bureaucratic process," but even so he was able to make some accomplishments while in the military,

¹² Information on Edward Durell Stone found on "The Recent Past Preservation Network" at www.recentpast.org/people/stone.html.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, p. 89.

¹⁵ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, p. 92.

¹⁶ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, p. 91.

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including recommending that military bases be master-planned in order to facilitate efficient development. In addition, he worked on revolutionizing hangar design, which had remained stagnant even though planes were getting larger, making hangars obsolete in a short amount of time.¹⁷

After the war ended, Stone returned to New York and reestablished his office in Great Neck on Long Island although he moved it to New York City a short time later. Many of his first clients in the late 1940s wanted residential designs, so Stone was able to apply the things he had seen in Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture. He wrote that, "The houses which I designed during this period were a new departure for me. They were more indigenous and therefore more at home in this country than my earlier houses inspired by European architecture."¹⁸ The Willis Noll House in Fayetteville and Felix Smart House in Pine Bluff, both built in 1950, illustrate the influence of Wright on Stone's architecture during the period.

The late 1940s and early 1950s were a busy time for Stone in Arkansas. In addition to the residential designs being worked on, which included homes in Fayetteville, Harrison, Little Rock, Pine Bluff, and McGehee, he was involved with other public and institutional designs for the University of Arkansas. His first major commission by the University was the Fine Arts Center, which included architecture, all of the visual arts, music and theater in one facility. To Stone's knowledge, it was the "first completely physically integrated Fine Arts Center."¹⁹ The Fine Arts Center would also lead to a design for the Sigma Nu Fraternity House, also built in 1949 with an addition in 1957. In addition to the commissions at the Fayetteville campus, Stone also designed a hospital (built 1950) and school (built 1954) for the University of Arkansas Medical School in Little Rock. By the time that the Carlson Terrace project was awarded, Stone even opened a field office in Fayetteville in late 1955. The office would remain open only a short time, however, before it was closed in late 1959.²⁰

However, during the early 1950s, Stone was still searching for a style to call his own. Since most of Stone's architectural training was based on classical design, he was looking for a style that was formal and based on classical ideas. He would finally find his style with the design and construction of the United States Embassy in New Delhi, India, in 1954. He "developed a more individualistic style, incorporating classical traditions and contemporary materials and methods."²¹ He described his thoughts on the complex in his 1962 autobiography:

¹⁷ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, p. 95-96.

¹⁸ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, p. 97.

¹⁹ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, p. 41.

²⁰ Ernie Jacks (associate of Edward Durell Stone). Interview with the author. 16 September 2004.

²¹ Information on Edward Durell Stone found on "The Recent Past Preservation Network" at www.recentpast.org/people/stone.html.

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First I decided to place the structure on a platform or podium under which automobiles could be sheltered from the 120 degree sun of India. Also – let’s be frank – I wanted to keep them out of sight. The idea of a monumental building rising from a sea of multi-colored, tail-finned automobiles is simply revolting. I elected to place the offices on two stories around a water garden to gain the cooling effect of the fountains and pool. To shade windows and other glass areas from the sun and reduce glare, I adopted a terrazzo grille for exterior walls – an ancient principle in tropical climates. The entire building is shaded by a rectangular canopy separated from the second floor by several feet – a heat-dissipating breezeway. For proper shade I carried the canopy well beyond the wall of the building – beyond the reach of the cantilever – so columns were required for support. ... The result of solving all these considerations of climate and function produced a building type – a temple – almost as old as history.²²

The embassy also used several characteristics, such as placing the complex on a podium, grillwork for exterior walls, and canopies, that he would use on designs in Arkansas, notably the Carlson Terrace Apartments at the University of Arkansas, built in 1956 and 1958, and the Pine Bluff Civic Center, built in 1963-1967. (Although the grillwork at Carlson Terrace probably provided some shading during the hot Arkansas summers, Stone wrote that it also “provides privacy and veils any irresponsible student housekeeping.”²³)

The Embassy in New Delhi was also widely received in the architectural community, and really catapulted Stone onto the international scene. In fact, Frank Lloyd Wright called it one of the finest buildings in the past one hundred years, and said, “Ed, that’s a perfectly beautiful building. If I were doing it I’d do it in the same way.”²⁴ (Compliments from Wright were rare indeed. Although he called Stone an “honest” architect, he was not so kind to other firms of the day. For example, he often referred to Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, who are best-known for their work designing office buildings, as “Skiddings, Own-more, and Sterile.”²⁵)

Stone’s residential designs in the 1950s also changed, reflecting more of his classical ideas rather than exhibiting the influence of Wright. In fact, with respect to the Bruno Graf Residence in Dallas, Texas, built in 1956, Stone referred to it as a “formal” house that “evokes a sense of the classical Pompeian house,

²² Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, p. 138.

²³ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, p. 196.

²⁴ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, p. 139.

²⁵ Robert C. Twombly. *Frank Lloyd Wright, His Life and Architecture*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1979, p. 384.

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enclosed by high walls, with all rooms opening to courtyards.”²⁶ It was also during the very late 1940s and early 1950s, with respect to residential design, that Stone was finally able to develop a plan that eliminated the “space-wasting” hallway,” which was a “constant irritant” to him. Although the Noll Residence in Fayetteville and the Smart Residence in Pine Bluff were experiments in eliminating the hallway by using wide galleries that were meant to be multi-purpose spaces, the Jay Lewis House in McGehee, built in 1955, is the best example in Arkansas of a residential plan without a hallway.²⁷

After the completion of the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, Stone became much more of an international architect. From the mid-1950s until the time he retired, Stone designed many commercial, civic, religious, and institutional buildings around the world. Probably his best known commissions from the later years of his practice are the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, designed in 1959, and the U.S. Pavilion at the Brussels World’s Fair, designed in 1957. The magnitude and scope of the projects Stone received after the U.S. Embassy project in New Delhi also put an end to his residential design after the mid-1950s.

After the initial flurry of designs that Stone did in Arkansas in the late 1940s and early 1950s, only a couple of his designs were built in the 1960s. Although Stone completed designs for the University of Arkansas Alumni Center in 1962 and the proposed Greer’s Ferry National Garden Park in 1966, they were never built. Only his designs for the Pine Bluff Civic Center (1963-1967) and the First National Bank in Hot Springs (1969) were brought to fruition.²⁸ The Pine Bluff Civic Center is also significant among Stone’s Arkansas designs in that it was the only collaboration in his native state with his son, Edward Durell Stone, Jr., who was the landscape architect for the project.

Stone continued to practice architecture, and also take an active role in the firm’s practice, until he retired in 1974 due to health reasons. He died on August 6, 1978, after a brief illness, and was cremated and buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Fayetteville.²⁹

Edward Durell Stone will likely always be remembered as one of the greatest architects of the twentieth century. In fact, while the U.S. Pavilion at the Brussels World’s Fair was under construction in 1958, Stone was featured on the cover of the March 31 issue of *Time* magazine. The accompanying feature article on him wrote that he was “One of the profession’s freest spirits and by general consensus the most versatile designer and draftsman of his generation. Ed Stone was a pioneer modernist. He early set his mark on such buildings as Manhattan’s Museum of Modern Art, [and] became one of the deftest interpreters of the International

²⁶ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, p. 141.

²⁷ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, p. 97.

²⁸ Ernie Jacks (associate of Edward Durell Stone). Letter to the author. 14 August 2003.

²⁹ Information on Edward Durell Stone found on “The Recent Past Preservation Network” at www.recentpast.org/people/stone.html.

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Style initiated by France's Le Corbusier and Germany's Bauhaus school."³⁰ His legacy is further cemented by the many awards he received during his career, which included three medals from the Architectural League of New York (1937, 1950, and 1953), a Gold Medal (1955) and two Honor Awards (1958 and 1967) from the American Institute of Architects, the Architectural Excellence Award from the Metropolitan Washington Board of Trade (1965), and the First Prize in the 1973 American Society of Landscape Architects Competition.³¹

The first settlement in Pine Bluff occurred circa 1819 when Joseph Bonne brought his family up the Arkansas River from Arkansas Post and built a log cabin on the south side of the river on the high bluff covered with pine trees on the edge of the coastal plain. A few years later, James Scull, who had first settled Arkansas Post, also brought his family to the area, but settled on the river's north bank. Scull built a small tavern and inn, and was appointed the postmaster of Pine Bluff on January 25, 1828. Jefferson County, which was named after Thomas Jefferson and formed from parts of Pulaski and Arkansas counties, was created by an act of the territorial legislature on November 17, 1829.³²

The growth of Pine Bluff was slow at first, and the city had less than 400 residents when it was incorporated on December 12, 1848. However, once manufacturing began in the community with the opening of a foundry in 1850 by Henry Cloyes, Pine Bluff began to develop rapidly, especially after 1870 with the end of the Civil War and Reconstruction. In fact, the Bell & Bocage works, which burned in 1873, were the largest south of St. Louis, and the J. W. Bocage & Company foundry and machine shops, which were built in 1879, were one of the largest works in the region.³³ The late-nineteenth century growth of Pine Bluff was also aided by the arrival of the Little Rock, Pine Bluff and New Orleans Railroad in December 1873, which connected the city with the Mississippi River.³⁴

As the twentieth century dawned in Pine Bluff, the rapid economic growth that had occurred in the nineteenth century as a result of the railroad began to slow somewhat although river traffic was revived after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredged the river.³⁵ However, World War I brought more growth to the area, especially in the farming sectors, as the need for cotton fiber brought a boom to the cotton industry.

³⁰ "More Than Modern." *Time*, 31 March 1958, p. 56.

³¹ Ann Lee Morgan and Colin Naylor (eds.). *Contemporary Architects, Second Edition*. Chicago: St. James Press, 1987, p. 873.

³² James W. Leslie. *Pine Bluff and Jefferson County: A Pictorial History*. Norfolk, VA: Donning Company, Publishers, 1981, pp. 15, 17-18.

³³ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland, and Hot Spring Counties, Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, pp. 134-135.

³⁴ Leslie, p. 42.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 109.

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Another period of economic growth also occurred in the mid-1920s with new industry coming to the area, and it caused Pine Bluff to further expand, especially to the southwest.³⁶

Like the rest of the nation, Pine Bluff experienced a period of extreme contrasts during the 1930s and 1940s. The Depression, which was coupled with a disastrous drought that caused crop failures, dealt a tremendous blow to the Jefferson County economy. However, Farm Security Administration projects at Lake Dick (NR listed 07/03/75) and the Plum Bayou Homesteads (NR listed 06/05/75) did provide a little glimmer of hope as the 1930s came to a close.³⁷

However, it was the arrival of World War II in the 1940s that really helped Pine Bluff get back on its feet. The establishment of Grider Field, a flight instruction facility southeast of the city, and the Pine Bluff Arsenal north of the city, which was one of the nation's largest chemical warfare production plants, brought a tremendous boom to the economy. As GIs and other people migrated to the area it brought a boom to the building industry in order to provide housing for the city's new residents. Even after the end of the war, new industry along with new residents came to the area, keeping the city's economy vibrant through the 1950s and into the 1960s.³⁸

It was during this period of economic vibrancy and optimism that it was decided to look at constructing a new civic center for the city. Another impetus that brought about the development of the Civic Center, along with the other public buildings in the area, was the growing popularity of urban renewal. Urban renewal, which reached its popularity in the United States from the 1940s through the 1970s, was seen as a way to redevelop and improve areas that had been blighted by residential slums and commercial areas. Although large areas were demolished and replaced by housing projects, highways, and vacant lots, and some cities were revitalized, it often resulted in the destruction of vibrant, although run-down, neighborhoods.³⁹

In Pine Bluff, an Urban Renewal Agency was formed in 1961 in order to redevelop an area east of Main Street that was located on swampy ground and consisted of substandard housing. In order to pay for the cost of the Civic Center a bond issue was passed in 1962. In addition to the Civic Center, a Federal Building and city park (also landscaped by Edward Durell Stone, Jr.) were developed as part of the renewal of the area.⁴⁰

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 151.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 173.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 185, 195.

³⁹ Information on urban renewal found at: http://www.brainyencyclopedia.com/encyclopedia/u/ur/urban_renewal.html.

⁴⁰ "Pine Bluff Festival of Progress," *The Delta Review*, July 1968, pp. 73-78. Found in the Edward Durell Stone Papers at the University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections.

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Planning of the Civic Center began in 1961-1962, and Stone used the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India, which had propelled him onto the international scene as an architect, as the inspiration for the design of the complex. With respect to the Embassy, Stone wrote:

First I decided to place the structure on a platform or podium under which automobiles could be sheltered from the 120 degree sun of India. ... I elected to place the offices on two stories around a water garden to gain the cooling effect of the fountains and pool. ... The entire building is shaded by a rectangular canopy separated from the second floor by several feet – a heat-dissipating breezeway. For proper shade I carried the canopy well beyond the wall of the building – beyond the reach of the cantilever – so columns were required for support. ... The result of solving all these considerations of climate and function produced a building type – a temple – almost as old as history.⁴¹

Arkansas's warm climate, especially in the summer, made many of the features that Stone used in New Delhi also suited to use in Pine Bluff. The Civic Center is also placed on a podium, which allows city vehicles such as police cars and fire trucks, to be parked underneath and also allows easy access to the vehicles from the buildings above. As originally designed and built, the buildings were placed around a central pool (although there wasn't a fountain in it as in New Delhi) which would have allowed the cooling effect that Stone obtained at the Embassy. Finally, Stone also used a colonnade with columns at Pine Bluff. Not only does the colonnade unify all of the buildings and structures of the complex, it also provides shade for the top of the podium and its courtyards.

At the same time that Stone was designing the Civic Center, his son, Edward Durell Stone, Jr., was in the process of designing the landscape for the complex. The Civic Center project was the only time that the father and son team collaborated on a design in Stone's native state. Work on the landscape design was underway to at least some degree by October 1962 with the preliminary plans for the landscaping finished by December 1964. The Civic Center complex was part of a much larger landscape plan that encompassed the area roughly bounded by 8th Avenue on the north, Main Street on the west, 12th Avenue on the south, and Missouri Street on the east. The landscape, which was to feature a variety of large shade trees, small flowering trees, narrowleaf evergreen trees, and groundcover, was to be planted around the Civic Center, commercial and office buildings in the area, the Federal Building, a proposed armory, a motel, and a

⁴¹ Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, p. 138.

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municipal park and amphitheater. Although Stone, Jr., envisioned grand plans for the landscaping around the complex, little of the design was ultimately carried out.⁴²

In order to help coordinate the design and construction of the complex, Mayor Offie Lites and the City Council appointed the Civic Center Advisory Committee on May 24, 1963. Barbara Delle Gregory, who was the Secretary of the committee, described it in a February 24, 1964, letter to Stone, by writing:

Its specific duties are to study the proposed plans, be responsible for their workability, make recommendations, and finally, for the City as "Owner", make the recommendations for final acceptance by the Council. The Committee's members are: Mr. Guy Goodman, Councilman, and he is chairman of this particular committee; Mrs. J. Walker Jones, member at large; Mr. Henry F. Dial, member at large (retired Superintendent of Public Schools); Chief Joe Edwards, Chief and Director of the Pine Bluff Fire Department; Chief Norman Young, Chief and Director of the Pine Bluff Police Department; Henry W. Gregory, Jr., Chairman of the Library Board, Director of Chamber of Commerce, Chairman of Civic Affairs; and Mrs. Henry W. Gregory, Jr., member at large and secretary of this committee.⁴³

However, it was not just the Civic Center Advisory Committee who would have reviewed the plans. Reed & Willis, who were the associated architects; Erhart, Eichenbaum, Rauch, and Blass, who were also involved in the project; and the Harmon Construction Company of Oklahoma City, who were the builders, also would have reviewed the plans.

Construction of the complex began in 1963, although changes in the plans were still being proposed up into 1964. Howard Eichenbaum, of Erhart, Eichenbaum, Rauch, and Blass, sent two pages of proposed design changes to Stone on May 25, 1963, which varied from minor changes, such as changing closet dimensions, to reworking entire spaces.⁴⁴ Barbara Delle Gregory, secretary of the Civic Center Advisory Committee, also wrote to Stone with changes in a February 21, 1964 letter. She wrote:

⁴² *Preliminary Landscape Plans, Civic Center, Pine Bluff, Arkansas*. December 1964. In the files of EDSA, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Courtesy of Edward Durell Stone, Jr.

⁴³ Barbara Delle Gregory. Letter to Edward Durell Stone. 21 February 1964. Found in the Edward Durell Stone Papers at the University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections.

⁴⁴ Howard Eichenbaum. Letter to Edward Durell Stone. 25 May 1963. Found in the Edward Durell Stone Papers at the University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections.

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We realize we are not designers, but we are charged with the responsibility to study all areas and phases of the proposed Civic Center design and building, and make recommendations accordingly. We have consulted with existing similar project organizations and directors who have been most cooperative and sympathetic, pointing out their own oversights, shortcomings and successes. Also, we have made some research of technical points related to function, in recent periodicals and other available sources. The committee must also naturally consider the particular needs and demands of our local patrons.

It is only with concern (for all our hides) that we suggest that the preliminary drawings be reworked with more technical research, so that... for instance: in Library Arts and Science ground level, kitchen, beverage, yum yums and garbage for receptions don't get hauled through a gallery that will possibly be exhibiting masterpieces on occasion; or that theatre seating space will meet standard or better dimensions even at the expense of doing away with one row; or ladies don't have to climb a wall ladder to operate the projection room, etc.

We enthusiastically await the revisions and please know we respectfully submit these suggestions for your consideration.⁴⁵

The construction of the Civic Center was finished early in 1968, and a memorandum from Willard Burks of Reed, Willis & Burks, indicated that, "The Pine Bluff Civic Center contains approximately 101,200 sq. ft. of heated floor space. The total contract price of the project was \$2,908,115.72, thus making the cost per square foot \$28.74."⁴⁶

One of the most distinctive features of the Civic Center is the colonnade that borders the podium, courtyards, and buildings. The technology that was used to construct the colonnade was pretty advanced in the concrete industry, and the construction of the colonnade was the feature of an article in the March 1967 issue of *Modern Concrete* magazine. The following excerpts from the article describe the colonnade and its fabrication:

The 130 umbrellas forming the concrete colonnade are unusual in size, weight, and shape. Each cap is 16' square, 4' 6" deep and weighs

⁴⁵ Barbara Delle Gregory. Letter to Edward Durell Stone. 21 February 1964. Found in the Edward Durell Stone Papers at the University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections.

⁴⁶ Willard R. Burks. Memorandum to Edward Durell Stone. 5 August 1968. Found in the Edward Durell Stone Papers at the University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections.

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approximately 33,500 lb. Each of the columns to which the balanced caps are connected is 12" square, 19' high, and weighs 2,850 lbs. ...

The slabs which cover and seal the large center void space in the caps are 9' square and 4" thick, with this thickness increasing to 5" along the longitudinal center line of the colonnade, for rain-water run-off slopes. This matches similar ridging along the top area of the caps themselves. The slabs are set down into the recessed square formed into each cap and sealed against any water penetration around their perimeters. ...

...The exposed aggregate concrete was composed of white quartz aggregates, Sheridan white rock sand, and Trinity white Portland cement, with addition of Pozzoloth admixture. ...Because the reinforcing of the umbrellas was quite heavy and having the minimum of concrete coverage in the relatively thin sections, all the 100 tons of reinforcing used in the umbrellas was zinc-coated through the after-fabrication, hot-dip galvanizing process. This protective specification of Engineering Consultants, Inc., Little Rock, the engineers for the project, was designed to prevent the possibility of any rusting of the metal reaching the surface to cause staining or other discoloration. Anchorage devices, weld plates for joining the adjacent concrete umbrellas, other miscellaneous metal parts cast into the concrete components, and all hardware used, are similarly hot-dip galvanized. ...

Concrete Casting Corporation's engineers were responsible for many innovations in equipment and methods used to produce the concrete umbrellas, remove them from their forms, and deliver them to the jobsite. Especially efficient in this regard were fiber glass forms used in casting the columns and slabs, the cradle frame for handling the completed products out of the forms and onto the storage yard, and the unique tilting table which tilted the umbrellas on the trailer, reducing the overall width to 12' which made it legal to haul 13 formerly illegal loads.⁴⁷

However, it was not only the colonnade that employed pre-cast concrete. The communications tower also used pre-cast concrete panels to sheath its sides. With respect to the use of a zinc coating on the reinforcing in the concrete, it was explained that:

Although the reinforcing steel is not exposed, zinc coating was specified to protect it from moisture entering from the surface. By preventing

⁴⁷ "A colonnade of precast concrete umbrellas," *Modern Concrete*, March 1967. Found in the Edward Durell Stone Papers at the University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections.

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corrosion of the reinforcing rods, the exterior surface is protected against staining and discoloration which could bleed through if the interior metal rusted...

In addition to preventing exterior staining and discoloration, the after-fabrication galvanizing process also will help to control spalling and cracking of the concrete by eliminating rust buildup on the steel...⁴⁸

The completion of the Civic Center in 1968 was a big event in Pine Bluff. Since the Civic Center was meant to renew a run-down area of downtown Pine Bluff, the three-day celebration in May 1968 was called the "Festival of Progress." A press release from the period described the complex and explained the celebration and its associated events in detail:

The Pine Bluff Civic and Cultural Center, in which the Library-Fine Arts building is a focal point, will be open and ready for use April 1, 1968.

The formal dedication ceremonies and the celebration of the completion of the multi-million dollar Civic Center complex will occur May 10, 11, and 12. The celebration events will include a concert by a major American symphony, a seminar with nationally distinguished speakers, a pageant, jazz concerts by New Orleans musicians, sky divers, an antique automobile rally, and a special style show by the Maid of Cotton, Miss Susan Holder, who will parade on ramps over the great, square reflecting pool in the center courtyard. Highlight of the celebration will be the inaugural art exhibit of European masterpieces encompassing five centuries selected from the collection of Col. Arthur W. S. Herrington of Indianapolis.

The internationally famous architect, Edward Durell Stone of New York, designed the Civic and Cultural Center. The 65-acre park landscaped by his son, Edward Durell Stone, Jr., was made possible through the Urban Renewal Agency. Martin Van Buren of Charlotte, N.C., recognized as one of America's foremost interior designers and planners, was commissioned to plan the new Henry Ford Memorial Library at Dearborn, Mich., and has also designed the interior furnishings of the three building Civic Center complex at Pine Bluff. The Center has been described by Mr. Stone and others as one of the most beautiful and functional municipal complexes in the United States. It is unique because it is the only modern municipal complex containing the

⁴⁸ Ray Lloyd. Memorandum to I. F. Sherwood. 29 August 1966. Found in the Edward Durell Stone Papers at the University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections.

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necessary functions of a city in administration, law enforcement and protection, and educational and cultural activities. ...

The classically modernized Greco-Roman design is an impressive setting for future cultural events and exhibits. The Library-Fine Arts building is the epitome of grace, with the library skylights recessed in concave openings. On the lower level, the Arts Museum gallery walls are hung with stretched burlap and effectively lighted. The twin galleries, one on either side of the foyer, provide 275 running feet for important collections and exhibits such as the Herrington Collection.

The theater seats 191 people in European style, and a 30-foot stage accommodates recitals, concerts, movies, lectures, and experimental theater.⁴⁹

The entire city of Pine Bluff was invited to the festival, and Stone also attended the dedication. According to *Delta Review* magazine, in addition to Stone and the city's elected officials, "Those taking part in dedication ceremonies included Senator John L. McClellan, Senator J. William Fulbright (both Democrats of Arkansas), Governor Winthrop Rockefeller, Representative David Pryor, Robert T. Griffin of Washington, assistant administrator of General Services Administration; Don Hummel of Washington, assistant secretary for Renewal and Housing Assistance; William H. McDonough of St. Louis, director of Postal Services for the region, and Gerald J. McLindon of Baton Rouge, dean of the School of Environmental Design at Louisiana State University."⁵⁰

Since the Pine Bluff Civic Center's completion in 1968, little has been done to alter the complex's integrity. The largest change to the complex has been the modification of the original reflecting pool in the complex's northern courtyard to a paved and landscaped plaza. Although it is unknown when many of the modifications were done, the International Friendship Garden was planted in 1987. It is also apparent, when looking at historic photographs of the complex, that there have been some changes to the landscaping around the complex, notably the removal of rows of trees along the northern façade. In addition, also at an unknown date, two small enclosures were added to the north side of the podium. However, they are small in scale and used materials that allow it them to be compatible with the original materials. Overall, the changes to the Pine Bluff Civic Center, with the exception of the modifications to the northern courtyard, have been minor in scale and have done little to change and obscure Stone's original design.

⁴⁹ "The Pine Bluff Civic and Cultural Center Opening Dedication and Celebration." Press release. c.1968. Found in the Edward Durell Stone Papers at the University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections.

⁵⁰ "Pine Bluff Festival of Progress," *The Delta Review*, July 1968, pp. 73-78. Found in the Edward Durell Stone Papers at the University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections.

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The Pine Bluff Civic Center is an important example of Stone's architecture in Arkansas. The complex contains several characteristics that Stone first used on the American Embassy in New Delhi, India, which propelled him onto the international scene as an architect, and represents the zenith of Stone's design philosophy. Of the limited number of Stone's commissions that were built in his native Arkansas, the Pine Bluff Civic Center is the best representation of his modernized classical design philosophy and, as a result, is an important example of Arkansas's modern architecture.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed between 1963 and 1968, the Pine Bluff Civic Center was Edward Durell Stone's only commission for a civic complex in his native state of Arkansas. The complex, which includes three buildings, a communications tower, a podium, three courtyards, a colonnade and landscape designed by Edward Durell Stone, Jr., contains several characteristics that Stone first used on the American Embassy in New Delhi, India, which propelled him onto the international scene as an architect. Due to the fact that the complex represents the zenith of Stone's design philosophy and is the only civic complex that he designed in Arkansas, it is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion C**.

The Civic Center is also significant for its associations with the role of urban renewal in Pine Bluff. The Civic Center was built on a formerly swampy area that had been occupied by substandard housing. The construction of the Civic Center represents the pivotal role of urban renewal in modernizing and revitalizing Pine Bluff's downtown in the 1960s. As a result, the Pine Bluff Civic Center is also being nominated to the National Register under **Criterion A**. Since the Pine Bluff Civic Center is the premier example of Stone's trademark design philosophy in his native state of Arkansas, it meets the "exceptional importance" requirements of **Criteria Consideration G: Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years**.

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Preliminary Landscape Plans, Civic Center, Pine Bluff, Arkansas. December 1964. In the files of EDSA, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Courtesy of Edward Durell Stone, Jr.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the southeast corner of East 8th Street and State Street, proceed easterly along the southern edge of East 8th Street to the northwest corner of the parking lot east of the Civic Center, thence proceed southerly along the west side of the parking lot to the north side of East 11th Street, thence proceed westerly along the north side of East 11th Street to the East 11th Street and State Street intersection, thence proceed northerly along the east side of State Street to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary contains all of the land occupied by the Pine Bluff Civic Center and its associated landscape that retains integrity.

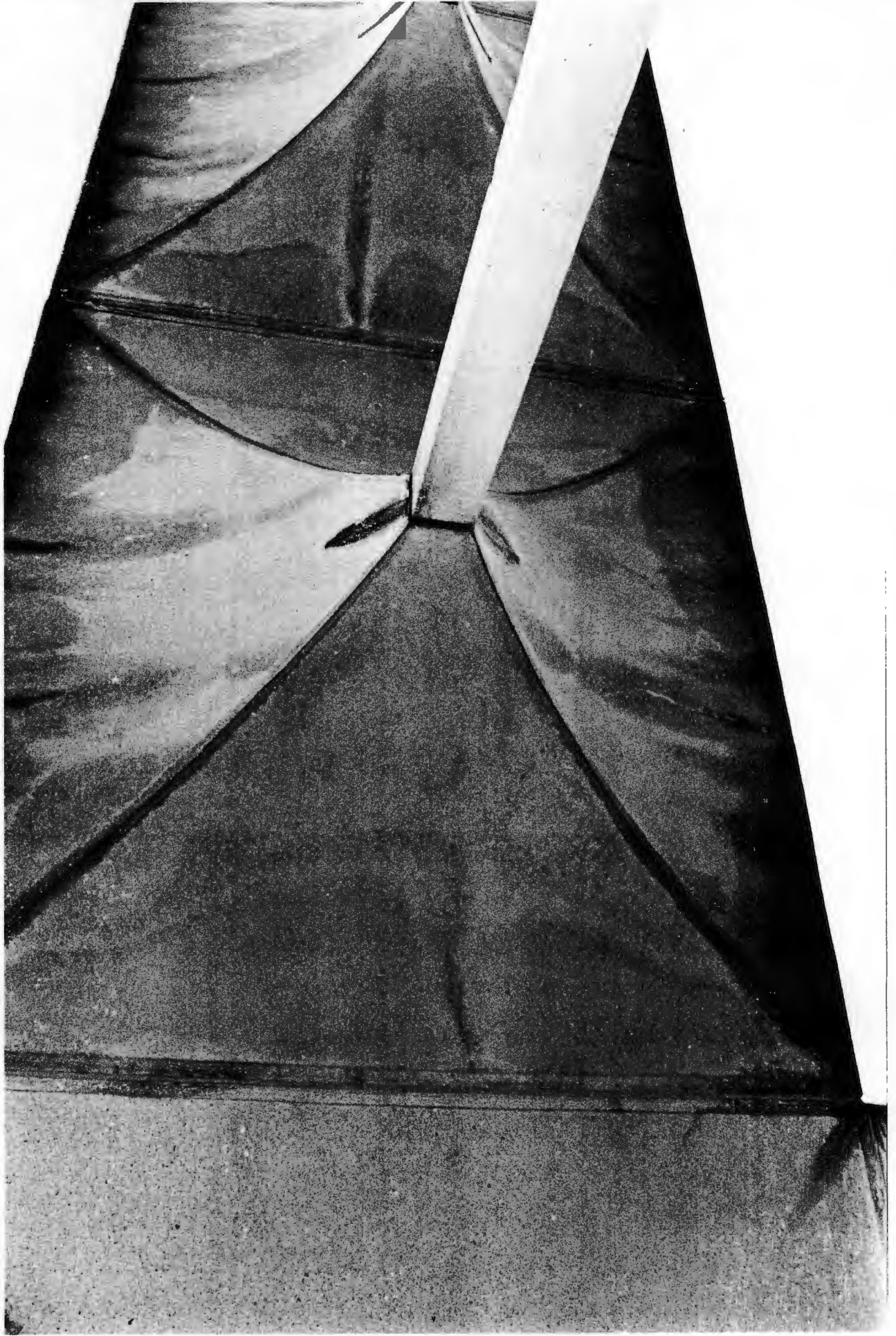












PINE BLUFF CIVIC CENTER

COMPLETED IN 1967, AFTER SIX YEARS OF VISION, PLANNING, AND EFFORT BY MANY HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE IN ADDITION TO THE OFFICIAL GROUPS HERE LISTED, THIS CIVIC CENTER IS DEDICATED TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF PINE BLUFF.

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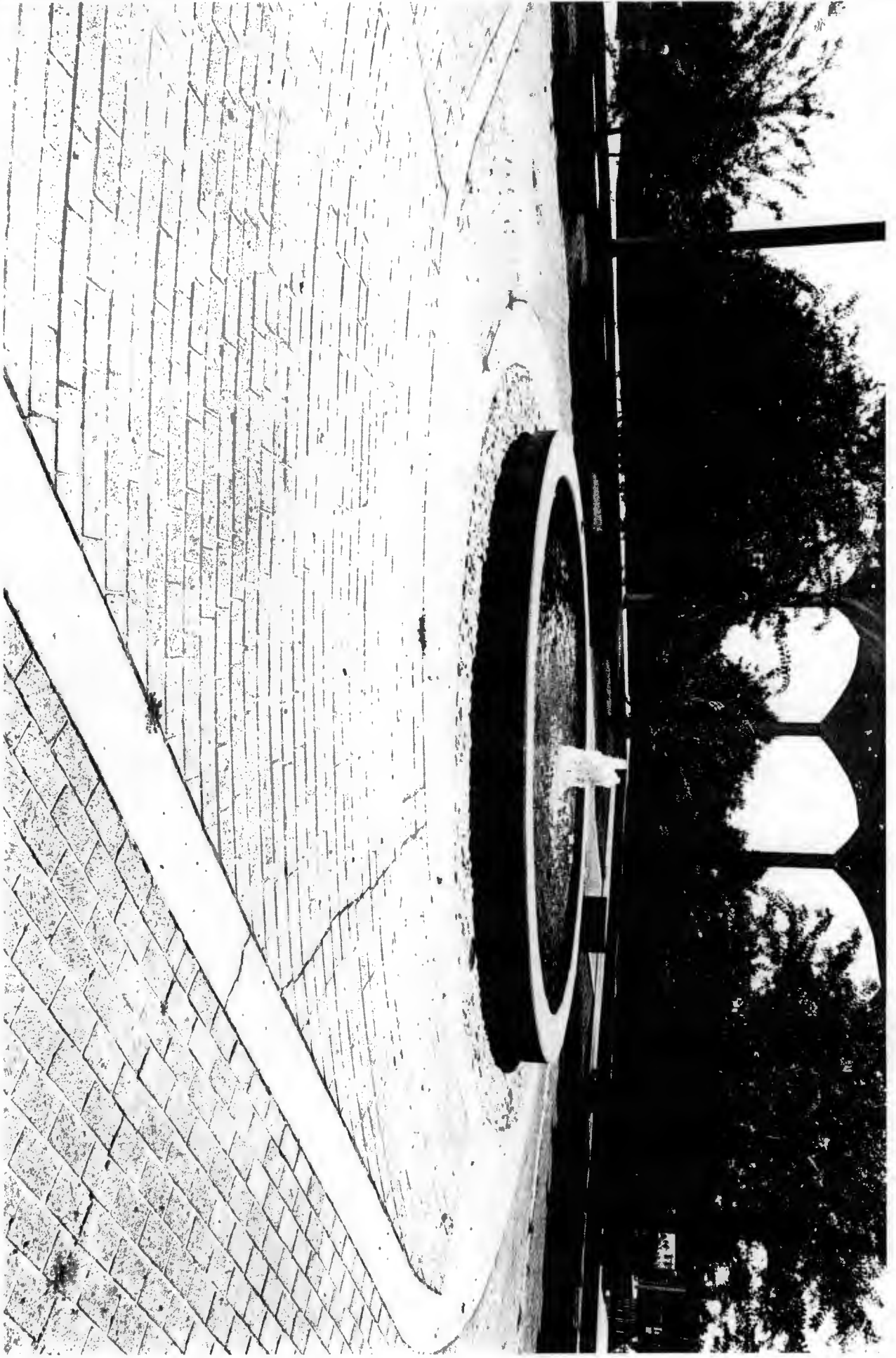
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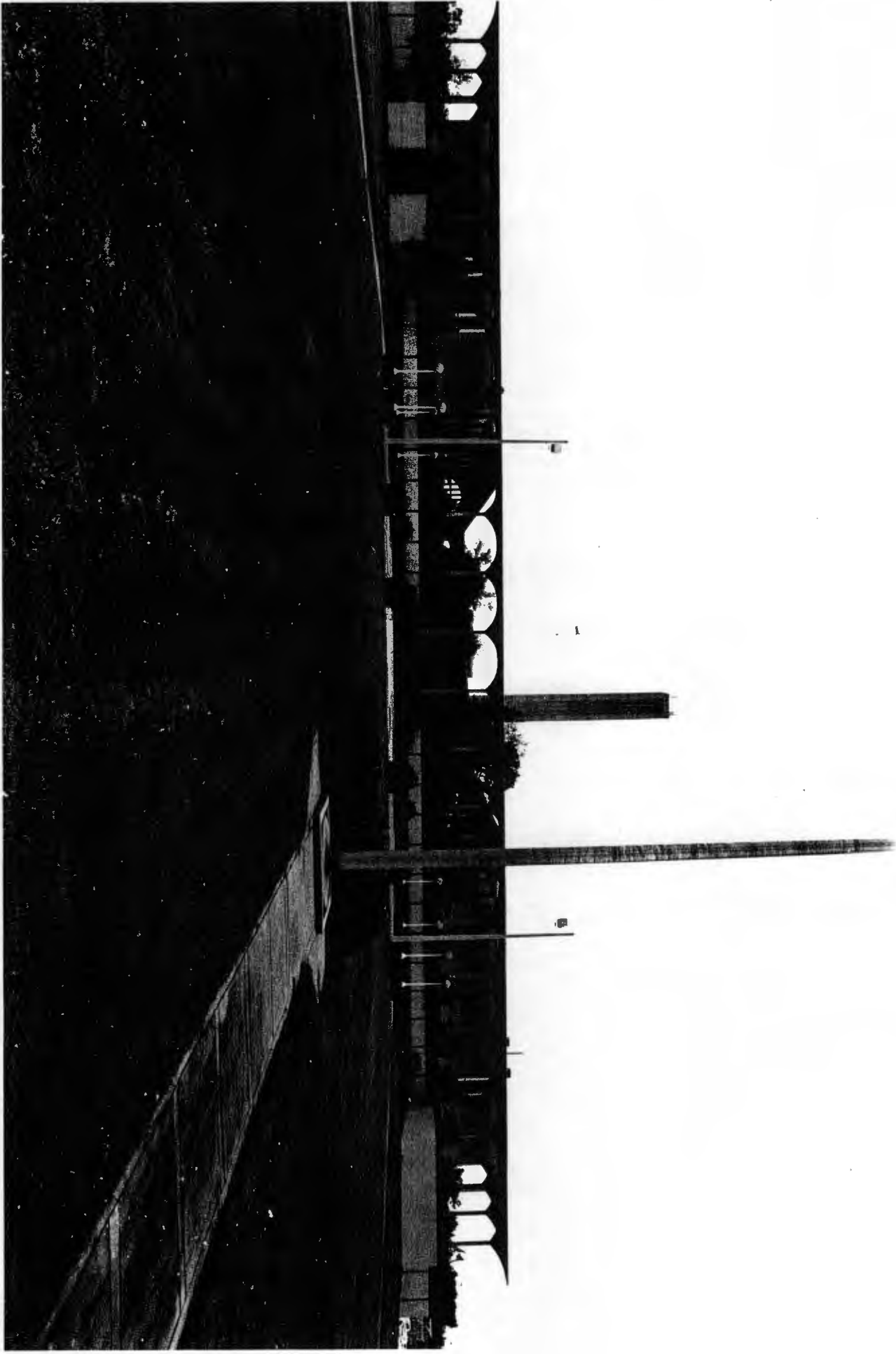
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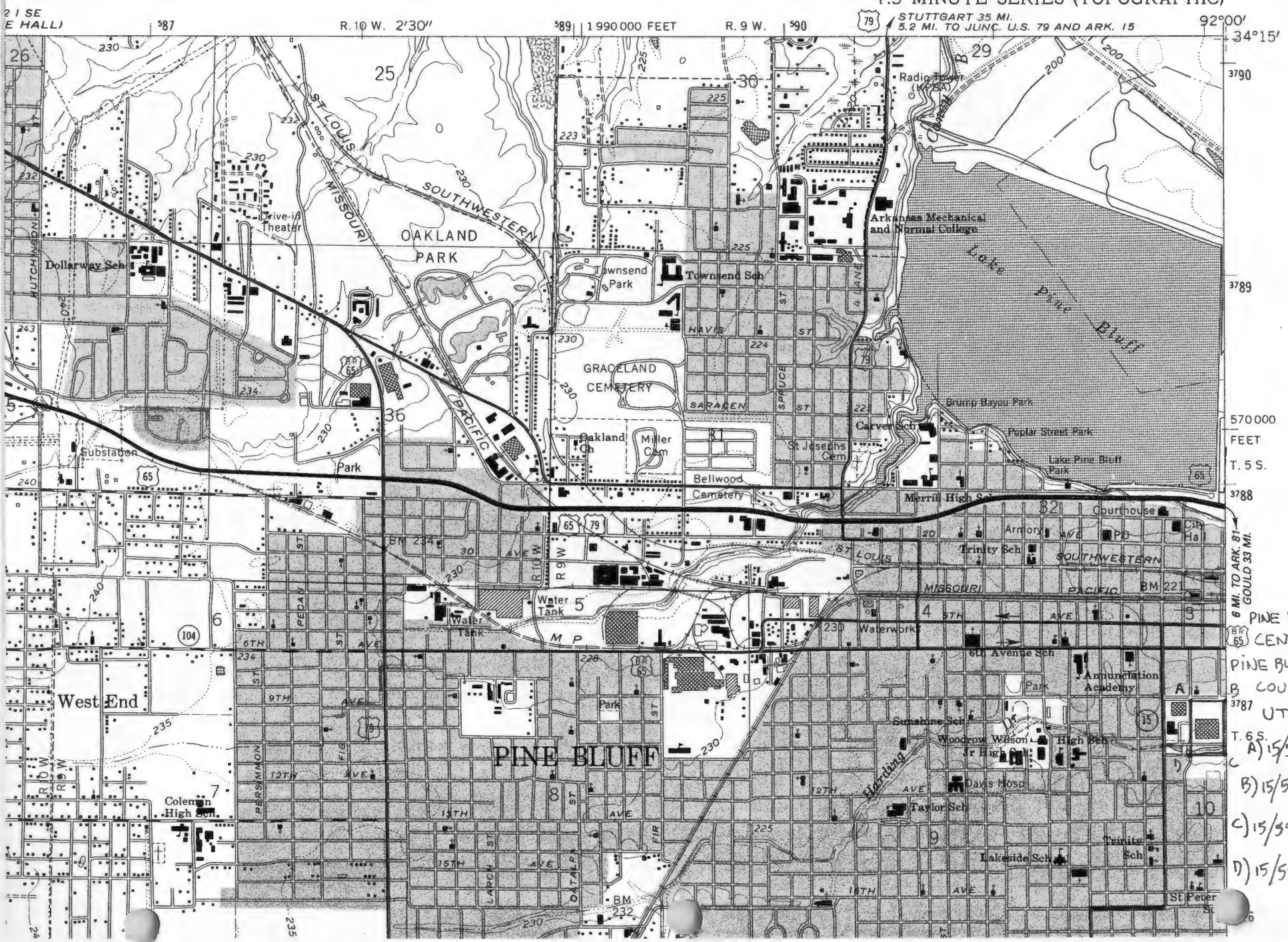






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