

Bunch-Walton Post #22 American Legion Hut

Name of Property

Johnson County, Arkansas

County and State

NPS Form 10-900

(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

NR 1-24-07  
NR

**United States Department of the Interior**

National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

**1. Name of Property**

Historic Name: Bunch-Walton Post #22 American Legion Hut

Other Name/Site Number: JO0111

**2. Location**

Street & Number: 201 Legion Street

Not for Publication: NA

City/Town: Clarksville

Vicinity: NA

State: AR County: Johnson Code: AR071 Zip Code: 72830

**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing    Noncontributing

<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	buildings
<u>  —  </u>	<u>  —  </u>	sites
<u>  —  </u>	<u>  —  </u>	structures
<u>  —  </u>	<u>  —  </u>	objects
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:   0  

Name of related multiple property listing:   “An Ambition to be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943”  

**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.

**RECEIVED**  
**NOV 22 2006**  
**DIRECTOR'S OFFICE**

*Cadence Matthews*      11/22/06  
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

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### 5. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
     See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the  
    National Register  
     See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the  
    National Register
- removed from the National Register
  
- other (explain):

Signature of Keeper    Date of Action

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### 6. Function or Use

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Historic: Social                      Sub: meeting hall

Current : Social                      Sub: meeting hall

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### 7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

Other: Romanesque

Materials: foundation CONCRETE roof ASPHALT  
                  walls STONE                      other

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

**Summary:**

The Bunch-Walton Post #22 American Legion Hut is a two-story, native-stone structure built on a raised foundation on what was formerly an island in Spadra Creek. It displays an unusual castellated design that is best described as Normanesque.

**Elaboration:**

The Bunch-Walton Post #22 American Legion Hut is a two-story, native-stone structure built on a raised foundation on what was formerly an island in Spadra Creek. It displays an unusual castellated design that is best described as Normanesque.

The building rests atop a continuous cast-concrete foundation, and the first floor is raised some seven feet above that, supported by cast-concrete pillars. This was done to protect the building from high water, given its location on an island in Spadra Creek. (The island was eliminated when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built a levee in the 1970s.)

The front or north façade begins on the east with a rounded corner that is topped by a castellated turret. Three bricked-in fenestrations climb the side of the turret in stair-step fashion; they have been covered with a single pane of plastic laminate to resemble windows. Continuing west, there are three more bricked-in openings covered with plastic laminate resembling one-over-one, double-hung windows. A concrete stairwell then rises to the door opening; it is partially obscured by a long, wooden ramp that provides access to the building for the handicapped. The stairwell is perforated below by an arched opening on either side. Three more bricked-in openings covered with plastic laminate resembling one-over-one, double-hung windows are to the west of the door, and the façade ends in a second rounded corner topped by a castellated turret. It has two bricked-in windows and a third opening that is blocked from the inside with plywood; all are covered with a single pane of plastic laminate to resemble windows. The top of the wall between the turrets also is castellated, and three arched openings reveal the concrete foundation below the building.

The west façade, from north to south, features two bricked-in windows, a two-story stone chimney, and two more bricked-in windows. The top of the wall is castellated. The bottom of the wall includes two arched openings.

The south, or rear, façade from west to east features two bricked-in windows, a concrete stairway leading to the back door, and five more bricked in windows. The bottom of the wall includes four arched openings.

The east façade is fenestrated with a single bricked in window. The top of the wall is castellated; the bottom includes two arched openings.

Despite the loss of the windows, which were bricked in during the 1970s when a tornado ripped out the ones that had not already suffered from vandalism, the Bunch-Walton Post #22 American Legion Hut retains excellent integrity. It is truly unique, as the only known American Legion Hut in Arkansas to reflect a castellated, Normanesque design.

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A and C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): NA

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE  
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period(s) of Significance: 1934-57

Significant Dates: 1934

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Civil Works Administration

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

**SUMMARY:**

The Bunch-Walton Post #22 American Legion Hut is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C with statewide significance by virtue of its status as the only known example in Arkansas of an American Legion hut designed in a castellated, Normanesque style and under Criterion A with statewide significance for its association Civil Works Administration and with the activities of the American Legion in Clarksville. The nomination is being included within the multiple-property submission "An Ambition to be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943."

**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 veterans' 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 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.

The Lee Bunch Post #22 was formed in Clarksville in February 1919 when fifteen veterans applied to form a Johnson County post. It was named for Bunch, a resident of Batson who was the first Johnson Countian to die in World War I. The group initially met in local homes, churches and clubs, but in February 1932 the Civic Club sold the post for one dollar an island between the main stream and west fork of Spadra Creek near downtown Clarksville.

In 1934, the Civil Works Administration, which helped build Legion huts across the state, approved Project No. 36-34 T 2, a community building in Clarksville. The Post's ladies' auxiliary sold cement for seventy cents per bag to finance the building's foundation and to raise some of the local match needed to secure CWA funding. On February 3, 1934, the *Arkansas Legionnaire* reported that the construction of the building was "well under way" and that Lee Bunch Post members "with a dignified ceremony under the supervision of the Masonic Order, laid the cornerstone of the community house and Legion home, Monday afternoon at five o'clock."

The building was completed a few months later, and was officially dedicated on Memorial Day in a ceremony led by Charles Q. Kelley, the Arkansas Department commander of the American Legion. The *Arkansas Legionnaire* noted that "a fish fry culminating a membership contest between Russellville and Clarksville was given during the afternoon. Lee Bunch Post at Clarksville won the contest which made it necessary for the Riggs Hamilton Post of Russellville to pay all expenses for the fish fry."

The chapter was rechartered after World War II as Bunch-Walton Post #22 in honor of Captain Raymond Charles Walton of Clark County, the co-pilot of a bomber that was shot down over Italy in 1943. He was the first casualty of that war from Johnson County.

Because of its somewhat remote location, the Bunch-Walton Post #22 American Legion Hut suffered from frequent vandalism, especially after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built a levee and diverted the west fork of Spadra Creek in the 1970s, ending the building's island status. After a tornado further damaged the windows in the 1970s, post members bricked up the openings. Plastic laminate was recently placed over the windows on the building's front façade to simulate glass windows.

The Bunch-Walton Post #22 American Legion Hut, with its Norman-esque appearance and castellated turrets, remains one of the most architecturally distinctive buildings in Clarksville. It continues to serve the local American Legion Post today as it has for 72 years, and stands as a monument to the members of the American Legion and to the role the Civil Works Administration played in bringing work to Johnson County in the throes of the Great Depression.

The Bunch-Walton Post #22 American Legion Hut is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C with statewide significance by virtue of its status as the only known example in Arkansas of an American Legion hut designed in a castellated, Norman-esque style and under Criterion A with statewide significance for its association Civil Works Administration and with the activities of the American Legion in Clarksville. The nomination is being included within the multiple-property submission "An Ambition to be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943."

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## **9. Major Bibliographical References**

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Arkansas E.R.A. Division of Research Statistics report, on file at the AHPP.

Information at <http://www.bunchwaltonpost22.org/content/contentdetail.asp?id=2>, downloaded August 23, 2006.

*Arkansas Legionnaire*, February 3 and June 2, 1934.

Newport American Legion Community Building National Register nomination, 1991

Information provided by Dan Dunson, interview with author, August 21, 2006.

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

Acreeage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

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C \_ \_ \_ \_ D

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point 40 feet northwest of the northwest corner of the building proceed due south for 120 feet; thence proceed easterly along a perpendicular line for 250 feet; thence proceed northerly along a perpendicular line for 120 feet; thence proceed westerly along a perpendicular line for 250 feet to the point of beginning.



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County and State

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Boundary Justification:

The boundary contains all of the historic resources associated with this property that retain integrity.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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Name/Title: Mark Christ/Community Outreach Director

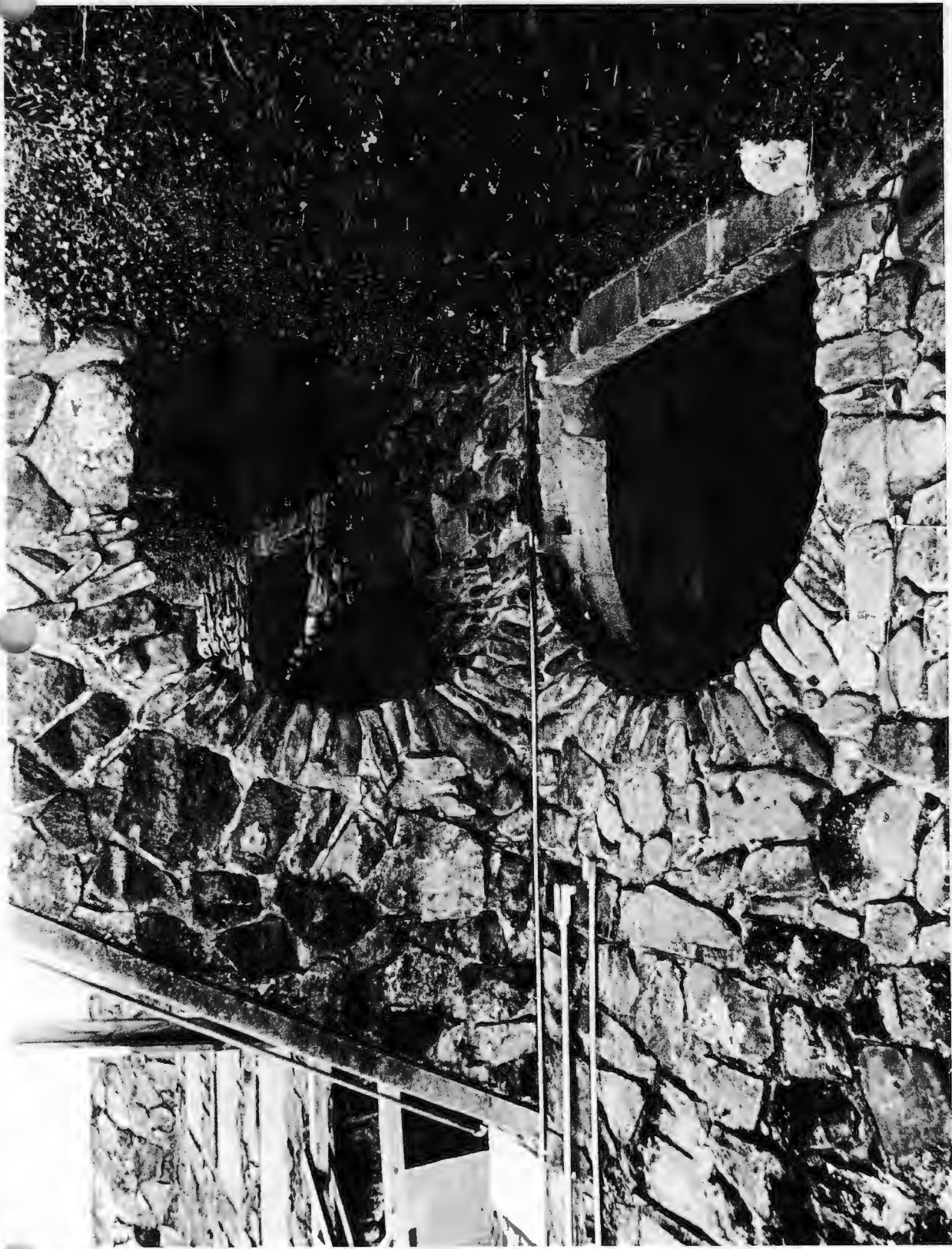
Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: August 23, 2006

Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg., 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

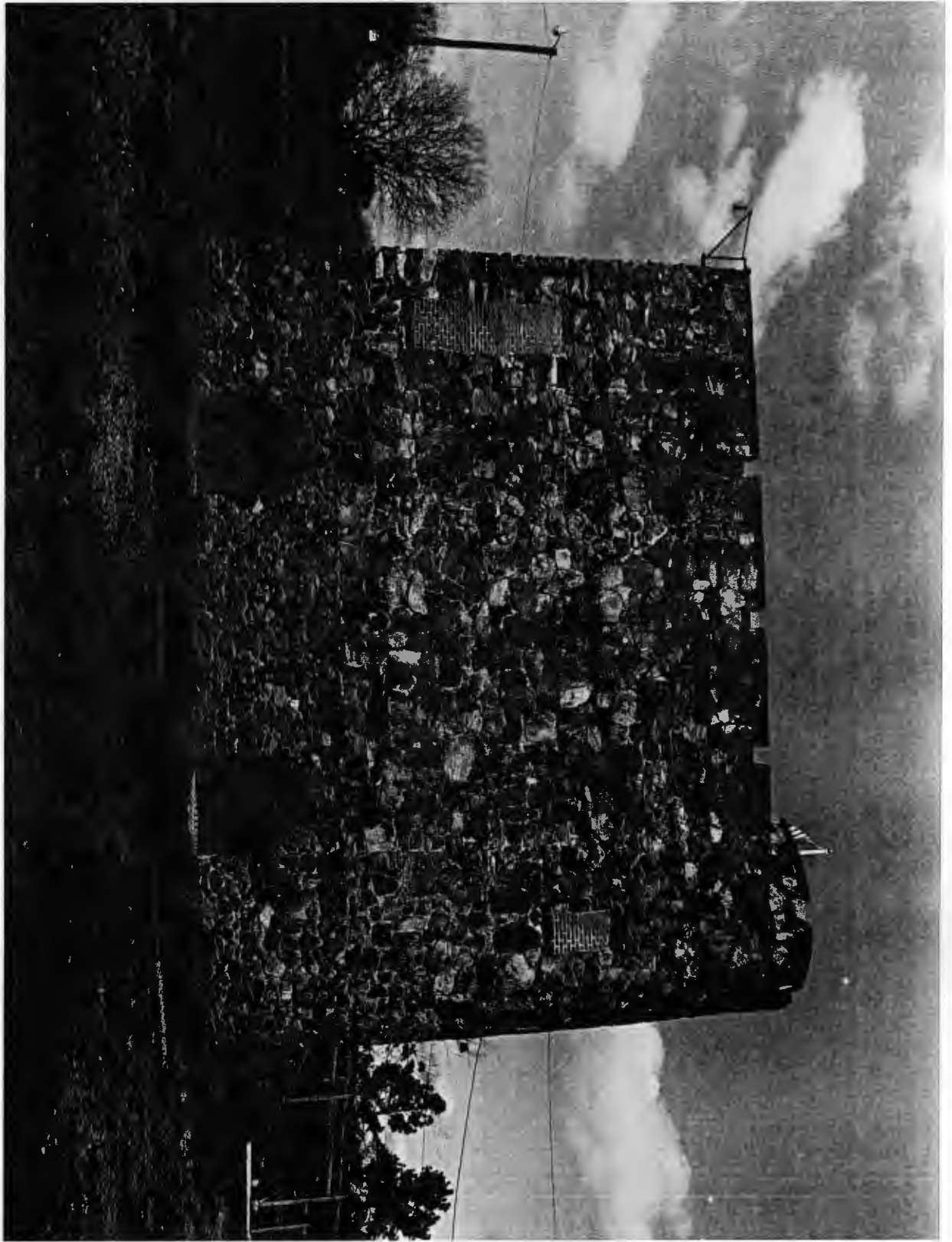
City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201











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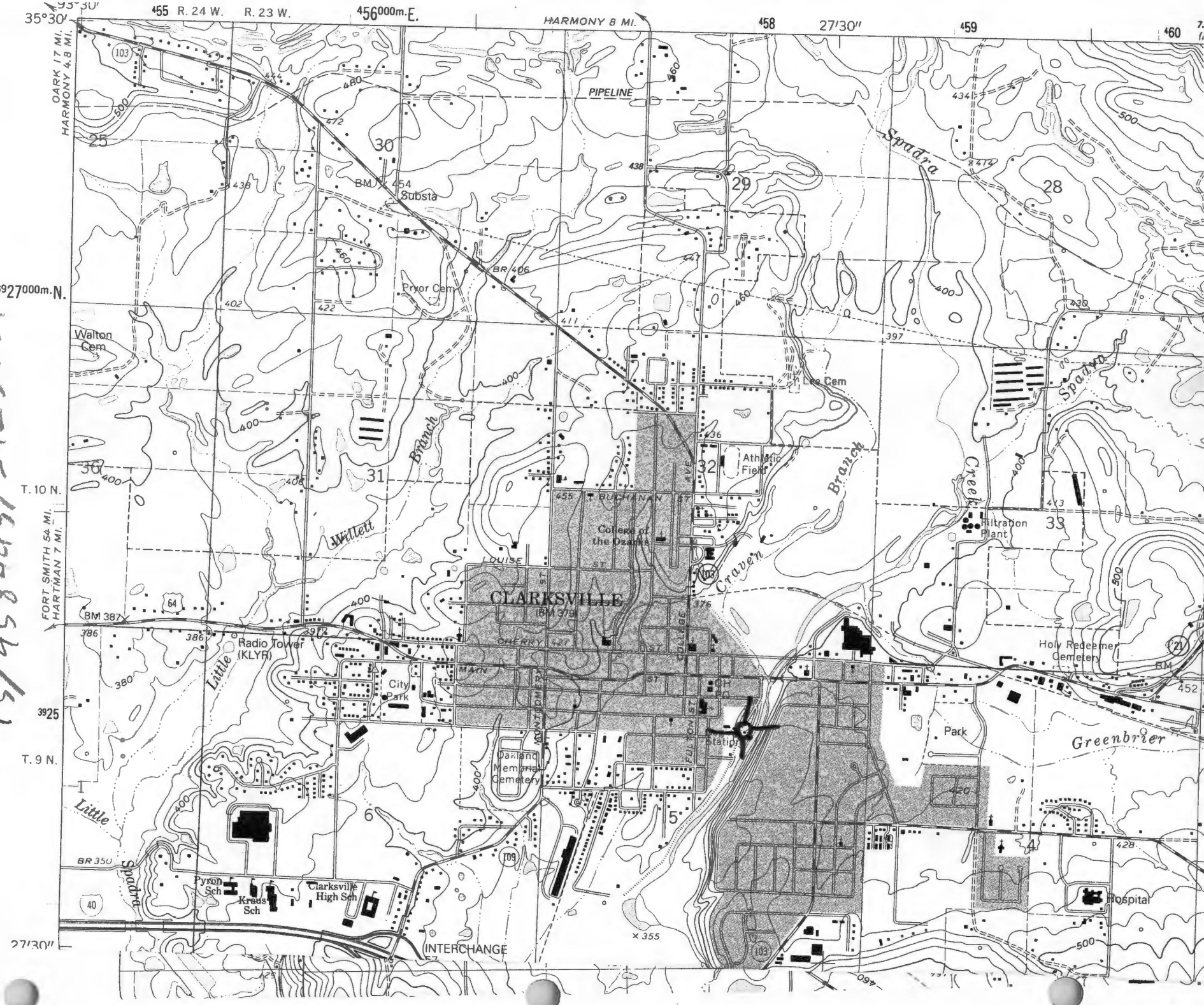
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THE BUNCH POST  
NO 22





Bunch-Walton Post #22 American Legion Hut  
Clarksville Johnson Corral  
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Bunch-Walter Post #22 American Legion Mt  
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