

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Lafayette County Courthouse

other name/site number: N/A

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2. Location

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street & number: Square formed by Third, Spruce, Fourth, and Maple Sts.

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Lewisville

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Lafayette code: AR 073 zip code: 71845

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Public-local

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | buildings |
| <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | sites |
| <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | structures |
| <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | objects |
| <u>1</u> | <u>3</u> | Total |

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A. Byrd _____ 1-25-93
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: Government _____ Sub: Courthouse _____

Current : Government _____ Sub: Courthouse _____

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification:

Art Deco

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation Brick roof Asphalt
walls Brick other _____

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

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8. Statement of Significance
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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1940-1942

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Clippard & Vaught

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

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

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

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10. Geographical Data

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→ Acreage of Property: Approximately four

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---------------|----------------|---|-----|-----|-----|
| A | <u>15</u> | <u>446340</u> | <u>3690860</u> | B | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| C | ___ | ___ | ___ | D | ___ | ___ | ___ |

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ___ See continuation sheet.

Beginning at the NE corner of the int. of Third and Spruce Sts.; proceed north along the eastern curblineline of Spruce St. to the SE corner of the int. of Fourth and Spruce Sts.; thence proceed east along the southern curblineline of Fourth St. to the SW corner of Fourth and Maple Sts.; thence proceed south along the western curblineline of Maple St. to the NW corner of the int. of Third and Maple Sts.; thence proceed west along the northern curblineline of Third St. to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification: ___ See continuation sheet.

This boundary encompasses the entire courthouse square which includes the historic courthouse and the surrounding associated property as well as the noncontributing jail, log structure, and cemetery.

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11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Patrick Zollner, National Register Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 01/15/93

Street & Number: 323 Center, 1600 Tower Bldg. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

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

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1**Summary**

The Lafayette County Courthouse is a two-story buff-brick government building with a full basement. Constructed from 1940-1942 as a WPA project, the courthouse reflects the WPA's interpretation of the Art Deco style of architecture. A ziggurat effect is employed in the basically rectangular plan and consists of two one-story projections, two two-story projections, and the main two-story courtroom block. As was typical with this courthouse type, the roofs are flat behind parapets and the ornamentation is minimal. The interior features marble wainscoting, wood door moldings, and a courtroom with the judge's bench positioned along the long wall of the rectangular room as opposed to the more common arrangement along the short wall. The Lafayette County Courthouse is located in Lewisville on a square formed by Third, Spruce, Fourth, and Maple Streets. There are two noncontributing structures on the square: a jail behind the courthouse that, though originally constructed at the time of the courthouse, has been altered and expanded and a c. 1830 log structure that was moved to the square in 1968. A cemetery dating to 1860 is located on the eastern side of the square. Although possessing historic integrity, the cemetery does not contribute to the current courthouse's period of significance. The courthouse is in excellent condition and has been virtually unaltered since construction.

Elaboration

Constructed from 1940-1942 as a WPA project, the Lafayette County Courthouse is a two-story buff-brick government building with a full basement. The courthouse reflects the WPA's interpretation of the Art Deco style, and the most distinguishable characteristic of that style is seen in the ziggurat effect employed in the basically rectangular plan. The main two-story block is flanked by two shorter two-story sections with two one-story sections projecting from the front elevation. The roofs of each section are flat with parapets, and there is a large exterior chimney at the rear.

The front, or southern, elevation is accessed by three tiers of concrete steps leading up to a large stoop between the two flanking one-story projections. A central double-leaf entrance is slightly recessed behind a monumental, typical Art Deco concrete door surround with "Lafayette County Court House" inscribed above in conventional lettering. Above the double-leaf doors (which are aluminum-frame replacements), the large transom is decorated by a geometric-patterned metal screen. The main two-story block is divided into five window bays. The three center bays have both first and second story windows surrounded by a decorative band of rectangular reliefs with the same motif applied to the space between the upper and lower windows. Because of the central entrance, there are four first-story windows and five second-story windows. The lower-story windows are all of the same type: metal-frame, two-pane casement window with a stationary rectangular pane (transom) above and a lower awning single-pane (of the same dimensions as the transom). The upper-story windows in the three center bays are long, metal-framed windows consisting of seven three-pane sections (the outer two panes are very narrow) with every other section containing a center awning pane. The two outer windows are of the same basic sash type but are narrower due to the deletion of the two small flanking panes on each section.

Both one-story projections have a window facing inward (east and west respectively) that is identical to the first-story windows on the main block. Although the southern elevations of the two projections are blank, the central portions of each are adorned with two vertical bands of rectangular reliefs with a single square relief positioned in between near the roof coping. A horizontal band of vertical bricks extends across the top of both sections just below the square relief. Above the one-story projections on the southern elevation are the two shorter, two-story sections.

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Each section contains a single, centrally placed transom/casement/awning window facing south.

The western elevation is composed of the one-story projection to the south and the shorter, flanking two story section. Also visible from this elevation is the upper portion of the main two-story block. It is not, however, fenestrated or otherwise defined. The single-story section at the southern end of the elevation contains a single, centrally placed window of the transom/casement/awning type previously described. There are also two symmetrically arranged, partially above-ground basement windows that are metal-framed and of one-over-one configuration with a lower pane that opens awning-style. All of the basement windows on this elevation are identical.

To the north, the two-story section on the western elevation is divided into four distinct bays. The southernmost bay contains a single basement window, a pair of casement/awning windows (without the transom) on the first story, and a single transom/casement/awning window on the second story. The next bay to the north features a double-leaf entrance with a monumental concrete door surround that, though of smaller scale, is similar to the entrance surround on the front elevation. There is no inscription on this surround nor a transom; however, a narrow band above the doors is decorated with a decidedly Art Deco motif of chevrons, lozenges, and sunbursts. Above the entrance surround, the first to second-story stairwell is illuminated by a long rectangular metal-framed window of six three-pane sections with every other section containing a center awning pane (as in the similar front elevation windows, the two outer panes are very narrow). The two bays to the north of the entrance bay are identical with each containing a basement window and single transom/casement/awning window on each floor.

The rear, or northern, elevation is composed of the two flanking two-story sections with each containing a basement window and a single transom/casement/awning window on each floor. The western end of the main two-story block has a narrow projection with a single-leaf entrance between the basement and first-floor levels and a window between the first and second stories. A square exterior brick chimney is adjacent to the eastern side of the projection. Fenestration for the remainder of the two-story block is divided into three bays. All three bays contain a pair of basement windows of the aforementioned type. All three bays have first-story windows of the transom/casement/awning type but with full-length sidelights. The center bay window also has the distinction of being larger due to wider sidelights. The second story is illuminated by windows on the two outer bays only. These are elongated metal-frame windows similar to those on the front elevation, but are composed of six horizontal sash sections with every other pane opening awning style.

The eastern elevation is identical in arrangement to the western elevation.

The interior is largely original and features marble wainscoting, wood door moldings, and a courtroom with the judge's bench positioned along the long wall of the rectangular room as opposed to the more common arrangement along the short wall. Most of the doorways have transoms, and the judge's office entrance has full-length sidelights as well.

There are two noncontributing structures on the square: a jail behind (to the north of) the courthouse that, though constructed at approximately the same time as the courthouse, has been altered and expanded and a c. 1830 single-pen log structure that was moved to the square in 1968. The log structure, situated north of the current jail, is reputedly the first county jail that was originally located on Chickaninny Prairie. Covered by a wood-shingled gable roof, the structure is constructed of hewn logs with half notching and features a reproduction "mudcat" chimney.

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A small cemetery dating to 1860 is located on the eastern side of the courthouse square. It contains the graves of the Steel family who sold the acreage on which the town was developed. Most of the gravestones are modest in design; however, there is prominent double-arched stone marking a joint gravesite. The cemetery, though possessing historical integrity, does not contribute to the current courthouse's period of significance.

Located in Lewisville on a square formed by Third, Spruce, Fourth, and Maple Streets, the Lafayette County Courthouse is virtually unaltered and is in excellent condition.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1**Summary**

The Lafayette County Courthouse is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best example in the county of an Art Deco-styled government building.

Elaboration

Lafayette County is situated in the southwest corner of the state and was created from part of Hempstead County by an act of the Arkansas Territorial Legislature on October 15, 1827. In 1852, neighboring Columbia County was formed from several counties including a portion of Lafayette County. This loss in acreage caused the county to fall below the standard county size and required a special act of the state legislature to ensure its continuity. The county is named for the Marquis de Lafayette; however, about 1905 the name pronunciation was altered to a less French sounding "luh-FAY-et" by yet another act of the state legislature.

The act which created the county designated the house of Sheriff Joshua Morrison on Chickaninny Prairie as the temporary county seat, but shortly thereafter elected commissioners chose a site nearby and erected a log courthouse. This remained the seat of county government until 1842 when a brick courthouse was constructed at a cost of \$4,000 in Lewisville, a new town that had been laid out a year earlier when J. N. Wilson donated the land to the county. The town was named for Wilson's brother-in-law, Lewis Battle Fort, who had previously owned the land.

In 1882, the St. Louis, Arkansas & Texas Railroad began construction across Lafayette County, and, as was often the case, the railroad did not pass through Lewisville, but about two miles south of town. Like many other Arkansas towns that were bypassed by the railroad, the old town of Lewisville was soon to be a memory only. On January 1, 1883, Eugenia and Lewis C. Steel sold over 240 acres of their railroad-adjacent property to the Southwestern Improvement Company for \$2,340. The Southwestern Improvement Company was a St. Louis organization associated with the railroad that purchased the property with the intent of developing a new town, which they dubbed "New Lewisville". As expected, the residents and businesses of what was now called "Old Lewisville" began to gradually move to the new location. The railroad depot was the first building in town, and it was followed by a business constructed on First Street by M. D. [redacted] in 1885. Others followed and growth began in earnest in 1887 with the construction of the Shreveport branch of the railroad. By 1890, the population of New Lewisville numbered over 700 while the population of Old Lewisville had declined to approximately 300.

At this time, New Lewisville and Canfield, another new and prospering town on the Shreveport Branch, were clamoring for the county seat. The issue was put to a vote on August 26, 1890, and the result determined that a new courthouse would be built on the square that the New Lewisville city surveyors had confidently set aside. The new wood-frame courthouse, costing approximately \$5,000, possessed the distinction (as does the current courthouse) of being the only courthouse in Arkansas to share a square with a cemetery. In the deed for the acreage sold to the Southwestern Improvement Company, the Steels mentioned the property as a possible courthouse site but stipulated that the family cemetery not be disturbed. The county has maintained the cemetery ever since. The 1890 courthouse was soon supplanted, however, by a two-story brick courthouse constructed in 1903 by J. W. Detwiler & Co.

The 1903 courthouse served the county needs until 1940 when it was decided that a new courthouse, with a grant from the WPA, would be more economical than repairing the old structure. By 1940, Lewisville (the "new" and

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"old" designations were dropped as Old Lewisville ceased to exist) boasted a population of 1,314 and was described as a banking town with a newspaper, a flour mill, electric light plant, waterworks, a telephone exchange, several sawmills, retail stores, and a public school. Construction of the new courthouse was completed in 1942 at an approximate cost of \$100,000, of which the WPA funded 40%.

Designed by the architectural firm of Clippard & Vaught, the new courthouse reflects a restrained interpretation of the Art Deco style that was typical of WPA courthouses. The Art Deco influence is largely seen in the massing; ornamentation is minimal and basically confined to the front and side entrances. There is no documentation regarding any other Art Deco-styled buildings in Lewisville, and it is probable that the new courthouse introduced "modern" architecture (as the Art Deco style was known then) to Lafayette County. This would not be atypical of the trend in other Arkansas counties where the WPA was often responsible for the first new major building construction since the 1920's. Thus, the Lafayette County Courthouse is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best example of an Art Deco-styled government building in the county.

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Bibliography

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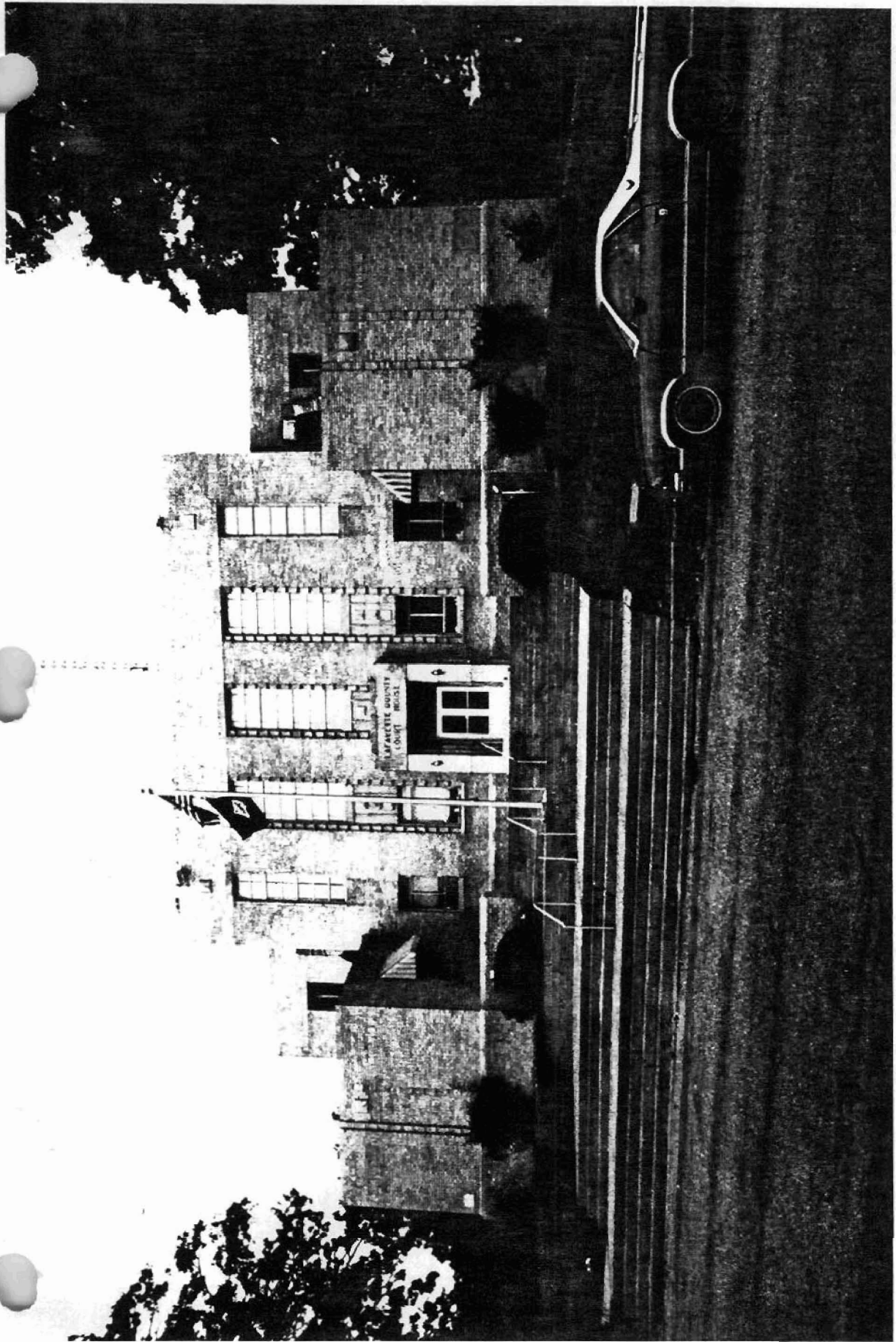
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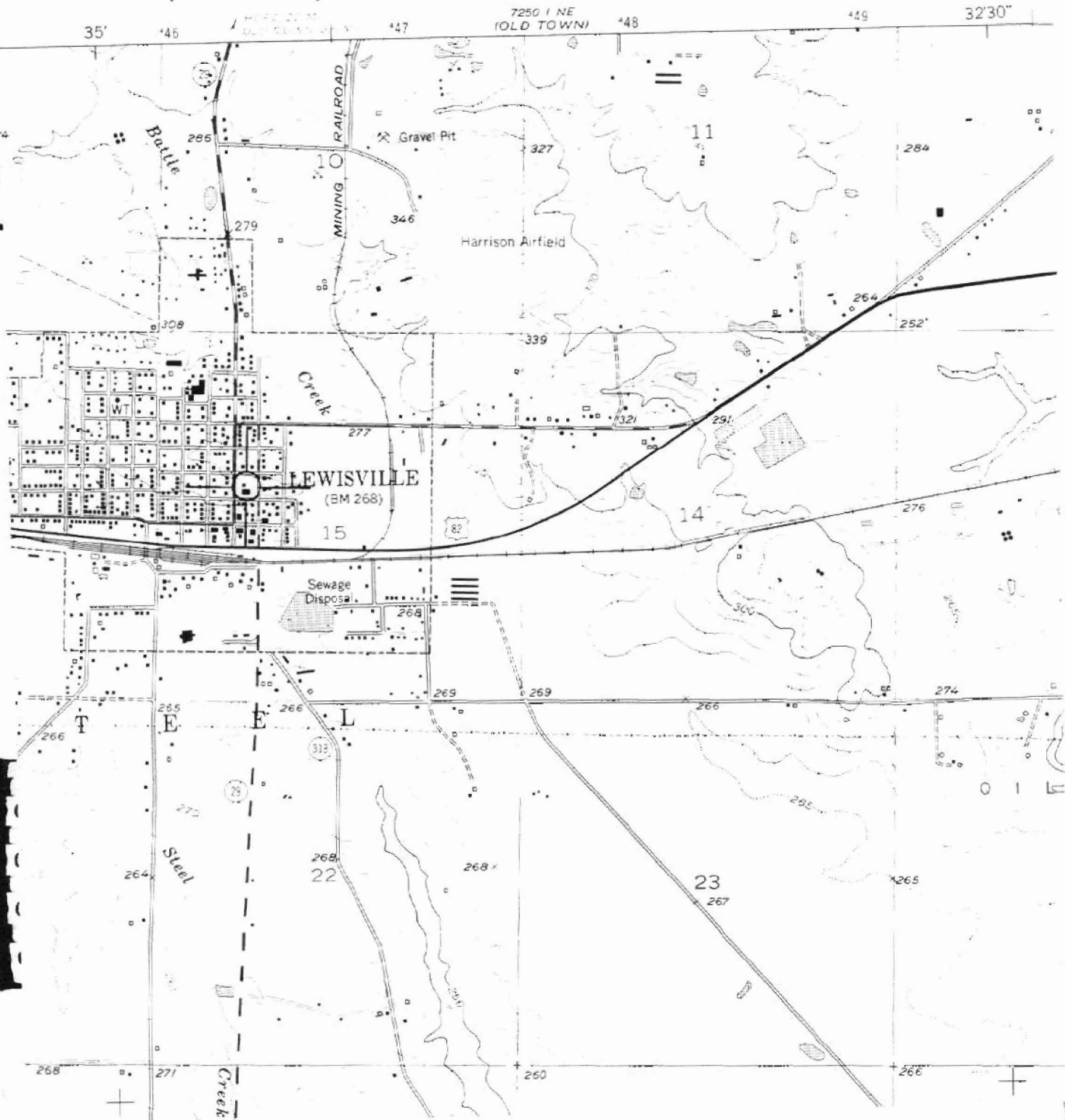
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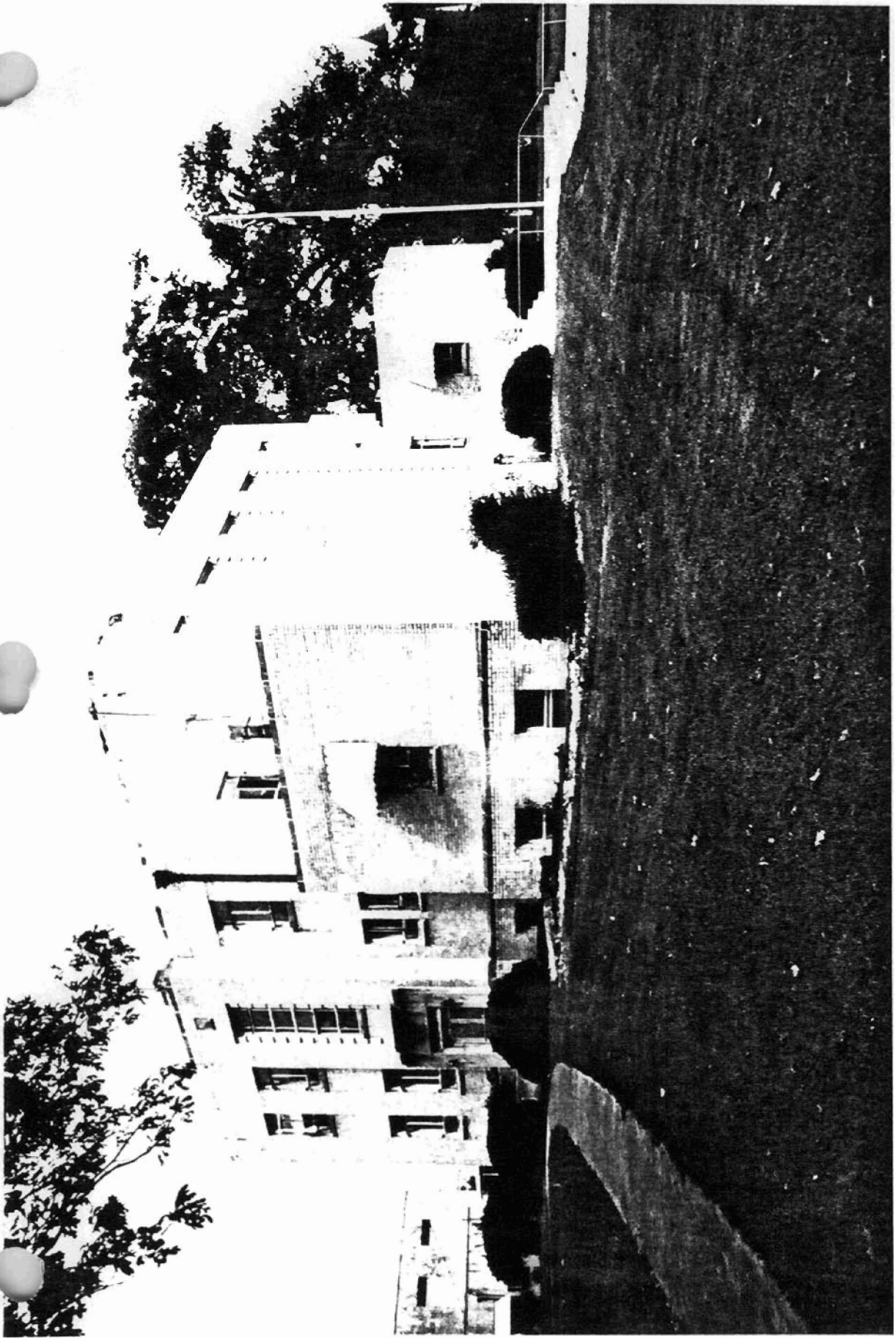
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Lafayette County Courthouse
Lewisville, Lafayette Co., Arkansas
UTM: 15/446340/3690860



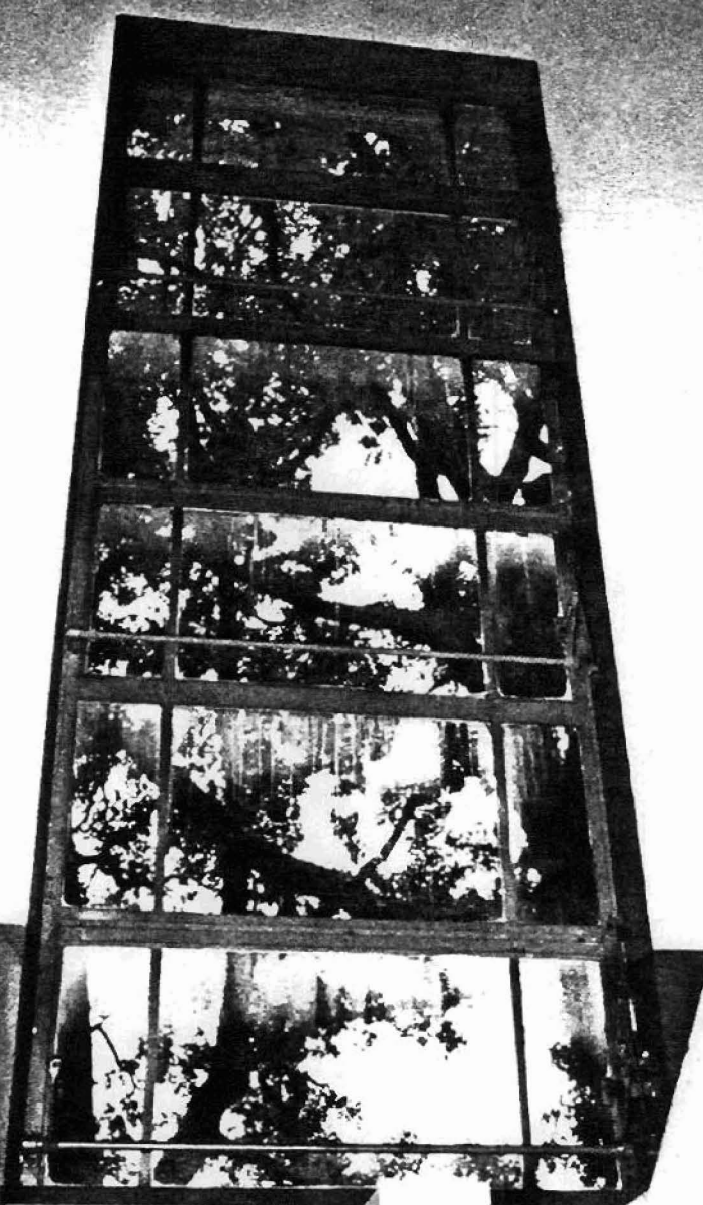








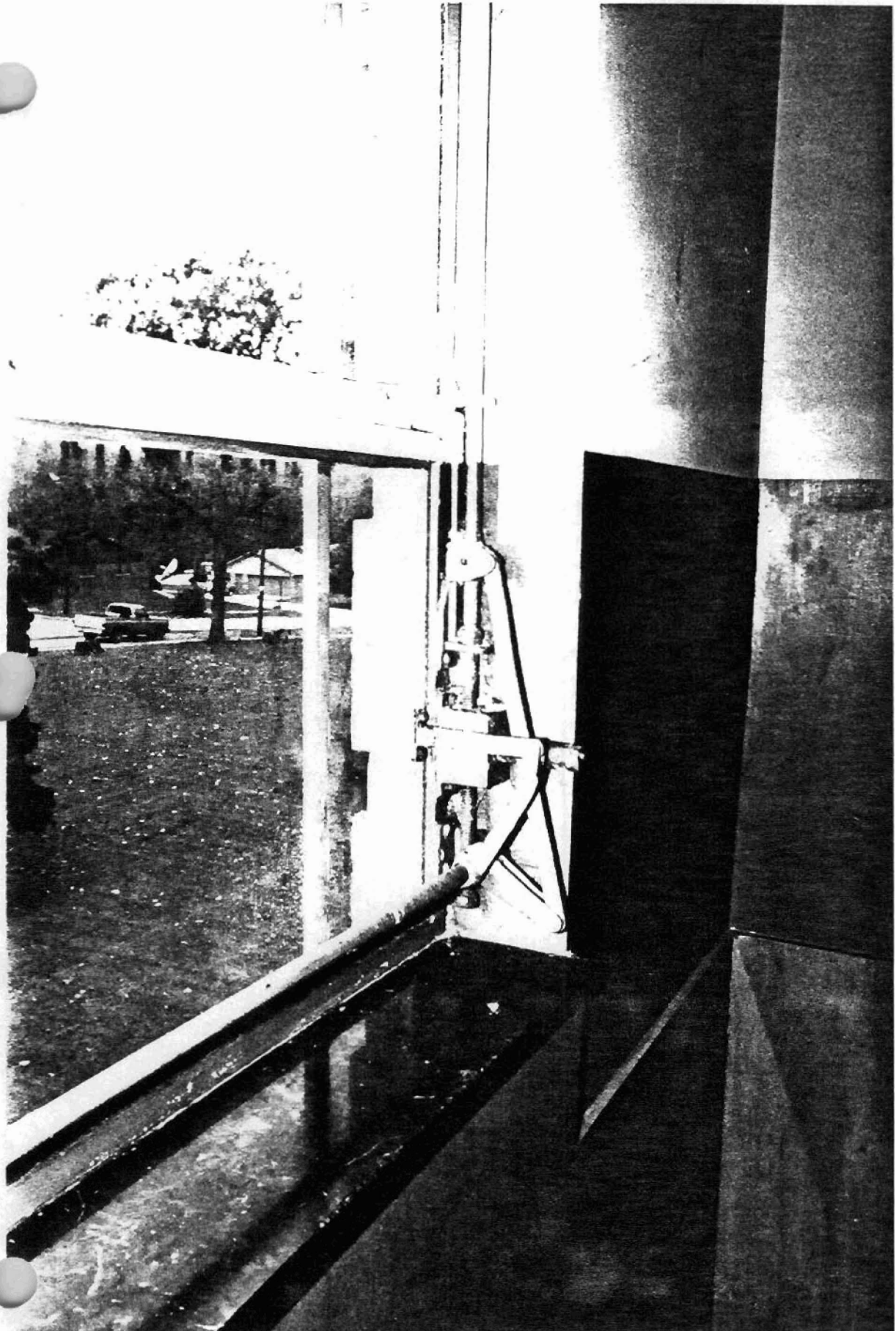




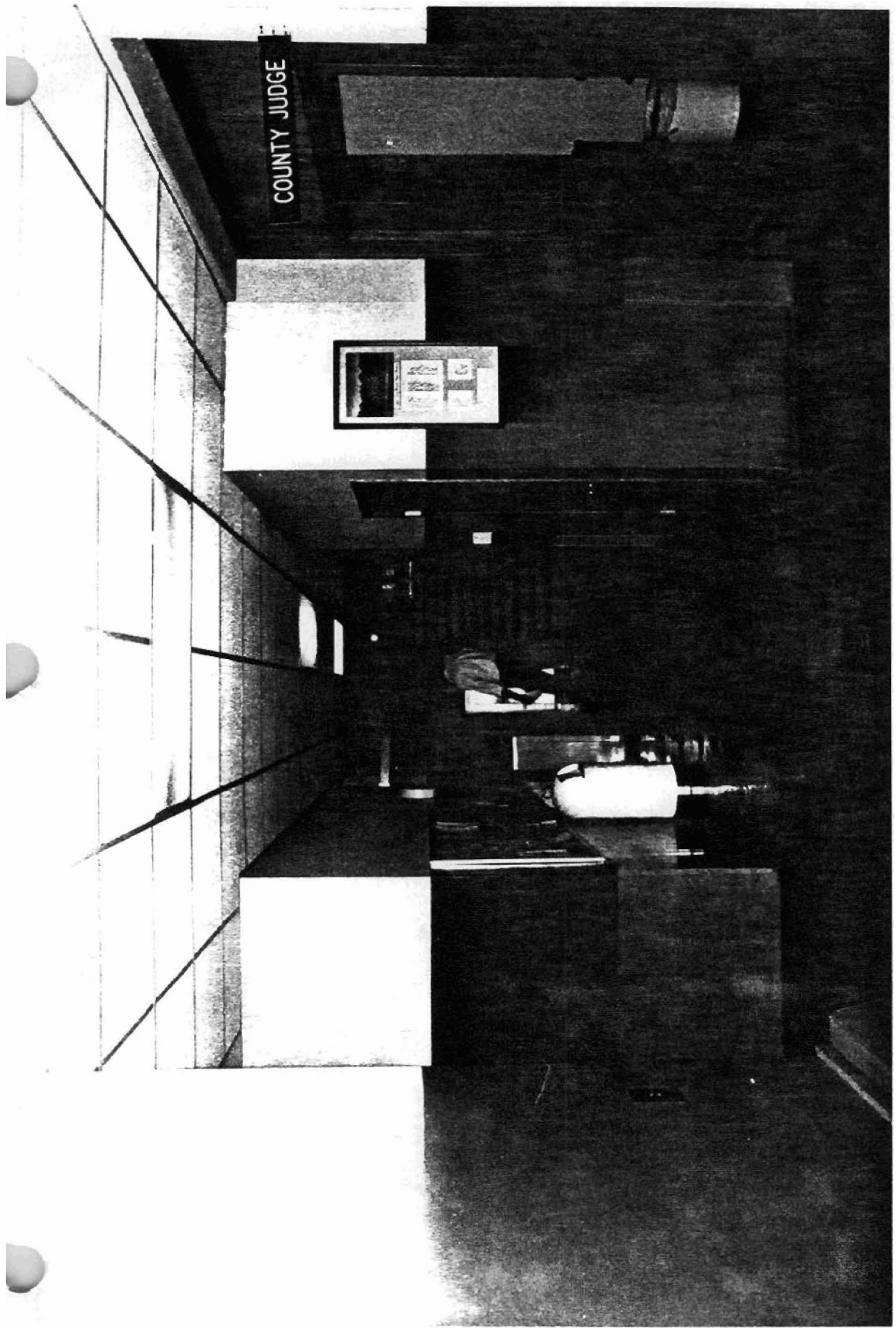
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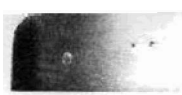
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COUNTY JUDGE





COUNTY LODGE