

(9/77)

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Pullin EIS Dortch Added to 3-21-79

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# 355

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Dortch Plantation

AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Scott

VICINITY OF

Second

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Arkansas

05

Lonoke

085

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

(1) William P. Dortch III and (2) Robert L. Dortch, Jr.

STREET & NUMBER

(1) Route 1, Box 164; (2) P.O. Box 38

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Scott

VICINITY OF

Arkansas

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Circuit Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Lonoke County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Lonoke

Arkansas

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 17 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

(Throughout the "description," historic features are followed by numbers in parentheses. The numbers link the historic features with the sketch map and the photographs.)

The Dortch Plantation is a functional and historic farm complex located near Scott, Arkansas. It is comprised of farm buildings, 975 acres of cotton and soybean fields and pasture, (32) and a portion of a horseshoe-shaped lake (31). The plantation includes the site of a plantation church (29) which was removed a few years ago. A lone "mule-cooling tree" (27) still stands in the fields. An underground silo (28) lies along the southern boundary of the plantation. Two modern equipment sheds, a mobile home, and two modern residences are intermingled among the historic structures and sites. Most of the structures, both the historic and the modern, are located alongside two dirt roads in the northern half of the plantation.

One of the historic buildings is enormously more imposing than any other structure on the plantation. The building is Marlsgate (23), the residence of three generations of the Dortch family for 75 years. It is presently the home of William P. Dortch III, one of the two owners of the plantation. Marlsgate was individually entered on the National Register in 1975. It was designed by the prominent architect, Charles L. Thompson. The 1904 construction cost was \$33,000.

Marlsgate is grand in both scale and design. Its height encompasses 2½ storeys, and its expanse comprises 20 rooms of living space. A full basement lies beneath the superstructure. The grandness of design is suggested by the two-storey portico, a second-storey balcony, and fourteen-foot-high ceilings. Marlsgate reflects the lifestyle of the Dortches as a wealthy farm family at the turn-of-the-century.

The full-sized, two-storey portico has four square, brick columns. Ionic capitals crown the four columns. This grand portico dominates the facade of the house. Dentil work, which ornaments the cornice, is also utilized in the pediment of the portico. Located in the center of the pediment is an oeil-de-boeuf window. A second-storey balcony projects over the entry; it features urn-shaped balusters. Support for the balcony is provided by heavy paired brackets. The single entry is set into a wide, arched opening. The arch is defined by brickwork and is capped by a keystone, which is centered above the door. The keystone contains the intertwined initials of William and Nettie Dortch. Paired windows flank the entry; they are unusual in their use of cut stone and brick in the window heads. Upper, paired windows have simple trim. The railing on the portico is cast concrete; it is molded on the grounds. The facade is symmetrically balanced by two projecting one-storey wings, one on either elevation.

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Marlsgate is crowned with a high, hipped roof. Dormers, each with double windows, project from the east and west elevations of the roof. Two finials project from the ridge of the roof. A dentiled cornice extends around the house.

The unusually thin bricks of which the house is constructed were made in St. Louis. An interesting feature of the bricks is that they extend around the corners. The corners of the main wing of the house are highlighted by cut-stone quoins.

A well house at Marlsgate's southwest corner features lattice work above a brick base. The well house is capped with a conical roof, which is topped with finial. A dentiled cornice similar to that on the main structure surrounds the octagonal well house.

Projecting from the south rear elevation of the house is a two-storey portion consisting of an enclosed porch. This original wing contains the kitchen.

Located in the wide central hall are the symmetrically divided flights of stairs. In the landing of the stairway is a massive window with six upper lites of stained glass. All the woodwork in the house is original; it is of virgin oak. There is a fireplace in each room; each oak mantel is of a different design. A number of the rooms are richly panelled with oak. There are operable transom lights over all the doorways.

The most distinctive features of Marlsgate's interior are the fourteen-foot ceilings. All are of pressed tin, and each has a different design. The ceilings were designed and made in St. Louis for the Dortches.

The only addition or alteration to Marlsgate occurred circa 1910, when the porch on the east elevation of the house was enclosed. In 1927 the attic caught fire, but the workers on the farm formed a bucket brigade and extinguished the fire before any damage had occurred.

Marlsgate has been continually occupied by the Dortch family since its construction in 1904 and remains in an excellent state of repair. Virtually unchanged since 1904, the mansion stands as a tangible reminder of a past era.

An earlier plantation house (constructed c. 1880) (12, 22) rested where Marlsgate is now located. The earlier house was cut in half and moved to make way for Marlsgate. The two halves now comprise individual residences for farm workers. Both are located within 200 yards of Marlsgate.

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The two halves of the earlier house are basically identical; they reflect the symmetrical design of the parent structure. They are both one-storey, ell-shaped, and gable-roofed. Both are sided generally with board-and-batten. Weatherboarding covers at least one elevation of one of the houses. The gable-ends feature box-cornices with returns. The facades are adorned with shed-porches, which are supported by squared, wooden posts. The windows are rectangular and double-sashed. One house has six-over-six windows; the other, four-over-four. Window encasements are trabeated. One gable-end elevation on one of the houses is ornamented with a bracketted window-hood; the hood consists of a shed roof with centered gable.

\* At two locations on the plantation, very simple tenant houses (1, 3, 4, 5, 15, 16, 17, 30) are strung side-by-side along dirt roads. One group consists of four houses; the other, three houses. Another tenant house, a single structure standing alone, is located on the eastern edge of the property being nominated. The houses were built in the 1920's and 1930's to provide living quarters for farm hands. They are all small, rectangular, one-storey structures. Two of the houses have their original board-and-batten siding. The batten has been removed from the other six, and brick-patterned, roll, asphalt siding has been added. Roofs are of simple gable or hip design. Roof coverings are of corrugated metal or composition-roofing. The houses are supported by simple piers of wooden or concrete block. Crude, partially dilapidated, shed-roofed toilets sit behind some of the houses.

The historic plantation commissary (19) is very sturdy and in an excellent state of repair. The commissary was built c. 1900. Rectangular shape and gable roof give a basic simplicity to the building. Adornment is provided by boxed cornices with returns and by lites over a double-leaf entrance on the facade. The facade is the north gable-end elevation. It features a hip-roofed porch and a trabeated window on each side of the entry. The sides of the commissary are covered with board-and-batten; the facade is covered with weather-boarding and novelty-siding.

Apart from the plantation house which was cut in half and moved, the oldest structure on the Dortch plantation is the corn crib (9); it was built in 1888. The corn crib is a small, rectangular building constructed of hewn logs. The roof is gable-type and is covered with sheet-metal. The gable-ends are of vertical flush-board. The roof features exaggerated overhang on the side elevations.

\* Delete item # 30 FROM NOMINATION. Request by HCRS  
3-21-79. THIS TENANT HOUSE IS OF TOO RECENT CONSTRUCTION.



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Just south of the corn crib is the mule barn (10), which was constructed in 1940. The barn is a huge, two-storey structure. It features a wide, gabled roof. The covering is of corrugated metal. The roof rests on wooden poles spaced around its perimeter. A second row of poles, which are inset from the gable-ends, provide added support for the roof. Even further inset from the perimeter is an enclosed, rectangular section in the center of the barn. The gabled ends of the barn comprise four bays each; the side elevations have nine bays each. The mule barn is in an excellent state of repair.

Three cotton pens (2, 14, 21) are still located on the plantation. Two of them have been moved from their original locations for utilization as storage sheds. One is still in its original location alongside a dirt road. The cotton pens are one-room, one-storey, square buildings. They measure approximately 10' by 10'. They feature board-and-batten siding. They have gable roofs.

The gear room (11) was built in the 1920's. Interior features of this building are especially interesting in that they vividly portray historic usage. A horizontal row of harness racks lines the interior. Above each rack is a wooden plate bearing the name of the mule whose harness was kept on that particular rack. The gear room also contains shelves and cabinets for the storage of medicines, combs, and other paraphernalia for the care of the mules. The design and exterior features of the tack room are simple, but historic. The shape is rectangular, and the roof is gabled. Board-and-batten covers all elevations; the roof is covered with corrugated metal. A simple, shed-type addition has been attached to the north side of the structure.

The cow barn (26) was constructed in the 1920's. It is a large, rectangular structure. Wooden poles around the perimeter provide roof support. The barn is open on all four sides. The interior of the barn features a large number of stalls constructed for the feeding of cows. The gabled roof is covered with corrugated metal.

A number of other structures (mostly storage sheds and barns) (6, 7, 8, 13) generally follow a single, simple pattern: rectangular shape, gable roof, board-and-batten siding, and corrugated-metal roof covering. The structures date from 1900-1935. This same pattern applies to the historic carriage house; this structure was built at the same time as Marlsgate.

The structures heretofore described have been minimally altered. (This paragraph does not apply to Marlsgate; its historic integrity has been discussed separately.) None has been altered to such a degree as to seriously impair historic integrity. The most common alteration is the asphalt siding on tenant houses and the corrugated-

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metal roofs on most of the structures. The corrugated metal generally replaced wood shingles.

In addition to buildings, the Dortch Plantation includes six historic features of other types. These are: (1) a farm bell, (2) a "mule-cooling tree," (3) the site of Mt. Hope Church, (4) the fields, and (5) a portion of Bearskin Lake.

The farm bell (20) is located behind the commissary. The bell, itself, sits atop a derrick of heavy wood poles and timbers. The derrick rises to a height of twenty feet. The bell is of cast iron.

The underground silo (28) was built in 1935. It consists of a man-made, oblong, earthen mound with a rectangular trench dug the length of the mound. The ends of the trench are open, so that the floor of the trench is on a continuous level with the ground outside. The earthen floor of the trench is flat. The sides of the trench are sloping, but closer to the vertical than the horizontal. The silo has been infrequently used during the past few years; consequently, erosion has lowered the mounds and reduced the severity of the slopes of the trench sides.

The "mule-cooling tree" (27) is a lone oak tree in the middle of a soybean/cotton field. Its great height and spread are sufficient to reflect the tree's historic usage -- that of providing a cooling/resting place for plow mules and field-workers.

The site of Mt. Hope Church (29) is on the eastern extremity of the plantation. There are no remains of the structure; the area is now plowed each year.

The fields (32) are still cultivated each year. They are largely one continuous expanse; only an occasional dirt trail/road interrupts the continuity. The only exception to this pattern occurs at the south end of the fields, where fences create various enclosures utilized in the raising of beef cattle.

A portion of Bearskin Lake (31) is included in the western portion of the property being nominated to the National Register. The land slopes gently down to the lake. Cypress trees, singly or in groups, are infrequently spaced along the lake's edge. The water is clear and free of debris. At one point, a swimming/boating ramp extends out into the lake.

The property being nominated is only a portion of the historic Dortch estate. The criteria used in determining the boundaries of the property to be nominated to the National Register are as follows: (1) to include the concentration of historic structures and sites, (2) to include a representative portion of the historic fields and lake, (3) to exclude incompatible intrusions, and (4) to avoid excess

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in the inclusion of fields and lake. Thus, to the south, the boundaries extend only far enough to include the underground silo. To the east, the boundaries extend far enough to include the site of Mt. Hope Church. They stop well-short of a number of non-historic houses which lie in this direction. To the north, the boundaries extend far enough to include a group of four historic tenant houses. Here also, the boundaries stop short of a group of non-historic houses. To the west, the boundary is generally defined along property lines of William P. Dortch III and Robert L. Dortch, Jr.; this provides for the inclusion of the main concentration of historic structures and a portion of Bearskin Lake. The boundaries as thus defined have resulted in the inclusion of a representative, but moderate, portion of the fields and lake.

The only incompatible intrusions on the historic scene are the metal-roofed equipment sheds, a mobile home, and several pieces of motorized farm equipment. The two modern residential houses are compatible with the historic aspects of the plantation.

# SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1904 (Marlsgate) BUILDER/ARCHITECT Charles L. Thompson (Marlsgate)

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

(Throughout the "statement of significance," historic features are followed by numbers in parentheses. The numbers link the historic features with the sketch map and the photographs.)

The Dortch Plantation is significant in that it represents a number of historical characteristics of life in the Scott area, in Arkansas, and in the mid-South. The historical period represented is the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. The plantation represents agriculture and the immense importance of that activity to the economic base of the area, the state, and the region. It also represents the historic plantation as the social and economic unit which shaped so much of the agricultural enterprise. And, finally, it represents much of the architecture and technology of agriculture of the era.

A brief sketch of Dortch family history is essential to an explanation of the Dortch property's operation as a plantation. This is so because "plantation" denotes the farming of a large area as a unit, and the unity of operation of this plantation cannot be fully understood apart from the Dortch ownership and family-relationships.

William P. Dortch and his mother moved to Arkansas in 1858; William was only twelve-years-old. Over the years, William and his mother were successful in their pursuits in Arkansas. By the early 1880's they were the owners of a large amount of land in the vicinity of Old River, which is near present-day Scott, Arkansas.

Just a few miles away, in the vicinity of Bearskin Lake, Thomas Steele and his family lived and prospered. Thomas Steele was one of the largest land-owners in Pulaski County. In 1885 William P. Dortch married Nettie Steele, a daughter of Thomas Steele. Thomas's wedding present to his daughter and her new husband was a large farm. The land which Thomas Steele gave to the newlyweds includes the property presently being nominated to the National Register.

Shortly after their marriage, William and Nettie moved to their newly acquired property and began farming. By the year 1892, Nettie had given birth to four sons. Continued success made it possible for the couple to make plans for a new house of grand design. The renown architect, Charles Thompson, designed the new house; Thompson's original drawings of the house now hang above the mansion's beautiful staircase. The house in which the Dortches had been living was cut



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in half and moved to make way for the new residence. To their new and beautiful house, the Dortches gave the name "Marlsgate," which was the name of the ancestral Dortch home in England.

William P. Dortch died in 1912. His land was divided among the four sons. The property being nominated to the National Register went to the sons, Thomas Steele Dortch and William P. Dortch, Jr. After decades of prosperous farming, Thomas Steele Dortch died in 1950, and William P. Dortch, Jr., died in 1956. Thomas Steele Dortch's land went to his brother, Robert L. Dortch, and, later, to Robert L. Dortch, Jr. Upon the death of William P. Dortch, Jr., his land passed to his son, William P. Dortch, III. Thus, Robert L. Dortch, Jr., and William P. Dortch III are the present owners of the "Dortch Plantation" being nominated to the National Register.

After Mr. and Mrs. William P. Dortch assumed operation of the land given them by Thomas Steele and until Mr. Dortch's death in 1912, the land was a plantation in the full sense of the word. The whole farm, not just the nominated property, was operated as a unit. Another characteristic which is commonly considered as distinguishing a plantation from, simply, a farm is that the workers live on the land which they work. During the time of William P. Dortch, approximately 100 tenant families lived on the Dortch plantation (the larger unit, not just the nominated property).

After the nominated property was divided between William P. Dortch, Jr., and Thomas Steele Dortch in 1912, or soon thereafter, the plantation aspect of the farm operation certainly did not die. The part of the nominated property containing by far the greatest concentration of historic structures still standing was owned by William P. Dortch, Jr. From Marlsgate, which was on his property, William P. Dortch, Jr., directed the operation of his farm. For a while, the two brothers joined their enterprise and farmed both estates as a unit. It is from this period, when William P. Dortch, Jr., and Thomas Steele Dortch owned the nominated property, that a good portion of the extant historic structures date.

As late as the early 1950's the nominated property was again farmed as a unit. By about 1950, William P. Dortch, Jr., had become an invalid. His son, William P. Dortch III, therefore assumed management responsibilities. For a period of three years, William P. Dortch III rented the lands of Thomas Steele Dortch, which lands by this time were owned by Robert L. Dortch. William P. Dortch III thus operated both portions of the nominated property as a unit.

Since the mid-1950's the two sections of the nominated property have been operated separately. William P. Dortch III has continued to operate the southern portion from the historic plantation house, Marlsgate. Robert L. Dortch, Jr., has continued

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operation of the northern half of the nominated property.

Throughout its history the Dortch Plantation has been engaged in agricultural pursuits which have been typical of the region and the era. Up until very recent times, the pre-eminent concentration was upon the raising of cotton. Recently, as is generally the case in the Arkansas lowlands, soybeans have come to rival cotton as the main money crop. Other typical agricultural pursuits in which the Dortch Plantation has been engaged are cattle-raising, the growth of hay and corn for the feeding of the cattle and mules, and dairying. These activities have, from time-to-time, varied in their importance in relation to other plantation concerns, but they have always been a part of Dortch Plantation life.

The historic structures and sites on the Dortch Plantation today have all played a part in the plantation enterprise of the past. They have been a part of family life, religious life, recreation, and the actual farming of the fields.

Marlsgate (23), the house, has been the operational headquarters for farming operations for 75 years. It has been the residence of three generations of Dortches. From this house have come the directions and decisions regarding personnel matters, financial matters, and the tactics of field operations.

The older house (12, 22), which was cut in half and moved, served the same purpose prior to 1904. After that time, the half of the house which was moved further north served as the residence of the mule-hostler. The hostler was an important and respected person on the farm. He had the responsibility of caring for the draft mules and their equipment.

The gear room (11) is located directly across the road from the mule-hostler's house. It was in the gear room that the harnesses, medicines, liniments, curry combs, and other equipment for the use and care of the mules was kept.

Not far from the gear room the mule barn (10) is located. Hay for the mules was stored here, and it was here that the mules were fed. The mules also came to this huge structure to escape the rain and snow. The present mule barn was built in 1940 to replace an earlier one, which was destroyed in 1939 by a tornado. The new barn is on the site of the old one.

The corn crib (9) is located only slightly to the north of the mule barn. Apart from the earlier plantation house, the corn crib is the oldest structure on the plantation; it was built in 1888. Corn for the feeding of the mules was stored here.

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The other historic feature directly related to the care of the mules is the "mule-cooling tree" (27), which stands majestically in the southern portion of the fields included in this nomination. Historically, several such trees stood singly in widely scattered spots in the cotton fields; only one mule-cooling tree remains today. In the past, the plowmen periodically stopped their plowing at the mule-cooling tree and allowed the mules to cool off in the tree's shade and to drink. Underneath the mule-cooling tree was a well and pump and a water trough. Also located underneath the mule-cooling tree was a "johnny-house" (toilet) for use by the plowmen. The mule-cooling tree also served as a rest area for groups of workers as they "chopped" and picked the cotton.

Several other structures which still stand served various purposes associated with the planting, plowing, and harvesting of crops. There is a shop (8) and a storage shed (13) for the maintenance of plows and other equipment and for the storage of supplies and equipment. One historic wagon shed (6) still stands; wagons served a wide variety of transportational needs on the plantation.

Three "cotton pens" (2, 14, 21) still stand on the plantation. Each of these small buildings held about a bale of cotton. Historically, they were located at various spots along the edge of the cotton fields. Cotton pickers would periodically dump the contents of their cotton sacks into the pens, where the cotton would remain until a wagon came by and picked it up.

To the south and east of Marlsgate are a number of structures which reflect the historic dairying operation on the plantation. At least as early as the 1920's, the Dortches produced milk, not only for their own use, but also to sell in Little Rock. Each day the milk wagon traveled the 15 miles from the plantation to the city to make its deliveries. This operation ended in the late 1940's because of the pressures toward pasteurization and because the Dortches did not want to invest the effort and expense required for pasteurizing.

Two barns (25, 26) near Marlsgate were parts of the dairying activities. The larger of them is the cow barn, which was used for the storing of hay and for the sheltering and feeding of the cows. The smaller, enclosed barn was for the milking of the cows.

Much further to the southeast is a peculiar structure which was used to store silage for the cows and beef cattle. The structure is an underground silo (28). A young man who, under the auspices of the Smith-Hughes Act, taught agriculture in the public schools at Scott gave W. P. Dortch, Jr., the concept for the silo. The underground silo provided an inexpensive and efficient way of storing additional feed for the animals -- feed which might be needed when the hay supply ran short during the winter.



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The fields (32) included in the nomination are a portion of the historic crop- and pasture-land which has served the Dortches so well and for so long. The "Dortch Plantation" would not be complete as a nomination without including, at least, a portion of the fields which have been the basis for all else that occurred here. In addition to their own historic merit, the fields have value as a part of the nomination in that they provide the essential and appropriate setting for all the individual and historic structures and sites on the plantation.

The same two kinds of value reside in the portion of Bearskin Lake (31) included in the nomination. It, too, is a part of the historic setting of the plantation structures and activities. Throughout the years of the Dortch Plantation's existence, Bearskin Lake has been a part of the popular conception of the plantation. Even more important is the functional part played by the lake in historic life and activity. The lake provided a part of the water supply for the farm animals. Fishing and swimming in Bearskin Lake were a part of the recreational life of the Dortch family. The lake also played a part in religious life on the plantation. It was here that the Negro workers baptized their converts into Christianity. During the summer, hardly a Sunday passed when the religious community did not gather at the water's edge for an enthusiastic ceremony of hymn-singing, a sermon, and the immersion of the newly "saved" into the clear waters and into the service of "Mr. Jesus." Such assemblies were held, not only by the plantation tenants, but also by the Negro congregations of other churches in the area. The historic value of Bearskin Lake is enhanced by the fact that these traditional services are still conducted each summer.

A closely related significance inheres in the site of Mt. Hope Church (29). The dilapidated remains of the church were removed only about four years ago. The date of the church's construction is unknown, but William P. Dortch III, who was born on the plantation in 1928, says that the church is a part of his earliest childhood memories. Each Sunday morning and almost every night during the summer, the church bell called the plantation Negroes to an assemblage of religious and social experience. It was here that plantation weddings were held. Upon the death of one of the plantation "folk," the bell was "tollled" in a special way to note the loss.

Prior to the time when automobiles made it feasible for the plantation workers to do their shopping elsewhere, the commissary (19) was an essential part of life. The workers were not paid in money, rather they received slips of paper redeemable at the commissary. The workers acquired most of their food through their gardens and the animals which they raised. They made a good portion of their own clothes. Still, there were many items which they had to buy -- salt, shoes, overalls, cooking utensils, coffee, etc. The commissary was the source of these items.



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ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 5

The farm bell (20) and the sun were chronological regulators of life on the plantation. The bell rang at sunup to signal the beginning of work. It rang at 12:00 noon and at 1:00 p.m. to signal the beginning and end of "dinner." There was no need for the bell to signal the end of the workday; the workers were very much aware of the sun's touching the tree tops -- "quittin' time."

Tenant houses (1, 3, 4, 5, 15, 16, 17, 30) located on the plantation were the residences of the farm-workers. Only in recent years has this changed, as the lure of city life has drawn the workers away from the farm houses. In the past, though, all the workers lived on the plantation. All that the worker needed was there -- church, school (because of its distance from the main concentration of resources, the site of the plantation school is not included in the property being nominated), work, commissary, and food supply. The worker was within walking or wagon distance of all these features of plantation life. The house was a part of the worker's compensation; it was rent-free.

In addition to representing agriculture of the period and the plantation way-of-life, the structures discussed above also represent the architecture and some of the technology of the historic plantation. Marlsgate, the mansion, represents the architectural luxury which the wealthy land-holder could afford. The other historic structures are representative of the simple, functional architecture which characterized barns, corn-cribs, tenant houses and other farm-buildings of the time. When architecture is this functional, it often represents technology as well as style. For example, the mule barn represents the technology of storing animal feed and of the actual feeding of the animals. Likewise, the cotton pens are representative of the methodology in getting cotton from the field to the gin. The single most outstanding representative of historic farm technology is the underground silo.

In summary, the Dortch Plantation is a powerful reflection of at least three aspects of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century agriculture: (1) typical agricultural pursuits (types of crops, etc.), (2) the plantation social and economic pattern, and (3) agricultural architecture and technology. The representative value of the Dortch Plantation is valid in the contexts of the local area, the state, and the mid-South. There is, perhaps, no other complex of comparable historic value within the state of Arkansas.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 975

QUADRANGLE NAME Scott, Ark.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A | 1 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 |

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | 1 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 0 |

D | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

E | 1 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 0 |

F | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

G | 1 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 0 |

H | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Jack Doss, Compliance Officer; Sandra Taylor Smith, National Register Section         

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

March 20, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Suite 500, Continental Building, Main and Markham Streets

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Little Rock

Arkansas

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE   X  

LOCAL   X  

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Joan W. Baalbridge*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE March 20, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE 1

Verbal boundary description of the Dortch Plantation is as follows:

From southeast corner of NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 11, R10W, T1N to southeast corner of Section 14, R10W, T1N, to southwest corner of Section 14, R10W, T1N, from there north along section line to center of Bearskin Lake, then along center of Bearskin Lake to point where center of lake intersects eastern boundary of NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 11, R10W, T1N, from there north to southeast corner of NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 11, R10W, T1N, from there east to starting point.

SKETCH MAP: (USGS) Scott, Arkansas; Scale 1:24,000: R10W, T1N, Sec.11,14

The boundary of the Dortch Plantation nomination is shown as the red line on the accompanying map entitled "Sketch Map of the Dortch Plantation". This map is a USGS Quad (1:24,000).

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

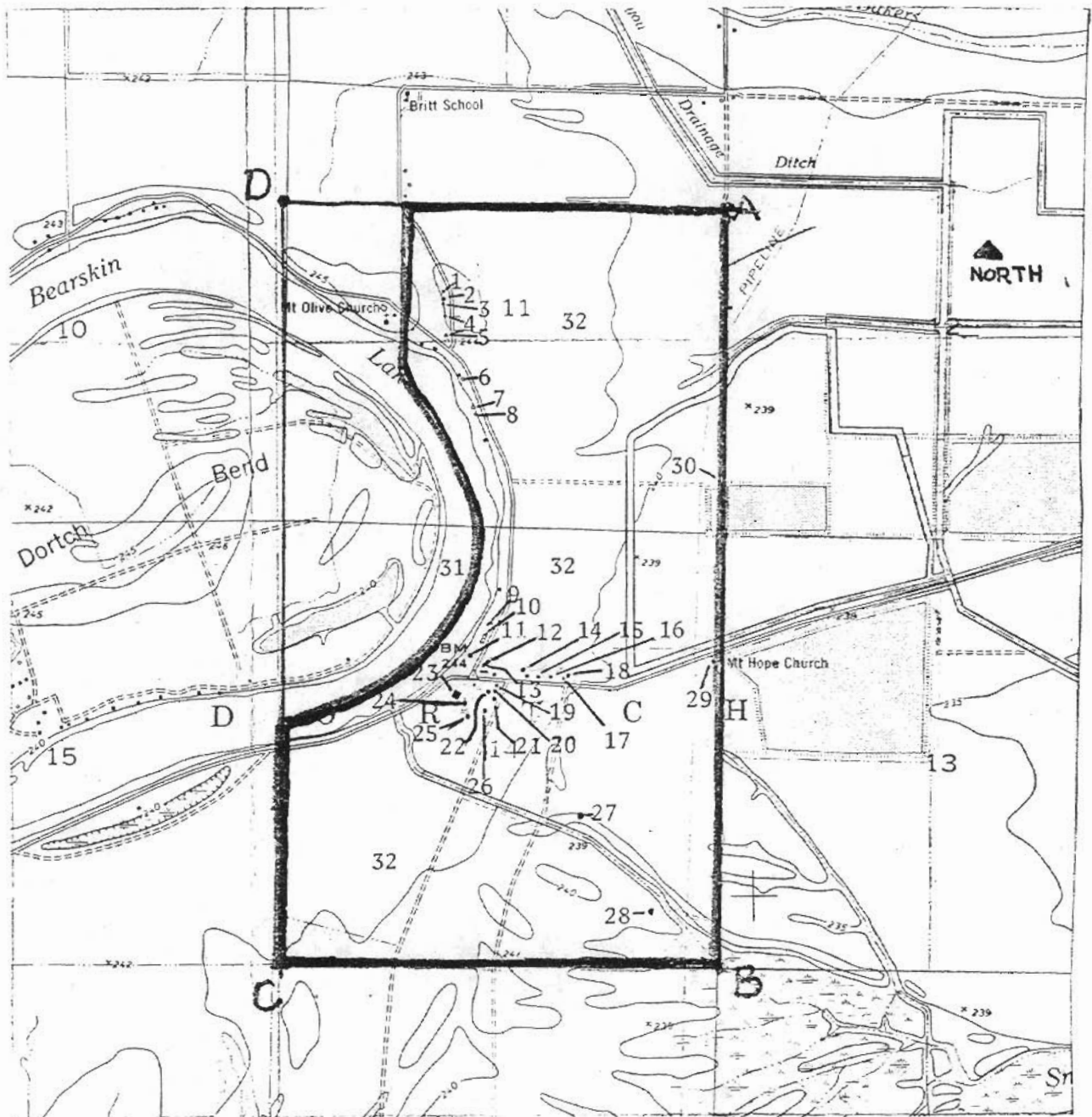
ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

#9 MAJOR BIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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14. Lonoke County Deed Record Book, County Courthouse, Lonoke, Arkansas, Book 72, p. 601.
15. Lonoke County Deed Book, County Courthouse, Lonoke, Arkansas, Book 72, p. 602.
16. Lonoke County Deed Record Book, County Courthouse, Lonoke, Arkansas, Book 78, p. 1.
17. Lonoke County Deed Book, County Courthouse, Lonoke, Arkansas, Book 75, p. 105.
18. Quapaw Quarter Chronicle, May/June, 1975.



# SKETCH MAP OF THE DORTCH PLANTATION



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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE 2

Historic features keyed to sketch map and to features as mentioned in nomination narrative:

1. Tenant house
2. Cotton pen
3. Tenant house
4. Tenant house
5. Tenant house
6. Wagon shed
7. Barn
8. Shop
9. Corn crib
10. Mule barn
11. Gear room
12. One-half of nineteenth-century plantation house
13. Storage shed
14. Cotton pen
15. Tenant house
16. Tenant house
17. Tenant house
18. Outdoor toilet
19. Commissary
20. Farm bell
21. Cotton pen
22. One-half of nineteenth-century plantation house
23. Marlsgate
24. Carriage house
25. Dairy barn
26. Cow barn
27. Mule-cooling tree
28. Underground silo
29. Site of Mt. Hope Church
30. Tenant house
31. Bearskin Lake
32. Fields

ADDITIONAL SKETCH MAP  
DORTCH PLANTATION

↑  
N.R. BOUNDARY

32

32

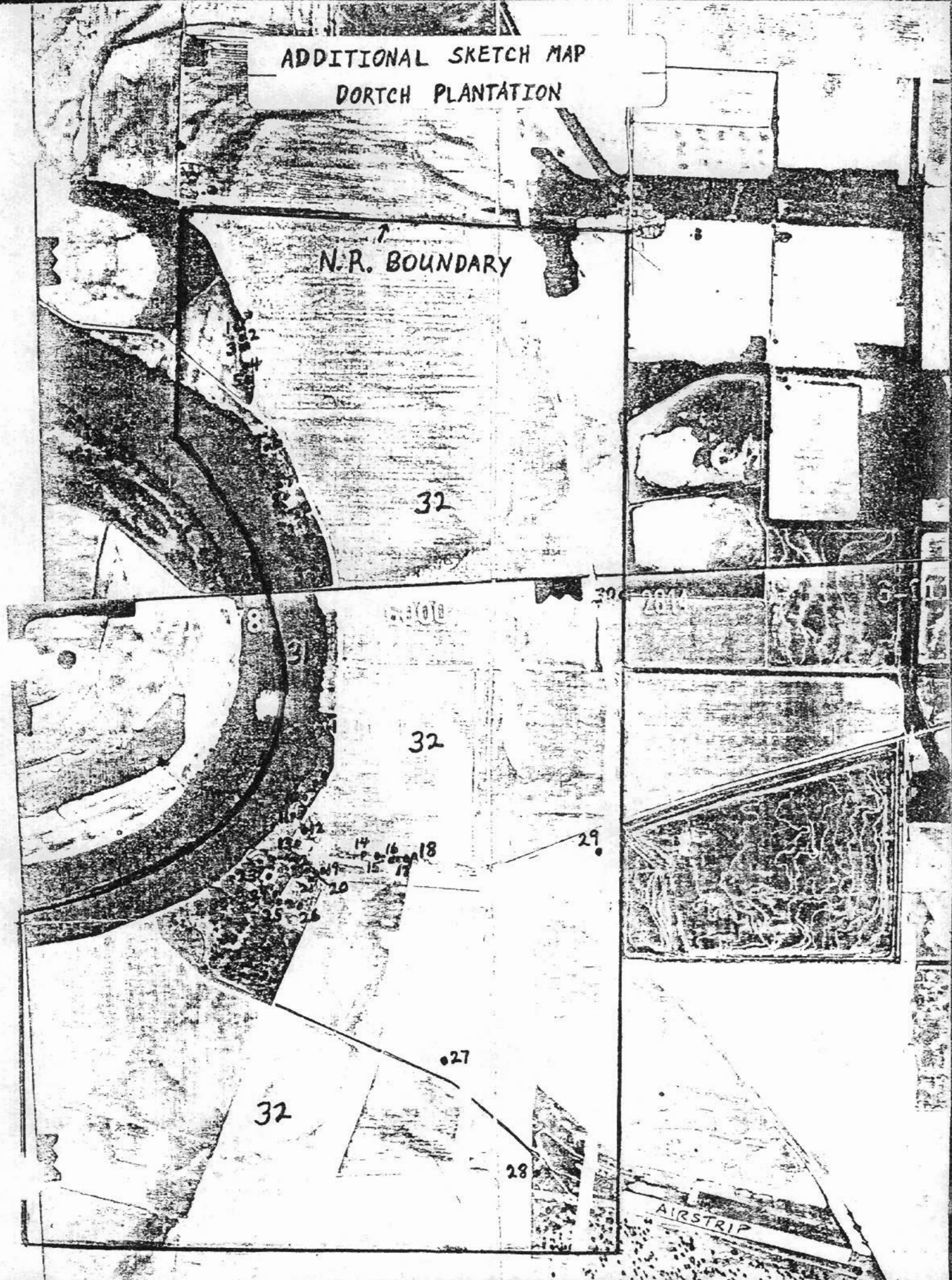
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27

28

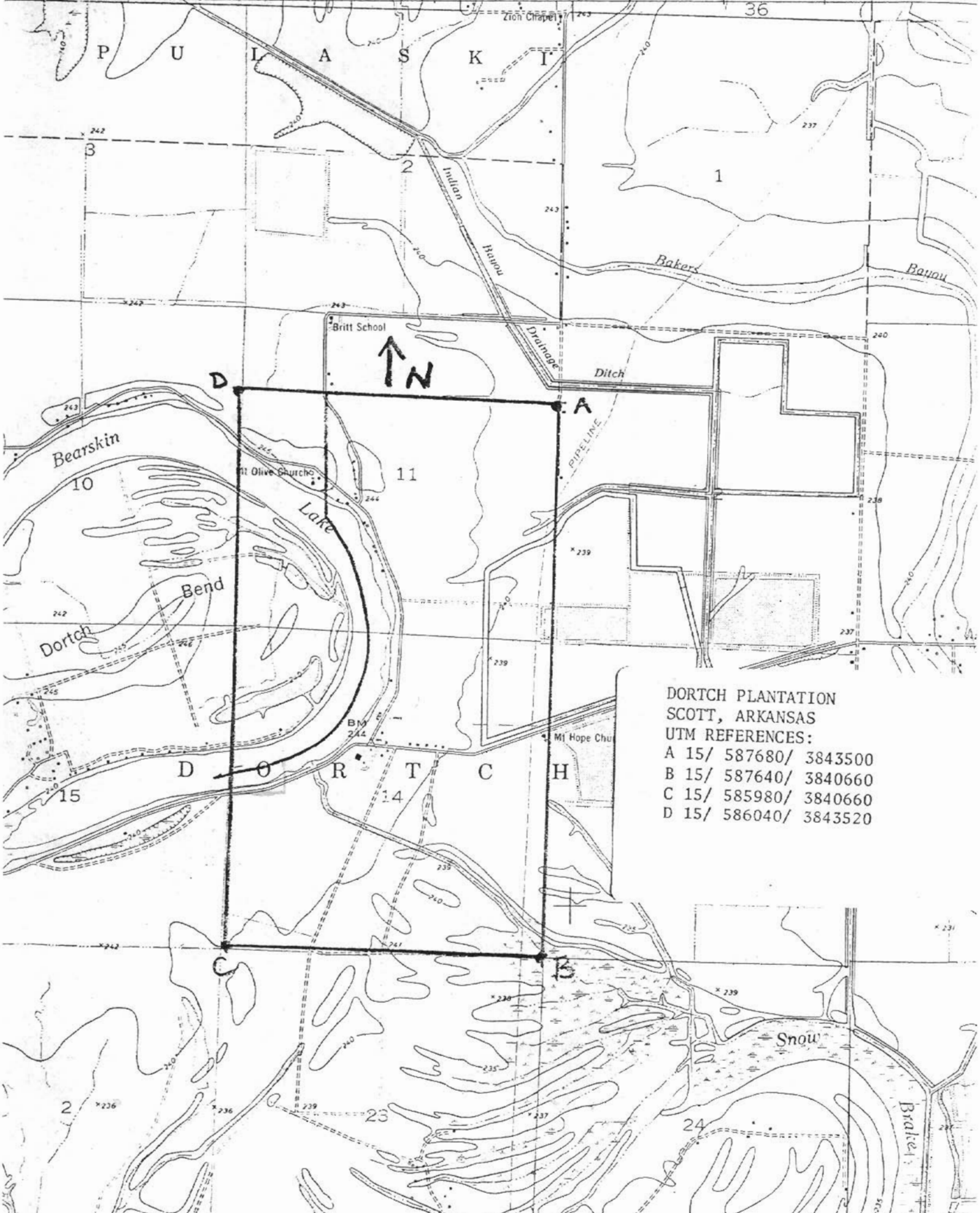
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7553 / SE (JACKSONVILLE)

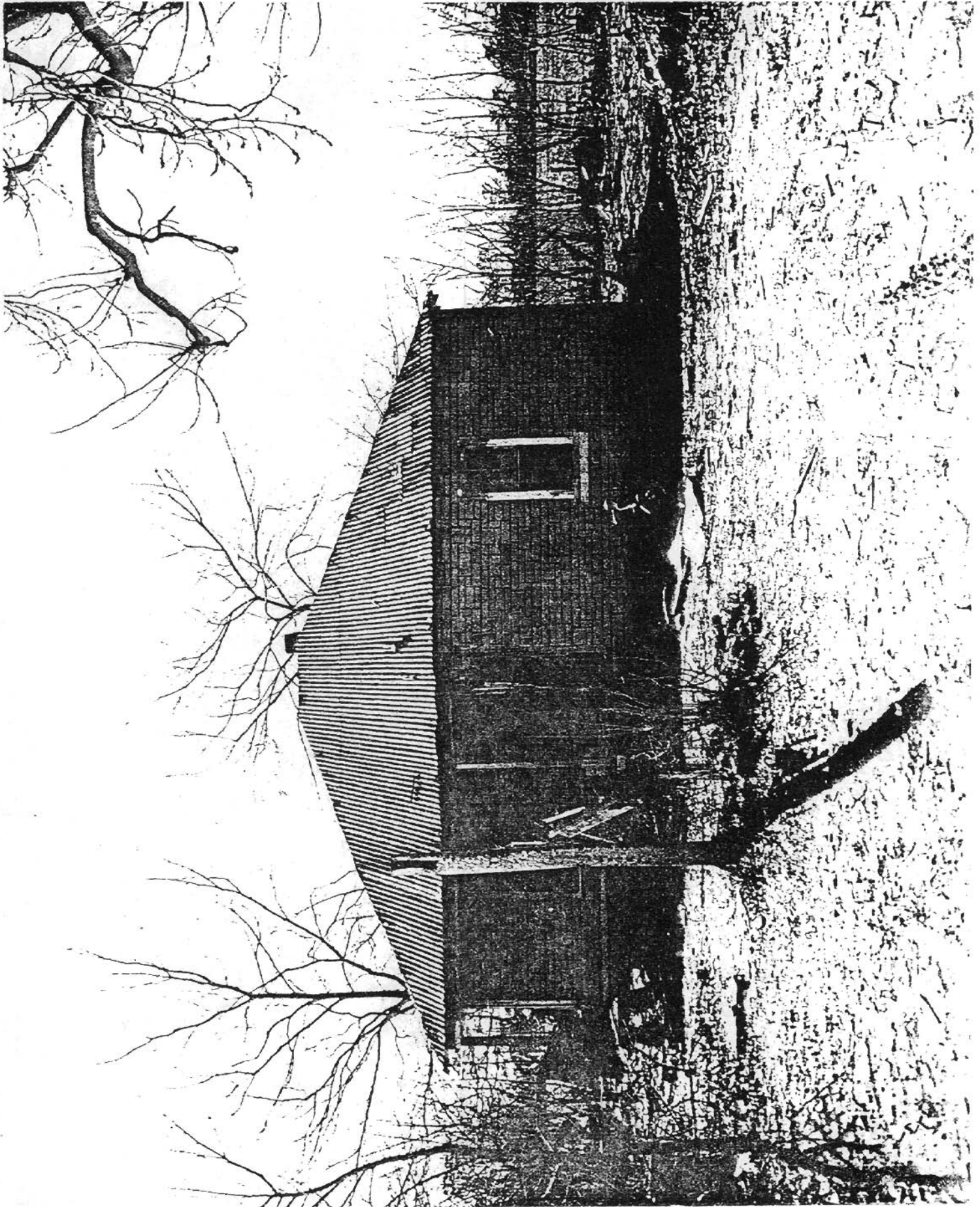
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1 990 000 FEET

R. 10 W. R. 9 W.

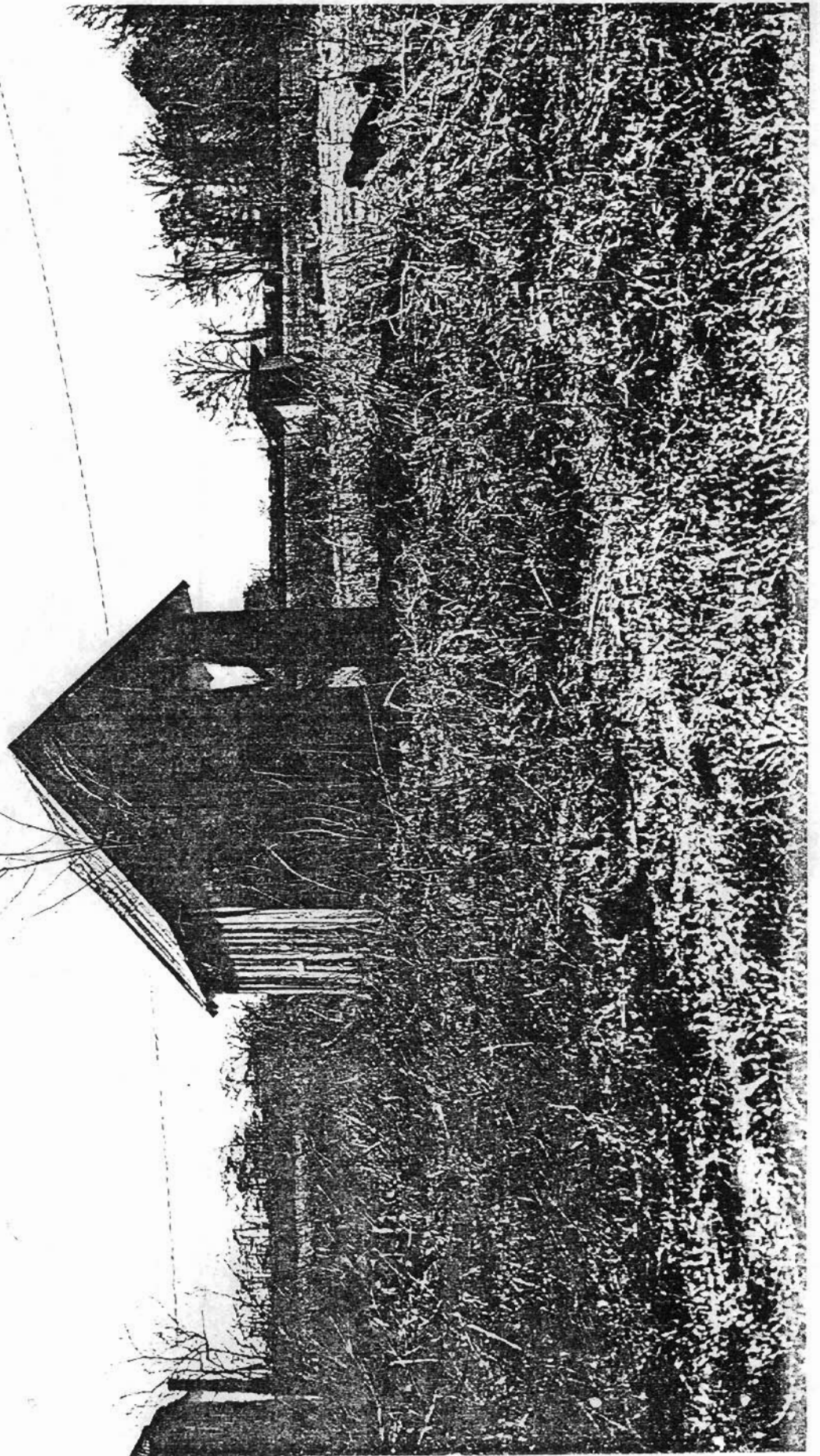


DORTCH PLANTATION  
 SCOTT, ARKANSAS  
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 A 15/ 587680/ 3843500  
 B 15/ 587640/ 3840660  
 C 15/ 585980/ 3840660  
 D 15/ 586040/ 3843520



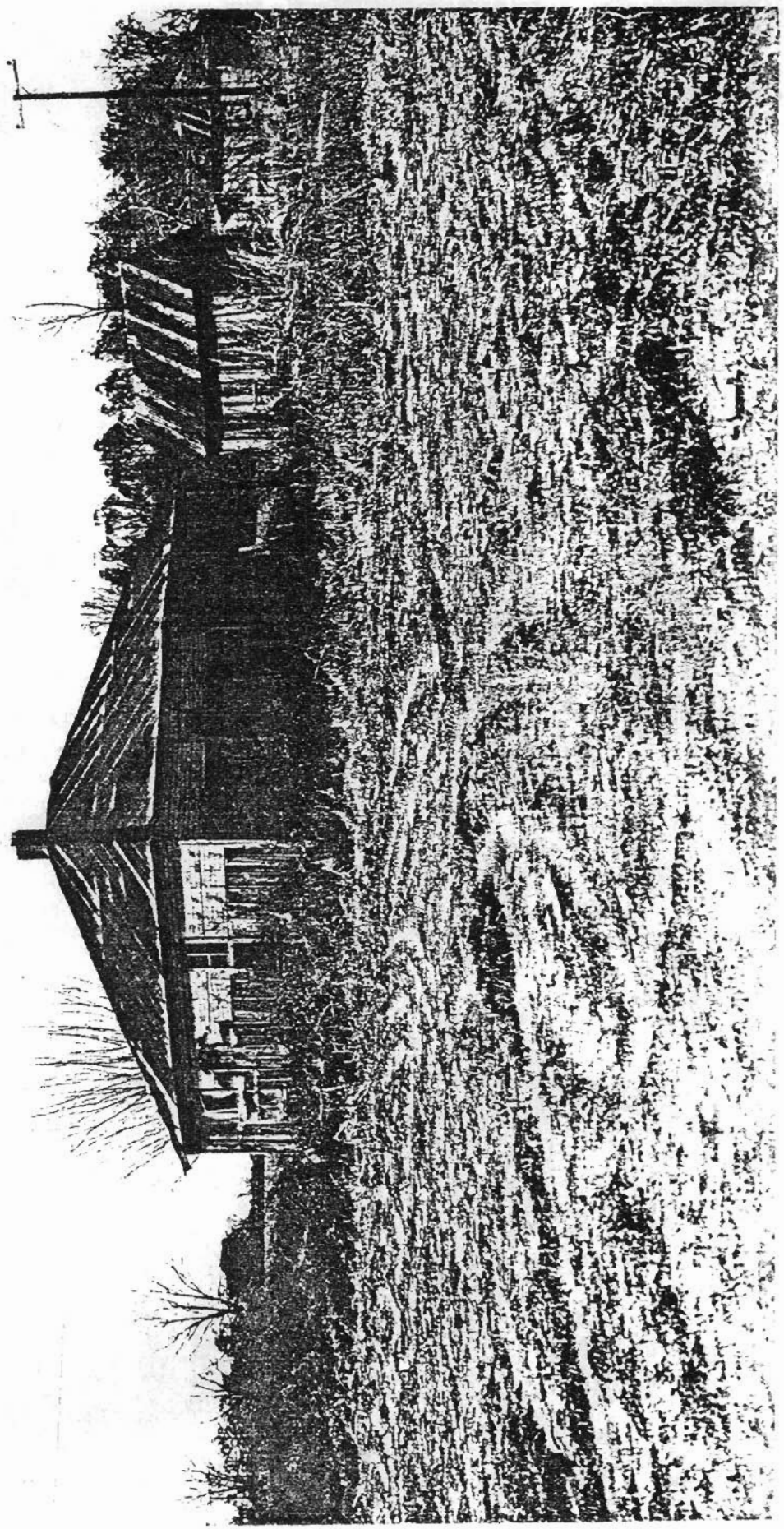


- Dortch Plantation  
Scott, Arkansas  
3. March, 1979  
4. Jack Doss  
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
6. #1; Tenant House; viewed from the east  
7. photo # 1



1. ch Plantation
2. t, Arkansas
3. March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. #2; Cotton pen; veiwed from the east
7. photo # 2



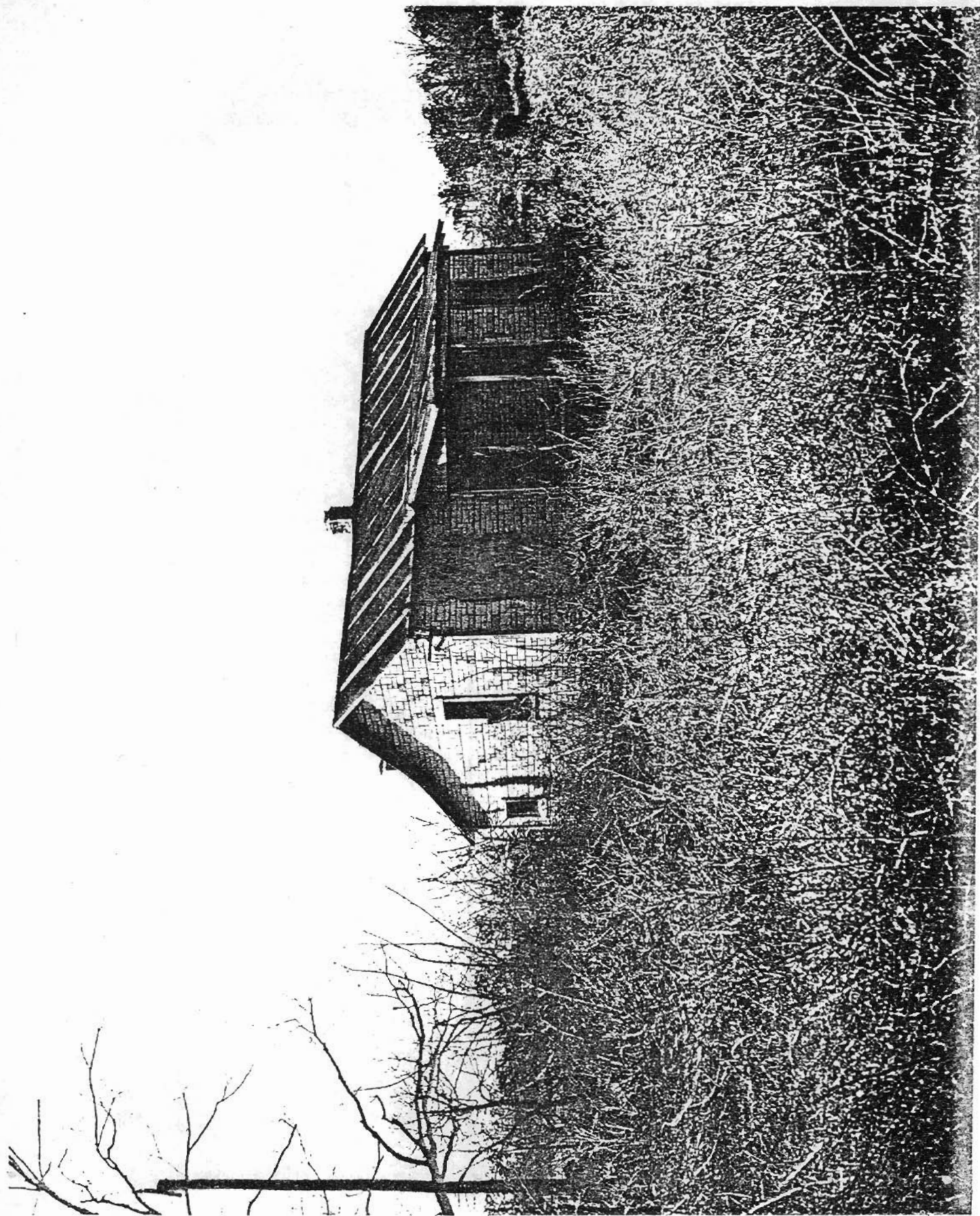


1. ch Plantation
2. Scott, Arkansas
3. March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. #3; Tenant House; viewed from the south-  
east
7. photo # 3

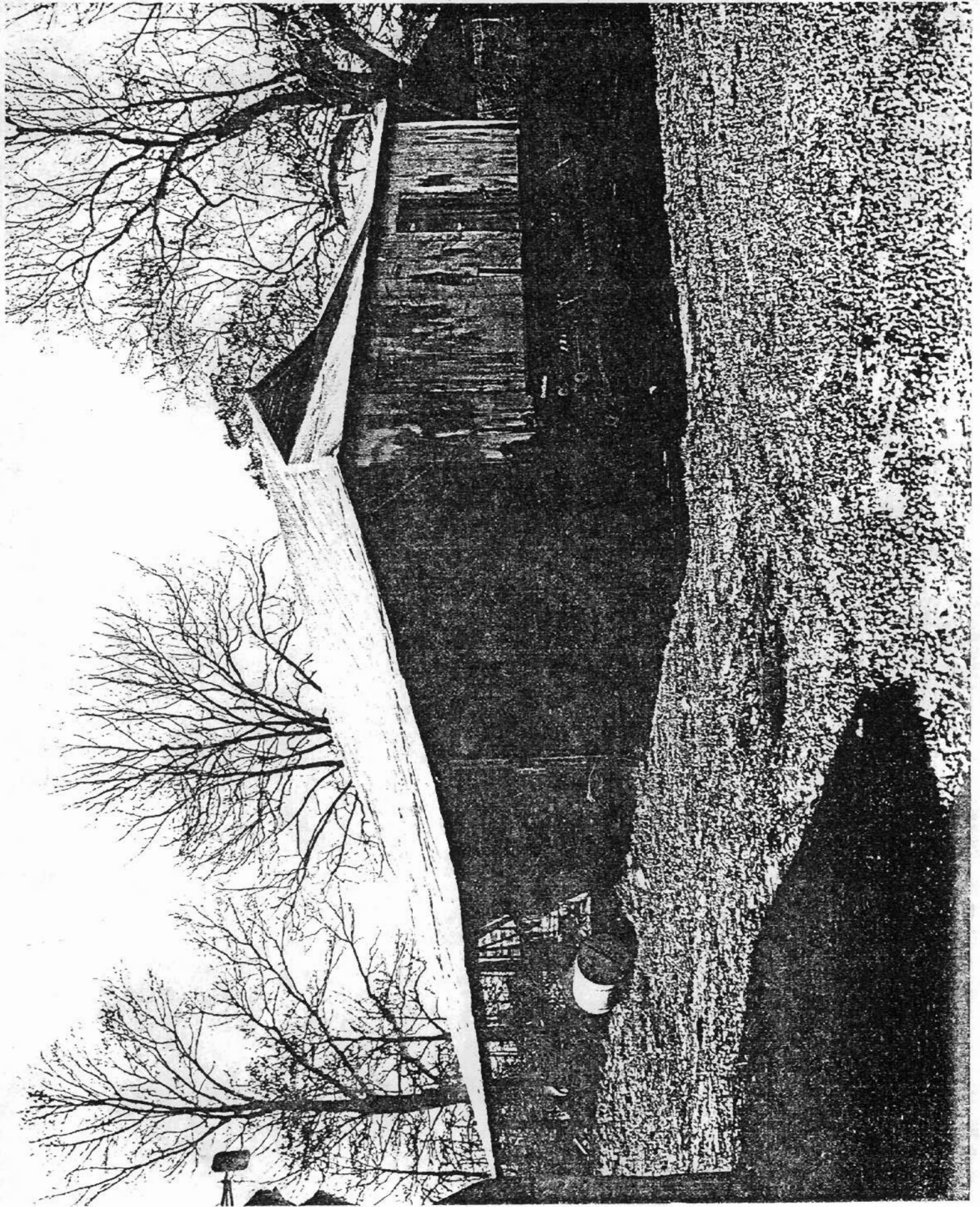


1. De Plantation
  2. Se... Arkansas
  3. March, 1979
  4. Jack Doss
  5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
  6. #4; Tenant House; viewed from the south-east
  7. photo # 4
-



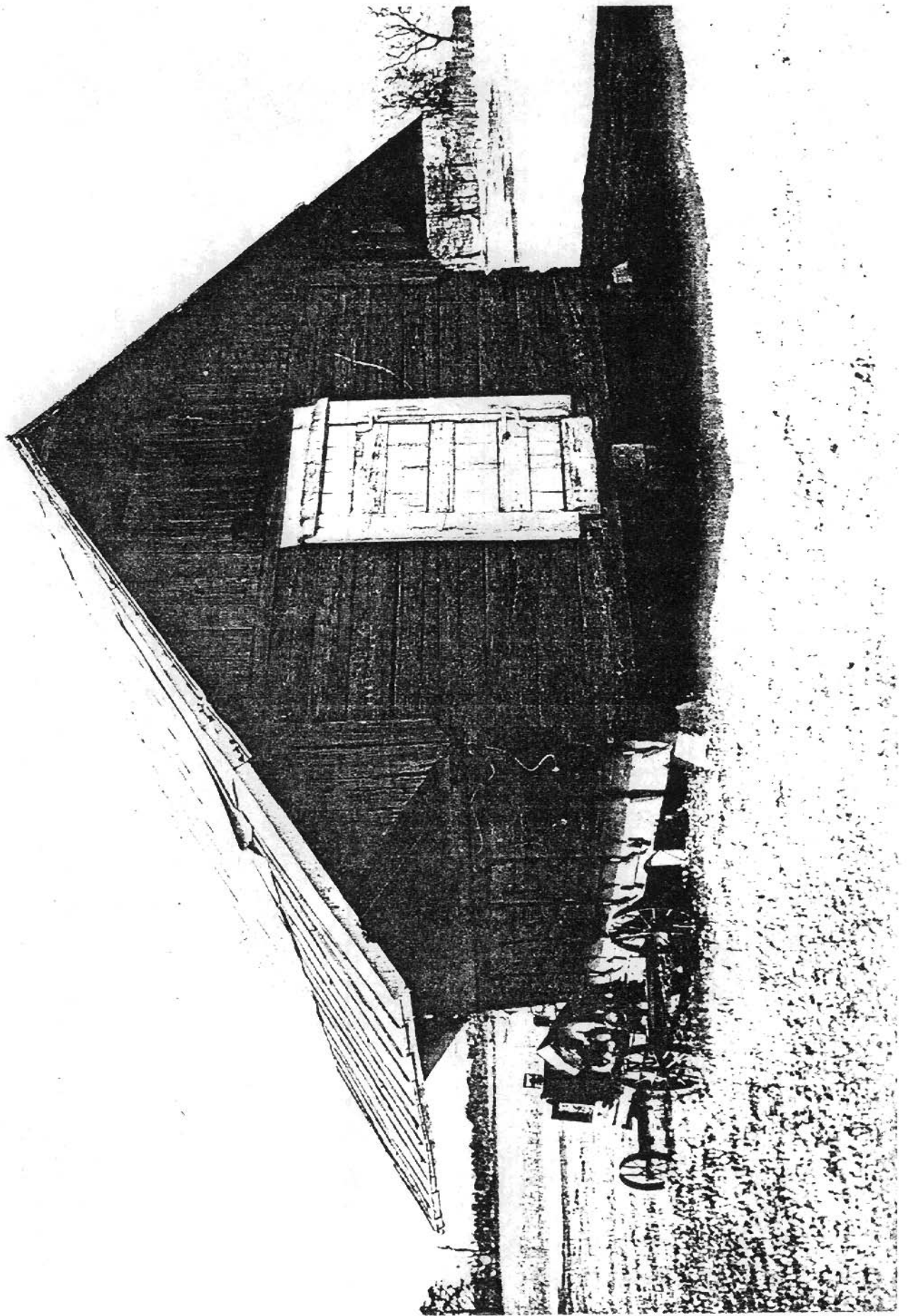


1. tch Plantation
2. t, Arkansas
3. March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. #5; Tenant House; viewed from the south-  
east
7. photo # 5

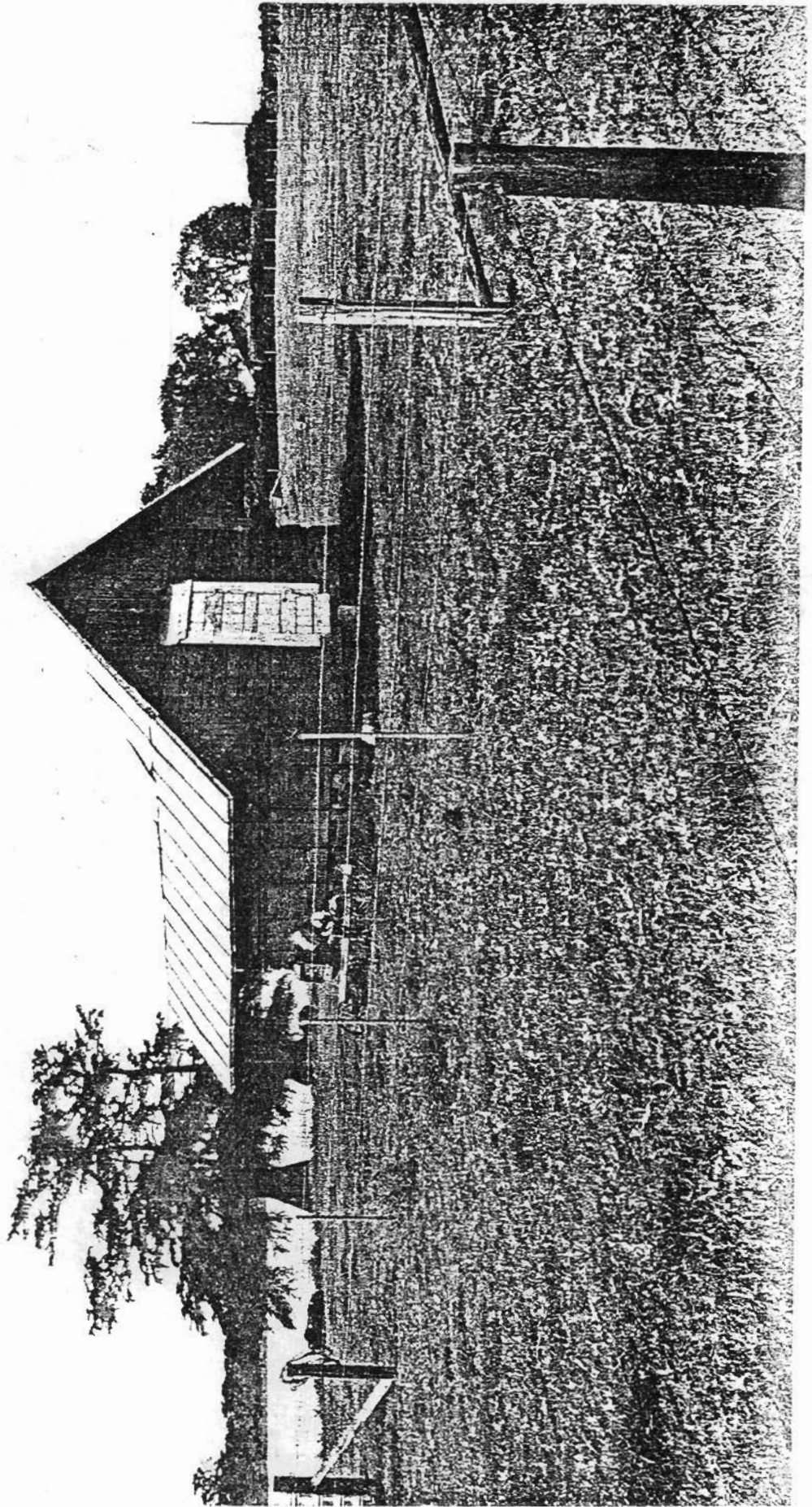


1. E. S. Plantation
2. S. , Arkansas
3. March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. # 7; Barn; viewed from the southeast
7. photo # 6



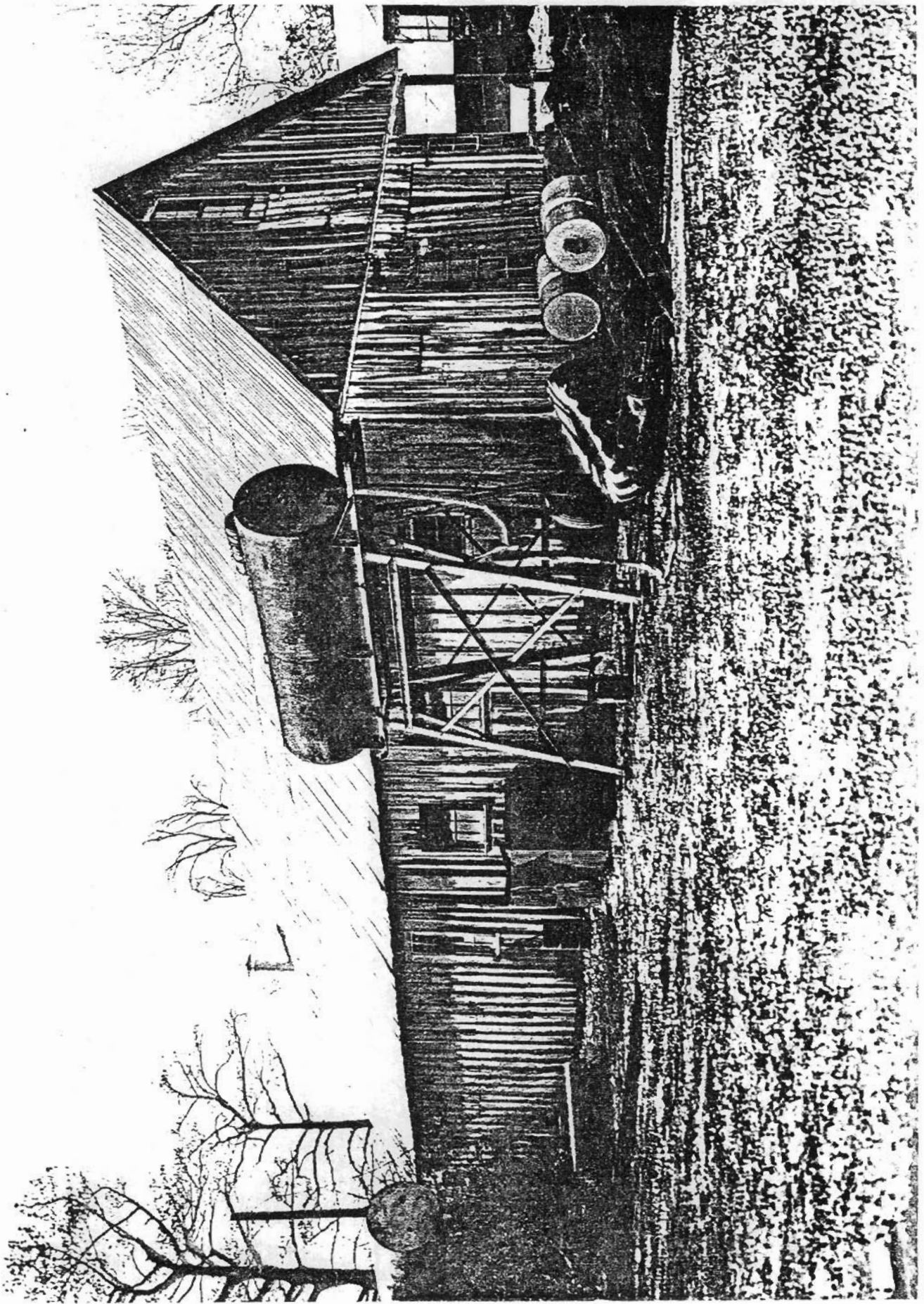


1. Do Plantation
  2. Sci Arkansas
  3. March, 1979
  4. Jack Doss
  5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
  6. #9; Corn Crib; viewed from the southeast
  7. photo # 8
-

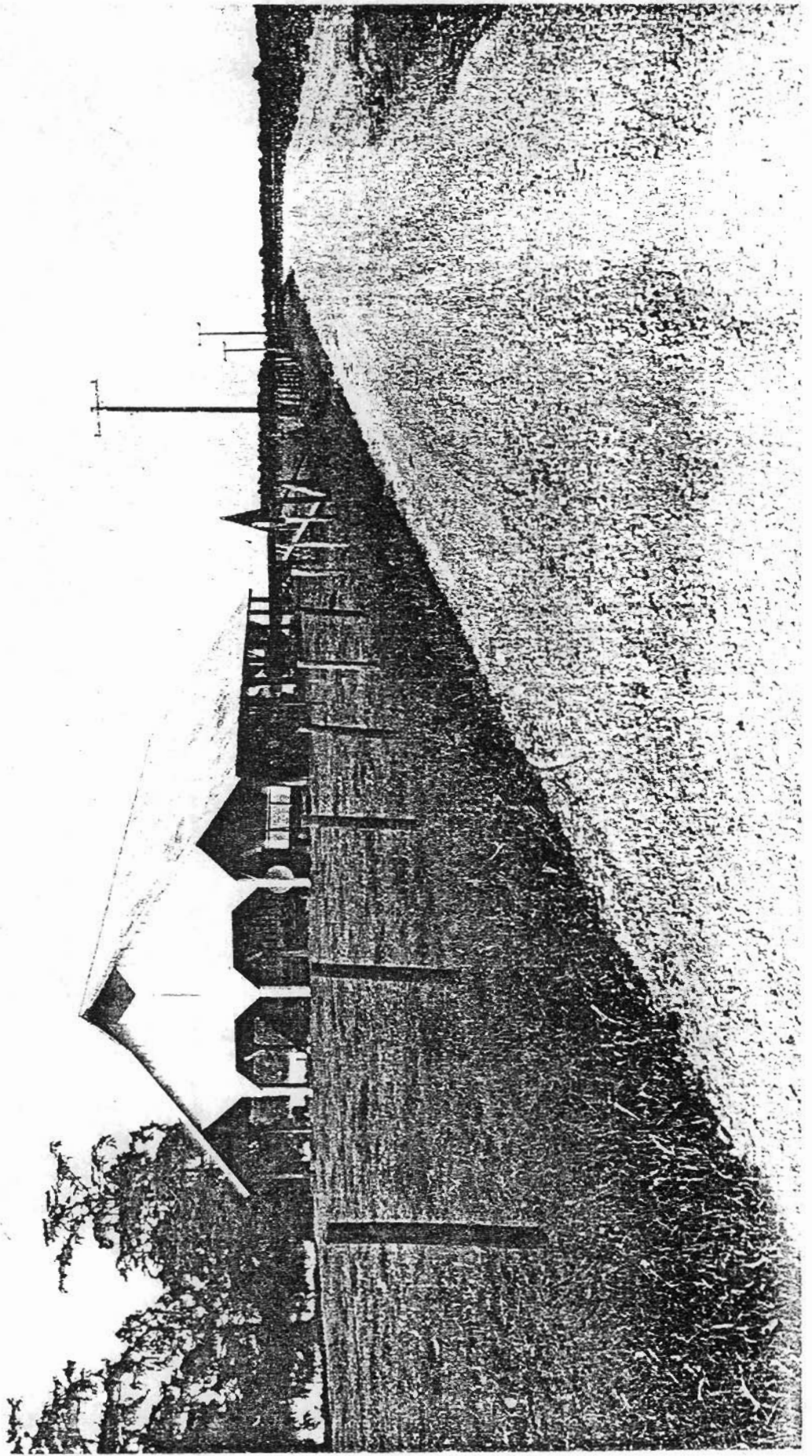


1. D -h Plantation
2. S , Arkansas
3. March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. #9; Corn Crib;
7. photo # 9



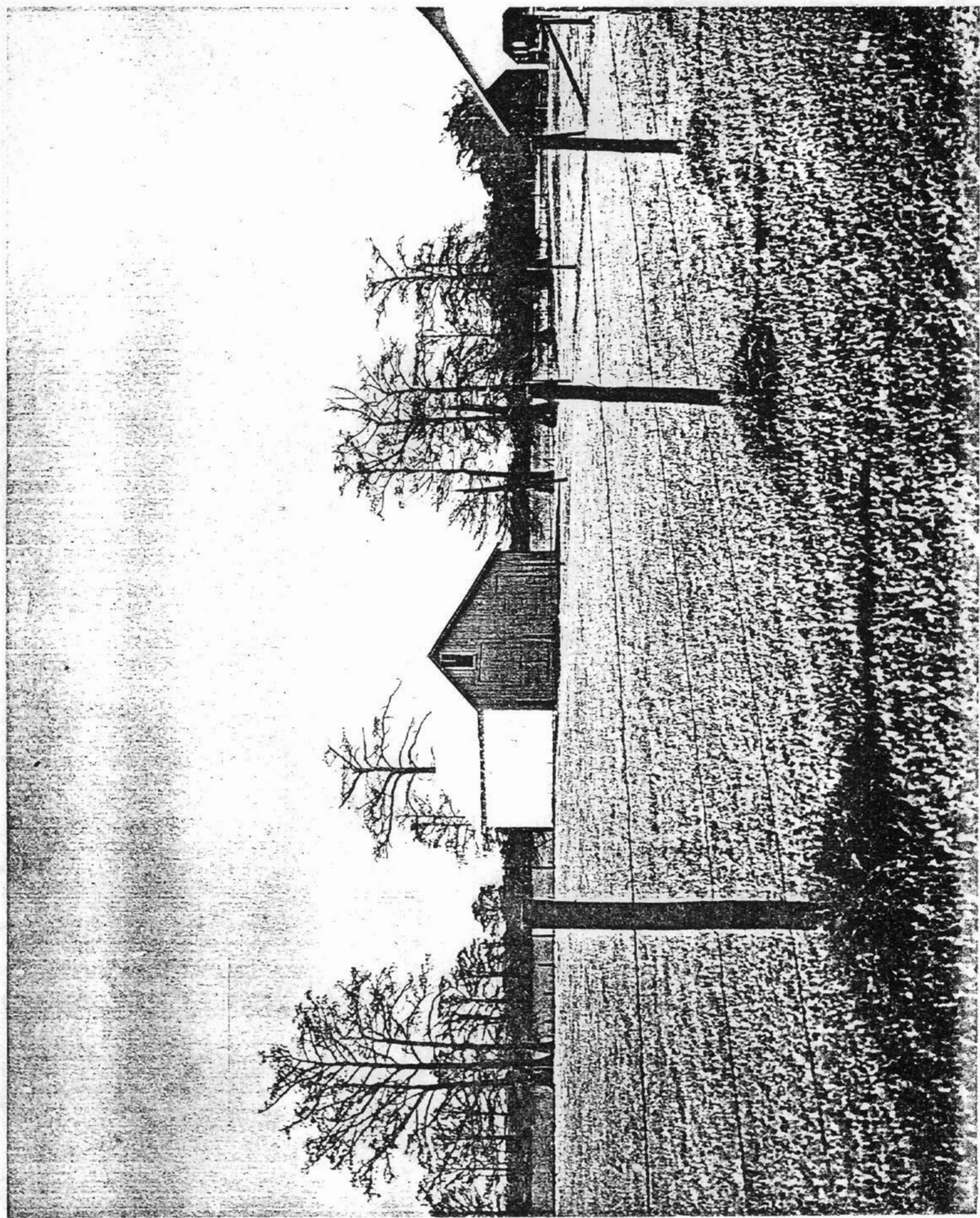


1. Do Plantation
2. Soc Arkansas
3. March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. # 8; Shop; viewed from the southeast
7. photo # 7

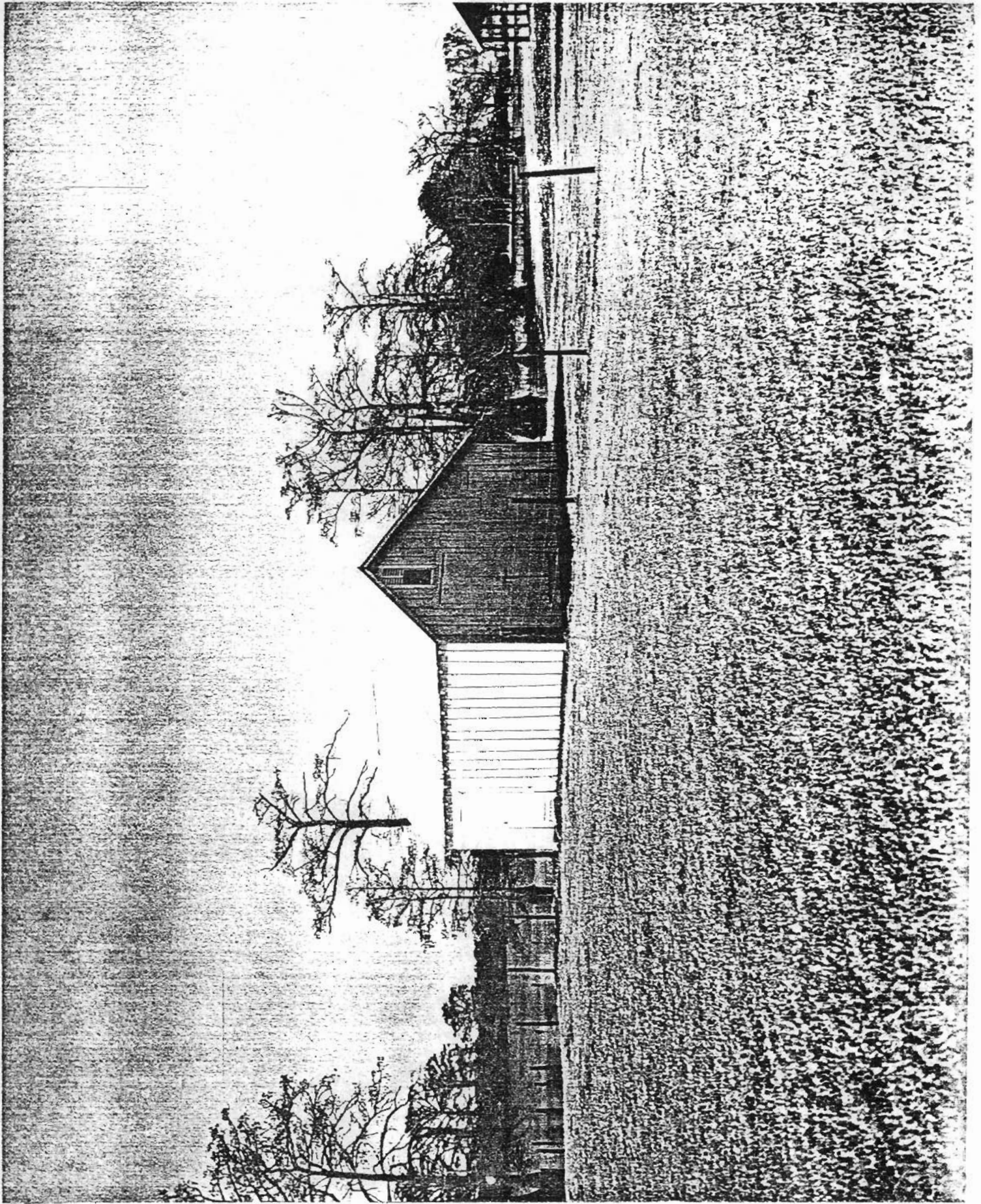


1. Do: Plantation
2. Sec Arkansas
3. March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. # 10; mule barn
7. photo #10



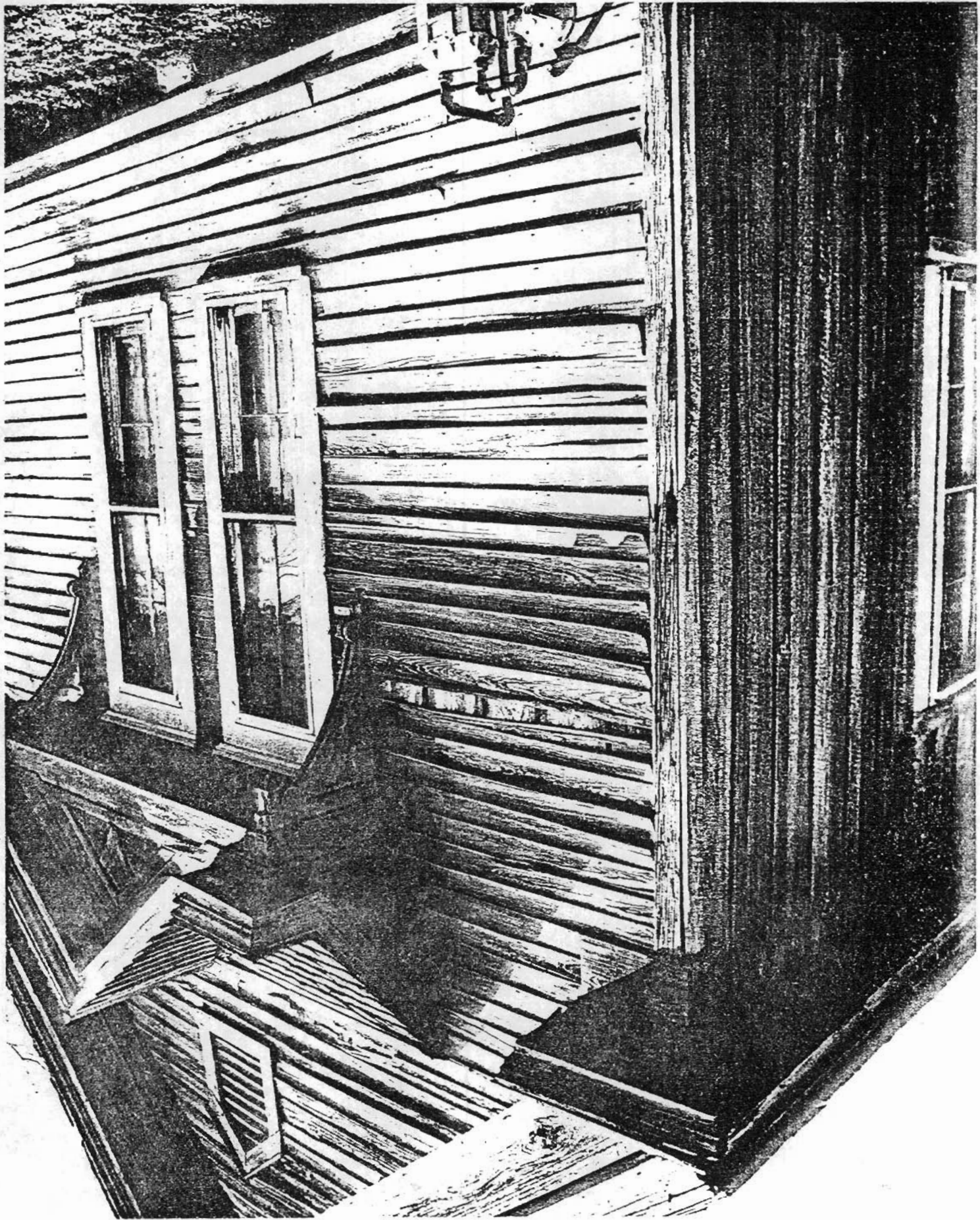


1. Dort 'lantation
2. Scott, Arkansas
3. March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. #11; Gear room; viewed from the southeast
7. photo # 11

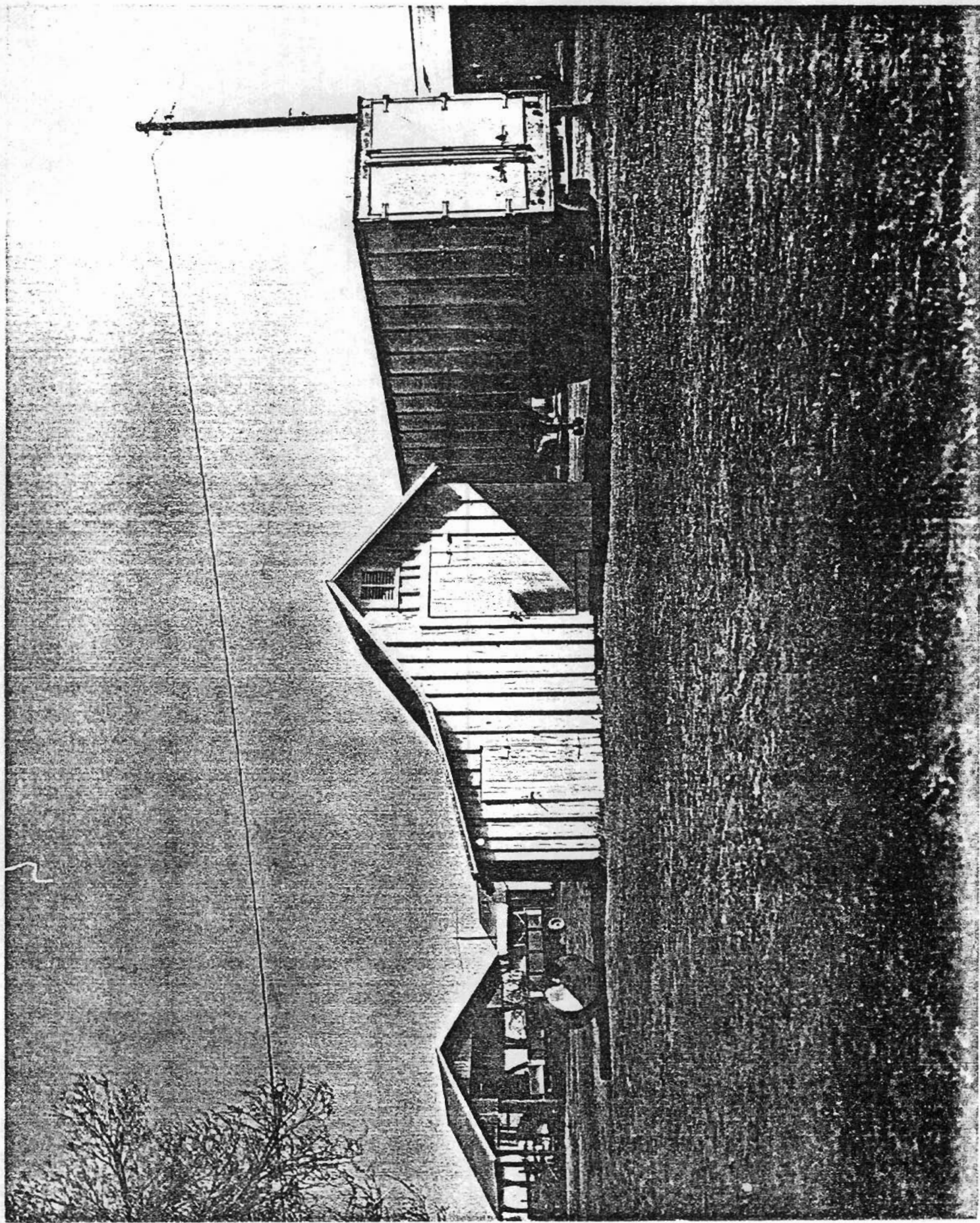


1. Do ' Plantation
2. Sc , Arkansas
- 3... March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. #11; Gear Room; viewed from the southeast
7. photo # 12



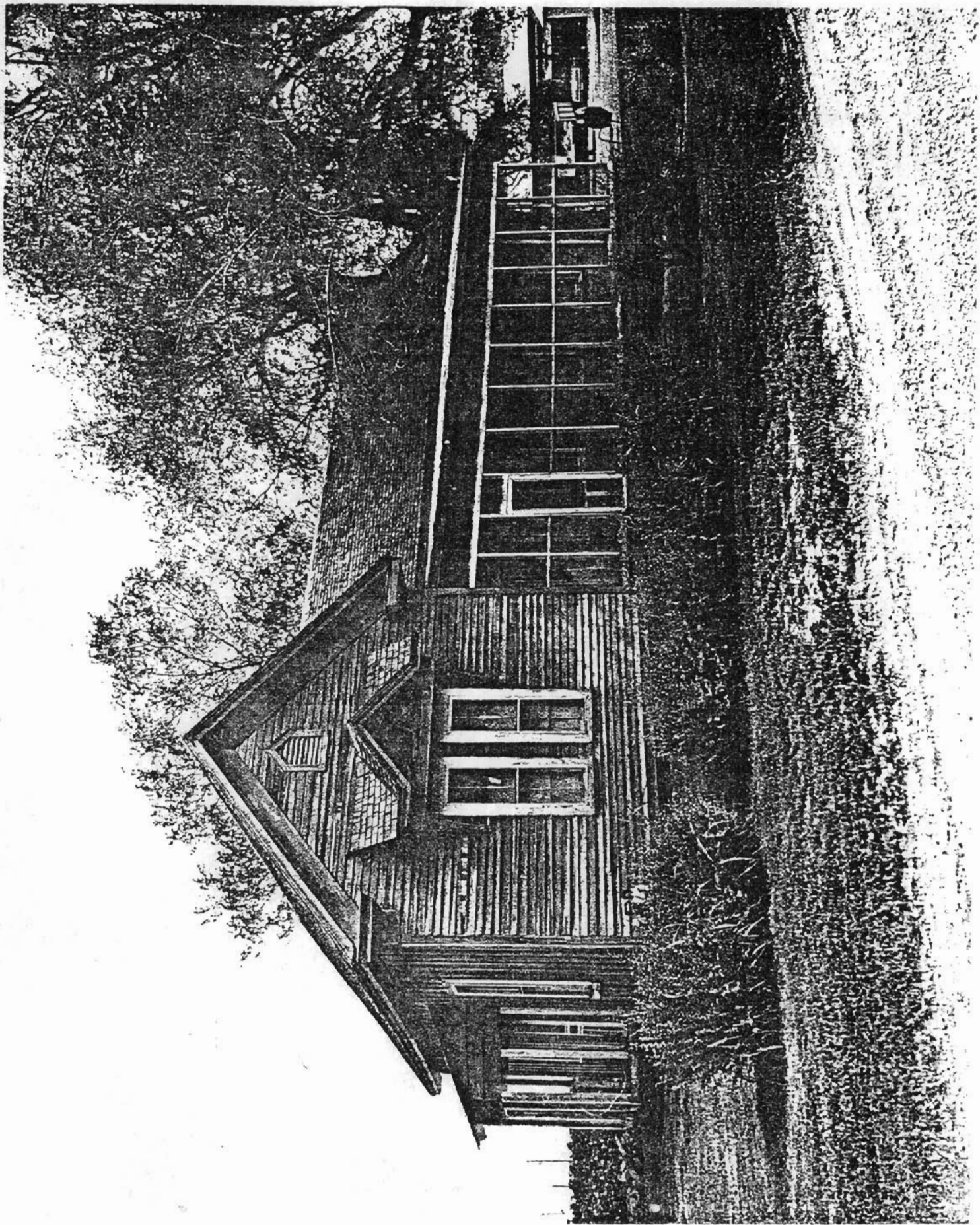


1. Dorte antation
2. Scott Kansas
3. March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. #12; detail of  $\frac{1}{2}$  original house
7. photo # 14

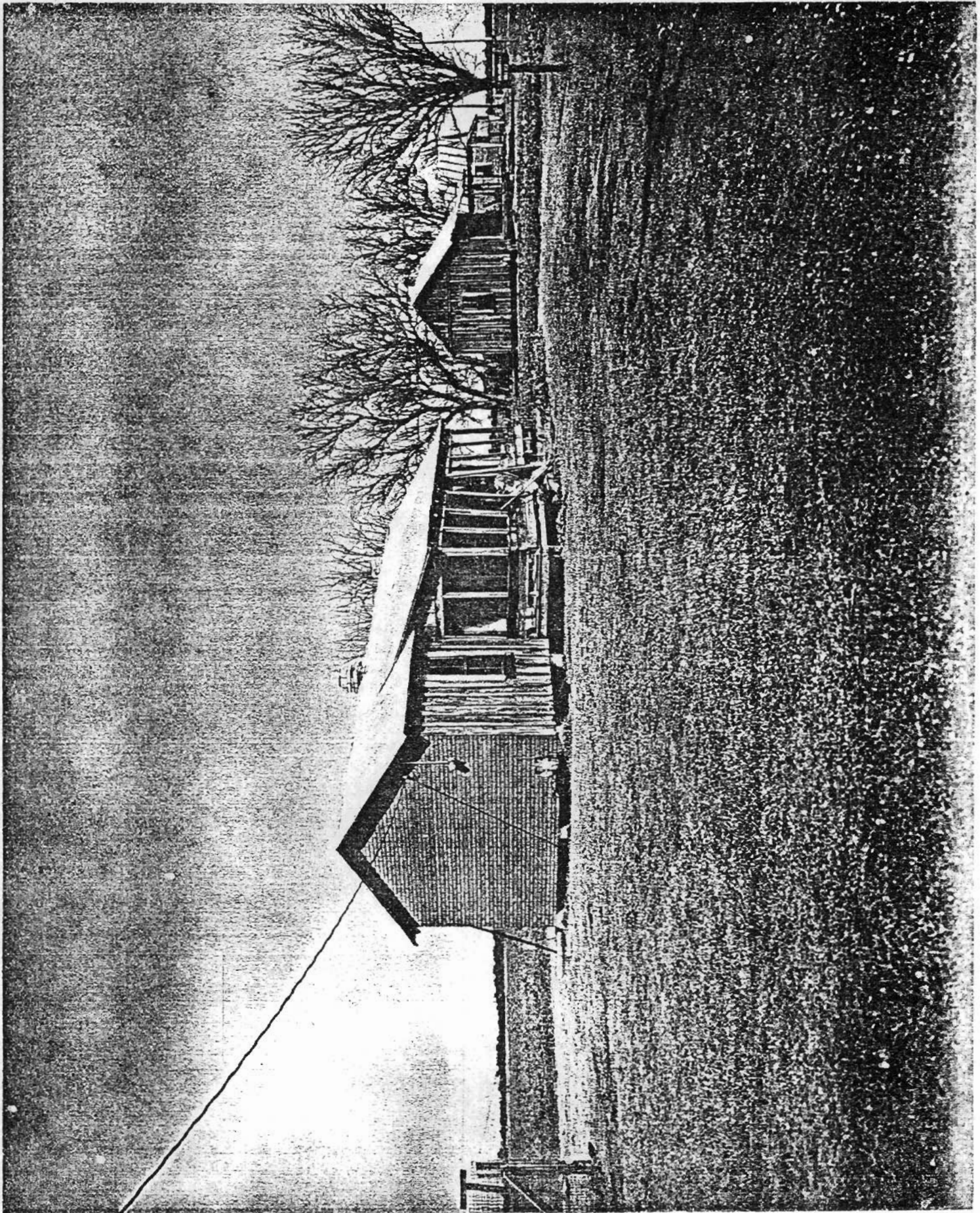


1. Dorte lantation
2. Scott, .rkansas
3. March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. # 13; Storage Shed; viewed from the west
7. photo # 15





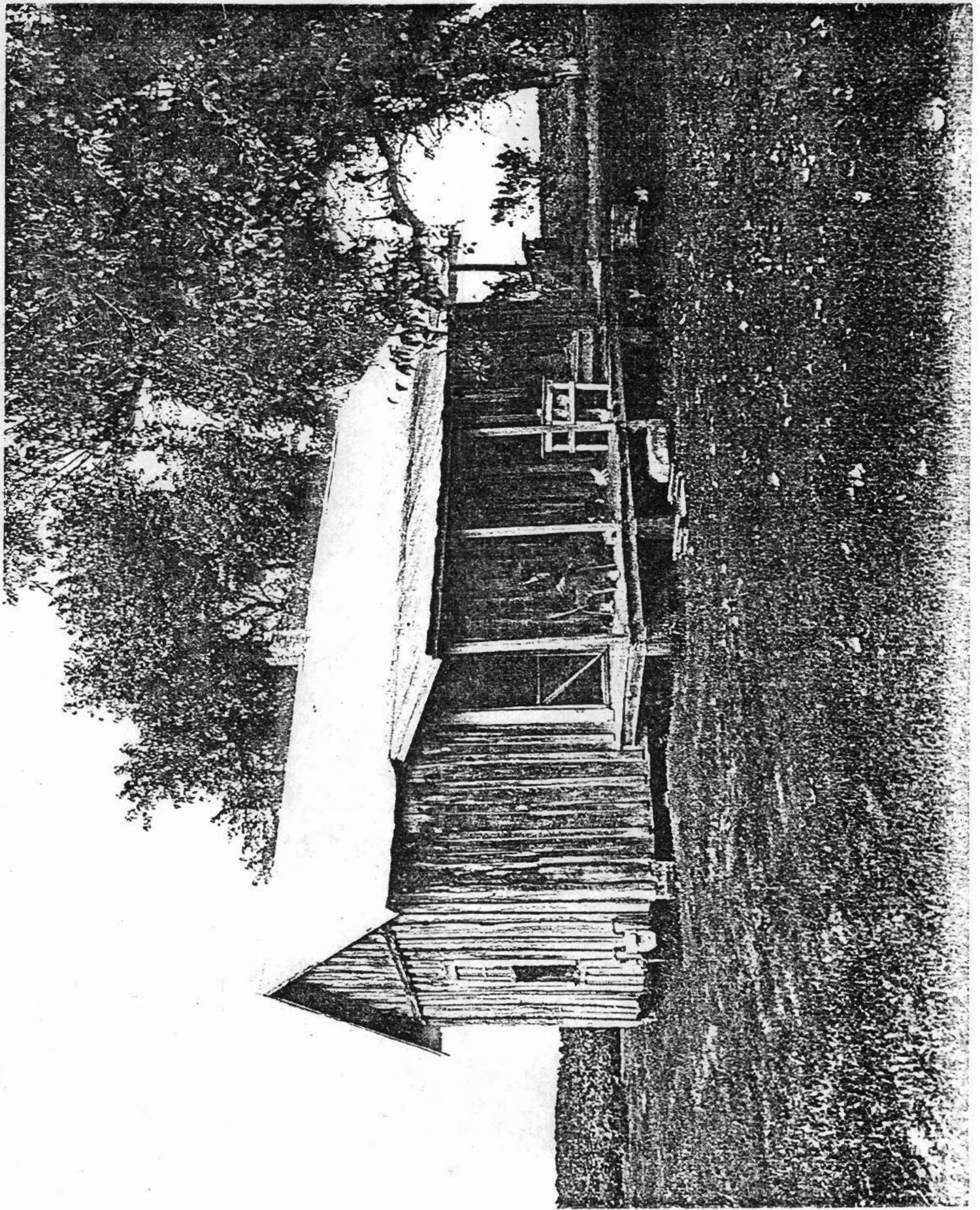
1. Dort Plantation
  2. Scott Arkansas
  3. March, 1979
  4. Jack Doss
  5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
  6. #12; 1/2 of the original house
  7. photo # 13
-



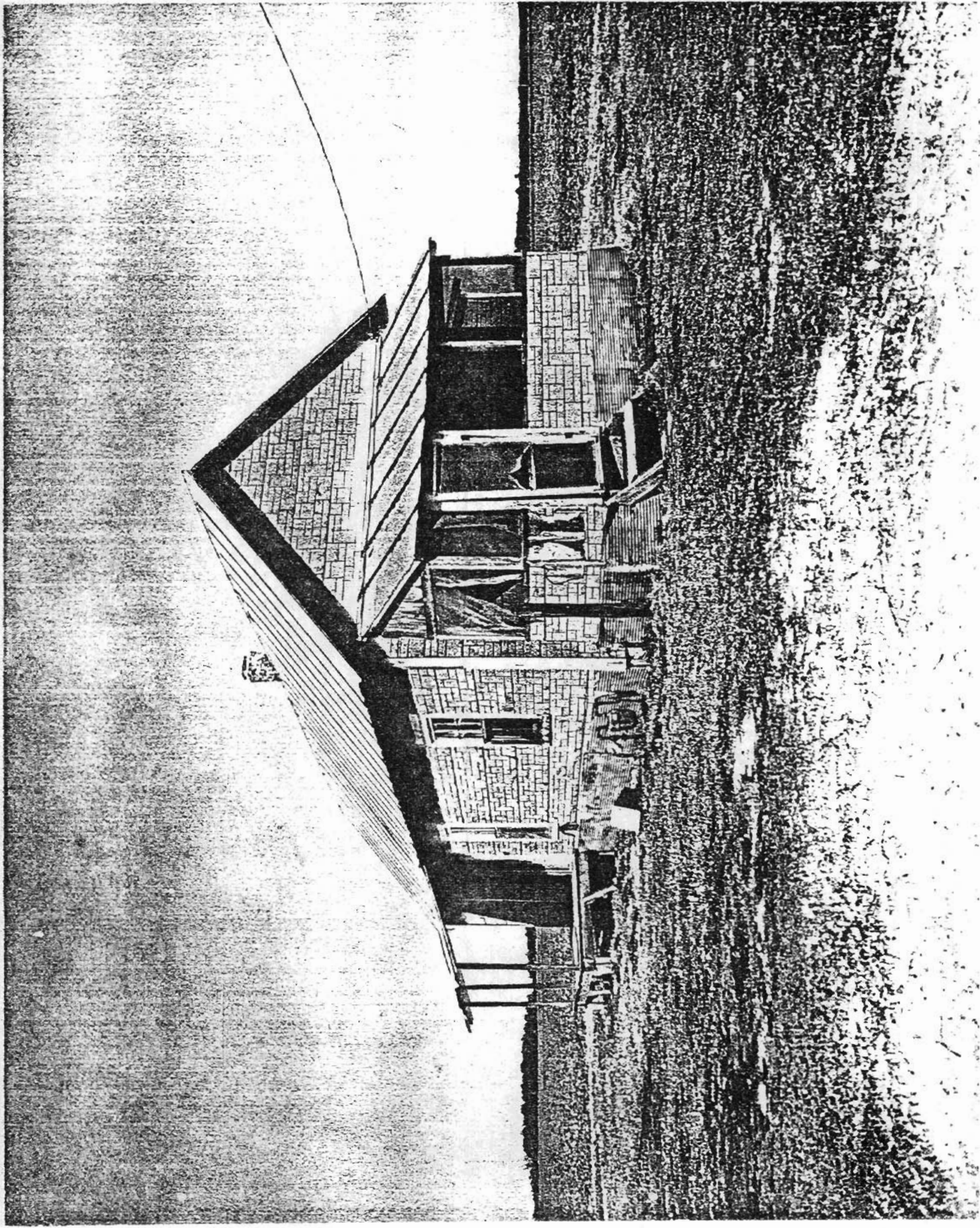


1. D .h Plantation
2. Sc , Arkansas
3. March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. #15,16,17; Tenant houses; viewed from the west-southwest
7. photo # 16



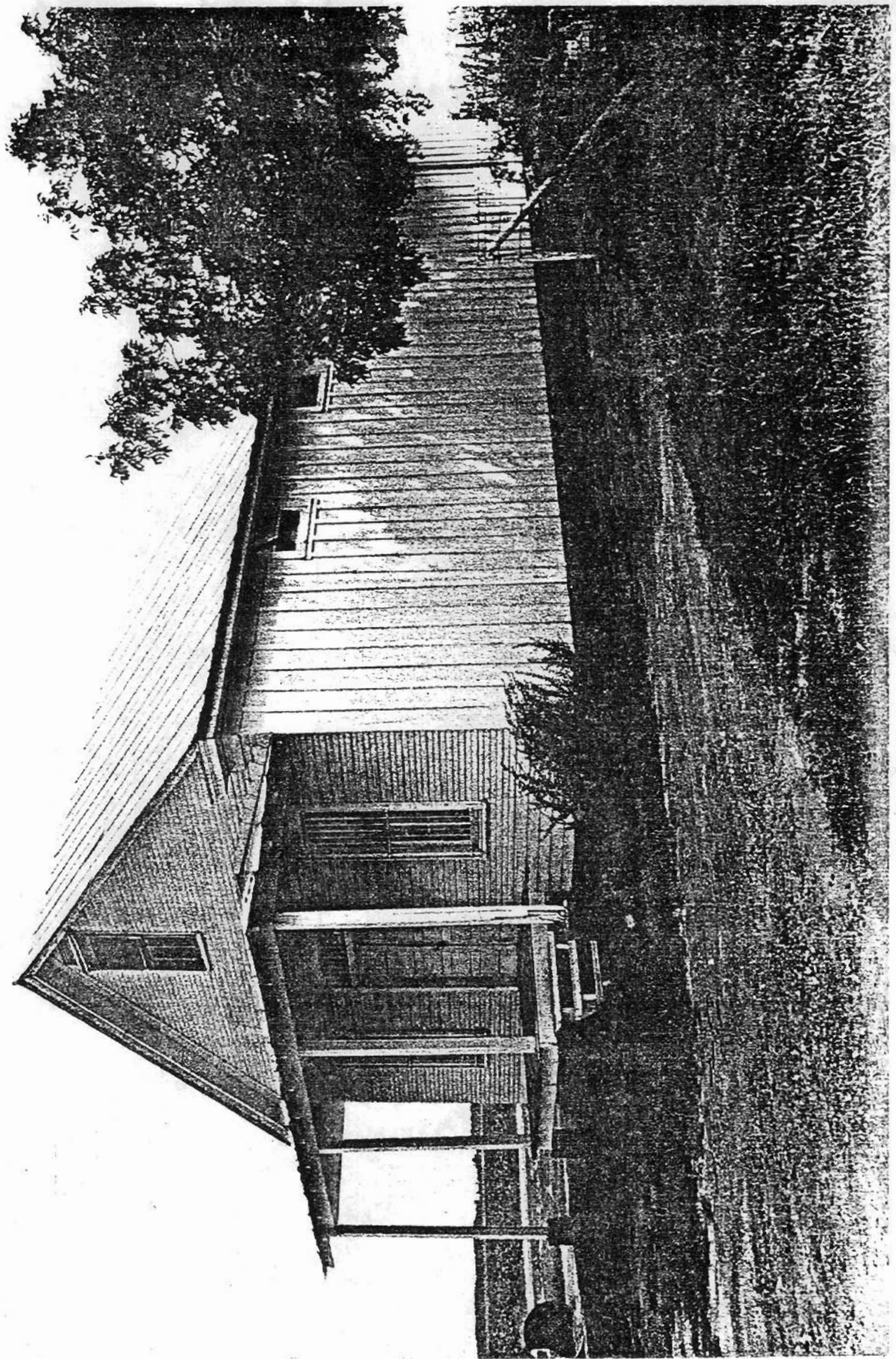


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  3. Mar... 1979
  4. Jack Doss
  5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
  6. # 16; Tenant House
  7. photo # 17
-

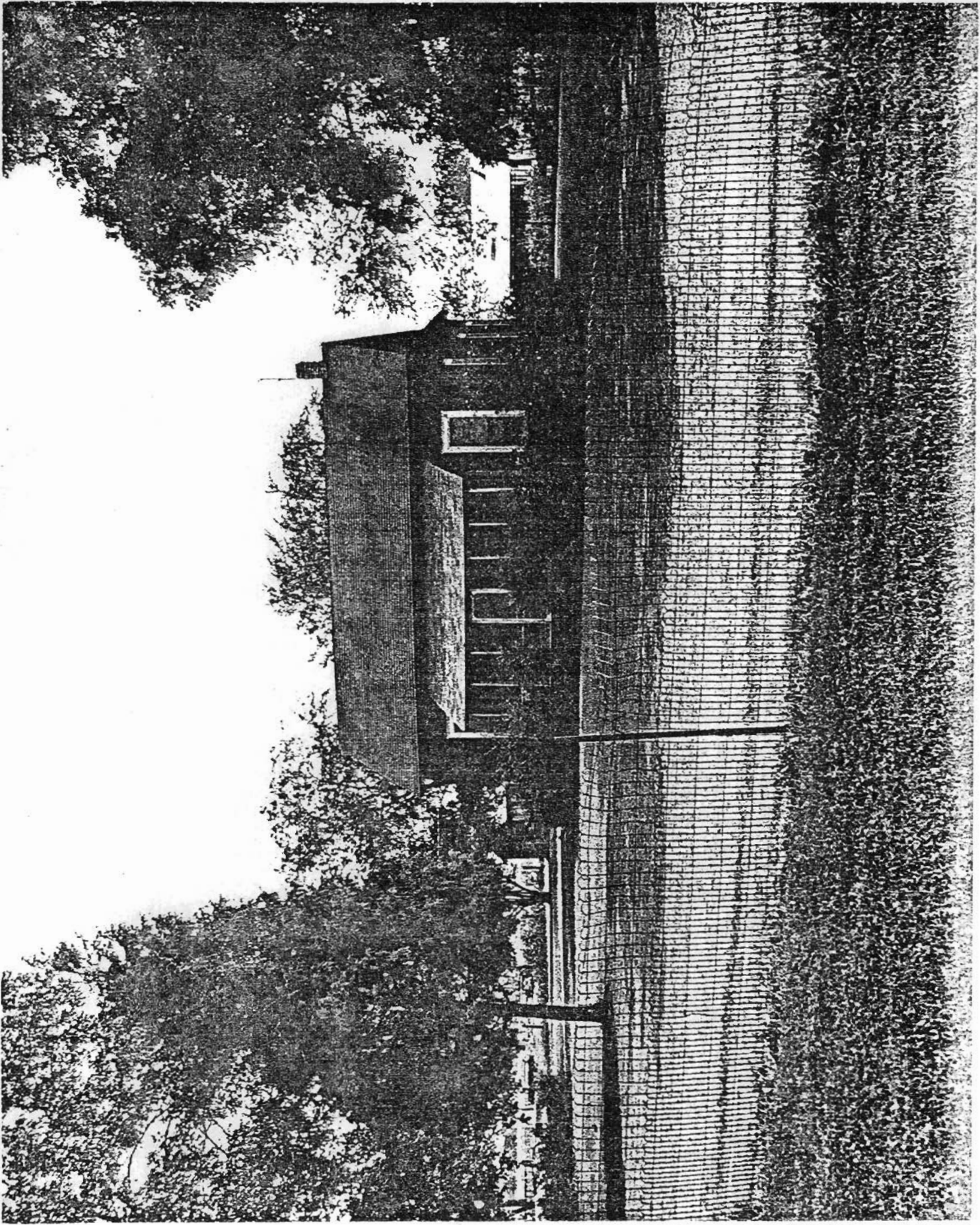


1. WORCESTER BATTALION
2. Scott, Arkansas
3. March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. #17; Tenant House; viewed from the south
7. photo # 18



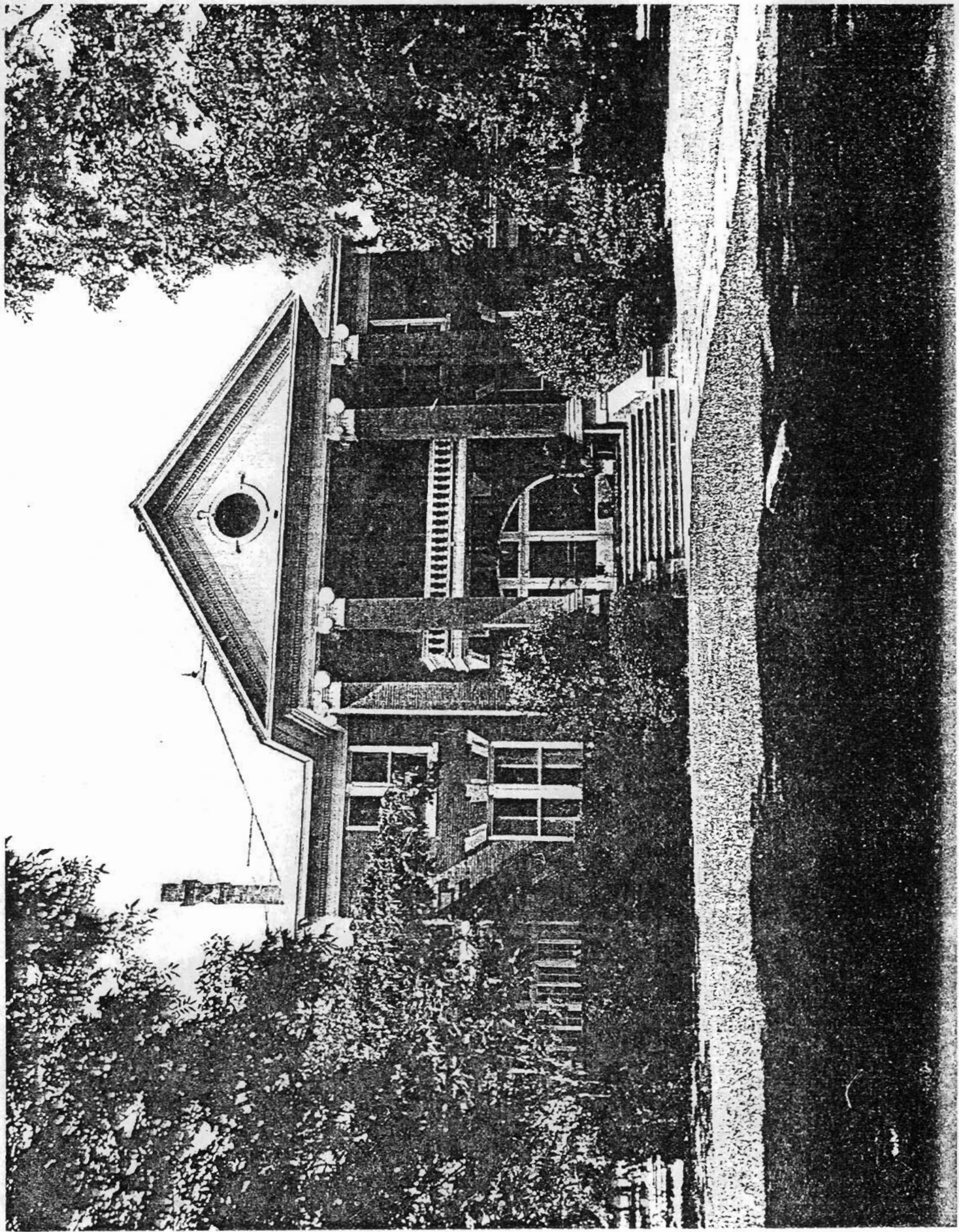


1. UORIC SHILLON
2. Scott, Kansas
3. March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. #19; Commissary
7. photo #19



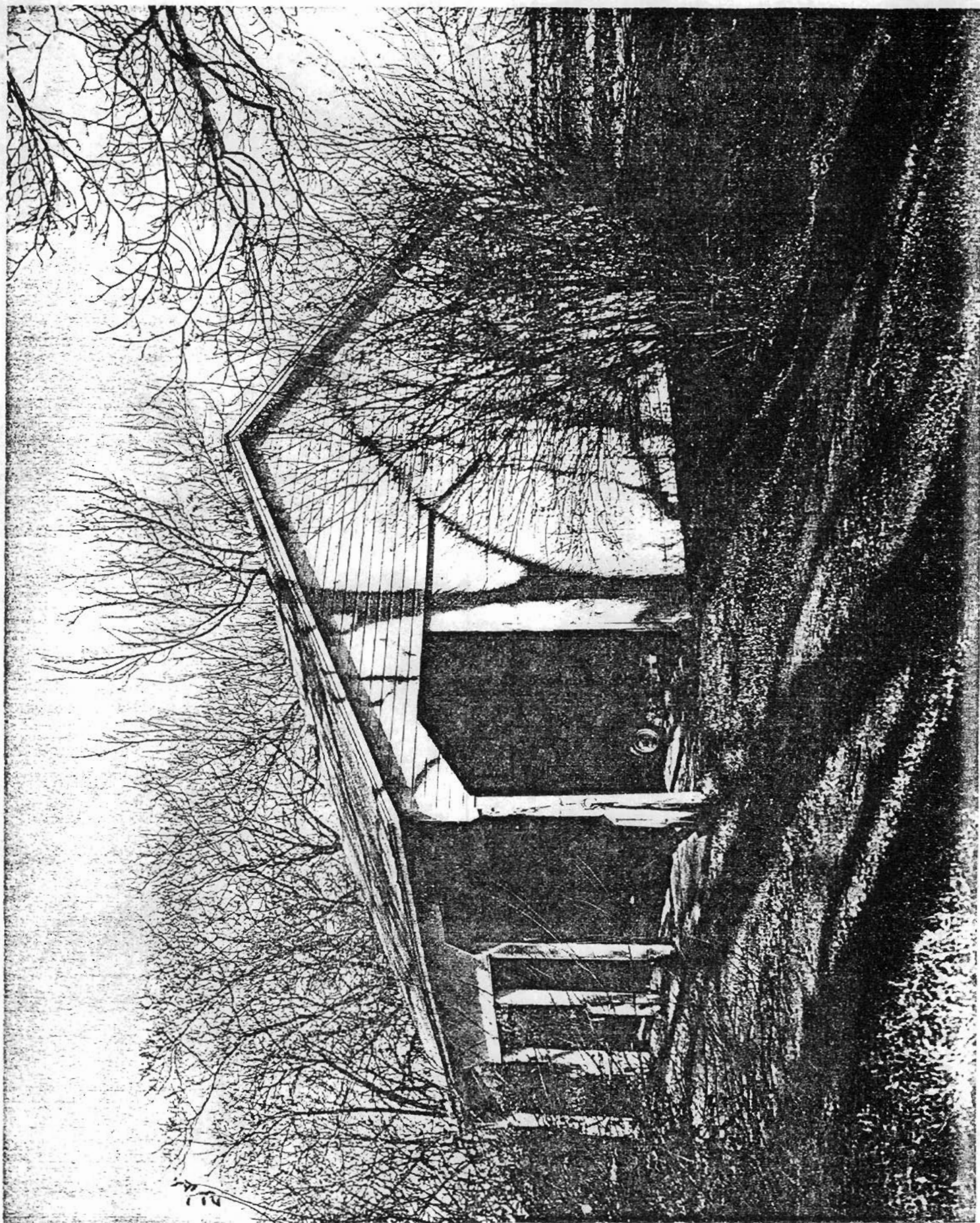
1. Scotti Kansas
2. March, 1979
3. Jack Doss
4. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
5. # 22; 1/2 of original house
6. photo # 20
- 7.





2. Scott, Arkansas
3. March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. #23; Marlsgate
7. photo #21

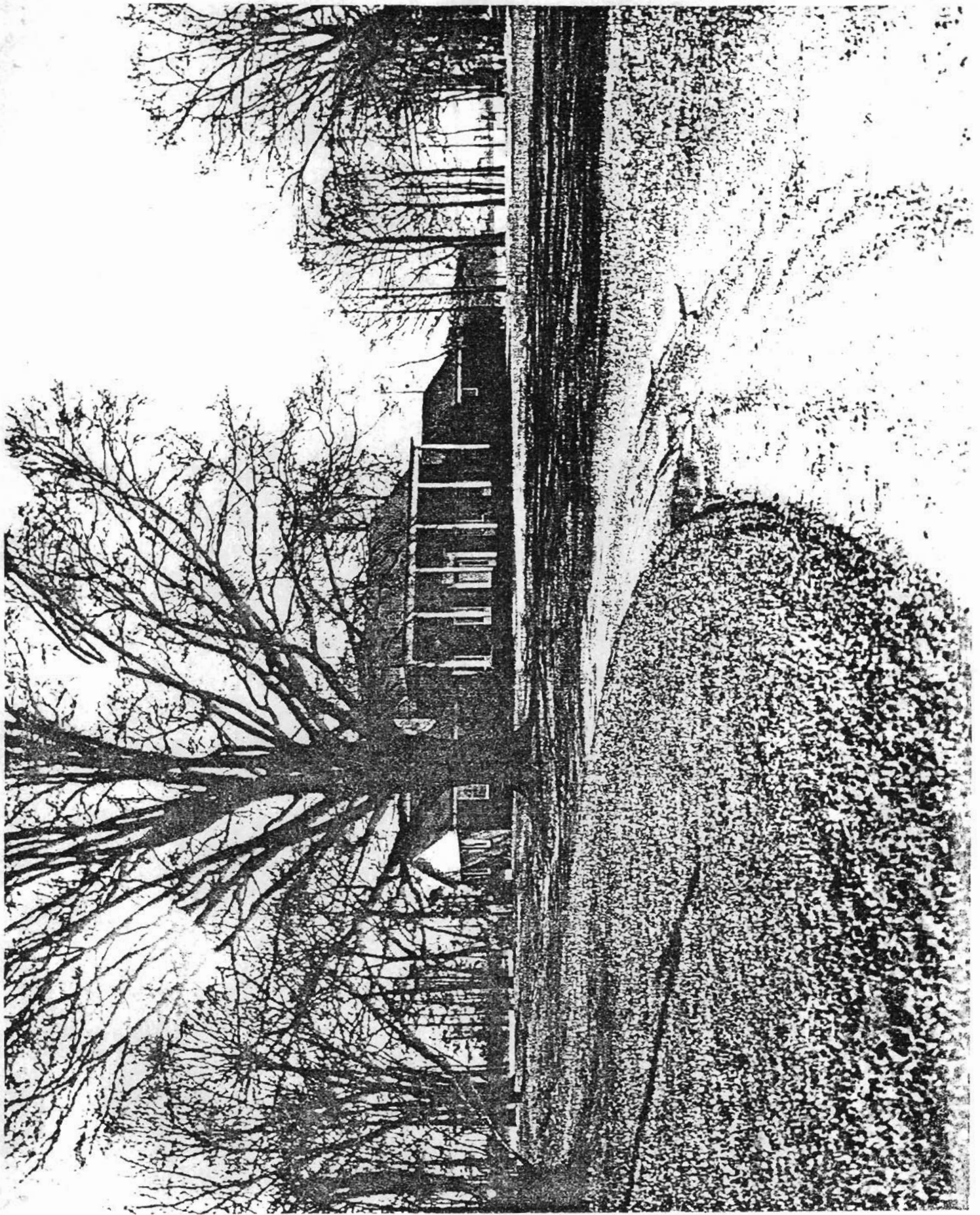
ARKANSAS  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
PROGRAM PHOTOGRAPH





1. Do: Plantation
2. Sec: Arkansas
3. March, 1979
4. Jack Doss
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
6. #24; Carriage House; viewed from the south-southwest
7. photo # 22





Report Citation

1. Scott, Arkansas
2. Smith, 1979
3. Jack Doss
4. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
5. Modern Residence; viewed from the east-southeast
6. photo #25

DATA SHEET PH 0246841

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED REC 6 1975

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME** *Dortch Plantation*  
HISTORIC *MAIRSGATE*  
AND/OR COMMON *(WILLIAM P. DORTCH HOUSE)*

**2 LOCATION**  
STREET & NUMBER *NE of Scott off AR 130 at Blairkin Lake*  
CITY, TOWN *SCOTT* VICINITY OF *vic.* COUNTY *LONOKE* CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT *SECOND*  
STATE *ARKANSAS* CODE *05* COUNTY *LONOKE* CODE *085*

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>OWNERSHIP</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>PRESENT USE</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDEN
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**  
NAME *WILLIAM PINKNEY DORTCH, JR.*  
STREET & NUMBER *ROUTE 1, BOX 164*  
CITY, TOWN *SCOTT* VICINITY OF STATE *ARKANSAS*

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**  
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. *CIRCUIT CLERK'S OFFICE*  
STREET & NUMBER *LONOKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE*  
CITY, TOWN *LONOKE* STATE *ARKANSAS*

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**  
TITLE  
DATE  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
CITY, TOWN STATE

\_FEDERAL \_STATE \_COUNTY \_LOCAL

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Marlsgate is an immense brick residence of large proportions. Located near Scott, Arkansas, Marlsgate is the center of the large William P. Dortch plantation. Built in 1904, at a cost of \$33,000 Marlsgate was designed by architect Charles L. Thompson of Little Rock. The unusually thin bricks of which ~~the house is constructed~~ were made in St. Louis. An interesting feature of the bricks is that they extend around the corners. The twenty room house reflects the lifestyle of the Dortch family as a wealthy farming family in the early twentieth century.

Marlsgate is a two-and-one-half-storey structure with a full basement. Projecting from the east and west elevations of the high hipped roof are dormers with double windows. Two finials project from the ridge of the roof. The corners of the main wing of the house are marked by cut stone quoins. A dentiled cornice extends around the house.

A full-sized, two-storey portico with four Ionic capital square brick columns dominates the facade. Dentil work found on the cornice around the house is also utilized in the pediment of the portico. Located in the center of the pediment is an oeil-de-boeuf window. A second storey balcony projecting over the entry features urn-shaped balusters and is supported by heavy paired brackets. The single entry is set into a wide, arched opening surrounded by a brick arch with a keystone centered above the door. The keystone contains the intertwined initials of William and Nettie Dortch. Paired windows flanking the entry are unusual in their use of cut stone and brick in the window heads. Upper paired windows have simple trim. The railing on the portico is cast concrete, molded on the grounds. The facade is symmetrically balanced by two projecting one-storey wings on either elevation.

A well house at the southwest corner of the house features lattice work above a brick base and is capped with a conical roof topped with finial. A dentiled cornice similar to that on the main structure surrounds the octagonal well house. Projecting from the south rear elevation is a two-storey portion consisting of an enclosed porch. This original wing contains the kitchen.

Located in the wide central hall are the symmetrically divided flights of stairs. In the landing of the stairway is a massive window with six upper lites of stained glass. All of the woodwork is original and of virgin oak. There are fireplaces in every room and each oak mantel is of a different design. A number of the rooms are richly paneled with oak. There are operable transom lights over all the doorways.

The most distinctive features of Marlsgate's interior are the fourteen-foot ceilings, all of pressed tin, each in a different design. The ceilings are designed and made in St. Louis for the Dortch's.



## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1904      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Charles L. Thompson

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Marlsgate is the plantation home of the William P. Dortch family, located near Scott, Arkansas. Built in 1904, the house is set in a pecan-tree-shaded area facing Bearskin Lake. The perfect horseshoe-shaped lake derives its name from the abundance of bear found in the area at one time. Marlsgate is recognized as a working plantation of historical value. Architecturally, Marlsgate is one of Arkansas' most impressive structures. The Dortch family has played an important role in the social and economic development of the area.

In 1790, one of the Dortch ancestors arrived in North Carolina from where his descendents migrated west in 1838. Willis R. Dortch settled in Tennessee and married Elizabeth Wommack Stone. Dortch successfully engaged in farming in Williamson County, Tennessee, until his death in 1858. The youngest of Willis Dortch's three children, William Pinkney Dortch, was born at Thompson Station, May 15, 1846. Upon the death of Willis Dortch, twelve-year-old William P. Dortch and his mother moved to Arkansas and settled in Lonoke County. The Dortch's then purchased the land upon which Marlsgate is located and constructed the first of two frame houses located on the site before the present Marlsgate was built. In 1864, Dortch enlisted in the Confederate Army in Anderson's Battalion from Little Rock and accompanied Price on his raid through Missouri and Kansas. During the Civil War, Union troops camped in and around the Dortch's house because Bearskin Lake provided water for their livestock, and it was only a day's march to Little Rock. During the war, the Dortch family packed all of their china and silver in butter churns, sealed them with beeswax and submerged them in Bearskin Lake for safekeeping.

At the close of the war, Dortch attended Miami University in Ohio for two years. While in Ohio he was married to Alice Orr of Kentucky. She died in 1874, leaving one son, Frederick W. Dortch. On January 15, 1885, William P. Dortch married Miss Nettie Steele who was born in Pulaski County, Arkansas, in 1859. Her father, Thomas William Steele, was born in North Carolina and moved to Scott, Arkansas as a young man, where he became the largest holder of land in Pulaski County. As a wedding present to his daughter upon her marriage to William P. Dortch, Steele presented her with a plantation of 1800 acres in Lonoke County which adjoined the Dortch property. This land had been in the Steele family for five generations.

In 1900 the second frame house Dortch had built was removed to make room for the new house. Marlsgate was completed in 1904 at a cost of \$33,000. The

Quapaw Quarter Chronicle, May/June, 1975.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Arkansas Gazette, September 18, 1956.

Dortch, William P., Jr. Personal Interview at Marlsate, Scott, Arkansas, July 23, 1975.  
Goodspeed Publishing Company. Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast, Central and Eastern Arkansas. Little Rock: Arkansas Historical Publishing Company, 1889-90.

Herndon, Dallas T. Annals of Arkansas. Little Rock: The Historical Record Association, 1947.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

*UTM OK - w/w  
12-22-75*

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A | 1, 5 | 5, 8, 6, 6, 7, 0 | 3, 8, 4, 1, 6, 8, 0 |  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
C | | | | | | | | |

B | | | | | | | | | |  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
D | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE  
SANDRA TAYLOR, HISTORIAN

ORGANIZATION  
ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

DATE  
SEPTEMBER 9, 1975

STREET & NUMBER  
300 WEST MARKHAM

TELEPHONE  
(501) 371-1639

CITY OR TOWN  
LITTLE ROCK

STATE  
ARKANSAS

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE *Gene Richardson* GENE RICHARDSON

TITLE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE SEPTEMBER 9, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Acting* *[Signature]* DATE *12/6/75*

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *[Signature]* DATE *11-28-75*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER *Acting*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED OCT 14 1975

DATE ENTERED DEC 6 1975

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

The only addition or alteration to Marlsgate was circa 1910 when the porch on the east elevation of the house was enclosed. In 1927, the attic caught fire but the workers on the farm formed a bucket brigade from Bearskin Lake and the fire was extinguished before the house sustained any damage.

Marlsgate has been continually occupied by the Dortch family since its construction in 1904 and remains in an excellent state of repair. Virtually unchanged since 1904, Marlsgate stands as a tangible reminder of a past era.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED OCT 14 1975

DATE ENTERED

DEC 6 1975

CONTINUATION SHEET

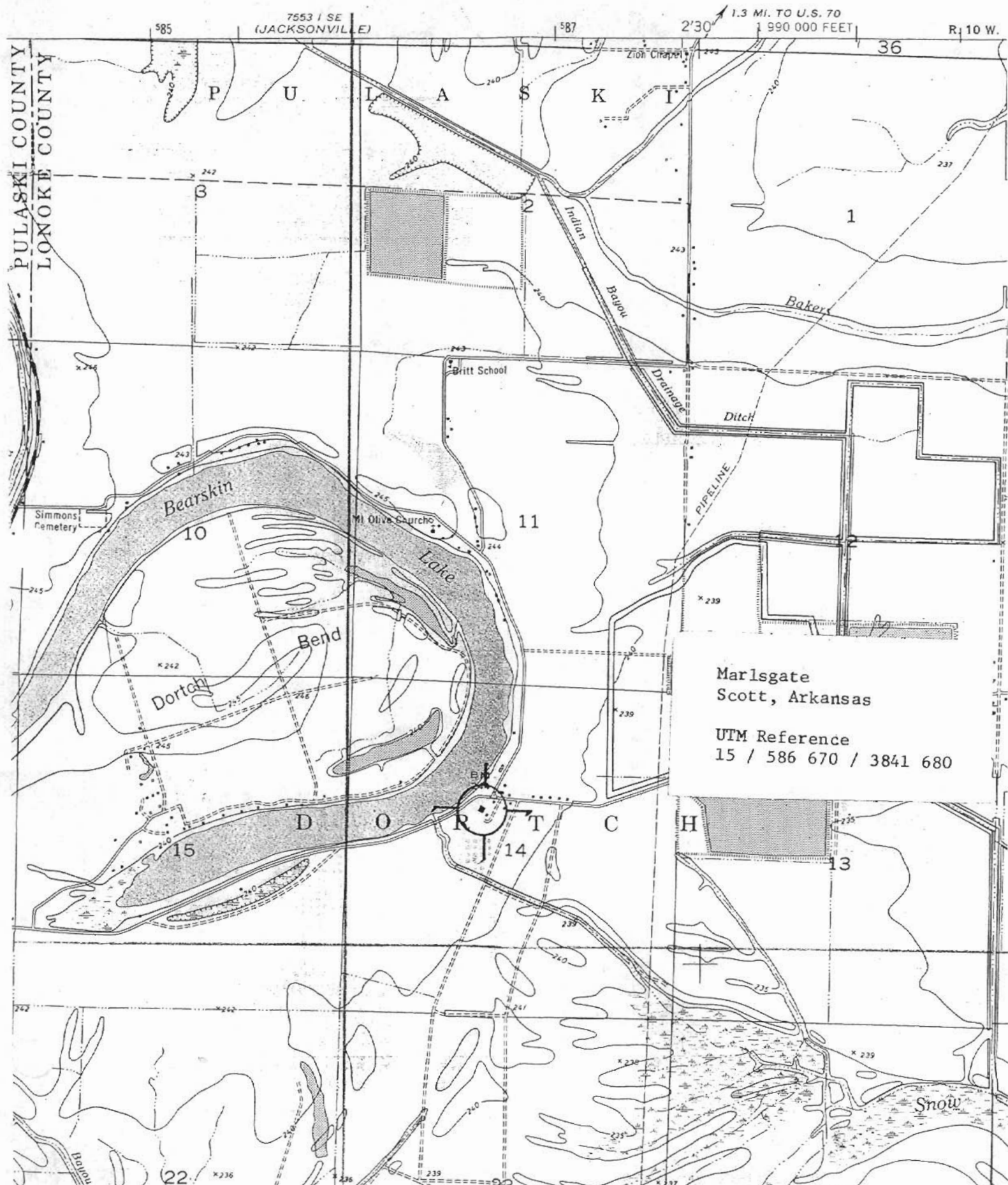
ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

keystone above the front door contains the intertwined initials of William P. and Nettie Dortch, Nettie Steele Dortch was a gifted artist and much of her work remains in the house. Five sons were born to William and Nettie Dortch: Thomas Steele Dortch, William P. Dortch, George Little Dortch, William Reeves Dortch and Robert Leake Dortch. Marlsgate contains twenty rooms and was built to accomodate the life-style of the large Dortch family. Upstairs there are five bedrooms for the five sons. Downstairs the rooms are large and spacious, ideal for frequent entertaining.

At William P. Dortch's death in 1913, his farm, which had grown to 7,000 acres, was divided among the five sons. Because he was the namesake, the second son, William P. Dortch, inherited Marlsgate. William P. Dortch was born in 1887. He married Alice Knowles of South Dakota and they had one son, William P. Dortch Jr., who was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, in October, 1928, and now lives in Marlsgate. On the plantation, Mr. Dortch raises beef cattle, soybeans and cotton.

The significance of Marlsgate lies in its architecture and in its representation of local history to the surrounding area. Marlsgate is a part of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which has survived changing times. It typlifies a large southern plantation. William P. Dortch and his sons made significant commercial contributions which helped stimulate the economic development of Scott, Arkansas. As the home of one of the leading early planters in Scott, Marlsgate is an important historic landmark to the community.





PULASKI COUNTY  
LENOIRE COUNTY

7553 1 SE  
(JACKSONVILLE)

1.3 MI. TO U.S. 70  
1 990 000 FEET

R. 10 W.

Marlsgate  
Scott, Arkansas

UTM Reference  
15 / 586 670 / 3841 680

