

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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**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 St. Anthony's Catholic Church

NR 08 / 21 / 86

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number N/A

not for publication

city, town Ratcliff

N/A vicinity of

state Arkansas

code 05

county Logan

code 083

**3. Classification**

**Category**

- district
- building(s)
- structure
- site
- object

**Ownership**

- public
- private
- both

**Public Acquisition**

- in process
- being considered
- N/A

**Status**

- occupied
- unoccupied
- work in progress

**Accessible**

- yes: restricted
- yes: unrestricted
- no

**Present Use**

- agriculture
- commercial
- educational
- entertainment
- government
- industrial
- military
- museum
- park
- private residence
- religious
- scientific
- transportation
- other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name St. Anthony Parish

street & number C/O Rev. Harold Heiman, O.S.B., P.O. Box 518

city, town Ratcliff

N/A vicinity of

state Arkansas

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Logan County Courthouse

street & number Courtsquare

city, town Paris

state Arkansas

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

site  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

### SUMMARY

St. Anthony's Church, situated on a hill, overlooks the small railroad town of Ratcliff in west Logan County in the upper Arkansas River Valley in west Arkansas. The church's otherwise rectangular plan is distinguished by its imposing bell tower and its apse. The church also exhibits simple classical elements on its cornice, door and window cornices and corner board trim. The frame structure, sided with weatherboard, is covered by a gable roof and rests on a continuous native stone foundation.

### ELABORATION

The church's facade (south) features the bell tower and main entrance. The bell tower's pyramid tin roof, surmounted by a cross, is accented by steep pitched gablets on each side of the configuration. Researching period photographs of other rural Catholic churches, the gablet or modification of it appears to be a common application to the bell tower. Single, elongated framed vents are placed on three sides of the tower below the cornice. Midway on the front side of the tower is a diamond shaped window opening. Single, eight pane window openings, located just below the gable area, flank each side of the tower furnishing light for the balcony area of the interior. The main entrance, with slender, double panelled wood doors, is housed in the bell tower. A recently added porch with a gablet roof protects the entrance from the weather.

The structure's east and west elevations have identical fenestration. Each side consists of five four-over-four double-hung windows. Simple classical detail surrounds each window opening.

The rear elevation consists of the apse and additions on both sides of the apse. The apse is a solid weatherboard mass covered with a hip roof. A small half room, with shed roof, is attached to the west side of the apse and rear of the rectangular portion of the church. A four pane window under the eave interrupts an otherwise solid wall. A side room addition is attached to the east side of the apse. Built c.1912, the room extends beyond the east elevation of the rectangular portion of the church as well as a few feet north of the apse. The weatherboard addition sits on a continuous native stone foundation and is covered by a shed roof. Two four-over-four double-hung windows are symmetrically arranged on the room's east side. A centered four-over-four double-hung window is located on its north side. The room is accessible by a short flight of wooden steps leading to a door opening on its west side. The room housed the nuns who taught at the St. Anthony's school.

The church still maintains much of the major interior character. The layout consists of the nave, apse and balcony. A wood arch, imitating a vault, distinguishes the division between the nave and apse. The balcony at the south end of the nave provides space for the organ and choir. The ceiling over the nave is gambrel-shaped. Modifications exist in the interior. Cellotex panels cover the ceiling and walls. Other changes included the replacement of the pews and altar, and the removal of the side alters.

## 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1903

Builder/Architect Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### SUMMARY

Constructed in 1903, St. Anthony's Church sits on a hill overlooking the small railroad community of Ratcliff in the upper Arkansas River Valley. St. Anthony's was founded as a church mission soon after the establishment of the Subiaco Abbey in 1878. The Abbey served as the mission center for the St. Benedictine Order in Logan County. By invitation from the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railway Company, the center and its satellite mission churches addressed the spiritual and educational need for the incoming German Catholic immigrants. The Subiaco Abbey eventually organized seven small mission churches throughout Logan County with St. Anthony being the third organized in 1879. St. Anthony's, a second generation structure, represents the important mission accomplished by the St. Benedictine Order during Arkansas's only major effort to attract European settlement within its boundaries. Very few mission churches of this period survived in the Arkansas River Valley despite the substantial influx of German Catholic settlers.

#### ELABORATION

The historic importance of St. Anthony's Church begins with railroad officials' efforts to attract European immigrants into Arkansas after the Civil War. The idea of European settlement in Arkansas as well as in the South was one method by which the region hoped to replenish its labor force and in turn revitalize its post-war economy. The railroad companies in Arkansas played a major role in encouraging immigrants into the state between the years 1870 to 1890. The Little Rock and Fort Smith Railway Company began such a campaign in the fall of 1875 in hope of selling their land grants. The campaign focused on German Catholics who were feeling the oppression of the Prussian state under the rule of Otto von Bismark. In his attempt to centralize political power for Prussia, Bismark began his infamous Kulturkampf campaign against the political power held by the Roman Catholic Church in the German states. This campaign began a large exodus of German Catholics, many whom found refuge in the sparsely settled areas of the United States. Such areas included the south and southwest in Arkansas, the Arkansas River Valley.

The United States Catholic orders, through their mission programs, assisted immigrants in finding areas to live and work. Aware of the Church's concern for these immigrants, the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railway Company contacted the St. Benedictine Order in Indiana and arranged a sponsorship for the establishment of a mission center in Logan County. The mission center, called the Subiaco Abbey, stood in the center of one of the largest Roman Catholic communities in Arkansas. Established in 1878, Subiaco provided assistance to the German immigrants in settling the valley as well as helping them adapt to their new environment. As a strategic part of the support effort, the Abbey organized area mission churches to provide local service to the settlers. Five of these mission churches were established by 1880. Created in 1879 as the third mission, St. Anthony's Church served the needs of the new settlers in the western part of Logan County.

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Continuation sheet 1

Item number 8

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Building remnants of the late nineteenth century German settlements are sparsely scattered throughout the Arkansas River Valley. St. Anthony's Church, an important surviving ethnic resource, reflects the strong religious heritage of the German immigrants as well as the St. Benedictine Order's mission program to support the spiritual and physical needs of these settlers coming into this foreign region.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Branch, AR

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 15 419830 3907940  
Zone Easting Northing

B           
Zone Easting Northing

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Don Brown, AHPP Historian

organization

date February, 1985

street & number P.O. Box 518

telephone (501) 934-4545

city or town Ratcliff

state Arkansas

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

title Arkansas Historic Preservation Officer

date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet 2

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Bibliographical References:

- Duerr, Helen, "The Benedictines in Logan County," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 14 (Winter 1955): 398-403.
- Kleck, Kay, Janice Huck and Martha Huck, compilers, The Centennial History of St. Anthony Parish, N.P., 1979.
- Lensing, The Rev. Michael, OSB, "The Founding of New Subiaco Abbey," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 3 (Fall 1944): 193-210.
- Lucey, J. M., Rt. Rev., Catholic Church in Arkansas, Reprint from Arkansas Gazette: 1906
- Wolfe, Jonathan James, "Background of German Immigration," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 25 (Summer, Fall, Winter 1966): 151-182, 248-278, 354-385.

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Continuation sheet 3

Item number 10

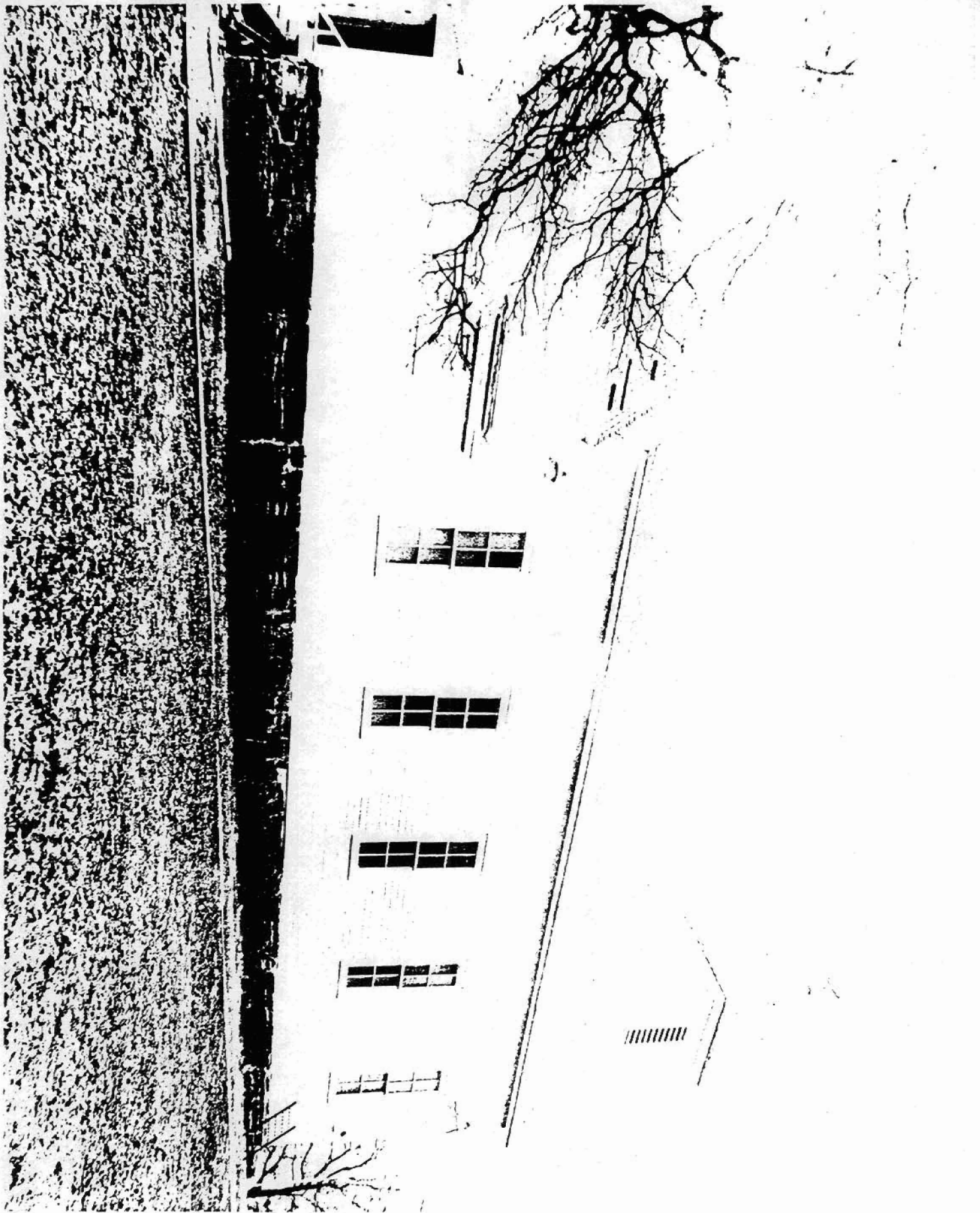
Page 2

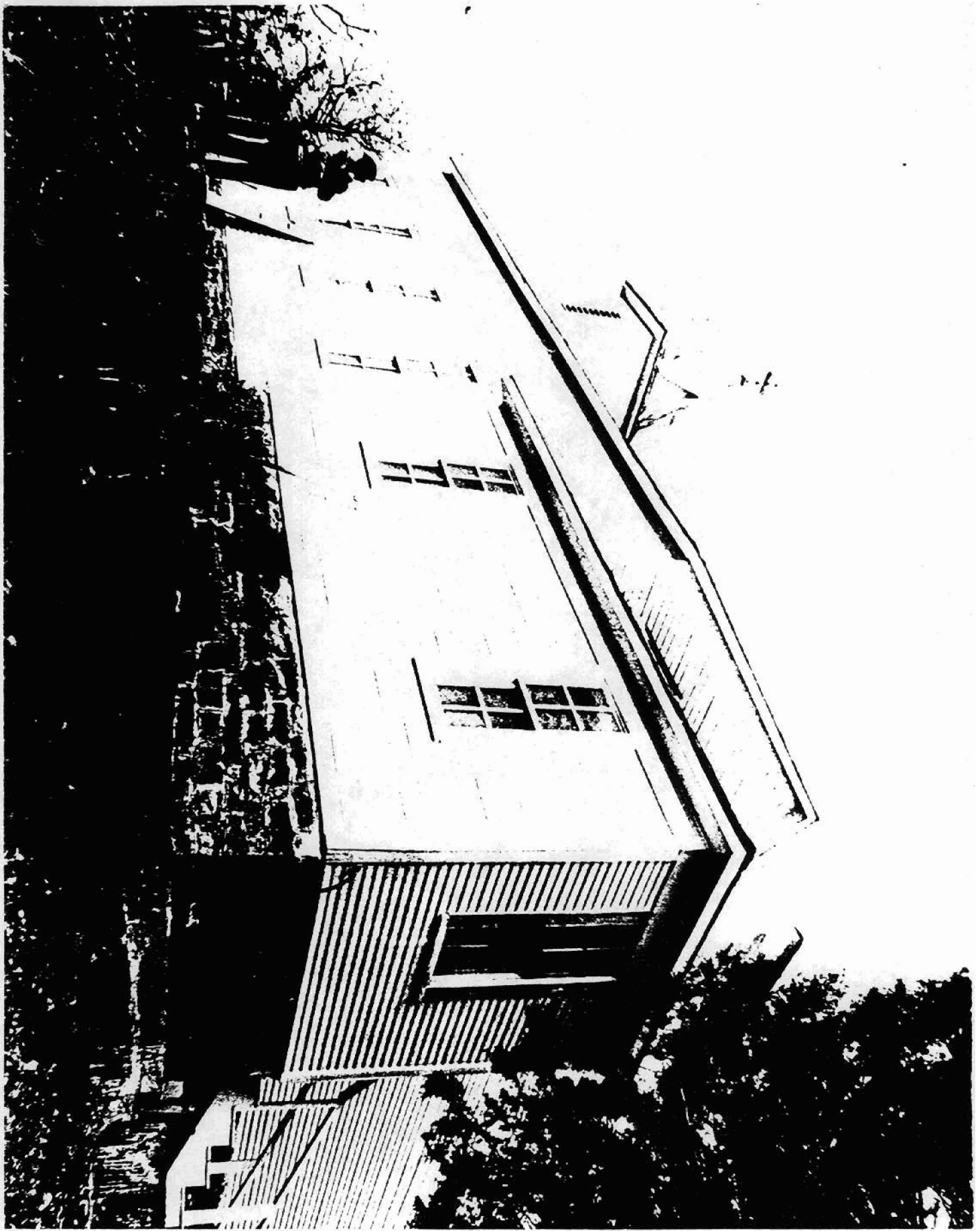
**Verbal Boundary Description:**

Beginning at the northwest corner of North Half of Northwest Quarter of Section 4, Township 7 North, Range 27 West, running South on Section line 1110 feet more or less to a point directly West of a certain well on the present site of the Church as now located, thence East 300 feet for a point of beginning, thence North 150 feet, West 300 feet to the section line, thence South with section line 150 feet, thence East to place of beginning, containing one acre more or less.

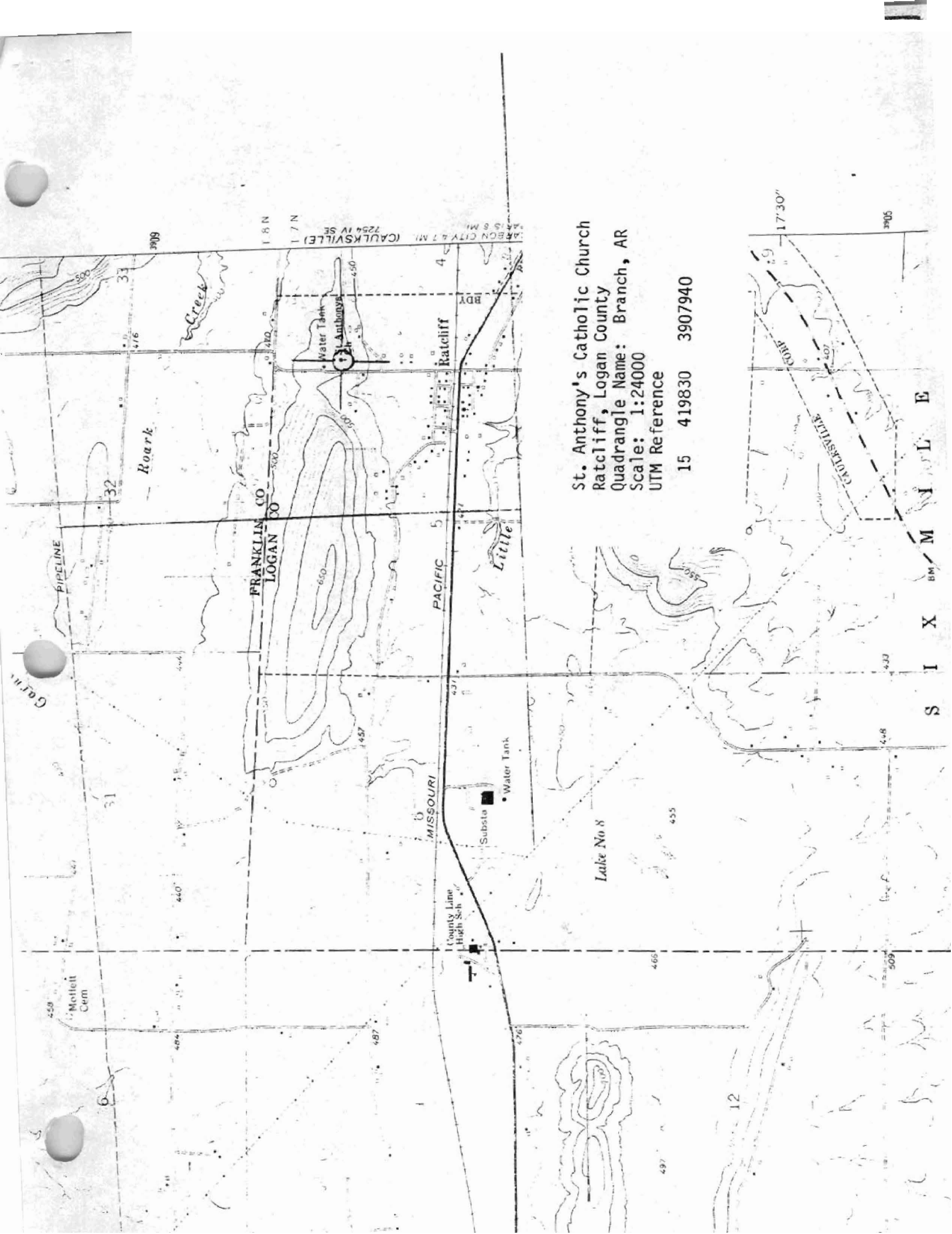












St. Anthony's Catholic Church  
Ratcliff, Logan County  
Quadrangle Name: Branch, AR  
Scale: 1:24000  
UTM Reference

15 419830 3907940

S I X M I L E