

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name: Walker, Evelyn Gill, House

other name/site number: N/A

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number: 18 S. Spruce St.

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Paris

vicinity: N/A

state: AR

county: Logan

code: AR 083

zip code: 72855

=====

3. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	sites
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	structures
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

=====
4. State/Federal Agency Certification
=====

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

Cathryn A. Slater Signature of certifying official August 9 1993 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

=====
5. National Park Service Certification
=====

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

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic: Domestic Sub: single family dwelling
Current : Domestic Sub: single family dwelling

=====  
**7. Description**  
=====

Architectural Classification:

See "other"  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Description: Rustic

Materials: foundation Stone roof Asbestos  
walls Stone other Concrete

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

=====  
**8. Statement of Significance**  
=====

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: 1938-1943

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Gill, Tolbert E.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

=====
9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

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:

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

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
A 15 433330 3905440 B
C D

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

The south half of Block 13 (measuring 100 X 200 feet) in the Labissa Waddel addition to the City of Paris.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

This boundary contains all of the property historically associated with th' resource that retains its integrity.

=====



11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Patrick Zollner, National Register Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: July 21, 1993

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  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   1  

---

### Summary

The Evelyn Gill Walker House is a one-and-one-half story, steel-reinforced concrete and stone veneer residence designed in a stone rubble aesthetic style resembling the later style that would become known as Rustic but which actually is unique to its builder, Tolbert E. Gill. Gill began construction on this property about 1938 after the completion of his own residence, and like that structure, several years were needed for its completion. The actual plan of the house is essentially simple - a central, one-and-a-half-story rectangular section covered by a gable roof with a flat-decked front porch and a flat-decked rear ell. This plan, however, is overwhelmed by the picturesque texture created by the irregular stone veneer and the wealth of the integrated concrete sculpture. There is one modern noncontributing outbuilding on the property. Located at 18 South Spruce Street, the Evelyn Gill Walker House is in excellent condition.

### Elaboration

The Evelyn Gill Walker House is a one-and-one-half story, steel-reinforced concrete and stone veneer residence designed in a stone rubble aesthetic style resembling the later style that would become known as Rustic but which actually is unique to its builder, Tolbert E. Gill. Gill began construction on this property about 1938 after the completion of his own residence, and like that structure, several years were needed for its completion. The plan of the house is essentially simple - a central, one-and-a-half-story rectangular section covered by a gable roof with a flat-decked front porch and a flat-decked rear ell. This conglomeration rests upon a continuous concrete and stone foundation. The gable roof is sheathed with asbestos shingles that resemble slate and is adorned by a decorative ridgepole of concrete that is formed to resemble a bark-covered log pole. Similar poles outline the rake, and the eaves feature hollowed, half-logs which serve as gutters. There is one tall rubble-stone chimney that rises through the rear deck at the southwest corner of the gable.

The front, or eastern, elevation is formed by a flat-decked, single-story porch projecting from the gable end. Supported by two large square columns, the deck is outlined with a concrete balustrade that is sculpted to resemble log poles resting on tree stumps. Underneath, the wall is uncomplicated, with a single-leaf door and a pair of modern, one-over-one double-hung windows with black anodized aluminum frames (unless specifically mentioned, all of the other windows on the house are wood-framed). The deck is accessed by a modern, single-leaf wood-paneled door flanked by two narrow one-over-one, aluminum-frame windows with projecting concrete drip molds formed to resemble two split logs. A similar narrow shed roof supported by concrete log brackets shields the doorway. Above, a concrete log viga projects beyond this

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

---

shed roof and has a light fixture attached. A cylindrical attic vent, also shielded by a concrete drip mold, is located at the gable peak.

The northern elevation is fenestrated by three conventional-sized one-over-one windows and one smaller bathroom-sized one-over-one window. All are considerably inset due to the thickness of the wall. Other than the split-log styled concrete drip molds over the windows, this elevation is not ornamented.

A one-story, flat-decked ell extends across and projects beyond (to the south) the rear, or western, elevation. This ell is anchored at each end (and on the southeastern corner) by massive rounded-corner buttresses that, in conjunction with the balustrade, provides a castellated effect. Two one-over-one windows light the northern half of this elevation; the southern half is not fenestrated but contains a single-leaf entrance. Above, the deck is outlined with the aforementioned concrete log-and-stump balustrade that is similar to that found on the front porch, but also features "sharpened log ends" between the stumps that do not support the log poles. At the terminus of each log pole, the ends are sculpted to appear "spliced" and attached with a concrete nail. The entrance to the second story differs from its front porch counterpart only by the addition of a modern light fixture on the viga and the deletion of the attic vent drip mold. An imposing concrete throne is created within the space provided by each of the three rounded corners on the deck. These chairs are sculpted to appear constructed from exposed log blocks and hewn wood planks for the seat, back, and armrest. As with Gill's other sculpture, the concrete used to form the nail heads is of a different, rusty color.

The southern elevation of the ell is flanked by two of the rounded-corner, "towers" and was originally a one-car garage bay. It has since been enclosed with a window and two French doors. A concrete staircase curves around a stone tower with a conical turret and accesses the deck from the ground level on the eastern elevation of the ell. A sculpted concrete eagle, of far greater sophistication than the one over the arch at the Tolbert E. Gill House, adorns the top of the turret, which appears to have originally had an outlet onto the deck and could have been a dumb waiter from the garage below. The staircase is enclosed by a curved, rubble wall with a sculpted concrete-log handrail. Between the tower and the wall of the main section of the house, another concrete throne is placed on the ground level. There are a pair of small one-over-one windows located at the western end of the southern wall of the main section. The concrete steps/stoop (scored to resemble stone) that leads to the staircase also accesses a door, which is covered by the characteristic concrete shed roof and viga, into the main section of the house. This stoop is bordered on the east by a short rubble wall and a flower planter constructed to resemble a deteriorated tree stump. The remainder of the southern elevation wall is fenestrated by two one-over-one double-hung windows.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   7   Page   3  

---

Although the Tolbert E. Gill House contains great quantities of outdoor sculpture, the Evelyn Gill Walker House features just two examples, a concrete birdbath on a rubble-stone pedestal located southeast of the southern elevation entrance and a large, craggy, drippy appearing flower bed planter in front of the porch that is reminiscent of similar sculpture in the T. R. Pugh Park in North Little Rock.

By comparison, the interior is much plainer, although it does feature the original plaster walls with an unusual curve inward at the unadorned juncture with the ceiling. The original wood flooring, door and window moldings also remain intact. The only principal alteration has been the enclosure and interior panelling of the garage.

There is one modern noncontributing storage shed located behind the house. Located at 18 South Spruce Street within sight of the Tolbert E. Gill House (the backyards of the two houses intersect), the Evelyn Gill Walker House is in excellent condition.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

---

### Summary

The Evelyn Gill Walker House is the second structure designed by Tolbert E. Gill and exhibits the same "naturalistic" or "rustic" style that he earlier established when constructing his own residence. Although architecturally significant if only for its association with Gill, the Evelyn Gill Walker House is distinct from the earlier structure in that it reflects the maturing of Gill as a designer, craftsman, and builder. Whereas Gill was confined in the design of his own residence by an existing frame structure, the Evelyn Gill Walker House afforded him with the opportunity to incorporate much of his considerable concrete sculpting abilities into the actual design rather than as applied decoration or outdoor sculpture. For these reasons, the Evelyn Gill Walker House is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance.

### Elaboration

Paris, Arkansas was the first Logan County seat, achieving that status in 1874 via the authority of a county-wide election held to determine the location of the center of county government (though there were probably settlers of European descent living in the area prior to that time, it is not clear how many there were and to what extent they formed a cohesive community of any kind). Paris grew gradually and prospered, largely due to its location on one of the major overland roads between the rich, cotton-growing land of surrounding rural Logan County and both the Arkansas River and the Little Rock-Ft. Smith Railroad that ran along its north bank. It became an important regional hub, therefore, not only for the conducting of official county business but also for trading, social activities, and obtaining other services.

Paris also grew as a result of the German-Swiss immigration that occurred during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The explosive growth of the railroad industry in Arkansas after the Civil War tied many of the heretofore rural and relatively isolated parts of the state into a national and international network that would generate far-reaching social and economic implications. One of the earliest was the realization on the part of the railroads that their fortunes would only be enhanced through the encouragement of new settlement from outside the state, thereby increasing the demand for both passenger and freight traffic. European immigration in particular increased dramatically after the cessation of hostilities that had closed many Southern ports and rendered even some Northern ports unsafe. Many of those that arrived from such countries as Germany, Italy and parts of Eastern Europe were usually poorer people from rural areas that possessed few work skills, typically knowing only one of the building trades or farming.

One need shared by all immigrants to the United States, however, was land, and this was one

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

commodity the railroads in particular possessed in abundance. The railroad industry had been rather successful in convincing the federal government that large land grants along their railroad lines were necessary to create the nationwide rail infrastructure that the government (and the railroad owners) desired. This was certainly true of the fledgling Little Rock-Fort Smith Railroad that completed its line between the two cities in 1876 and in the process gained an abundance of unclaimed land on both sides of the Arkansas River with which to lure immigrants to the valley. Even the new immigrants that did not purchase their property directly from the railroads frequently followed other countrymen who did in order to remain part of a familiar and culturally-cohesive community. Paris certainly received its share of German-Swiss immigration, due in part to its status as a governmental and commercial hub for the region, but due also to its relatively close proximity to the fledgling Benedictine abbey at Subiaco, located approximately five miles to the east, which would become a religious and cultural focus for these largely Roman Catholic immigrants.

By one account, Tolbert E. Gill -- himself either a German immigrant or a first-generation American descended from German immigrants -- first came to Paris, Arkansas as early as 1918; however, virtually all sources agree that he relocated to the northern county seat of Logan County (northern and southern districts had been created by 1900, with Booneville becoming the seat of the southern district) by 1920, at which time he began work on this residence. Gill's principle vocation was a clothing and dry cleaning service that he owned and operated in downtown Paris, though he purportedly worked as a barber prior to his arrival there.

Clearly, Mr. Gill acquired some construction expertise along the way (one informant recalled having heard that a local architect, Mansill "Max" Sutton, designed both Gill's own residence and the Evelyn Gill Walker House; however, though it is known that Mr. Mansill did design several buildings in Paris, interviews conducted with several members of the extended Mansill family did not produce any documentation of this, either written or recalled). Located across State Highway 22 (known locally as West Walnut Street) from the home of his in-laws, Gill began with a small, wood frame building already on the site. Doing the vast majority of the construction work himself, Gill expanded and elaborated the existing building to create this residence for himself and his family over the next fifteen years. Though the overall design of the house itself is not unusual -- a one-and-one-half story gable roof core with a single-story, wrap-around section that includes both an open porch and an enclosed room -- the style and construction technique reflect a clear confidence and proficiency with masonry construction. Gill's previous construction experience is not known, but given the fact that he built this himself and over a period of fifteen years, it is quite conceivable that he was self-taught. Nevertheless, this three-dimensional, bouldered aesthetic is unique and without known precedent (there is no reason to believe that the similarity to the Crystal River Tourist Court

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number   8   Page   3  

---

buildings is anything other than circumstantial), as are the bouldered stone walls, bird baths, planters, and other landscape features designed in the same style.

The concrete sculpture surrounding the residence, however, is another matter entirely. In its essentials it bears a remarkable resemblance to the concrete sculpture of Dionicio Rodriguez, the sculptor of Mexican ancestry who worked out of his studio in San Antonio, Texas. Rodriguez designed and installed his unique sculptural work at sites in Texas, Arkansas and Tennessee during the 1930's, with one of his largest and best known installations occurring at the T. R. Pugh Park in North Little Rock, Arkansas. His rendering in concrete of such natural forms as mushrooms, logs, and stumps was decidedly distinctive during his lifetime and has since become the focus of substantial scholarly and curatorial study to understand and appreciate his work more completely. While there have been artists who have attempted to imitate Rodriguez and his sculptural style, such study has uncovered no known stylistic antecedents.

There is substantial evidence to support the contention that Mr. Gill was, in fact, directly exposed to both the work of Rodriguez and the concrete techniques Rodriguez employed to craft his sculpture. One informant who was raised in Paris during Mr. Gill's lifetime recalls that Mr. Gill spent time in North Little Rock helping Rodriguez with the work in T. R. Pugh Park in the mid- to late-1930's, during which time he was also finishing the house and, presumably, beginning the landscaping work on the surrounding yard. This account of Mr. Gill's experience is corroborated by another local resident who knew Mr. Gill personally during Gill's later years. Mr. Ray Blaty recalled that Mr. Gill had told him of spending some "slack time" over the course of several summers in North Little Rock, working with Rodriguez on the creation and installation of the various sculptures there. It is known that Rodriguez frequently employed such assistants; and though Rodriguez could speak little English, he apparently experienced little problem in communicating his techniques to his helpers. Even a cursory comparison of Gill's concrete sculpture with that of Rodriguez reveals the remarkable stylistic similarities, and so virtually confirms the influence of Rodriguez. However, it is important to note that Mr. Blaty and others specifically remember Mr. Gill working on and producing these works himself, and later he even opened a small studio and store on the south side of town for the purpose of making and selling his creations; and thus there is no reason to suspect that he simply brought some of Rodriguez's own work for installation in his yard.

Although he was occupied with his outdoor sculpture through World War II, Gill managed to begin construction circa 1938 on a house as a wedding gift for his daughter, Evelyn Gill Walker. Completed approximately five years later (the interior may not have been finished until 1945), the Evelyn Gill Walker House is the second structure designed by Tolbert E. Gill and exhibits the same "naturalistic" or "rustic" style that he earlier established when

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   8   Page   4  

---

constructing his own residence. Although architecturally significant if only for its association with Gill, the Evelyn Gill Walker House is distinct from the earlier structure in that it reflects the maturing of Gill as a designer, craftsman, and builder. Whereas Gill was somewhat confined in the design of his own residence by an existing frame structure, the Evelyn Gill Walker House afforded him with the opportunity to incorporate much of his considerable concrete sculpting abilities into the actual design rather than as applied decoration or outdoor sculpture. For these reasons, the Evelyn Gill Walker House is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   1  

---

### Bibliography

Blaty, Ray, *Interview*, April 2, 1993 and May 25, 1993.

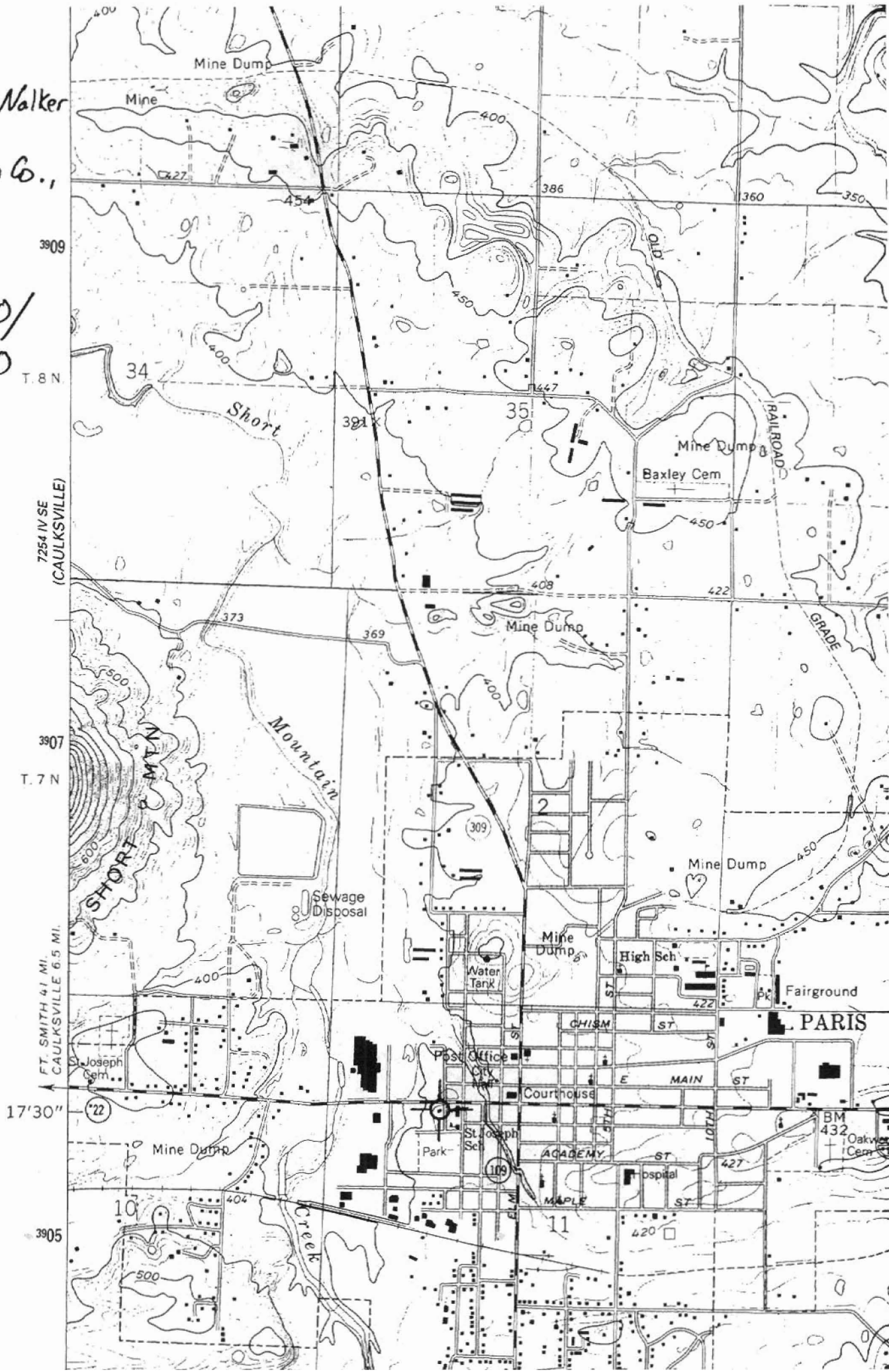
Czaplicki, Karen, *Interview*, December 3, 1992.

Workers of the Writers' Program. *The WPA Guide to 1930's Arkansas*, with a new introduction by Elliot West. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1987 (original copyright 1941).



Evelyn Gill Walker  
House  
Paris, Logan Co.,  
Arkansas

UTM:  
15/433330/  
3905440







Everitt Gill Water House

Loyam Co., Arkansas

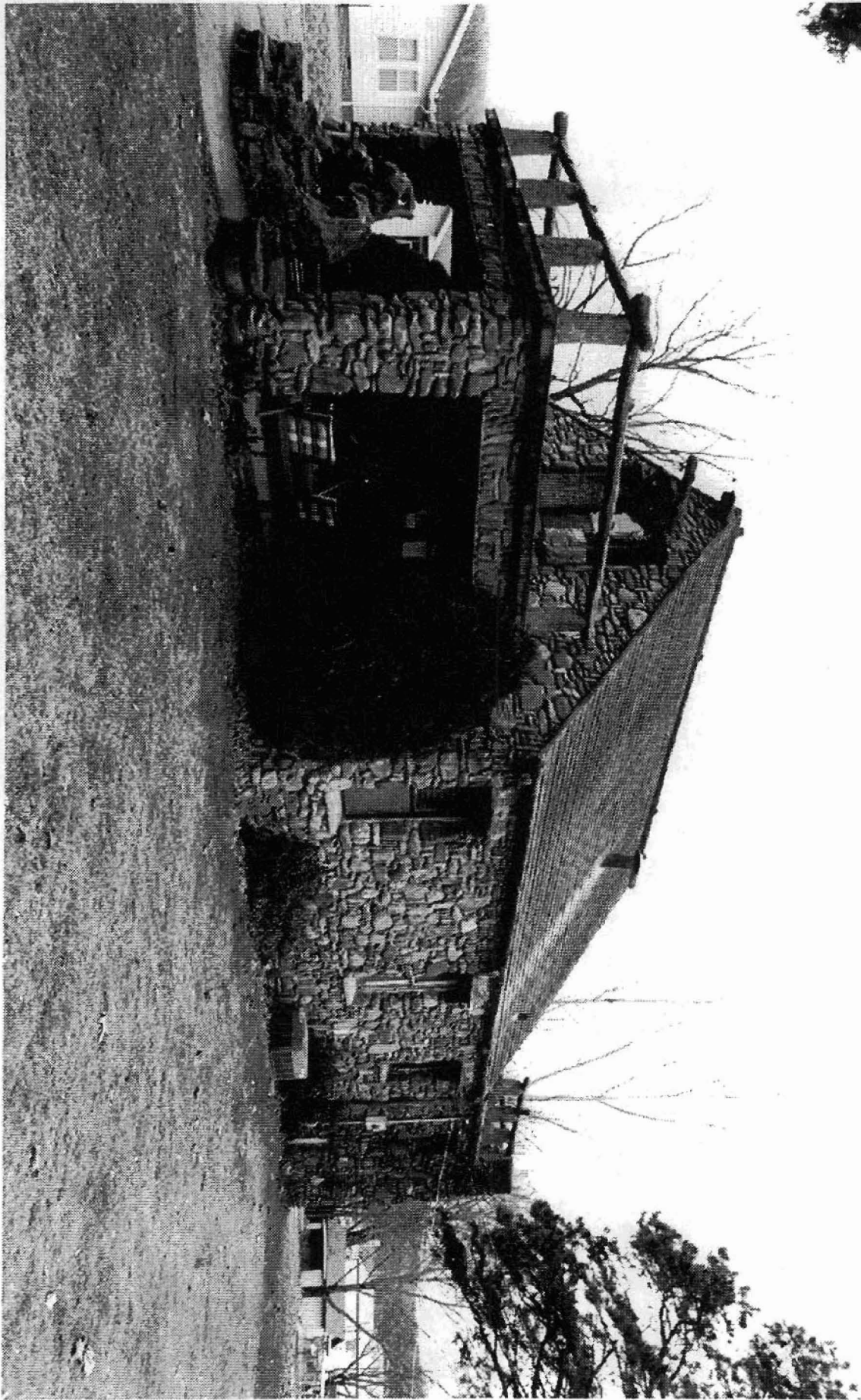
Photograph by Ken Story

December 1992

Negative on file at AITPP

View of front elevation from the east





1992-1993

Page 5, Arkansas

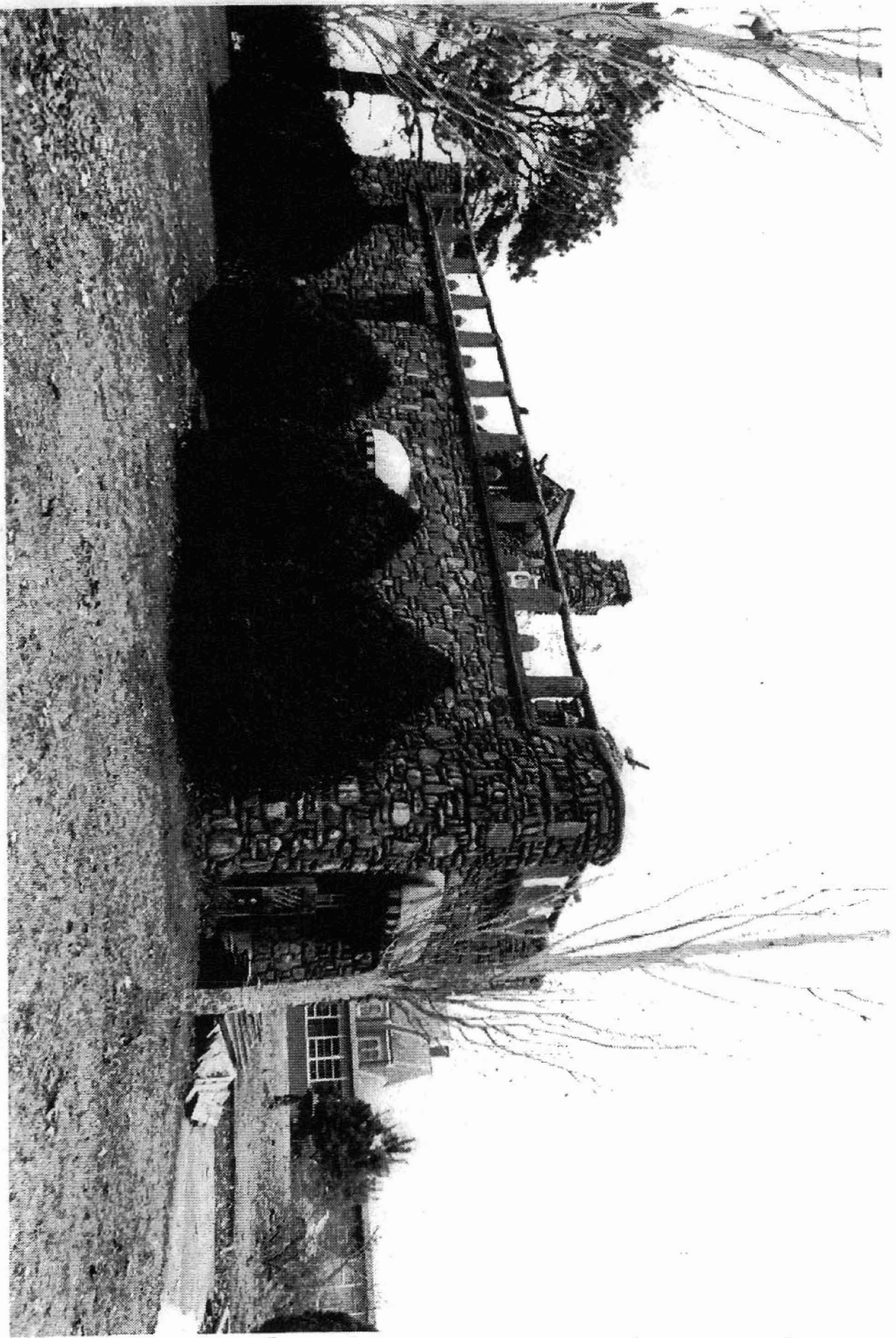
Photograph by Ken Story

December 1992

Negative on file at ANPP

View from the northeast





2000 D. M. Powell House

Logan Co., Arkansas  
Photograph by Ken Story  
December 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View from the southwest



Lyon Co., Arkansas

Photograph by Ken Sobry

December 1993

Negative on file at AHTFP

View from the west/northwest





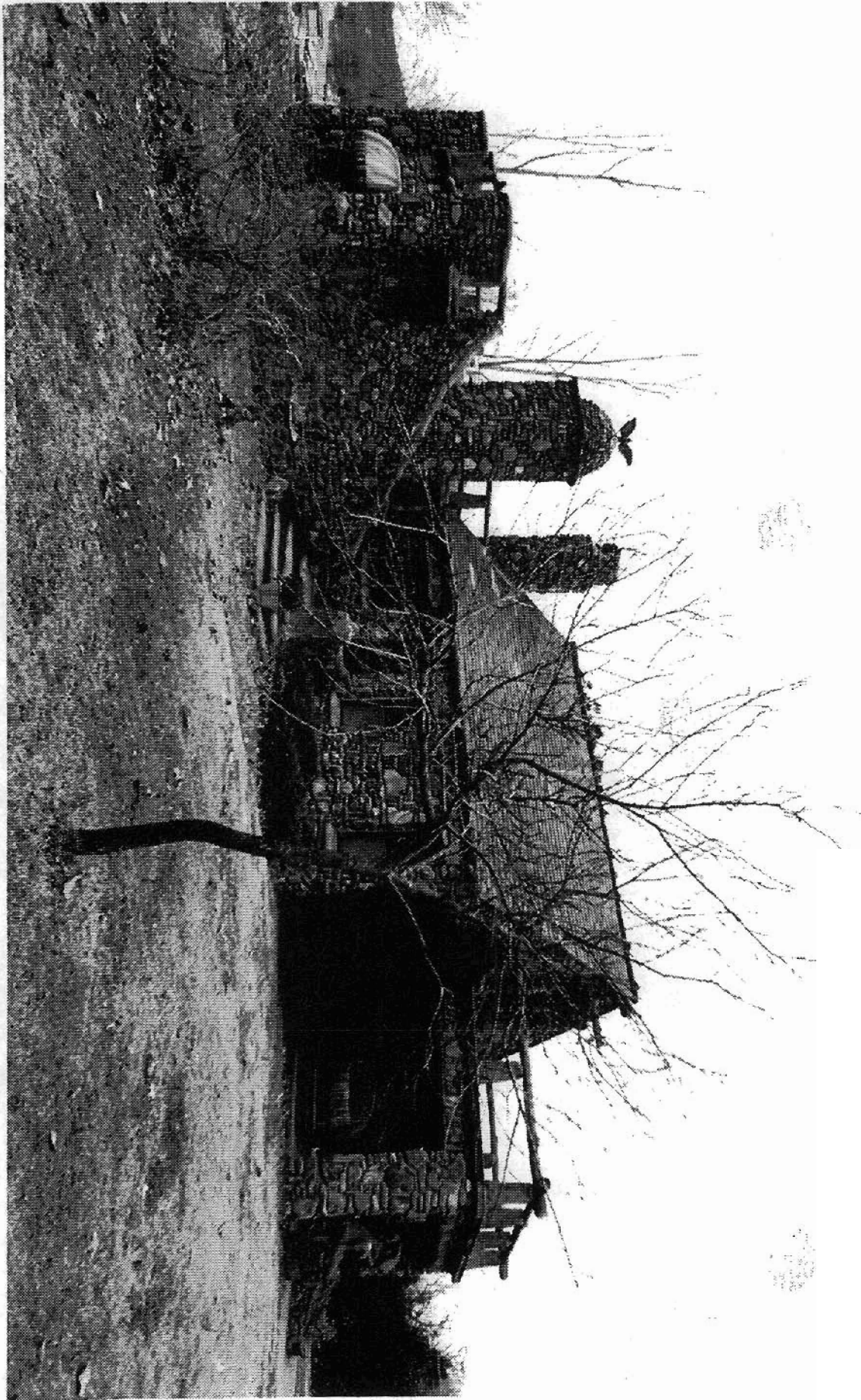
Logan Co., Arkansas

Photograph by Ken Story

December 1992

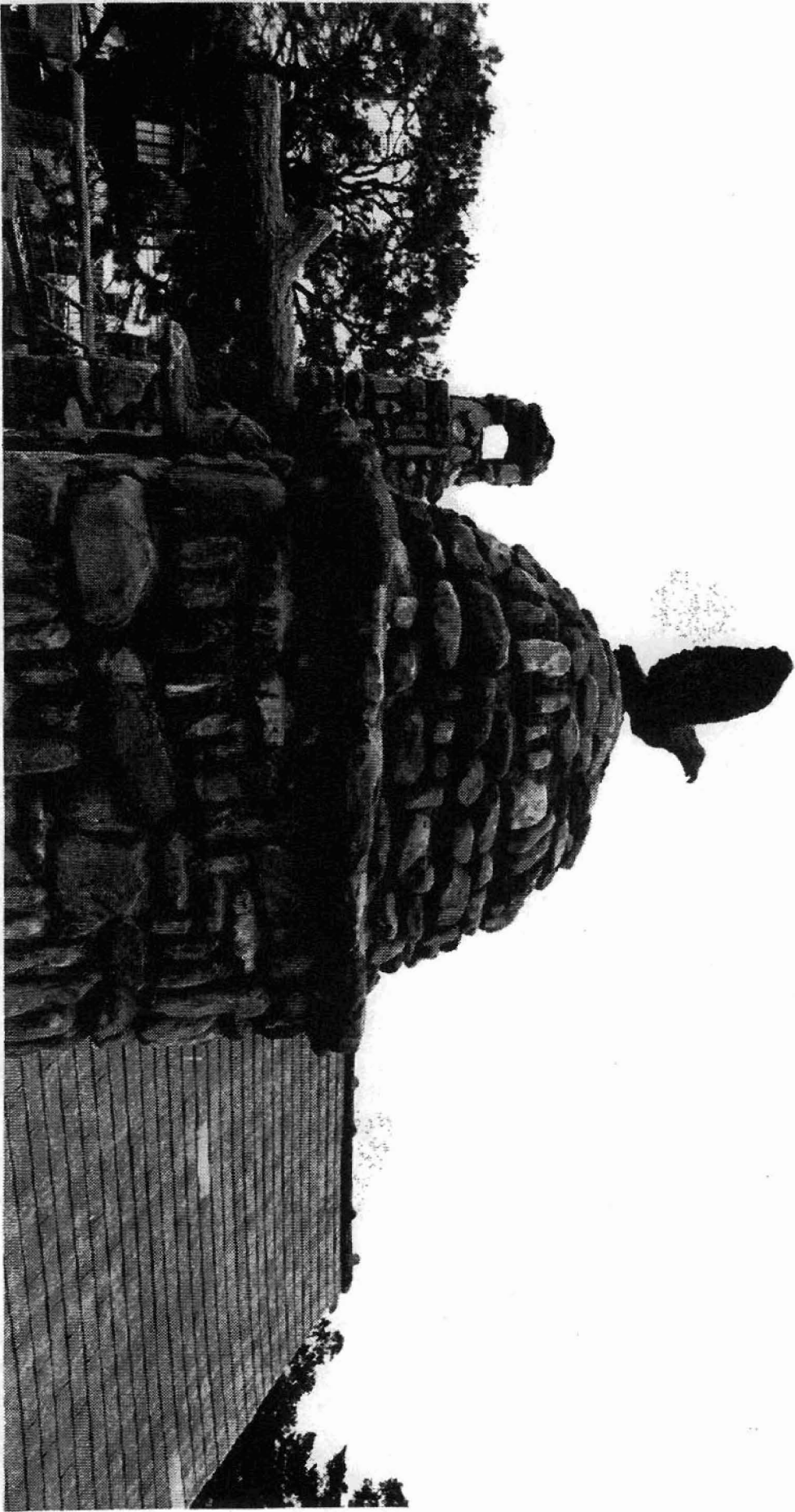
Negative on file at AHPP

View of garage area (now enclosed)  
from the south



Logan Co., Arkansas  
Photograph by Ken Story  
December 1992  
Negative on file at AHTAP  
View from the southeast





Evening 57th Walker House

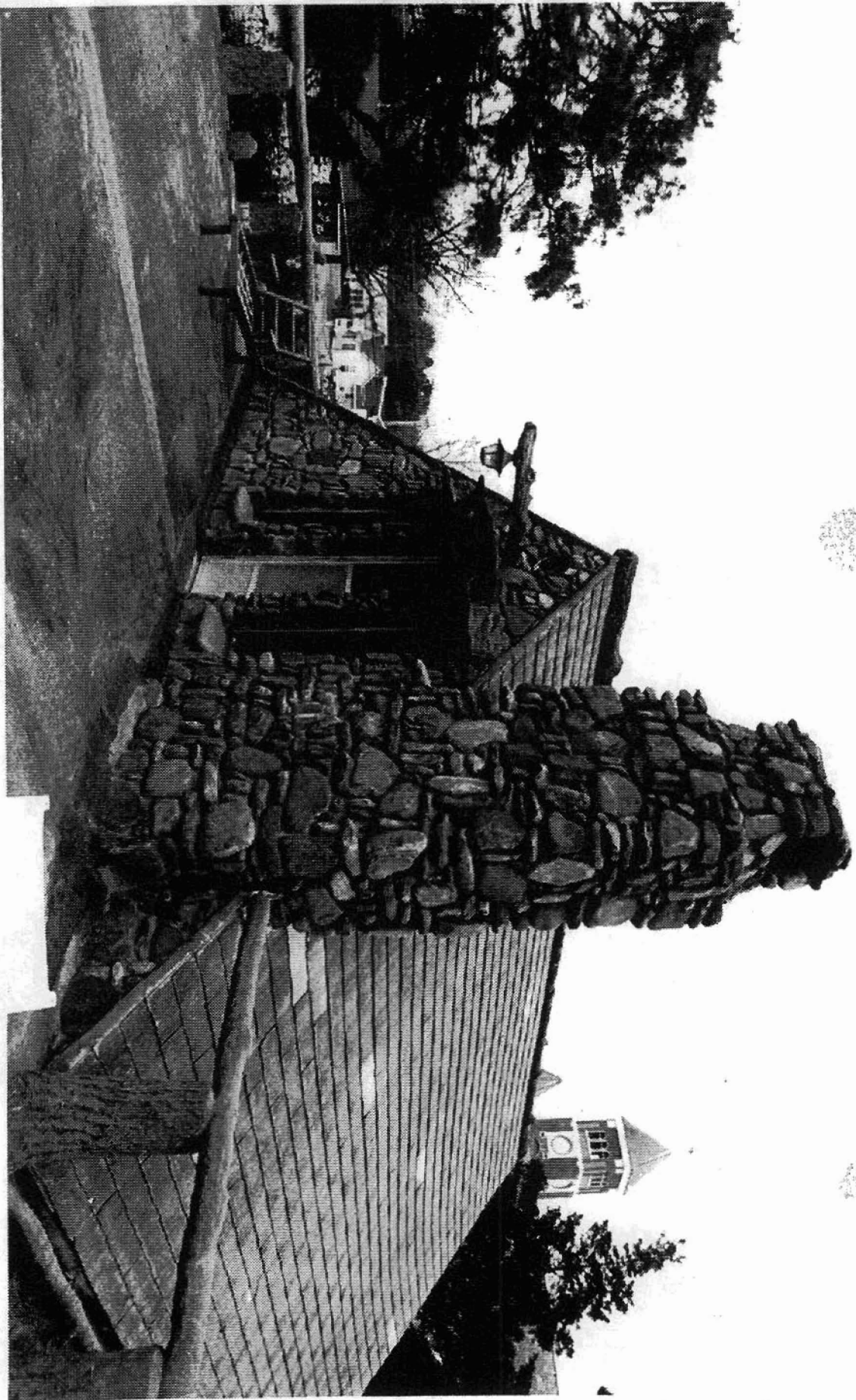
Lyon Co., Arkansas

Photograph by Ken Storey

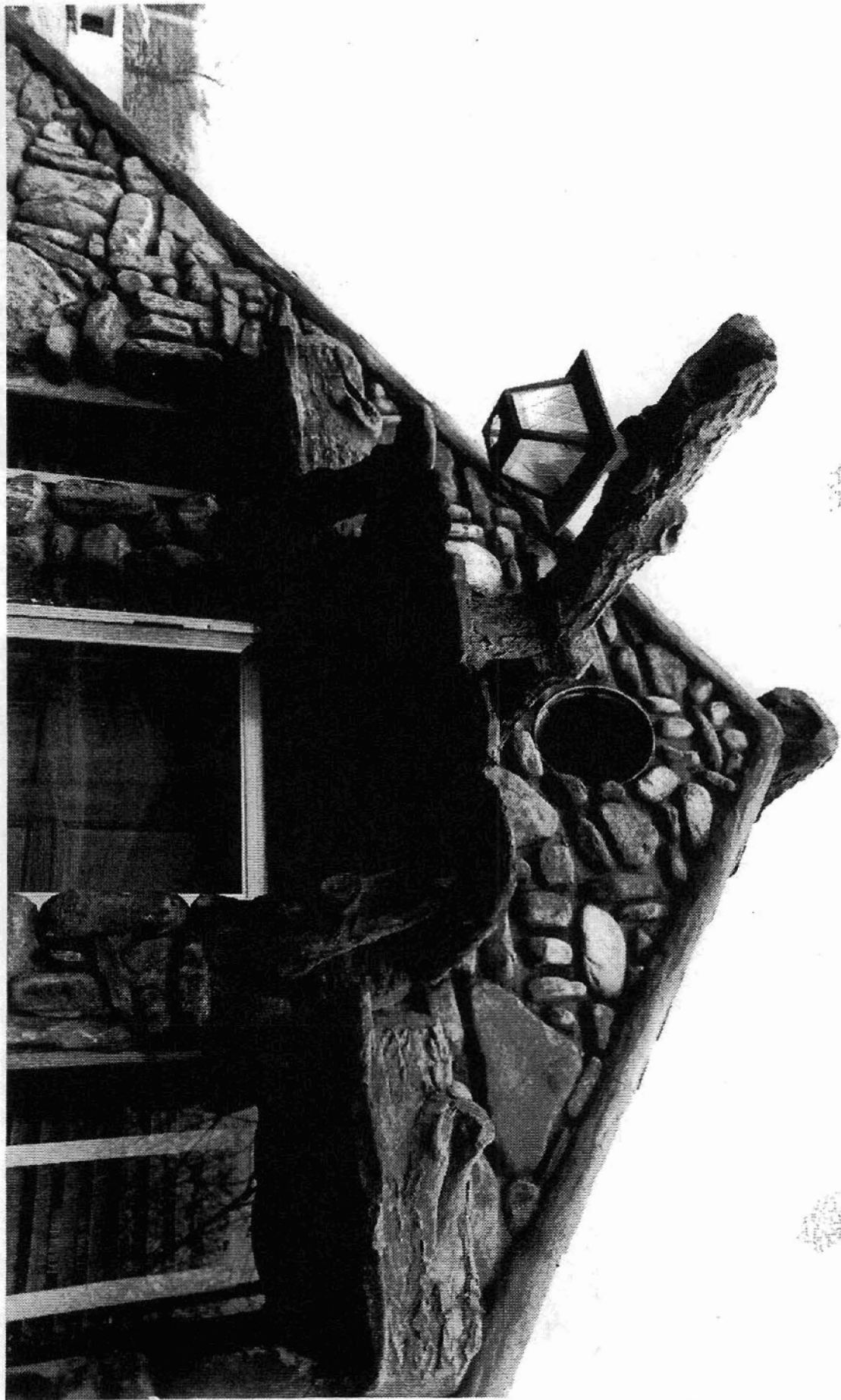
December 1992

Negative on file at AHP

View of sunset from the south



Logan Co., Arkansas  
Photograph by Ken Story  
December 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of saw deck from  
the southwest





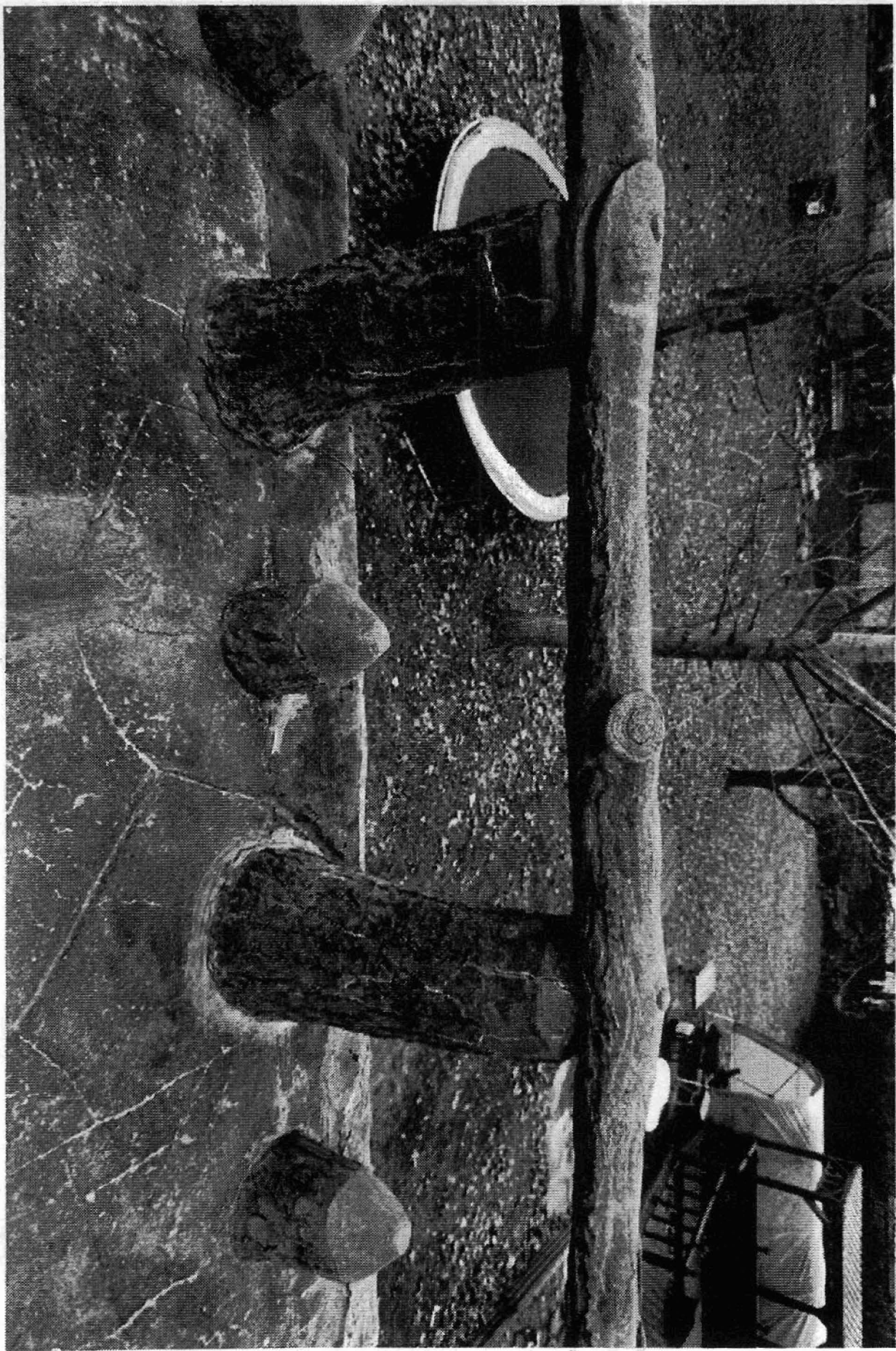
Franklin Co., Arkansas

Photograph by Ken Story

December 1992

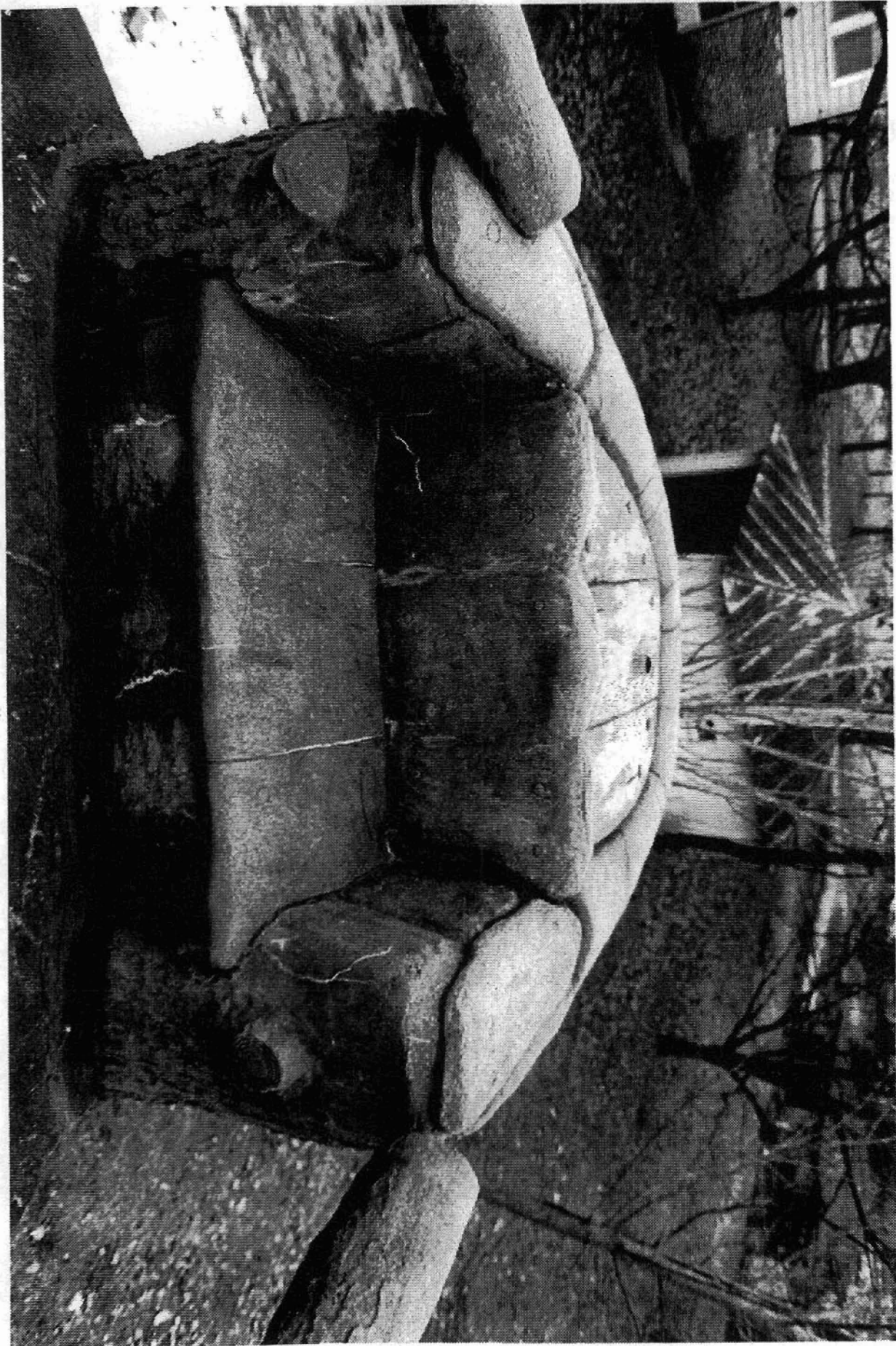
Negative on file at AHP

View of gable end detail  
from the west



Leban Co., Arkansas  
Photograph by Ken Story  
December 1992  
Negative on file at AHP  
View of balustrade from  
the east





Legion Hill Water Tower

Legion Co., Arkansas

Photograph by Ken Story

December 1992

Negative #1 in file at AHPP

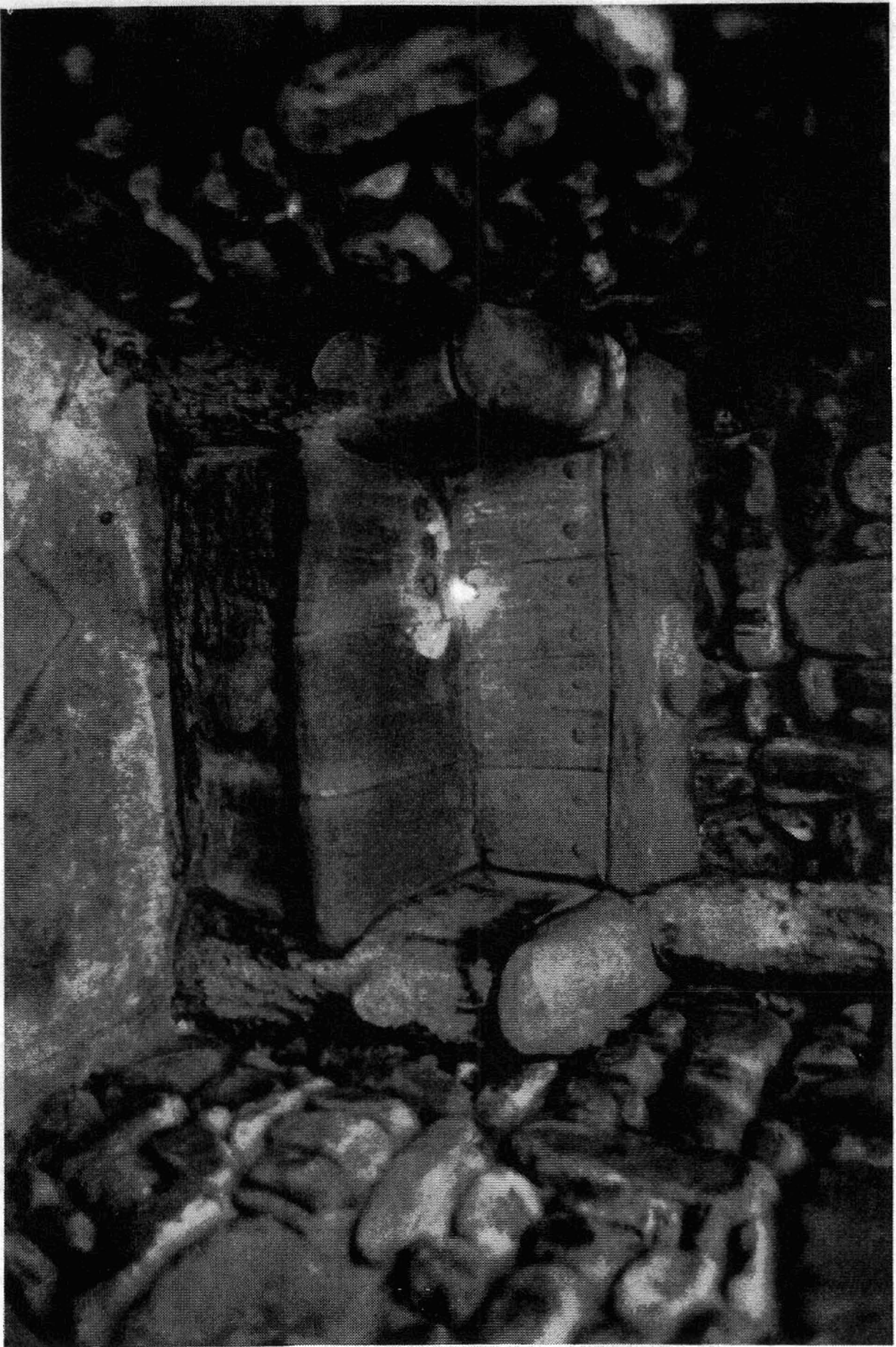
View of the "throne"

from the north east





Leflore Co., Arkansas  
Photograph by Ken Story  
December 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of stoop from the  
Southeast



Loyola Univ. Arkansas

Photograph by Ken Story

December 1992

Negative on file at AHAP

View of inset chair next  
to exterior staircase from  
the east











Logan Co., Arkansas  
Photograph by Ken Story  
December 1972  
Negative on file at AHP  
View of living room



Exhibit 10 - 1/16/92 - House

Exhibit 10 - Arkansas

Photograph by Ken Story

December 1992

Negative on file at AHPP

View of interior market