

403-A120-33

NR 9-29-76

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

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

Little River County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Main and Second Streets

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Ashdown

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourth

STATE

Arkansas

VICINITY OF

CODE

05

COUNTY

Little River

CODE

081

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

MONUMENT

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

Little River County (Hoye Horn, County Judge)

STREET & NUMBER

Little River County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Ashdown

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Little River Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Ashdown

STATE

Arkansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

The Little River County Courthouse is a two storey brick structure topped with an impressive octagonal dome. Constructed in 1907, the red brick building has a square floor plan with the dome rising from the center of the hipped roof.

The northeast facade features a two storey portico with the brick pediment rising above the roofline. The pediment displays a semi-circular arch trimmed in white. Projecting about six feet from the facade, the porch is semi-enclosed with ell-shape brick columns on either end. Set into the porch opening are two round, tapering columns with Ionic capitals. The porch shelters the center bay of the facade and covers the primary entrance to the courthouse.

This symmetrical structure is surrounded by a water table at the base and a dentiled cornice over brick corbelling just below the roofline. In contrast to the dark red brick, these and other architectural details are worked in white.

All windows have cast stone lugsills; window heads on the second storey are set in rectangular frames, while those on the ground floor feature simple pediments. The three secondary entries have similar pediments above. Along with the main entry, the center bay, second-storey windows on both the front and rear elevations have wide transoms with a lattice-like design. Somewhat like the facade, the center bay on the rear elevation rises slightly higher than the flanking bays.

The center of the building is covered with a hip roof which flattens out around the edges. Set into the hip roof is a massive octagonal dome covered with silver-colored tiles. At the base of the segmental dome each side has a horizontally set rectangular window filled with small square lights.

Though the dome dominates the structure, several smaller features add an interesting touch to the courthouse. The dentiled cornice, pediment covered doors and windows and Ionic capitaled columns give the building a classical flavor.

Set in the center of a tree shaded city block, the building rests near the railroad tracks which were responsible for Ashdown's origin. As the city's most architecturally significant structure, the Little River County Courthouse is also the most prominent landmark in the county.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1907 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Sidney Stewart

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The largest number of architecturally significant public buildings in Arkansas are the courthouses scattered over the state's seventy-five counties. As the center of local politics, the county courthouse is often the largest and most costly building in the county. The Little River County Courthouse in Ashdown is one of the most significant local landmarks in this area of southwest Arkansas.

Named for the water-way which marks its northern boundary, Little River County was organized on March 5, 1867, from portions of Hempstead and Sevier Counties. The first county court was held at the William Freeman House (now destroyed), located about ten miles northeast of Richmond. The following year the county seat was moved to Rocky Comfort near the western edge of the county.

Following a vote of the people in 1880, the county seat was moved to Richmond and housed in a structure containing four office rooms on the ground floor and a large courtroom above. In 1882 the courthouse burned, and for a time vacant buildings and even the school were used to house county offices and sessions of court. Eventually the citizens of Richmond donated enough money to construct a new courthouse.

When the railroads came to Little River County in the 1890's new towns sprang up. The most prominent railroad town was Ashdown, which developed where the Peytonville-Richmond Road crossed the Texarkana-Fort Smith Railroad. Within a few years the residents of Ashdown were petitioning to have the county seat moved to their new community; however, at the same time the Rocky Comfort community was petitioning for the return of the county seat.

Several elections were held, and for a time Richmond prevented either Ashdown or Rocky Comfort from becoming the new county seat. On April 29, 1903, the Arkansas Gazette carried the following note on the struggle for the county seat:

Texarkana, April 28.--The celebrated Little River County seat contest case was called for trial here today before Judge Smith of Camden, sitting as special judge. The testimony, which is mostly in the shape of depositions, is very voluminous, and the trial will in all probability occupy several days. The fight is between Rocky Comfort and Ashdown, both of which are represented by a great array of the best legal talent in the state. Each wants to be the county seat. *

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE one

Rocky Comfort was again declared the county seat, but a few years later another election was held. Ashdown was then declared the winner, and in 1906 County Judge T. B. Arnett ordered the records moved to the Mizell-Locke Building located west of the railroad tracks. In 1907 a permanent courthouse was constructed, thus helping to insure Ashdown's claim to be the county seat.

Architect Sidney Stewart designed this two-storey brick courthouse. The building has a square floor plan with entrances on all four elevations. Rising from the center of the hipped roof is the structure's most striking feature, an octagonal dome rising a full-storey above the roofline. Other features, including the Ionic-capital columns on the east and south elevations, pediments over first floor doors and windows and dentils around the cornice, give a classical touch to the simple architectural style.

Constructed in 1907, the present courthouse has housed the county seat longer than any other building. As the largest and most significant structure in Ashdown, the courthouse is also an architectural and historic landmark in Little River County. It rests on its original tree-shaded site, the court square at Ashdown.

* Arkansas Gazette, April 29, 1903.

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ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE one

Works Progress Administration: Federal Writer's Project Manuscript, Little
River County, circa 1940. Archives, Arkansas History Commission.



Form No. 10-301a
(Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS

TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Little River County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Ashdown

--- VICINITY OF

STATE
Arkansas

COUNTY
Little River

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Dianna Kirk

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

DATE OF PHOTO

January, 1976

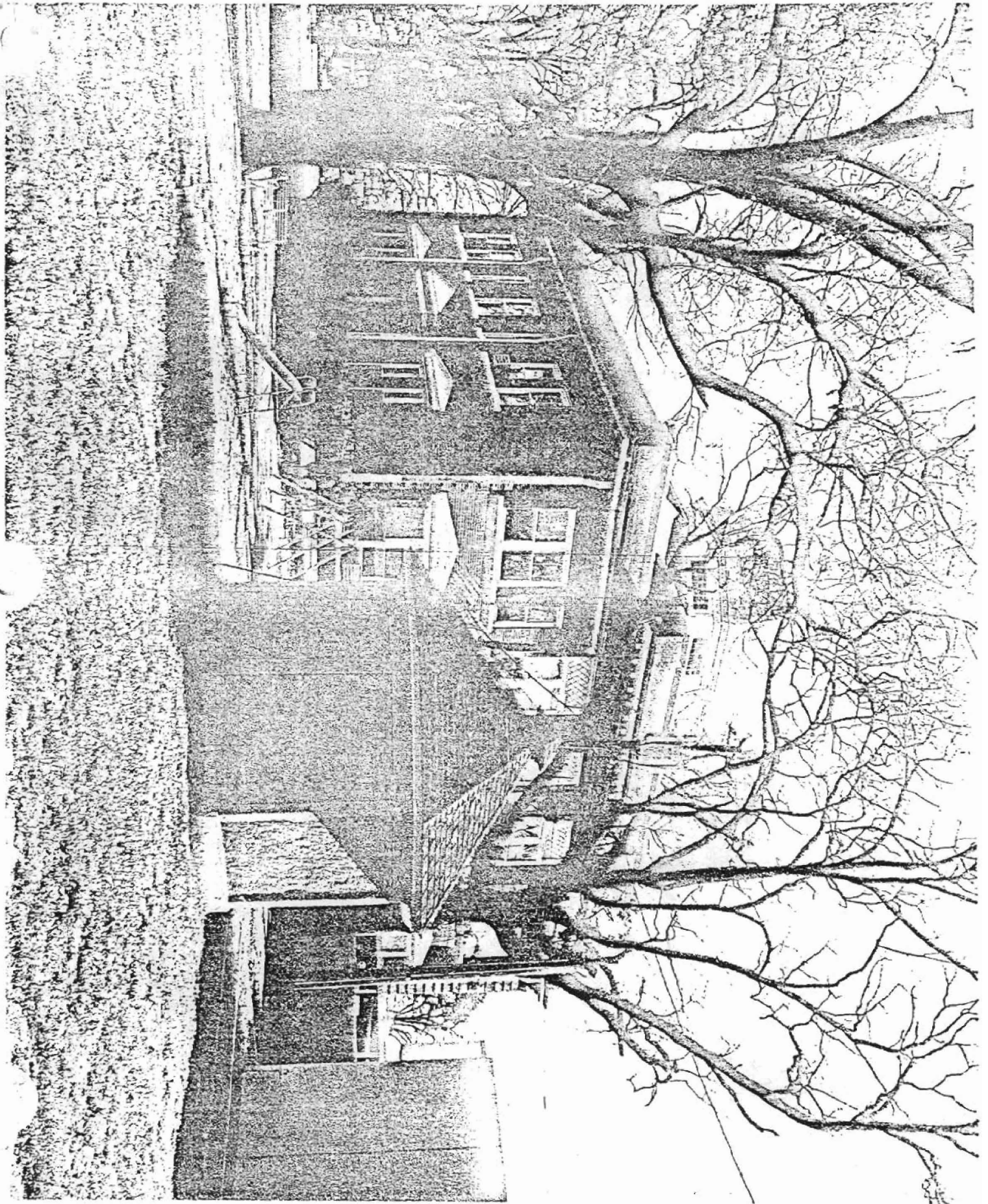
4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

Southeast elevation and northeast facade, viewed from the east

PHOTO NO.

1



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Arkansas

COUNTY
Little River

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PHOTO CREDIT Dianna Kirk

DATE OF PHOTO January, 1976

NEGATIVE FILED AT Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

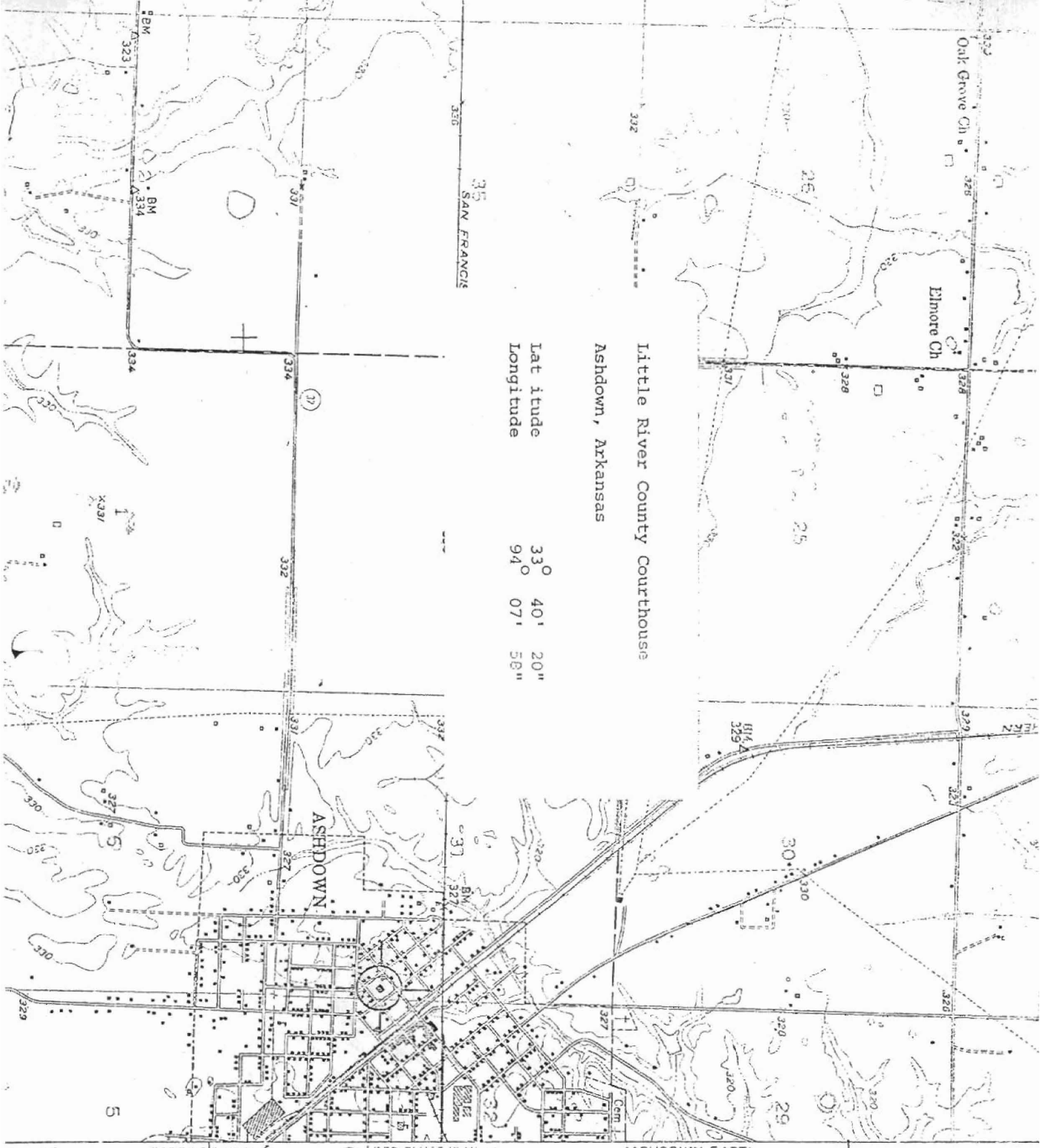
4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

Northwest and southwest elevations, viewed from the west

PHOTO NO.

2



Little River County Courthouse
 Ashdown, Arkansas

Latitude 33° 40' 20"
 Longitude 94° 07' 58"

35
 SAN FRANCISCO

OSDEN 7 MI. E. T. 12 S.
 TEXARKANA 50 MI. E. T. 12 S.
 (35) (71)
 (37)

(ASHDOWN EAST)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME

HISTORIC Little River County Courthouse
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Ashdown

____ VICINITY OF

COUNTY Little River

STATE Arkansas

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE U.S.G.S., Ashdown West Quadrangle
SCALE 1:24,000 DATE 1950

4 REQUIREMENTS

- TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
 2. NORTH ARROW
 3. UTM REFERENCES