

NR LISTED 3/17/94

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad Depot

other name/site number: Graysonia, Nashville and Ashdown Railroad Depot

2. Location

street & number: Northern corner of Whitaker Avenue and Frisco Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Ashdown

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Little River code: AR 081 zip code: 71822

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic Railroad Depots of Arkansas, 1870-1940

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

Cathryn A. Slater  
Signature of certifying official

1-31-94  
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**  
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I, hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the  
National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the  
National Register

\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
of Action

=====  
**6. Function or Use**  
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Historic: TRANSPORTATION

Sub: Rail-related

Current: VACANT/NOT IN USE

Sub: N/A

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification:

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS  
Folk Victorian

Other Description: Plain Traditional

Materials: foundation Wood logs roof ASPHALT  
walls STUCCO/Wood other Wood brackets

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

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Locally.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: TRANSPORTATION  
ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1908-1940

Significant Dates: 1908

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad

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

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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See *Historic Railroad Depots of Arkansas, 1870-1940* Multiple Property Documentation Form, Section H.

X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

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

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing      Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>395410</u>	<u>3726380</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the northern edge of Whitaker Avenue with the western edge of Frisco Street, proceed northerly along the latter line for a distance of approximately 100 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel with the depot's northern elevation; thence proceed westerly along said line for a distance of approximately 100 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel with the depot's western elevation; thence proceed southerly along said line for a distance of approximately 100 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running along the northern edge of Whitaker Avenue; thence proceed easterly along said line for a distance of approximately 100 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification: \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes all the property historically-associated with this property that retains its integrity.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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Name/Title: Kenneth Story, Architectural Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: January 28, 1994

Street & Number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500 Telephone: (501) 324-9880

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

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National Park Service

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### Summary

The Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad Depot, located at the northern corner of Whitaker Avenue and Frisco Street in downtown Ashdown, is a single-story, wood frame railroad depot designed in the Plain Traditional style common for such depot buildings throughout the state, but with more unusual Folk Victorian influences. Such elements as the decorative wood brackets and the stick detail in the gable verges ornament what is otherwise a relatively simple design. Though the interior has been largely refinished, the exterior is intact.

### Elaboration

The Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad Depot is a single-story, wood frame railroad depot designed in the Plain Traditional style common for such depot buildings throughout the state, but with more unusual Folk Victorian influences. The fundamentally rectangular plan is augmented only by the shallow telegrapher's bay that projects from the southeastern elevation. The asphalt shingle roof, and the stucco and novelty siding walls are all supported upon short sections of wood logs, placed vertically.

The southeastern or main elevation of the building is anchored by the gabled telegrapher's bay that projects just northeast of the central, single-leaf entrance. The telegrapher's bay is fenestrated with two large six-over-six wood windows on its trackside face and a single narrow four-over-four window on each of its sides. Both the central single leaf entrance and the entrance at the northeastern end of the elevation each retain their original three-pane transoms, though the northeastern entrance door has been replaced with a modern door at some point in the relatively recent past. The windows are all six-over-six wood sash, and sheltered beneath the broad, overhanging cornice that extends the full length of the elevation. The northwestern or opposite elevation is punctuated only by three large six-over-six wood sash windows placed irregularly down the wall.

The northeastern elevation features two of the large six-over-six wood sash windows, placed symmetrically within the wall. The southwestern elevation opposite originally contained a large rolling freight door; however, this door has been filled and a single-leaf entrance placed near the center of the wall.

Significant exterior details include such elements as the decorative wood brackets that support the cornice around all four elevations and the stick detail in the gable verges at the northeastern and southwestern ends of the building. Other details of note are the original window sash and

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the textured stucco upper-wall finish.

The interior -- which has served a variety of purposes in the non-historic period -- appears to retain its basic historic floor plan, though many of the original finishes have been removed. The former white waiting room at the northeastern end remains separated from the original telegrapher's area by a partition and doorway, and the telegrapher's area in turn is separated by a wall from the black waiting room to the southwest. The original freight room was located at the southwestern end of the building and was accessed by a wooden loading dock (now removed); its floor plan also appears to be intact. Other than the removal of some of the original interior finishes and the probable removal of an original chimney, the Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad Depot in Ashdown is intact.

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### Summary

Criteria A and C, local significance

The Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad Depot was constructed in 1908 upon the completion of the rail line to Ashdown from Nashville, Arkansas. It is locally significant under Criterion A by virtue of its associations with the commercial railroad enterprise that built it, the Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad line, one of southwest Arkansas's earliest timber railroads. It is also significant under Criterion C by virtue of its status as a remarkably intact example of a railroad depot designed with clear Folk Victorian stylistic influences, the only known example in the entire region.

### Elaboration

The Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad was incorporated in 1905 as but one of many such small, ambitious rail lines that sought to access the rich timber land of southwest Arkansas in response to the national and international demand for finished lumber, particularly for home building. As the name indicates, the original goal of this enterprise was to connect these woodlands with Memphis, Tennessee to the east, Paris, Texas to the southwest, and various points beyond in both directions. The fledgling Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad sputtered through a year of grand plans, good intentions, and precious little else until a second group of interested local citizens -- with much more realistic short-term goals -- obtained a new charter in 1906. This group sought only to construct a standard-gauge railroad between the Arkansas towns of Nashville in Howard County and Ashdown in Little River County, a total of twenty-five miles of track that ran through the heart of the timber country and connected it with the Kansas City-Southern Railroad (KCS) that ran through Ashdown on its way from Kansas City, Missouri to Port Arthur, Texas. Not surprisingly, this second incorporation of the railroad coincided with the incorporation of the Nashville Lumber Company in Nashville, and by the same investors, the Brown-Henderson Improvement and Timber Company (W.W. Brown hailed from Camden, Arkansas, while C.C. Henderson was from Arkadelphia). It was financed by a capital stock issue of \$375,000.

Formal construction on the line began on June 20, 1906, when equipment began to arrive at Nashville. Survey work proceeded for the next few weeks, with the final route determined by early July. Bids were then taken for the grading work along the line, and the clearing and roadway preparation began immediately thereafter, with the work beginning at Nashville and proceeding through the forest toward Ashdown to the southwest. The process of purchasing the right-of-way through the forest paralleled that of the construction, proceeding from Nashville and heading toward the envisioned intersection with the KCS in Ashdown.



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By early September, 1906, C. C. Henderson, president of the MP & G, visited Ashdown and promised the local residents that he would run his line directly into the heart of Ashdown and even establish his car and engine shops there if they would agree to put up a cash bonus and donate land for both the necessary depot and the right-of-way through town. The townspeople readily agreed, anticipating the boost to the local economy such a railroad connection would bring, and actually exceeded Henderson's requested land and right-of-way donation.

By October of 1906 nine miles of roadbed had been graded, awaiting only ties and rails. As these supplies arrived toward the end of the year, along with a new locomotive, the Brown-Henderson company continued to purchase valuable timber land adjacent to the railroad, thereby expanding their potential profits. A second locomotive arrived in early January of 1907, and the Brown-Henderson mill would be operational by April. Passenger equipment arrived by December and U. S. Mail service was inaugurated on April 13, 1908.

The MP & G would undergo an assortment of successes, failures and trials over the next few years, including the financial problems of the cement plant at White Cliffs (the western terminus for the line and the principal reason for extending the line at considerable expense across the Little River), the construction of a branch to Murfreesboro (Pike County) to take advantage of the expected development of the diamond field that was discovered there in 1906 (followed by another branch extending from Murfreesboro to Hot Springs via passage over the intersecting rails of the Gurdon & Ft. Smith Railroad), the absorption into the system of several other smaller independent local rail lines, and even the changing of the name to the Memphis, Dallas and Gulf Railroad (MD & G) in 1910 when it became clear that the earlier plans to extend the line to Texas would not materialize. Aggressive expansion characterized the railroad's policies in the second decade of the twentieth century, as its directors envisioned the their line playing an important role in the region as the main local connection between the rapidly consolidating trunk lines that ran along the borders of the state's southwest quadrant. The onset of World War I generally, the disastrous effects it had on the national economy, and the nervousness in caused certain principal investors in the MD & G ultimately spelled its doom. By 1922 it had gone into receivership and was sold at auction that same year.

Though purchased by its former stockholders, the railroad operation was reorganized as the Graysonia, Nashville and Ashdown Railroad (GN & A), and it operated as such until 1927, though it experienced constant problems during its first five years of operation, primarily due to growing competition from the overland trucking industry. It received new life in 1927, however, when it was purchased again by the Ideal Cement Company, which had opened a new plant in Okay, Arkansas, in southern Howard County. Ideal saw the wisdom of owning their own railroad line, thereby insuring control of both the cost and reliability of transporting their

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product to market. Ideal transformed the GN & A into a freight operation by and large, though the company continued to offer passenger service until 1947. The GN & A continued to operate as an independent freight operation until early 1993, when it was purchased by the KCS.

The Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad Depot in Ashdown is clearly significant through its direct associations with the lumber rail line that connected the town of Ashdown with the outside world both commercially and socially; however, it is also significant as one of the last known examples of a design influenced by the Folk Victorian style in the state of Arkansas. The adaptability of the Folk Victorian style (generally speaking, a smaller scale and relatively vernacular interpretation of the Queen Anne Revival) to the medium of wood construction had been understood and exploited in Arkansas since the 1880s, when the style came to the state in earnest; however, it generally disappeared as a popular style by the turn of the century. Though nothing is known about the designer of this building, it seems likely that an older carpenter that was familiar with this style was involved in the design and construction of this building. Whatever the reason, this is probably the latest architectural expression of this style in Arkansas.

This passenger and freight railroad depot is associated with the Railroad Growth and Development in Arkansas, 1870-1940 historic context as a structure financed and erected under the auspices of one of the smaller, local early twentieth-century railroads in the state. As such, it is eligible under Criterion A by virtue of those associations; however, it is also eligible under Criterion C as the finest extant example of the Folk Victorian style of architecture in Ashdown.

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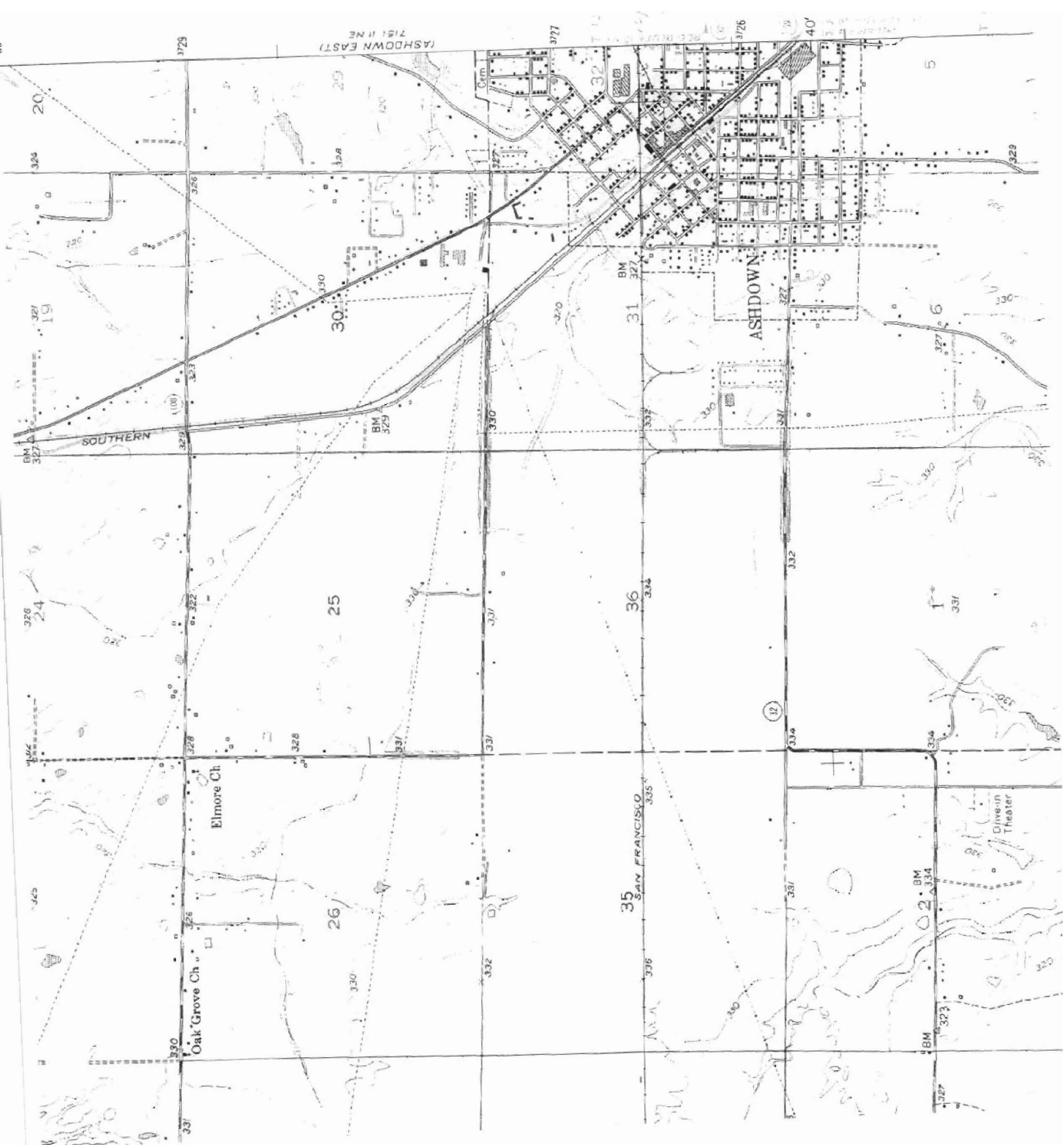
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### Bibliography

Hull, Clifton E., *Shortline Railroads of Arkansas*, (Norman, Oklahoma: 1969).

Stanton, Mike T., *Okay, Arkansas, A History of the Town, Its People, and the Ideal Cement Company*, typewritten manuscript, 13pp., on file at the Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives, Washington, Arkansas.





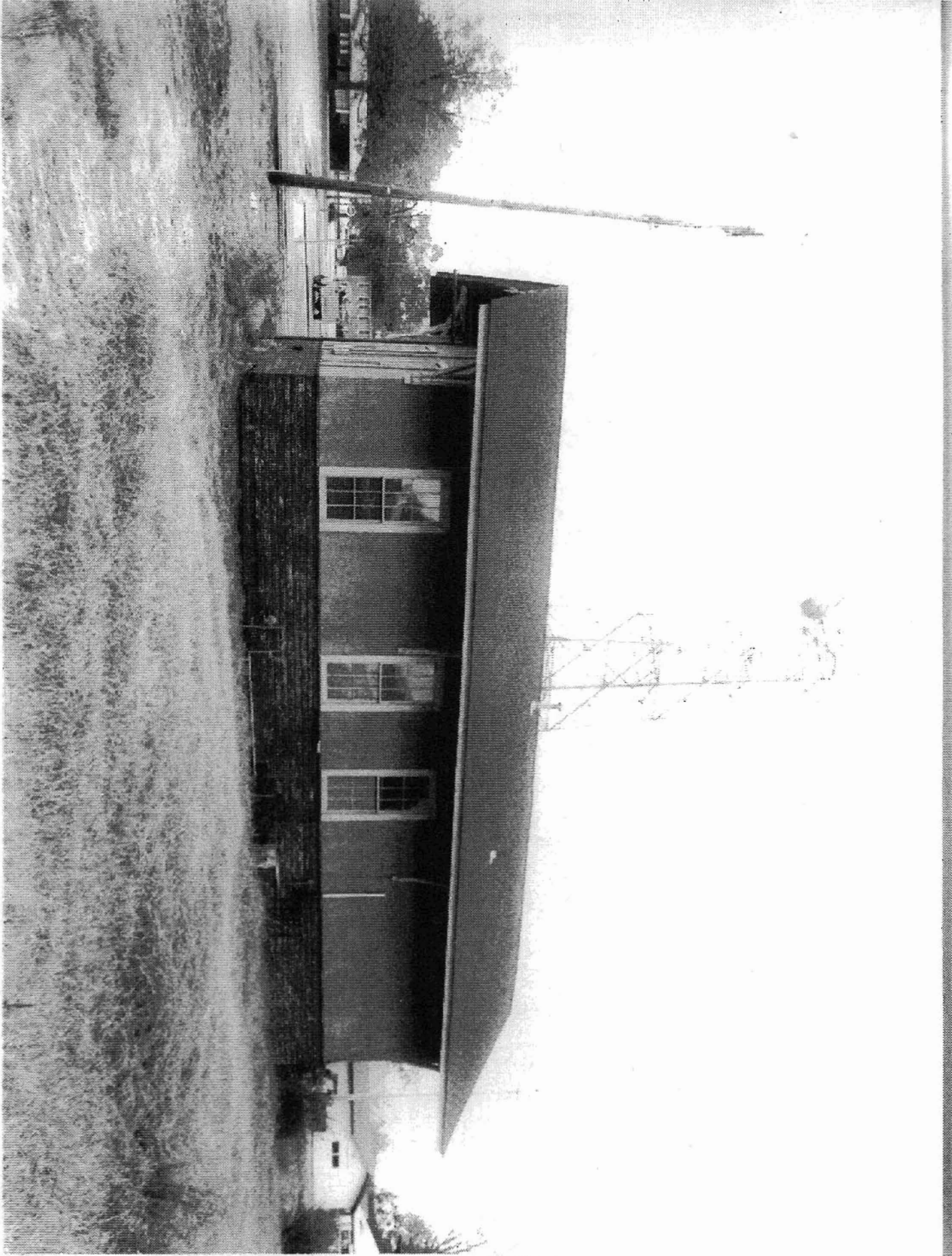




SPRINGFIELD, PARIS & GULF RAILROAD DEPOT  
ASHDOWN, LITTLE RIVER CO., ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLLNER  
NOVEMBER, 1993

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
VIEW FROM SOUTH



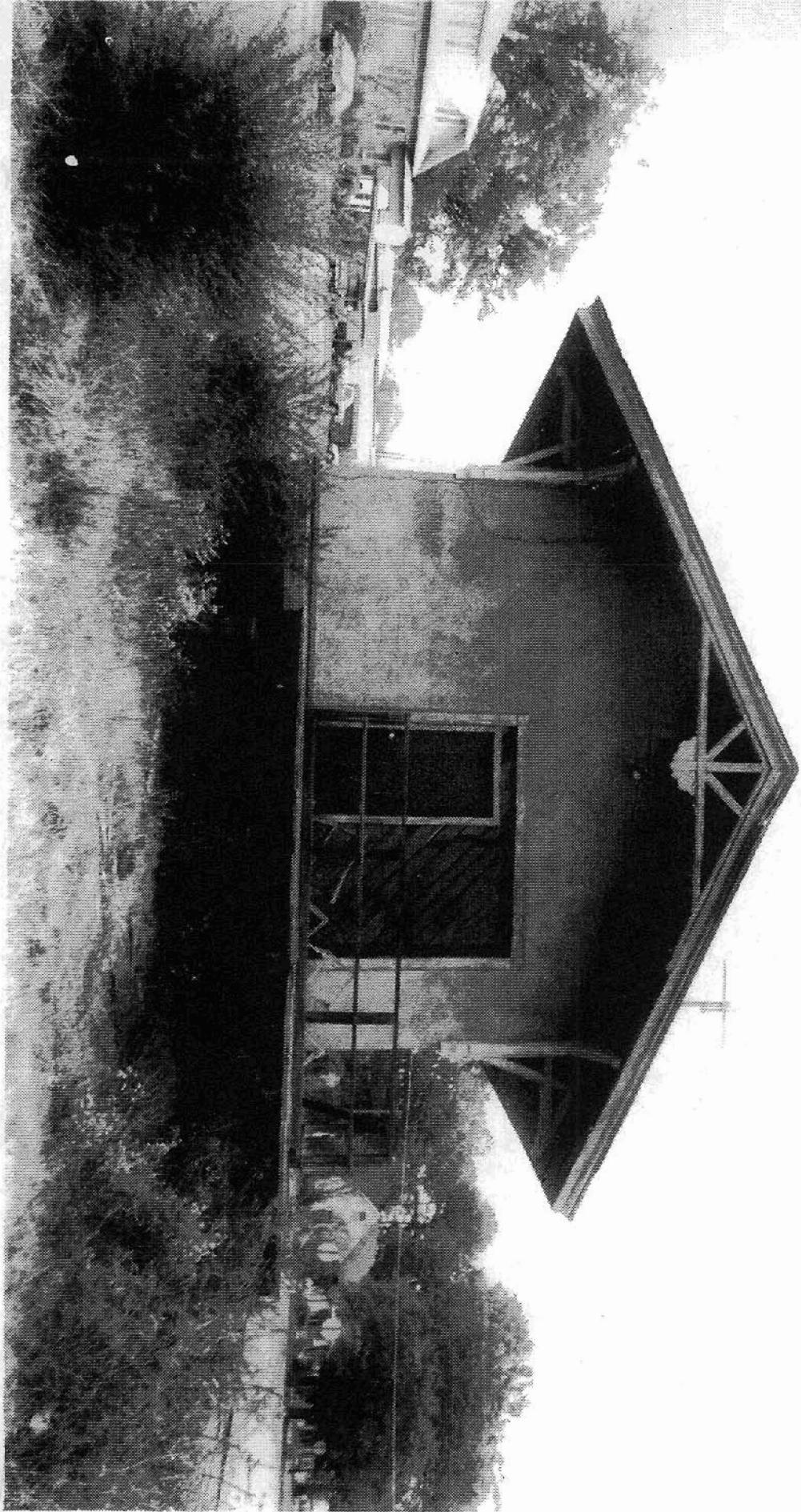


MEMPHIS, PUMPS & GULF RAILROAD D  
ABANDON, LITTLE RIVER CO., ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLLNER  
NOVEMBER, 1993  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
VIEW FROM NORTH

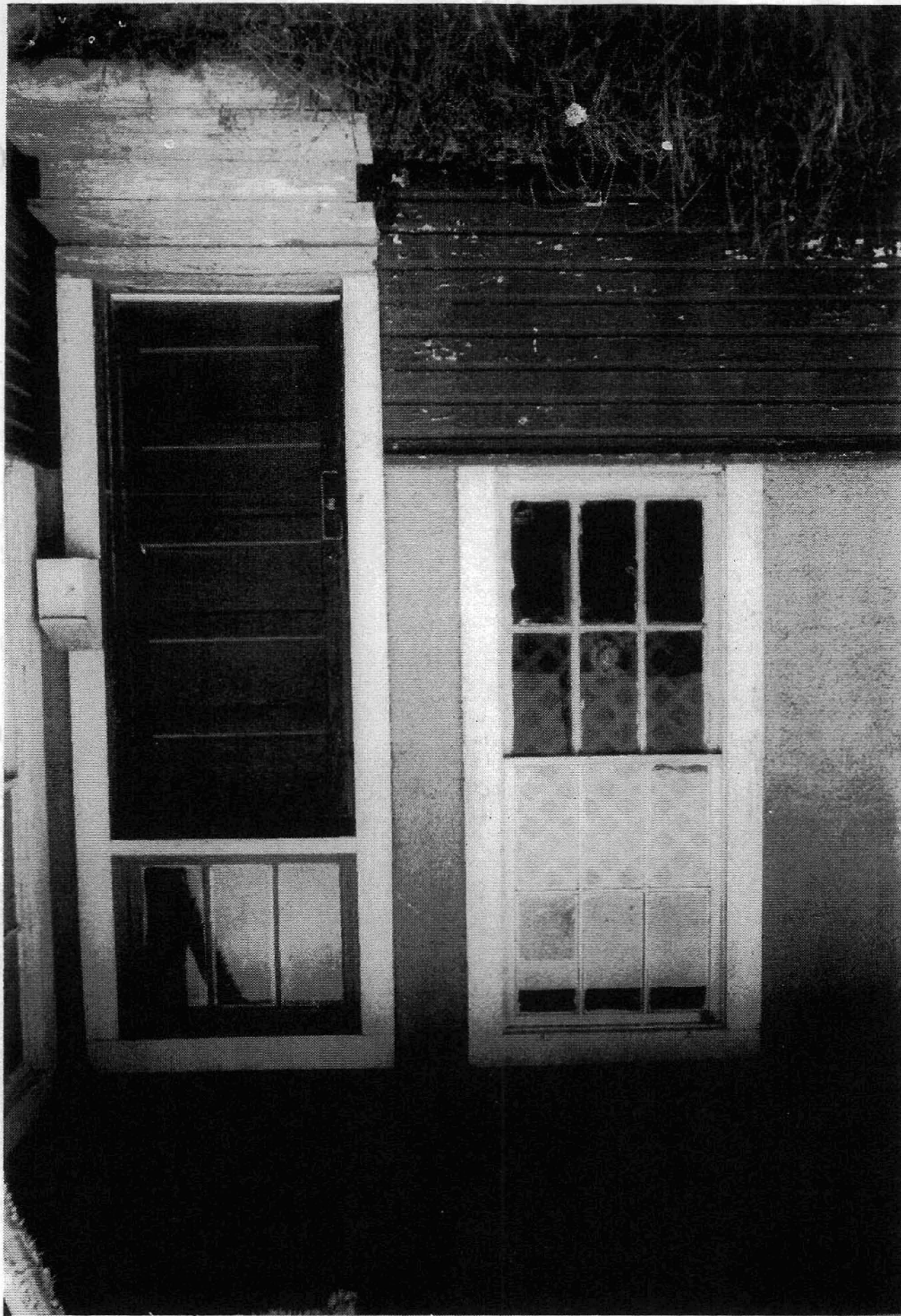


MEMPHIS, PARIS + GULF RR DEPOT  
ABANDON, LITTLE RIVER CO., ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOKNER  
NOVEMBER, 1993  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
VIEW FROM EAST





MEMPHIS, PARIS & GULF RAILROAD DEPOT  
TOWN, LITTLE RIVER CO., MISSISSIPPI  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY R. ZOLLNER  
NOVEMBER, 1993  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
VIEW FROM WEST



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ASHDOWN, LITTLE RIVER  
PHOTOGRAPH BY P. R. ZOK  
NOVEMBER, 1993  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT INMAD  
DOOR & WINDOW DETAIL





MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE & GREAT RIVER ROAD DEPOT  
ASHDOWN, LITTLE RIVER CO., ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. POLLNER  
NOVEMBER, 1993  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
CORNIC BRACKET DETAIN