

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NR 1/24/08

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Texarkana & Fort Smith Railway Depot

other names/site number Kansas City Southern Railway Depot; Wilton Depot House / Site # LR0085

### 2. Location

street & number Texarkana Avenue

not for publication

city or town Wilton

vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Little River code 081 zip code 71865

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets   
does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant

nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cathy Maeder  
Signature of certifying official/Title

11/29/07  
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 for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 the Keeper

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

Texarkana & Fort Smith Railway Depot  
Name of Property

Little River County, Arkansas  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Historic Railroad Depots of Arkansas, 1870-1940

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related/train depot

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Plain-Traditional  
LATE VICTORIAN/Stick/Eastlake

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete block  
walls Wood  
ASBESTOS  
roof Composition Shingle  
other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance **within the past 50 years.**

**Levels of Significance** (local, state, national)

Local

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

**Period of Significance**

1891-1920

**Significant Dates**

1891-1892

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

**Cultural Affiliation** (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

**Architect/Builder**

Texarkana and Fort Smith Railway Company

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Texarkana & Fort Smith Railway Depot  
Name of Property

Little River County, AR  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of Property Less than one

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 393578 3733960  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Van Zbinden, National Register Historian

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 9 July 2007

street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9880

city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

### Summary

The former Texarkana & Fort Smith Railway Depot is located in the town of Wilton in the northern part of Little River County. It is a one story building that was originally used for both freight and passenger service on the Texarkana and Fort Smith Railway. The building was built approximately 1893 as a frame structure of traditional design with some Stick influence evident. It is the only remaining depot built by the Texarkana and Fort Smith Railway Company. The Texarkana and Fort Smith was purchased by the Kansas City, Pittsburgh and Gulf Railroad Company, later to become the Kansas City Southern Railway. After serving as the town's depot for many years, the building was sold by the Kansas City Southern to private individuals who moved the structure to its present location near the railroad. The depot sits on concrete block piers and the original board and batten siding has been replaced with asbestos. The side gabled roof retains its unique rafter braces and trussed gables.

### Elaboration

Originally the depot at Wilton, AR, was built for the Texarkana and Fort Smith Railway (T&FS) in approximately 1893. This small depot served as the combination freight and passenger depot for both the Texarkana and Fort Smith and its later owner the Kansas City Southern Railway (KCS). The one-story wood frame building is rectangular and was built in the plain, traditional style with some Stick influence evident in the cross-braced, open eaves and the trussed gable on the west side.

The Kansas City Southern runs on an almost direct north to south course through Wilton. The depot, in its original location, sat on the western side of the main line with the freight portion of the depot to the south. The 1905 photograph reveals that the north-eastern room was perhaps a railway express office and that the north-west room was a waiting room. A 1929 map from the KCS reveals that the north side of the station sat on the south edge of Texarkana Avenue. The depot was located on the main line with two sidings to the east of the main line and one team track of unknown length behind the station to the west.

Railroad depots are notoriously standard buildings. Railroad engineering departments and engineers consistently worked toward the most efficient depot design for any given locale and level of business. Generally a small or temporary depot was built in a town or city and as business grew the depot would be rebuilt or renovated to meet the increasing demand. Many railroads such as the Missouri Pacific, the Union Pacific, and the St. Louis Southwestern had standard designs.

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### Back/North Façade

Common to all railroad depots are the telegraph operator and station agents' office. This office is usually in or near the middle of the depot and can be easily noted on the exterior of the building by the placement of a bay window. This bay window allowed the station agent to see up and down the track while continuing work at his desk. The Wilton depot house retains its bay window on the north side of the building, in the middle, with a small hipped roof over the bay.

There are five windows and one door in the north façade of the building. Four of the windows are the original two-over-two double hung. The window on the northeast corner is a replacement four-over-four double hung wooden window most likely added when the freight portion was removed.

### Side/East Façade

In any village, town, or city freight traffic contributed a significant amount to the station's receipts. Each station therefore offered some type of freight office and space. In the smallest stations this could be only a shed roof; in others it could be a separate building. At Wilton the freight portion had no windows but was accessible by large doors. The freight portion of the depot was approximately half of the overall size of the building.

It is unknown at what point the freight portion was removed. However the side/east façade was originally the south facing freight portion of the depot. This section was shortened at an unknown date and two wooden four-over-four double hung windows were added.

### Front/South Façade

This side was originally the west facing rear of the station. It has two original windows and one original door on the southwest side of the building. The original windows are wooden two-over-two double hung windows. The door is a solid wood, paneled door with three vertical glass panes.

There is one window in the southeast corner of the façade with a replacement window that was originally four-over-four double hung, however, half of the window is missing.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### Side/West Façade

This side originally had two windows and two four panel wood doors. The doors have been replaced with two panel, four light doors. One door is broken but extant the second door is intact. The original two pane fixed windows remain above the doors. Additionally the two double hung two-over-two windows remain in the building.

At some point after removal from the railroad, a shed roof was added to the west side of the building. This was presumably for a car port. The shed roof does not interfere with the cross-braced gables.

### Integrity

The depot is a wood-frame building that now sits on concrete block piers. The original board and batten siding has been replaced with asbestos siding. There are several missing windows and several replacement windows. The original windows, of which there are six, are of two-over-two arrangement. There are two four-over-four replacement windows and there are three missing windows. The side gabled roof was originally a plain wood shingle roof which has been replaced by composite shingles.

What was originally the north-west waiting room was converted to a bathroom and the formerly north-east room was converted to use as a kitchen. The agents' office and waiting room was converted to use as a living room or combination living room/bedroom.

Though the railroad depot was removed from it's location along the main line of the KCS it is still no more than 400 feet from its original location. There are no buildings or other man made obstructions in the sightline of the depot to the railroad from its current location. The building retains good architectural integrity, though the freight section was removed. The addition of a shed roof on the western end of the building does not detract from the architectural integrity of the building as no extensive modifications were made to accomplish this addition. The unique eave bracing of Stick influence, designed by the Texarkana and Fort Smith Railway, is still extant on most of the building. Overall the building continues to look and feel like a former train station.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

### Summary

The Texarkana & Fort Smith Railway Depot is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its association with the activities of the Texarkana and Fort Smith Railway Company and the Kansas City Southern Railway in western Arkansas. The building is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration B** as a moved property. The Texarkana & Fort Smith Railway Depot is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple property listing. "Railroad Era Resources of Southwest Arkansas, 1870-1945."

### Elaboration

Wilton merchant, Sergent Smith Prentiss Mills was born in Mississippi in December of 1844. Named for the famous Mississippi orator Sergent Smith Prentiss, Mills came to Arkansas with his parents approximately 1849. The family settled in, what was at that time, Sevier County. Gradually Mills' father built a significant plantation near the Little River. Mills joined the Confederate Army in the fall of 1862 and served at the battles of Pea Ridge, Iuka, and Corinth. Mills left the army on parole, returned home, and spent some time in Mexico with his father during the Civil War. He rejoined an Arkansas Cavalry regiment and closed the war participating in raiding parties in Missouri. Upon returning from Civil War service Mills took up farming. Initially he worked the family farm, slowly adding property of his own.<sup>1</sup>

Through the 1870s and 1880s Mills acquired a sizeable amount of property in what was now known as Little River County near the town of Millikin.<sup>2</sup> Historical tradition holds that the Little River County town of Millkin was named in honor of Mills and another large property holder of the area, P. S. Kinsworthy. After a hard fought election in 1880 the town of Millikin lost it's bid for county seat to Richmond.<sup>3</sup> S.S.P. Mills maintained a home, a hotel, and newspaper in Richmond along with substantial properties in the area of Millkin. Elected as Sherriff in 1886, Mills retained the position through two subsequent elections, serving until 1892.<sup>4</sup> It was Mills position in the county government that undoubtedly led him to the Texarkana and Northern Railroad.

<sup>1</sup> Dallas T. Herndon, ed., *Centennial History of Arkansas, Biographical, Vol. III* (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1922), 1047. Hereafter referred to as Herndon, *Biographical*.

<sup>2</sup> Little River County was formed from Sevier and Hempstead Counties in 1867.

<sup>3</sup> Bill Beasley, *Little River County, Special Sesquicentennial Edition* (Ashdown, AR: Little River County Historical Society, 1986), 78, 102.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.



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William L. Whitaker was a highly educated merchant and lumber mill owner in Texarkana, TX. Whitaker, about whom we know little, studied at the University of Heidelberg in Germany and at the University of Virginia. From Virginia, Whitaker took a teaching position at the University of Texas. He left the university to pursue private business interests, moving to Texarkana in the early 1880s.<sup>5</sup> Whitaker's lumber company made cross ties and bridge timbers for railroad construction. This, of course, required large timber reserves, many of which Whitaker held near the Red River north of Texarkana. In 1885, William Whitaker and several business partners, including Anthony Ghio, Ben Whitaker, and B.T. Estes built a ten mile railroad, the Texarkana and Northern Railroad, to reach their timber holdings.<sup>6</sup>

The Texarkana and Northern Railroad served essentially as a feeder railroad bringing raw timber to the mill in Texarkana. It was not until the timber reserves dwindled that Whitaker and his partners undertook the construction of a common carrier railroad. The Texarkana and Northern Railroad was reorganized on July 9, 1889, and renamed the Texarkana and Fort Smith Railway Company.<sup>7</sup> The goal of the company was to build toward Ft. Smith, Arkansas, and one source suggests that the ultimate goal was for the railroad to reach Kansas City, Missouri.

The Texarkana and Fort Smith Railway Company (T&FS) began purchasing land for right-of-way and structures in 1889 and quickly began construction northward. The *Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoir* noted in 1890, "the line of the Fort Smith & Texarkana Railroad crosses Little River County five miles east of Richmond. Fifteen miles of it are graded within the county, the bridges are being built, and it is expected soon to be completed across the county, thus opening up communication by rail."<sup>8</sup>

After crossing the river at Index, Arkansas, the construction and engineering crews of the Texarkana and Fort Smith explored routes both for the little village of Keller (later Ashdown), and the county seat at Richmond. Landowners in the vicinity of Richmond refused sell, or to donate land for the railroad; the railroad, in-turn, built east of Richmond.<sup>9</sup> Seizing his opportunity, S.S.P. Mills, who owned land in the area of Millkin, offered land to the railroad. In 1893, Mills sold the Texas and Fort Smith Railroad a right-of-way.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Charles Pitcher, "The Kansas City Southern Lines," [www.kcshs.org/schedule/subs/images/history/kcs\\_hist.htm](http://www.kcshs.org/schedule/subs/images/history/kcs_hist.htm) [accessed 07/05/2007]

<sup>6</sup> Nancy Beck Young, "Texas and Northern Railway," Handbook of Texas Online [www.thsa.utex.edu/handbook/online](http://www.thsa.utex.edu/handbook/online) [accessed 06/26/2007].

Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Goodspeed Publishing Company, *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas* (Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1890; reprint Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1978.), 523.

<sup>9</sup> Beasley, 118. See also William Baker, *Railroad-Era Resources of Southwest Arkansas (Lafayette, Little River, Miller and Sevier Counties), 1870-1945* (Little Rock: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1995), 24.

<sup>10</sup> Little River County, Deed Book W, page 446.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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At the time the T&FS was working on construction of the line from Millkin to Winthrop by way of Alleene—originally named Lawrenceville. The T&FS completed its line to Ashdown by 1889 and subsequently completed construction to Millkin in 1891. On July 1, 1892 at the urging of the railroad's directors, Millkin changed its name to Wilton. Construction proceeded in sections across Little River County to Alleene in late 1892, and to Winthrop where a lack of funding ended construction.<sup>11</sup>

Seeing no available financing opportunities, Whitaker approached Arthur Stillwell, who was building his Kansas City, Nevada & Fort Smith Railroad south toward Fort Smith, about purchasing the T&FS. Stillwell saw, in the T&FS, a great opportunity to quickly expand his line. The Kansas City, Nevada & Fort Smith was reorganized in December 1892 and renamed the Kansas City, Pittsburgh and Gulf Railroad (KCP&G). Stillwell's Kansas City, Pittsburgh and Gulf Railroad purchased all the controlling stock of the T&FS late in 1892. This purchase made the T&FS a subsidiary company of the KCP&G. With the financial backing of the much larger and better funded KCP&G the directors of the T&FS were able to weather the depression of 1893 and continued to find funding for construction through 1895, building north to Horatio.<sup>12</sup>

Beginning immediately, the T&FS placed into service a passenger and freight train. Passenger trains 3 and 4 ran daily to and from Texarkana. Freight trains 1 and 2 also began and ended in Texarkana, but unlike the passenger train it did not run on Sunday.<sup>13</sup> With regular passenger and freight service the newly named town of Wilton grew quickly. What had been nothing more than a crossroads was noted to have a population of 103 in 1891.<sup>14</sup>

By 1892, Wilton boasted three blacksmith shops, three livery stables, eight merchants, and eleven professionals. This was due, in large part, to the fact that for a significant portion of 1892 Wilton was the terminus of the T&FS. It is also due to the fact that Wilton was the commercial center for several local sawmill communities, including Rankin. Through the end of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth Wilton continued to grow in importance as a banking center and as the market center for the surrounding community.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Beasley, 105, 118.

<sup>12</sup> Steve Allen Goen, *Kansas City Southern Color Pictorial* (La Mirada, CA: Four Ways West Publications, 1999), 6; also Pitcher "Kansas City Southern Lines" and Beasley, 108.

<sup>13</sup> *Little River Ledger* (Wilton, AR), 27 March 1896, 17 April 1896.

<sup>14</sup> Beasley, 102.

<sup>15</sup> Dallas T. Herndon, ed., *Centennial History of Arkansas, vol. I* (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1922), 775. Hereafter referred to as Herndon, *Centennial*.

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The depot at Wilton served as the gateway for the community. Stillwell used the T&FS subsidiary to build the Texas portion of the Kansas City, Pittsburgh and Gulf. This was to comply with a Texas law requiring railroads operating in the state to be headquartered in the state. In 1897, the final spikes were driven and the railroad completed from Kansas City to Port Arthur, Texas.<sup>16</sup> The completion of the railroad gave Wilton merchants access to Midwestern markets to the north and foreign markets through Gulf ports to the south. It opened new opportunities for business and travel by way of expanded passenger train service.

The Kansas City, Pittsburgh and Gulf Railroad overextended itself financially and was reorganized as the Kansas City Southern Railway Company in 1900. It was at this time that the Texarkana and Fort Smith ceased to exist as a separate company. However, the town of Wilton continued to prosper. It was in 1900 that S.S.P. Mills moved his dry goods store from Richmond to Wilton.<sup>17</sup> Through the small depot's freight house arrived the majority of goods sold in that store.

Railroad depots became the entry point for the world to their little towns as well as the entry point for the town to the world. It was at the depot that orders from the Sears-Roebuck catalogue were telegraphed and where those orders later arrived. The station became the source of all the news and notes from the wider world. Newspapers, magazines, catalogues, and the mail all arrived through the station by train. More than these even, the small town depot served as the metropolitan hustle and bustle; the arrival of the train was the busiest part of the day.<sup>18</sup>

Small town depots, like Wilton's, came to regulate life in a powerful way. Western Union's weekly, Thursday noon telegraph set the exact time for the railroad, but it also set time for the town. Though Wilton's depot had no clock tower, for the local citizens concerned with accuracy of their watches and clocks the exact time would have been maintained, by the agent, on an interior clock at the station. In this way, unlike company towns, Wilton's depot would have been the heart of the town—the gathering place for news, the source of materials goods, and the regulator of daily life.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Goen, 7; Pitcher "Kansas City Southern Lines"

<sup>17</sup> Herndon, *Biographical*, 1047.

<sup>18</sup> John R. Stilgoe, *Metropolitan Corridor: Railroads and the American Scene* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 198-209. See also Carl H. Moneyhon, *Arkansas and the New South, 1874-1929* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997), 103.

<sup>19</sup> Stilgoe, 202-3.

Texarkana & Fort Smith Railway Depot  
Name of Property

Little River County, Arkansas  
County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### Statement of Significance

The Texarkana & Fort Smith Railway Depot is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its association with the activities of the Texarkana and Fort Smith Railway Company and the Kansas City Southern Railway in western Arkansas. The building is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration B** as a moved property. The Texarkana & Fort Smith Railway Depot is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple property listing. "Railroad Era Resources of Southwest Arkansas, 1870-1945."

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Little River County. Deed Book W.

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Texarkana & Fort Smith Railway Depot  
Name of Property

Little River County, Arkansas  
County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### Verbal Boundary of Description

Lots 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 in Block 19 in the town of Wilton, Arkansas. (Said block 19 being a subdivision of the NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 12, Township 12 South, Range 30 West).

### Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses all of the land historically associated with the second location of the Texarkana & Fort Smith Railway Depot in Wilton, AR.





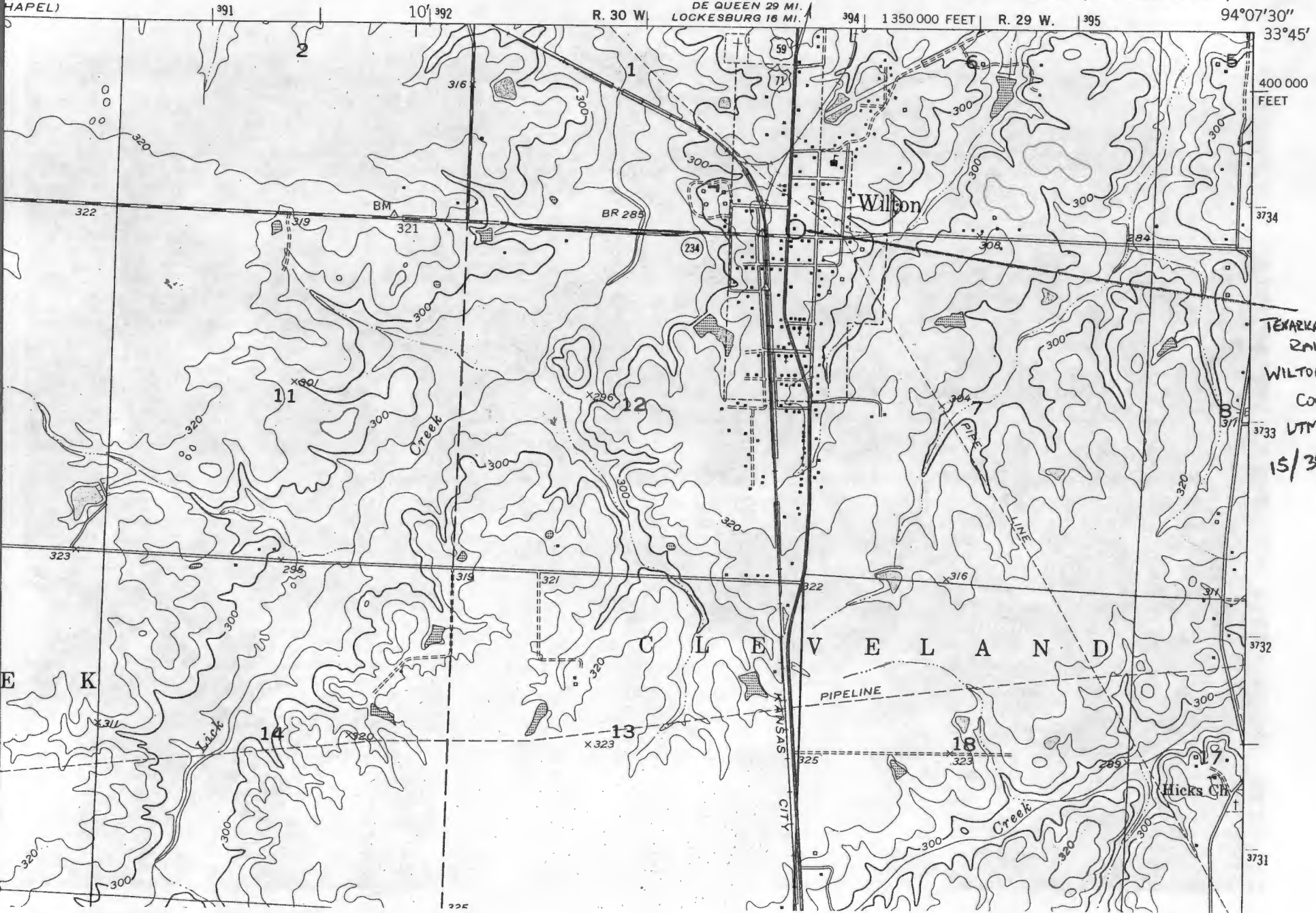




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