

NR 12-13-78

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Portia School

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

City Park

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Portia

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Arkansas

CODE

05

COUNTY

Lawrence

CODE

075

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

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: C. B. Club

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Portia, c/o Riley Millegon, Mayor

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall

CITY, TOWN

Portia

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Lawrence County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Courtsquare

CITY, TOWN

Walnut Ridge

STATE

Arkansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Portia High School is a two story brick structure facing north. The front of the building has five bays with each of the side bays stepping back from the entrance bay. This makes the building almost cross shaped in plan. There is a c. 1920 rectangular addition to the south. The major roof is bracketed and hipped with a cupola in the center. A gabled roof with wooden pediment having full entablature is over the entrance bay. Lentils are stone and diamond-shaped stones decorate the building at the storyline. The entrance has double doors with nine lights. The transom above has been infilled. There are two small eight over one windows on either side of the doors. Above the entrance is a window flanked by side lights having vertical strips dividing the window into triangular shaped lights. Below the double doors and above the three part windows (at the storyline) is a stone bearing the date of construction, 1914. Corners are quoined. Windows are eight over one lights.

The interior is original; however, the second floor is in poor condition. The building works off of a central hall on both floors with a stair at the rear. Ceilings are pressed tin.

SIGNIFICANCE

EP	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
100-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
150-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
160-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
170-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
180-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
190-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
2000-	<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 1914

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1914, the Portia School is an ell-shaped two story, red-brick structure which served as Portia's only school building for over thirty years. The school building is the most impressive example of early twentieth-century architecture in this community of four hundred people, and area residents take great pride in both its appearance and its ties with the history of the town; especially with regard to reknowned Portia political rallies.

The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program is currently conducting a statewide survey of historic school buildings, and preliminary investigation indicates approximately fifteen brick Arkansas school buildings contemporary with the Portia School, five. Of these schools, only three remain in northeast Arkansas, the general location Portia. In addition to being a locally significant example of architecture, the Portia school appears to be a significant example of early twentieth-century, brick school building construction in Arkansas.

Its significance is further compounded by the fact that the city of Portia plans to rehabilitate the rapidly deteriorating and vacant structure for use as a City Hall and Community Center.

The earliest settlement of Portia occurred shortly after the Civil War and the development of the town was assured in the mid-1880's when the Fort Scott-Kansas City Railroad was routed through the village. In addition to the benefits derived from being a rail center for northern Lawrence County, the economy of the town was sustained by local cotton and melon production. By 1900 the population numbered 400 people, approximately the same as the current figure for the town's population.

The first school built in Portia was a white frame, two-room school, located on the grounds now occupied by the present school building. The "New School," as Portia residents referred to the seven-room, two-story red brick school building, opened for classes in 1915. It served all grades until 1948, when the high school merged with the Black Rock school district and students were bussed to that town, which was several miles west of Portia. Several years after the high school merger, all students in the Portia school were bussed to Black Rock. Today, the building houses the meetings of a local Citizen Band radio club, but otherwise, the structure is vacant. City officials hope to use the school building as a Community Center and City Hall after it is rehabilitated.

The school building exhibits some classical detailing, especially in the pediment over the central bay on the entrance (north) elevation. However, its overall appearance fits more closely into that pattern design that distinguishes many turn-of-the-century Arkansas

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

school buildings; a design type characterized by rectangular, bulky forms that generate at once both an institutional and functional impression. Aside from the pediment, other interesting features of the building are the brick quoining on its corners, the concrete diamonds at the story line between the first and second floors, and the louvered cupola on its roof. The only major alteration to the exterior is a matching addition attached to the school's southeast corner before 1924.

Like the exterior, the interior has been marred by few alterations. The two front school rooms have been slightly modified by the C. B. Club, but these modifications are primarily the product of paint and plywood and are easily reversible. Outstanding interior features include the two wooden stairways, the wooden wainscoting and door and window trim, the pressed tin ceilings and the auditorium on the second floor which retains its original stage and many of the original theatre chairs. Neglect has, however, endangered much of the interior.

While the school building and its immediate lot are the subject of the nomination, the land surrounding the school house is the town park. For a number of years this park has been the site of Arkansas's most famous political rally. Conducted on the Fourth of July during election years, the rally habitually draws the candidates for all of Arkansas major elective positions and crowds often exceed 10,000. The Portia school building is integrally connected with these rallies and as such is something of a landmark in political circles as well as to the citizens of Portia.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Corey, Reta Goff. A handwritten, untitled ten page history of Portia.
 On file at the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.
 Hough, Willeen, Interview, Little Rock, 5-30-78.
 Johnson, J.D., "The Portia School House", an unpublished, typewritten
 history of the school, 1978. On file at the Arkansas Historic
 Preservation Program.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1 acre

Longitude: 36 05' 05"
 Latitude: 91 04' 15"

QUADRANGLE NAME Powhatan, Ark.

QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
E	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
G	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
F	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
H	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Frezil Miller and Mike Shinn, Historians
 ORGANIZATION

June 2, 1978
 DATE

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
 STREET & NUMBER

501-371-2763
 TELEPHONE

Suite 500, Continental Bldg., Main & Markham Streets
 CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Little Rock,

Arkansas

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

[Handwritten Signature]

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

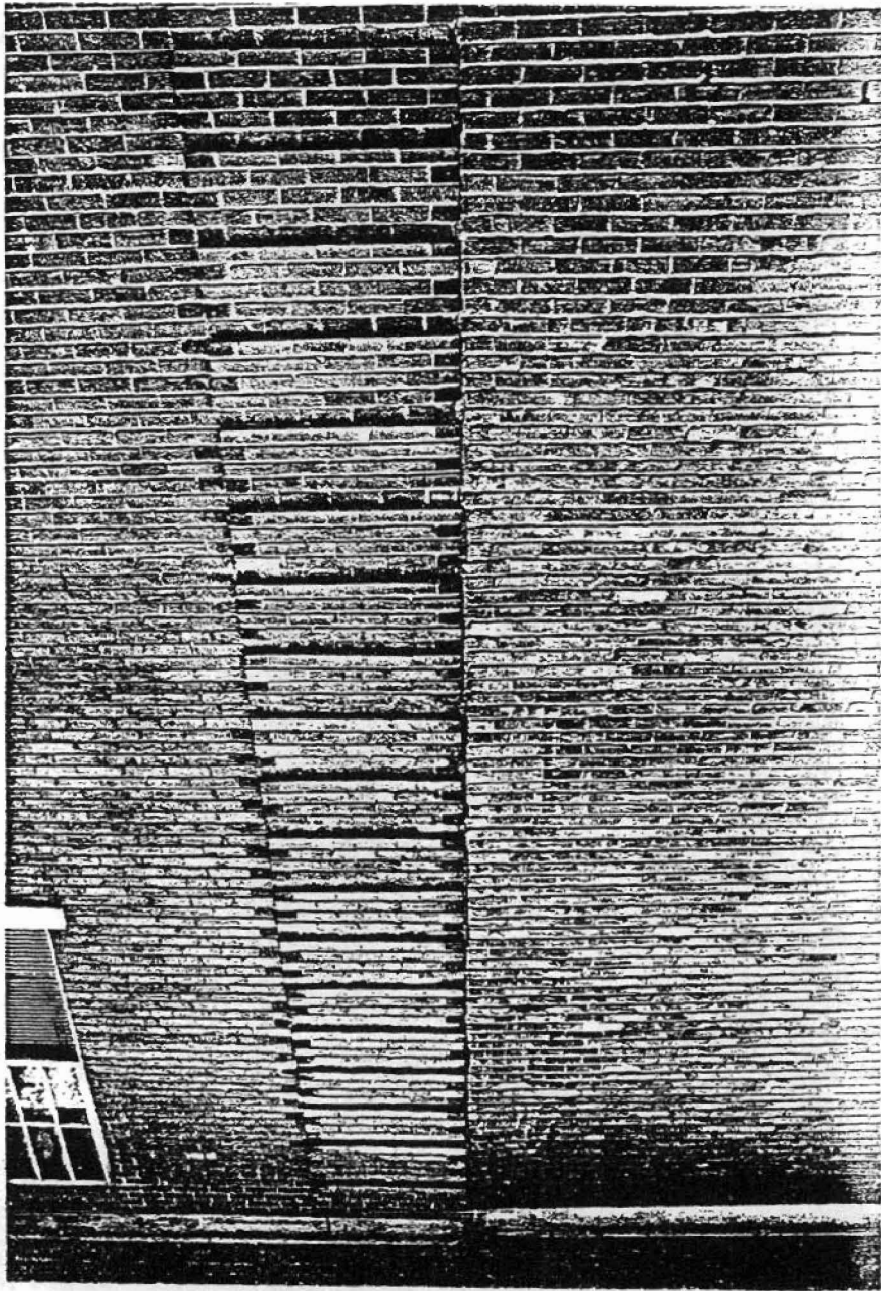
ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

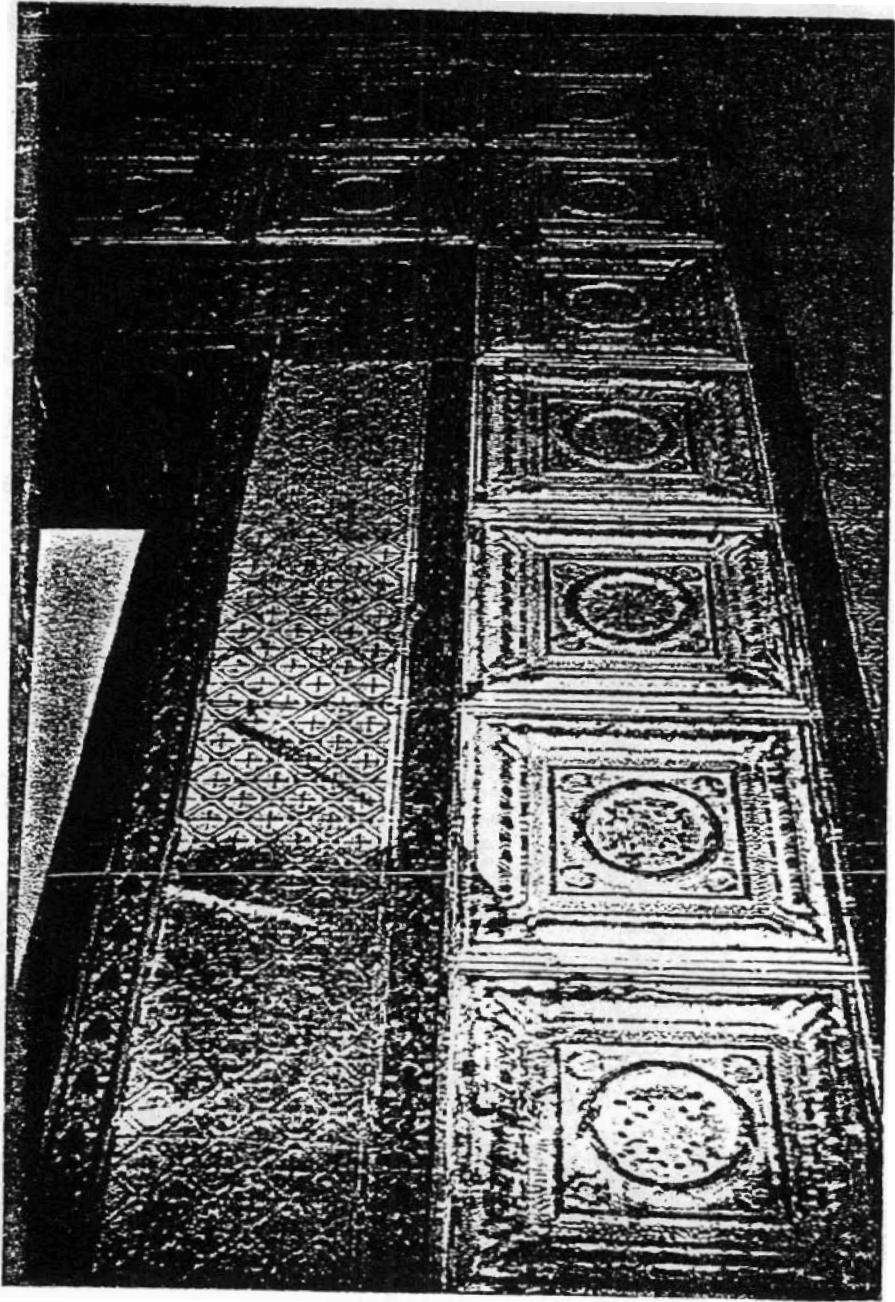
DATE

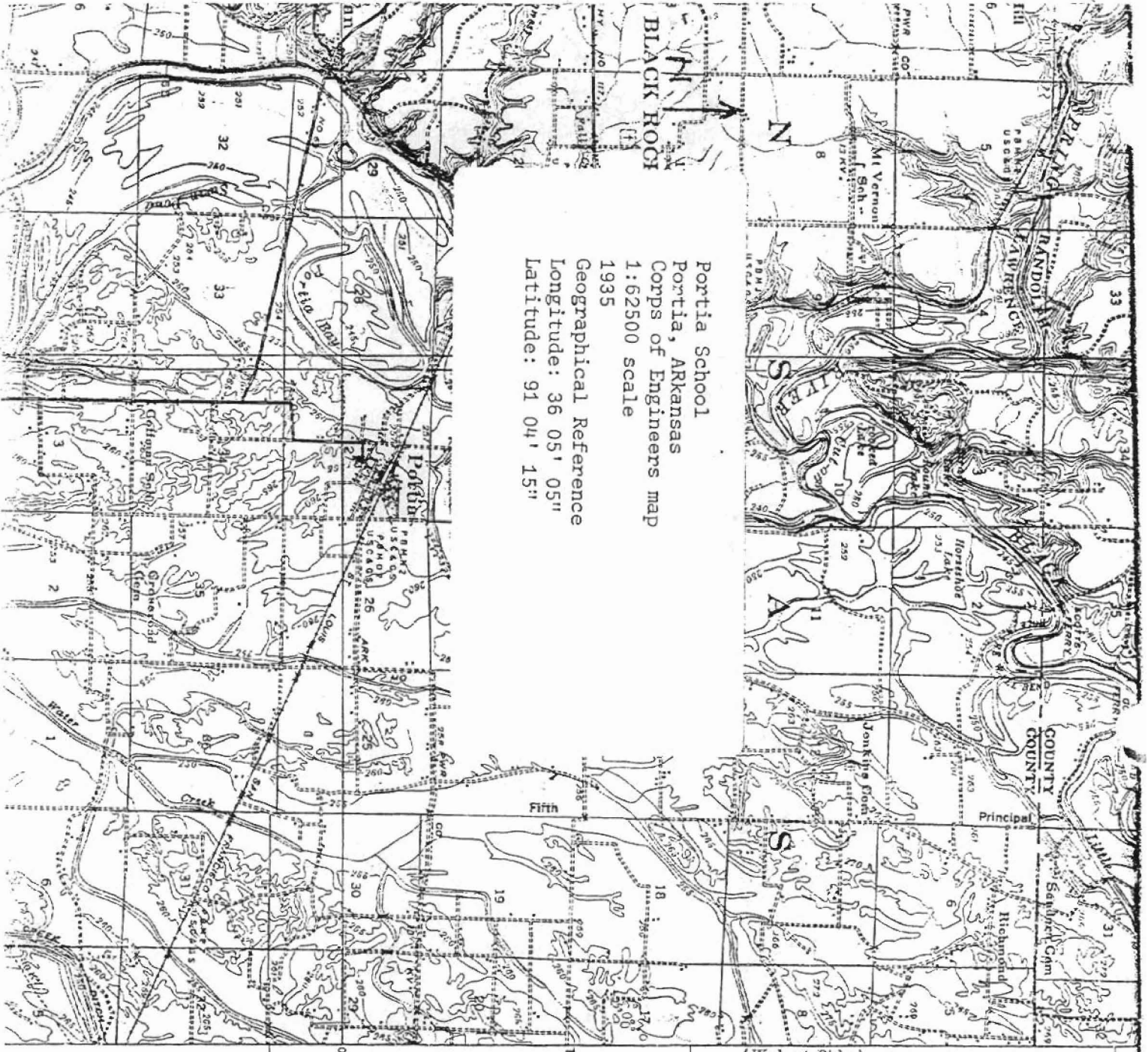
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION











BLACK ROCK

Portia School
 Portia, Arkansas
 Corps of Engineers map
 1:62500 scale
 1935
 Geographical Reference
 Longitude: 36 05' 05"
 Latitude: 91 04' 15"

(Walnut Ridge)

T 17 N