

NR LISTED 11/19/93

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

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1. Name of Property

=====

historic name: Madison County Courthouse

other name/site number: N/A

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2. Location

=====

street & number: 1 Main Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Huntsville

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Madison code: AR 087 zip code: 72740

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Public-local

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: N/A

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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.

Charles A. Slater _____ 10-6-93
Signature of certifying official 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

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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

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6. Function or Use
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Historic: GOVERNMENT Sub: Courthouse

Current: GOVERNMENT Sub: Courthouse

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

Art Deco

Other Description: N/A

Materials:	foundation	<u>Brick</u>	roof	<u>Asphalt</u>
	walls	<u>Brick</u>	other	<u>Limestone trim</u>

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: ARCHITECTURE
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period(s) of Significance: 1939-1942

Significant Dates: 1939

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Shelton, J. Ewing/Nelson, B. Chester
Federal Emergency Administration

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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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>433710</u>	<u>3993670</u>	B	<u>15</u>	_____
C	<u>15</u>	_____	_____	D	<u>15</u>	_____

 See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

The entire block bounded on the north by Main Street, on the west by Hughes Street, on the east by Court Street, and on the south by Church Street.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes all the property historically associated with this resource.

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Kenneth Story, Architectural Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 10/05/93

Street & Number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500 Telephone: (501) 324-98

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

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Summary

The Madison County Courthouse is a four story brick and limestone government building. Constructed in 1939 as a Federal Emergency Administration project the courthouse was designed in the Art Deco style of architecture. The plan is rectangular with a later addition on the south elevation. The roof is flat and ornamentation is restrained. The interior contains marble floors and wainscoting, detailed ceiling molding and wooden doors with frosted glass planes. The courtroom ceiling has been lowered cutting off the top half of the two story windows on the north wall. The walls have wooden coffered wainscoting and behind the judge's bench is a coffered panel with beaded molding. The Madison County Courthouse is located in Huntsville on a sloping lot at 1 Main Street and Highways 68 and 74. The courthouse is in good condition with few alterations.

Elaboration

The 1939 Madison County Courthouse at Huntsville is a three story, glazed brick structure with limestone decoration, a flat roof and a full basement. Its plan is rectangular with a one story brick addition on the south elevation. The northern elevation contains the front entrance, which is approached by a concrete stoop to a central bay of three recessed glass and wood doors with rounded brass handles. The doors are recessed in a surround of cut limestone embellished with a scroll pattern along the top of the border. Above the basement is a limestone watertable visible at ground level that runs around the building. The first story is topped by a limestone belt course and the third floor features limestone coping, both of which encircle the building. "Madison County Court House" is inscribed in conventional lettering on a limestone block over seven two-story metal casement windows separated by lines of cut limestone. There are ten casement windows with limestone sills visible from the street, six on the first and two on the second and third floors, which are separated by the central configuration. Only those on the first floor have a fixed transom above. Six more casement windows are contained within a dry moat below ground level that is shored up by a glazed brick wall.

The windows on the east facade match the casement style seen on the north. The second and third floors have seven windows each. The first floor has four and two windows with a fixed transom separated by a stoop reached by six concrete steps bounded by a stepped brick wall. The door and decoration match the front entry doors. The basement has four windows concealed in a dry moat and brick wall that is a continuance of the north wall. Two more windows on the other side of the stoop are at ground level due to the slope of the lot.

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The west face has five casement windows on the third floor and one wooden six over one light double-hung window. The second floor contains six casement windows. The first floor mirrors the four and two configuration of fixed transom casement windows with a door separating the windows that is seen on the east. This door is also of the same composition as the northern entrance. The basement holds only four windows within the dry moat.

The rear, southern elevation displays casement windows with the exception of four double-hung windows on the third floor like that seen on the third floor of the west elevation. The other windows on the third floor are one and four separated by a brick chimney leading to an incinerator in the basement. The second floor has four and five windows, the first has four and three fixed transoms, while the basement has four and two doors due to the addition of a jail. The new jail -- constructed in the early 1980s -- is brick with a square plan and flat roof. A limestone band runs below the roof line.

The interior has a "T" shaped hallway with ten inch gray marble squares on the first floor. The walls are white plaster with gray marble wainscoting. It features white recessed ceilings with heavy molding. The first two offices on the east and west have double wooden doors with one frosted glass panel in each, while all other offices on the first floor have a single wooden door and frosted glass panel. The staircase has a wooden newel post and stair rail with silver wrought-iron banisters and gray marble steps. The courtroom on the third floor has been altered with the addition of a lower acoustic ceiling that cuts off the interior view of the top row of two-story windows on the north. Behind the bench is a wooden coffered panel with beaded detail on the left and right. Wooden coffered wainscoting runs around the room. The wooden spectators benches resemble church pews.

Located at the junction of highways 68 and 74 in Huntsville, the Madison County Courthouse is in good condition.

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Summary

Criteria A and C, local significance

The Madison County Courthouse is being nominated under Criteria A & C with local significance though its direct associations with the FEA, one of FDR's Depression-era public works agencies, and as the best example of an Art Deco government building in the city of Huntsville.

Elaboration

Madison County was created by an Act of Legislature on September 30, 1836. Named after President James Madison, it was taken from territory in Washington County. Built in 1939, the present courthouse has had the longest history on the public square of all the county's previous courthouses.

The first session of the county court was held in Evan S. Polk's barn one fourth of a mile northwest of the present location of Huntsville. Until July 22, 1839, when Huntsville was named the permanent county seat, sessions were held at John Sanders' barn. The original town square consisted of one acre donated to the town by Elmer Polk's grandfather. The first courthouse occupied this public square at a cost of \$150.00. It was constructed of hewn logs that were never "chinked and daubed" in order to provide ventilation. There was one thirty-foot square room with an open roof. No chimney or stove were provided because sessions were only held in late spring and early fall. Two doors were positioned at the north and south with the judge's bench on the east end. For many years the building had a dirt floor until a puncheon floor was added.

In 1845 a new, improved, two-story brick courthouse was built by contractor Evan S. Polk at an expenditure of \$4,000. This forty-foot square building had brick floors. The first floor contained the courtroom that was entered by doors at the north and south, while the judge presided at the east end. The stairway rose from the northwest corner to a narrow hallway on the second floor extending east and west. The second story held offices of the clerk and sheriff, the jury rooms and several other offices. The roof was side-gabled with slopes north and south. In 1863 the courthouse was burned by Federal troops. After the war, sessions were held a John Vaughan's house as well as at the Masonic Hall.

In 1868 John Carroll and Charles Richmond submitted a plan for a new courthouse, which was adopted in October of 1868. Ten thousand dollars was appropriated and in November Richmond and Carroll were told to let out bids for construction of the courthouse. The proposed plan

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called for a 40 x 60-foot stone building with a southern portico; however, bids surpassed the appropriation by about \$2,000 and in 1869 an alternate plan was adopted and construction was completed in 1871. The finished courthouse was a forty-foot, two-story building with a second-story courtroom. Two apartments at the north end were used as jury rooms. Downstairs, a hall ran north to south with four rooms on each side. Aggregate cost of the building was \$4,600 paid in county warrants at a 75 percent discount, which amassed a debt of \$16,000. The county court refused payment and the courthouse was not formally accepted until 1872. In 1879 fire destroyed the building. Rumor is that Mr. Joseph Daugherty obtained permission to put a printing press downstairs for the Madison County Record. It seems that he stoked the stove too much until it became red hot and ignited the courthouse, resulting in its demise.

In 1881 a contract was awarded to W. A. Gage for a new courthouse at a bid of \$3,000. S. P. Jackson contracted to finish the interior for \$1,000. The building was again brick with two stories and proportions of 40 x 50 feet. It had four doors and two halls that intersected in the middle of the first floor, providing entrance to four rooms. The second story was used exclusively for the courtroom. In 1902 the courthouse burned.

County offices were moved in 1905 to a native stone courthouse on the northwest corner of the square which cost \$15,000. In the late 1930s this courthouse was in need of a new roof, which was estimated at \$500 to \$600. The county had no money so it was suggested that they build a new courthouse because the old one was too small and the Federal government was providing jobs for those who needed them at the time. The old courthouse and the lot were sold to Ralph Dryer of Huntsville, R.H. Wagstaf of Harrison, and Dr. Fred Youngblood for stores and offices. The old courthouse was then torn down.

Plans were announced in 1939 for construction of the present courthouse by the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works. The new building was approved in the November 8 general election and a \$90,090 allotment was provided. A new site was selected at 1 Main Street and three houses were sold and moved to make way for the new courthouse. W.J. Drake was serving as county judge at the time of construction. Orval Faubus, a later governor of Arkansas and resident of Huntsville, served as circuit clerk in the courthouse. The dedication ceremony was held on November 30, 1939. Congressman Clyde T. Ellis of the Third Congressional District delivered the dedicatory address. The building was lauded for its up-to-date fixtures and modern courtroom and jail. The jail had three cells providing for two prisoners each. With the addition of bunks, six more prisoners could be detained. This jail was used until the early 1980s when the new jail was added to the south face of the building. The new addition was built because of the need for more space and because the bars on the windows of the third story jail were so wide the prisoners could tie their bedsheets together and send them

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down for whiskey. Later this activity became a threat to the jailers as the prisoners were more likely to bring up a gun instead of moonshine.

The Madison County Courthouse is being nominated under Criteria A and C with local significance. It is eligible under Criterion A through its direct association with the public works agency that provided the labor for its construction, the Federal Emergency Administration. The onset of the Great Depression in 1929 and the subsequent advent of such federal public works programs as the Federal Emergency Administration (FEA) brought a new courthouse to Madison County in 1939. The FEA -- an organization that hired unemployed adult men and women to work on a variety of public projects throughout the nation -- was established by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his administration as part of the federal response to the dire economic circumstances brought upon the American people by the Great Depression. The FEA was but one of many such public works organizations instituted by the Roosevelt Administration and managed under the aegis of the umbrella agency in charge of all such public works efforts, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA); other agencies under its direction included the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the short-lived Public Works and Civilian Works Administrations (PWA and CWA), and such regional projects as the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the Rural Colonization Projects in Arkansas established at such places as Dyess, Clover Bend and Plum Bayou. Among its various other projects, the FEA constructed or repaired a number of county courthouses throughout the state, and the Madison County Courthouse was erected as part of this statewide effort.

The Madison County Courthouse is also eligible under Criterion C by virtue of its being the best example of the Art Deco style of architecture in the county seat of Huntsville, and probably in the entire county. Designed by architects J. Ewing Shelton and B. Chester Nelson, the new courthouse was rendered in a restrained version of the Art Deco style and constructed of glazed brick and cut limestone.

Though the Art Deco style became nationally popular in the late 1920s and 1930s -- and particularly for large public and commercial construction -- it became especially popular with the myriad public works agencies that provided the construction labor for the spate of public construction that occurred during the Depression. The selection of the Art Deco style by these agencies was particularly popular for construction in urban locations, as this style first became popular in such large, expanding eastern American cities as New York and Philadelphia. It thus seemed only natural to employ it in cities everywhere, even small cities in such relatively rural states as Arkansas. Yet it also seemed to reflect the real -- or projected -- ambitions that all truly "modern" cities should share. As the signature style of progress, growth, and a brighter future during a decade that desperately needed them all, the Art Deco style took on a positive symbolic

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meaning that these public works agencies, if not the residents themselves, viewed as an inspiration to the local populace and a beacon of hope. As a relatively good, if restrained example of this style and this symbolism, the Madison County Courthouse partakes of the significance of this style.

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Bibliography

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Goodspeed History. *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Western Arkansas*. Goodspeed Publishing 1889. Copyright 1978.

Guild, Robin, *The Victorian House Book*. New York, NY: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1989.

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Information supplied by Joy Russell, Madison County Genealogical Society.

Whittemore, Carol. *Fading Memories I*. Copyright 1992.

Whittemore, Carol. *Fading Memories II*. Copyright 1989.



7256 III NE
(HINDSVILLE)

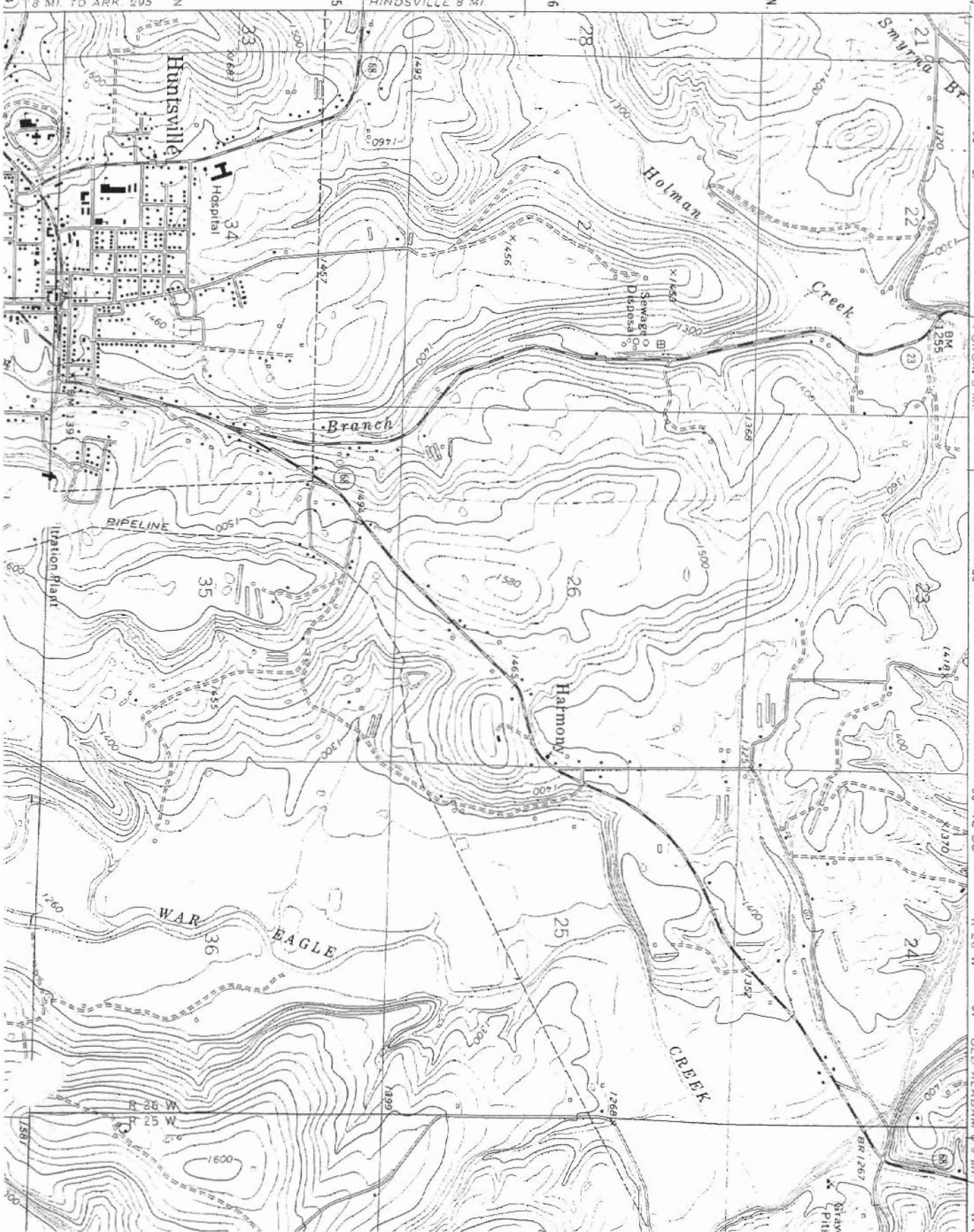
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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HINDSVILLE 8 MI

WESLEY 12 MI.
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FUNTSVILLE, MADISON CO, ARKANSAS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY T. FERGUSON
SEPTEMBER, 1992
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VIEW FROM EAST

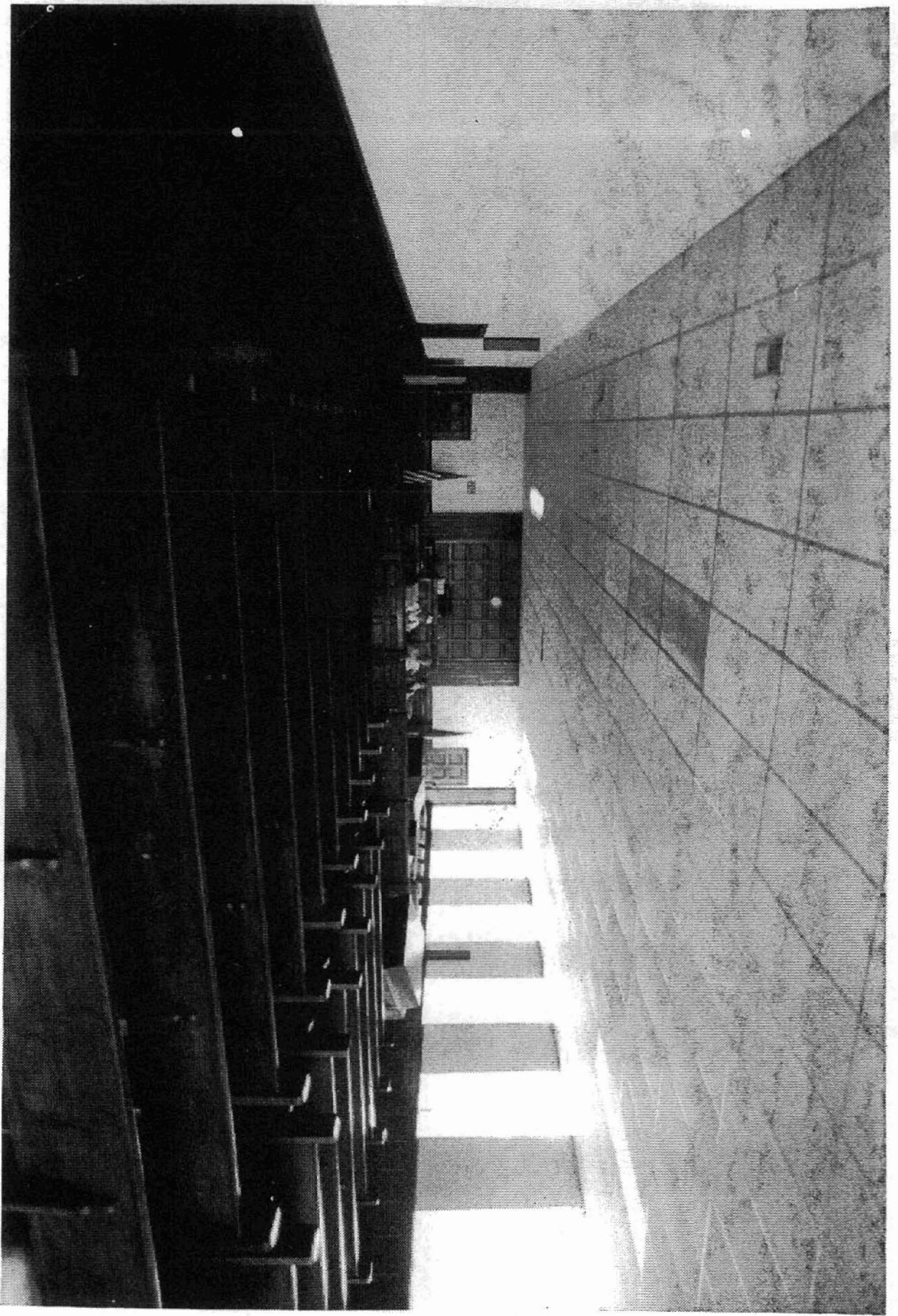
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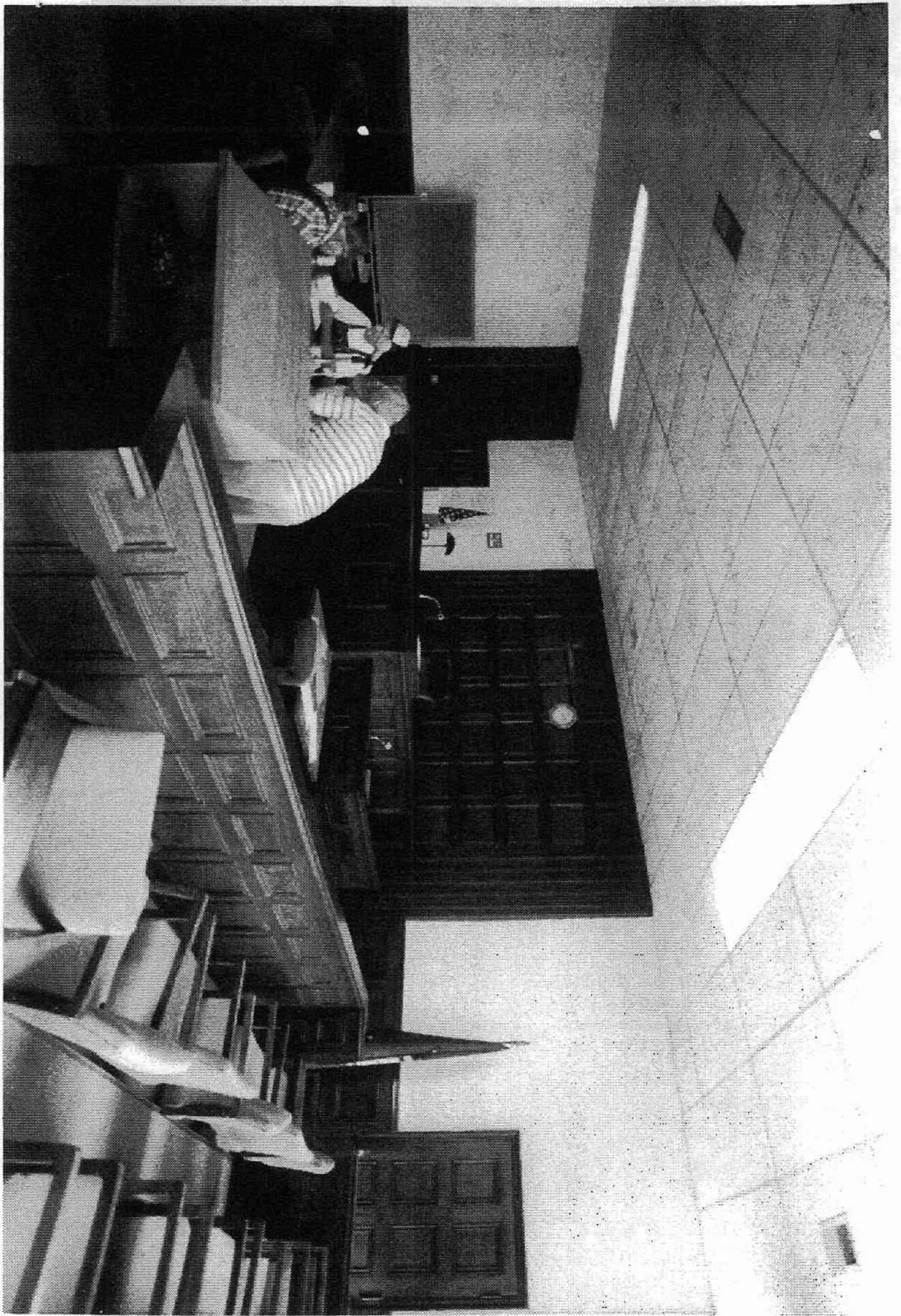
1939



MOUNTAIN, MADISON Co., ARKANSAS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY T. FERRISON
SEPTEMBER, 1992
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP
CORNERSTONE DETAIL



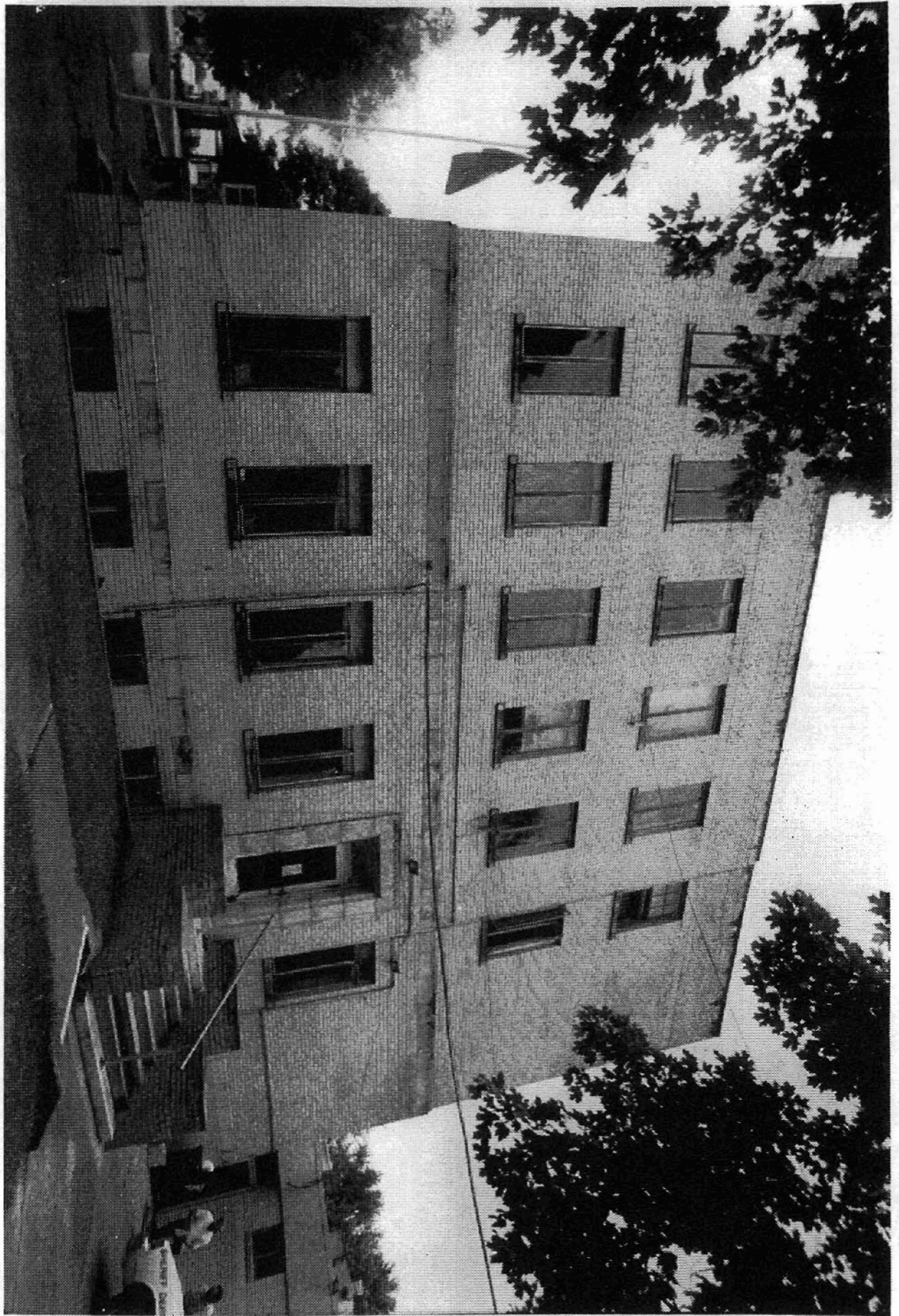
MOUNTAIN VIEW, MISSOURI CO., ARKANSAS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY T. FERRELLSON
SEPTEMBER, 1992
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AMPP
COURTROOM DETAIN



MOUNTAIN, MADISON Co, ARKANSAS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY T. FERRELLSON
SEPTEMBER, 1992

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT BHPP

DETAIL OF VORNE'S BENCH AND VORNE BOX



HUNTSVILLE, MADISON Co., ALABAMA
PHOTOGRAPHED BY T. FERGUSON
SEPTEMBER, 1992
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT ANPP
VIEW FROM WEST



COURTHOUSE

MEMPHIS, MISSISSIPPI, ARKANSAS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY T. FERGUSON
SEPTEMBER, 1992
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AMPP
VIEW FROM NORTH



HUNTSVILLE, WILKINSON CO., ARKANSAS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY T. FERGUSON
SEPTEMBER, 1992
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT ANPP
VIEW FROM SOUTH