

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NR 7/24/08

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 Huntsville Commercial Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by War Eagle, Hughes, Church and Harris streets

not for publication

City or town Huntsville

vicinity

state Arkansas

code _____

AR

county Madison

code _____

087

zip code 72470

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 Tharrett

3/14/08

Signature of certifying official/Title

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:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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:)

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

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

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

Contributing Noncontributing

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

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

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- Commerce/Trade: Specialty Store, Restaurant, Financial Institution, Social: Meeting Hall, Government: City Hall, Courthouse, Post Office, Cemetery: Mortuary, Recreation & Culture: Theater

- Commerce/Trade: Specialty Store, Restaurant, Financial Institution, Professional, Restaurant, Social: Meeting Hall, Government: Courthouse, Domestic: Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions) Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements: Commercial Style, Modern Movement: Art Deco

Materials (Enter categories from instructions) foundation Concrete, Stone, Brick

walls Stone, Brick, Stucco, Metal, Wood

roof Asphalt, Metal

other

Narrative Description

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

See Continuation Sheets, Section 7

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)

Architecture

Commerce

Community Planning & Development

Period of Significance

1902 - 1958

Significant Dates

1939

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Fay Jones, Architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
See Continuation Sheets, Section 8

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)
See Continuation Sheet, Section 9

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Huntsville Commercial Historic District
Name of Property

Madison County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Area of Property 7.346 Acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 433789 3993905
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.)

See Continuation Sheet, Section 10

Boundary Justification

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

See Continuation Sheet, Section 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sandra Taylor Smith, Preservation Consultant

organization Prepared For: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date December 14, 2007

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

city or town Little Rock State Arkansas 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 Multiple Owners

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.

Huntsville Commercial Historic
District

Name of Property

Madison County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Summary

Located in Huntsville, Arkansas, Madison County, the Huntsville Commercial Historic District is comprised of 49 historic resources, one of which is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Madison County Courthouse NR 11-09-93). Of the 48 resources (excluding the one resource individually listed in the NR), 31 resources (65%) contribute to the significance of the district while 17 (35 %) are non-contributing to the district's significance due to the lack of architectural integrity or because they do not contribute to the district's period of significance from 1902 to 1958. The majority of the buildings in the Huntsville Commercial Historic District are representative of vernacular twentieth century commercial architecture. The significant buildings in the district retain their overall massing and setback and contribute to the historic character of the district, substantiating the history and development of Huntsville, Arkansas, as a political and commercial center in its rural Ozark Mountain setting.

Elaboration

Madison County is located in the Ozark Mountain range of northwest Arkansas. Madison County is approximately 836 square miles and is bounded on the north by Carroll County, on the south by Franklin and Johnson Counties, on the east by Newton County, and on the west by Washington County. The county seat of Madison County is Huntsville, which is located in the center of the county. Situated in the Ozark Mountains, Huntsville has an elevation of 1,449 feet. The size of Huntsville is approximately three square miles with a population in 2007 around 2,000.

The land on which Huntsville is located was occupied as early as 1,000 B.C. by Neolithic peoples known as Ozark Bluff Dwellers. Numbers of artifacts from the Mississippian culture have been found at the Huntsville Mounds, an archeological site near the town. The Osage Chief Hurachias, War Eagle, signed treaties in 1825 ceding Osage interest in the lands to the United States. A local creek and township are named for Chief War Eagle as is one of the major thoroughfares through Huntsville.

Huntsville Commercial Historic
District

Name of Property

Madison County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Settlers from Alabama came to the area that is now Huntsville in 1827 and named their new settlement after their hometown. Madison County was established in 1836 with Huntsville as the county seat. The first courthouse was built in 1837 in the central town square.

Huntsville was surveyed in 1837. An acre of land to be used as the Public Square was donated by an early settler. Survey of the townsite was certified in 1839. A town square is bounded by College (Short), Harris, War Eagle and Main Streets on the original plat of Huntsville. A Public Commons of several acres, upon which the public spring was located, was a viable part of the town for a number of years. Huntsville is laid out in a grid, with a center Public Square flanked by War Eagle and Main Streets (AR State Highway 74). The streets running north and south from the Public Square run downhill.

By 1840 a post office was established in Huntsville and there were a few wood business buildings facing the square. A log cabin had been constructed in the center of the square in 1838 and served as the Madison County Courthouse until 1845 when a second courthouse was built in the same location. The 1845 Courthouse was a two-story brick building.

By the outbreak of the Civil War, there were a number of businesses around the town square. The streets were dirt; animals roamed the streets, and turkeys were herded through the town square on their way to market. Although there were no battles in Huntsville, the Civil War left most of the town burned to the ground, including the 1845 courthouse.

A third Madison County Courthouse was erected in the Public Square in 1869, but was destroyed by fire in 1879. The fourth Courthouse was constructed in the square in 1882 and although of brick construction, the building was destroyed by fire in 1902.

The fifth Madison County Courthouse was located on War Eagle, on the north side of the square. After the fourth courthouse constructed in the Public Square was destroyed, the citizens of Huntsville decided to locate the new courthouse building in a different

Huntsville Commercial Historic
District

Name of Property

Madison County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

location. The sixth courthouse was constructed in 1939 at 201 W. Main Street and continues to serve as the center of county government.

Fire has plagued the commercial district of Huntsville many times and rebuilding is a significant part of the history of Huntsville. The first of the series of tragic fires affecting the fabric of Huntsville's commercial district occurred in 1902 when the business section of the town was almost totally destroyed by fire. The courthouse (4th), with most of the county records, was destroyed. A total of fourteen buildings were burned around the Public Square. The 1902 fire was concentrated on the north side of the square, although buildings on the east side were also burned. It was noted that all of the burned buildings were frame structures except for the courthouse.

In an attempt to fire-proof the commercial district of Huntsville, buildings built after the 1902 fire were more substantial than their wood predecessors and were constructed of stone and/or brick. When the Bank of Huntsville announced they would be rebuilding their bank with Madison County marble, the local newspaper commented, "this will be a good thing". Other extant buildings from this period of Huntsville's development include the Famous Building at 106 W. Main, constructed c.1915. This building is built of cut stone block and is elaborated on the front (north) by a pattern created using varying hues of brown stone, creating a quoin-like effect on the front corners and highlighting "dentils" on the cornice. A center triangular pediment rises above the roof parapet on the front of the building. Located on a prominent corner lot at S. Harris and E. Main Streets, the Famous Building features a long east elevation of cut stone. The rear wall of the building is stucco with cut stone window and door surrounds. The adjacent building at 104 E. Main was constructed c.1917 and features a similar triangular center pediment rising above the parapet on the front. The front of the building at 104 E. Main Street is covered in stucco with brick trim. These two buildings in the 100 block of E. Main have survived all of the devastating fires in the surrounding blocks fairly unscathed and represent some of the oldest extant buildings in the Huntsville Commercial Historic District.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Another fire in 1925 destroyed fifteen buildings. Headlines on the front page of the *Madison County Record* on April 16, 1925 read "Huntsville is hard hit again by "the fire-fiend", and for the second time in less than 25 years one-half of the business section of the town is in charred ruins." This fire destroyed most of the west and south sides of the square. It was noted in newspaper accounts of the fire that the Famous Building at 106 E. Main had been saved from this fire.

After the 1925 fire, lots on the west side of the town square were transferred to the town for the purpose of enlarging the town square, making it twice its original size. The plan was to provide more frontage on the square for business development, "giving the entire town a look of greater breathing capacity." With the desire to build more "fire-proof" buildings, most of the new buildings were constructed of stone and brick or a combination of both. A few of the buildings in the Huntsville Historic District have stucco walls, a number of which appear to date from the 1920s.

Typical of buildings constructed after the 1925 fire include the one at 103 W. Main, a one-story brick structure with simple brick front. The major characteristic of the buildings rebuilt after this fire is that the original stone walls on the rear remain while the fronts of the buildings that suffered the most damage from the fire were reconstructed using brick. Examples abound of this including the building at 100 E. Main on the corner of E. Main and S. College Streets where the west elevation is of cut stone and the rear (south) is constructed of rough field stone. However the front (north) is covered in buff color brick with an east corner pilaster of a darker color brick, while the west corner pilaster is of cut stone. The First National Bank at 103 E. War Eagle is another example of visible original stone on the side (east) and rear (north) elevations with a front (south) elevation faced in marble block. Another of the many examples of rebuilding the fronts of buildings after fire is the building at 100 W. War Eagle where the front is completely rebuilt, bearing no resemblance to the original, but the east side and rear walls are of cut stone and their appearance is distinctly characteristic of early twentieth century commercial construction in Huntsville.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

The Huntsville Hardware Building at 200 E. Main Street, constructed c. 1920 is a large one-story building of cut stone. Featuring a full basement, the building is distinguished by square brick columns set into the walls on the front and sides. Tops of these columns rise above the roof parapet and are banded with cast concrete. Large metal, multi-pane awning windows on the side and rear elevations lend an industrial character to the building. It was reported the only damage to this building from the 1925 fire was to the roof from falling sparks.

Another fire in 1940 destroyed two buildings and damaged several others in the 100 block of W. Main. Damage in this fire was most significant to the theater at 105 W. Main and immediately surrounding buildings. A new theater was reconstructed on the site and opened later that year. The new building was constructed of concrete block with a brick front (north). Adjacent buildings were also reconstructed with brick fronts.

Another two fires in the 100 block of W. Main have damaged buildings since the 1940 fire, one in 1975 and the most recent in 1999. Again, the fronts of the buildings were reconstructed and have brick and stucco wall surfaces. Although storefronts have been changed from the original, the buildings at 107 and 109-111 W. Main retain their upper level stucco wall with brick trim as appears in 1920s photographs.

To understand the history of the Huntsville commercial downtown, the many changes to the fronts of the buildings convey the significant effect the fires have had in the town's growth and development. No side of the Public Square has escaped damage from the many fires in Huntsville's downtown- 1902, 1925, 1940, 1946, 1961, 1975, 1995, 1999. However, the commonality in all of the fires has been the immediate rebuilding of damaged structures and construction of new buildings, often within the same year as the fire occurred. Building methods, styles and technology at the time the various reconstruction or new construction took place is reflected in the buildings in the Huntsville Commercial Historic District.

The sixth Madison County Courthouse was constructed in 1939 at 201 W. Main Street. Art Deco influence is seen in the design of the three-story building. Construction of the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

courthouse in a location off of the Public Square spurred growth in the areas immediately surrounding it. Court Street, a one block long street between W. Main and W. Church provided direct access to the courthouse block. Three brick buildings were constructed at 103, 105, and 107 S. Court Street, facing the eastern entrance to the courthouse. Other areas of Huntsville's commercial district experienced new buildings in the years following WWII. Three small, one-story, brick commercial buildings were constructed on S. College Street in the late 1940s. Two late 1940s brick buildings were constructed facing N. College Street to the north of the 100 block of W. War Eagle. The larger of the two buildings is faced in light colored brick on the front (east) with dark red brick trim. Built as an automobile showroom, the building features broad window openings. The adjacent building to the north is a simple dark brick commercial structure on concrete foundation with one large window opening.

Very few buildings were constructed in the boundaries of the Huntsville Commercial Historic District after the 1950s, however one of the buildings at 111 S. Court Street is highly significant to the district through its architecture and historic association. The building architect of the building was Fay Jones who was commissioned by former Arkansas Governor, Orval Faubus, to design a building for the *Madison County Record*. Constructed in the mid 1960s, the building features Fay Jones design characteristics in its modern commercial building design.

The most significant characteristic of Huntsville's historic commercial building stock is the materials of which they are made. The most prolific material is stone. The abundant local supply of brown sandstone has been used in the construction of the buildings. Some of the stone is cut; there is the use of rough, uncut fieldstone on backs of buildings, and some buildings feature flat flagstone. The indigenous stone varies in brown hues, with the darker shade most dominantly used. A good example of the decorative use of the various shades of brown stone is seen on the Famous Building at 106 E. Main where the light color stones are used to create decorative detail on corners and cornice. Mid twentieth century use of stone is seen in the Masonic Lodge Building at 300 W. Main. Flagstone walls with narrow cut stone detail on the front (south) characterize this one-story, flat roof building.

Huntsville Commercial Historic
District

Name of Property

Madison County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

Integrity

The Huntsville Commercial Historic District is a cohesive group of buildings that have survived numerous fire disasters, the largest of which were in 1925 and 1940. The 49 buildings contained in the Huntsville Commercial Historic District represent, in their appearance, the resilience of the business owners, who consistently rebuilt immediately after each fire. These buildings possess integrity of location and setting in their original setbacks and configurations. The buildings which contribute to the district's significance, retain their much of their original materials and workmanship and This collection of buildings represents the businessmen and leaders who established, planned and developed the town and those who consistently rebuilt after fires. Although the commercial area of Huntsville has changed in appearance from its 1837 survey and plat, the extant buildings convey a sense of place and time in the early to mid-twentieth century in a small rural town in the Ozark Mountains.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8 Property List

HUNTSVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT BUILDING LIST

C/NC	Address	Construction Date	
NC	100 N. Harris	c.1917	
NC	104 N. Harris	c.1917	
NC	106 N. Harris	c.1917	
C	106 S. Harris	c.1920	
C	104 S. Harris	c.1929	
C	102 S. Harris	c.1930	
NC	100 S. Harris	c.1930	
C	N. College #1	c.1946	immediately north of 100 W. War Eagle
C	N. College #2	c.1946	adjacent on north to N. College building #1
C	102 S. College	c.1946	
NC	105 S. College	c.1948	
NC	107 S. College	c.1948	
C	109-113 S. College	c.1948	
C	103 Court	c.1948	
C	105-107 Court	D 1948	
NC	109 Court	c.1950	
NC	111 Court	c.1964	Fay Jones design
C	110 Court	c.1940	
NC	103 W. Church	c.1948	
C	105 W. Church	c.1946	
NC	107 W. Church	c.1929	
C	101 E. War Eagle	c.1912	
C	103 E. War Eagle	c.1925	
C	201 E. War Eagle	c.1925	
NC	106 W. War Eagle	c.1925	
C	War Eagle & Hughes	c.1950	NE corner
NC	110 W. War Eagle	c.1925	
NC	112 W. War Eagle	c.1990	
NC	100-104 W. War Eagle	c.1905	
C	100 E. Main	c.1920	
C	104 E. Main	c.1917	
C	106 E. Main	c.1915	
C	200-204 E. Main	c.1920	
NC	101 W. Main	c.1920	
	103 W. Main	c.1920	
C	105 W. Main	D1940	

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 9

Property List

HUNTSVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT BUILDING LIST

C/NC	Address	Construction Date
C	107 W. Main	c.1920
C	111 W. Main	c.1920
C	113 W. Main	c.1920
C	115 W. Main	c.1925
C	100blk W. Main	c.1920 north side of block/adjacent to 112 W.Main
C	112 W. Main	c.1919
IL	201 W. Main	D1939 Madison Cty. Courthouse (NR 11-09-93)
C	204 W. Main	c.1929
C	300 W. Main	D1952
NC	302 W. Main	c.1967
NC	100-102-104 West End Square	c.1940
C	106 West End Square	c.1920

Huntsville Commercial Historic
District
Name of Property

Madison County, Arkansas
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Summary

The Huntsville Commercial Historic District contains 49 buildings centered around a town square. The district is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance and is eligible for nomination under Criteria A and C. The buildings in the Huntsville Commercial Historic District reflect the growth and development of a small Ozark Mountain community and represent vernacular versions of popular American commercial architecture in the first half of the twentieth century.

Elaboration

Huntsville, Arkansas, is located near the center of Madison County, named after James Madison, fourth president of the United States. Madison County was established in 1836 with land taken from Washington County that originally contained most of the northwest corner of Arkansas. Over the next 29 years other counties were created and redefined around Madison with the last changes to its boundary made in 1885 bringing its total area to approximately 750 square miles.

Situated north of the Boston Mountains where the worn Ozark Mountains roll in gentle hillside, the Huntsville area boasts many water springs. The availability of pure spring water and abundant game first drew Native Americans to the region. Settlers coming from Tennessee and Alabama in 1827 found that once the timber was cleared, the land in the region supported all manner of farming, fruit orchards, and raising poultry and cattle.

The first transaction between the new white settlers and the Native Americans was said to have taken place under the old Council Tree, a large Burr Oak that was estimated to have been between 350 and 500 years old when it was cut down in 1950. The Indians who had lived around the natural springs for hundreds of years continued to return to camp near Huntsville as it grew.

George Woodward Sanders moved from Alabama with his second wife and children in 1836, the same year Madison County was established. South of what would become the town site he built Huntsville's first house. He was the first of many local leaders to become state and/or national recognized. In 1838 he was elected to the first session of the Arkansas House of Representatives where he served for 28 years.

Huntsville Commercial Historic
District

Name of Property

Madison County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

According to *Goodspeed's History of Northwest Arkansas in Madison County 1889*, Evan Shelby Polk and family moved to the county in 1836. "The first court in the county was held in Evan S. Polk's house, northwest of Huntsville about one-fourth mile." Polk was known to have produced most of the bricks used in the early Madison County homes and businesses on his land. Polk donated the land for Huntsville's public square.

George Sanders and his brother John pushed to have a town site laid-out. Another early settler of northwest Arkansas, Thomas McCuistian who had overseen the survey the original Madison County boundaries, was given the job. In 1837 he platted the town of Huntsville at no charge, stating that his service cost no more than the land donated by Evan Polk.

Main Street and War Eagle Street, both laid out to be forty feet wide, ran east and west on either side of the public square as they do today. Short Street (now College Street) and Harris Street defined the west and east sides of the square. Surveyor McCuistian asked to name one of the streets. Madison was his choice for the street, now more commonly know as Hwy 412. Seventy-six lots were platted around the square ranging in size from 15 square rods to 2 acres. Also designated on the plat map was a rather large Town Commons containing Huntsville's biggest asset, the town spring.

Northwestern Arkansas, from its earliest days of European-American settlement, drew persons of strong moral and political convictions. Opposing political beliefs played an important roll in the early history of Huntsville. Around 1837 Postmaster John Buchanan changed the name of the only post office in the region from War Eagle to Sevierville in honor of Ambrose Hundley Sevier who was one of Arkansas's first U.S. Senators. Sevier played an important role in admitting the Arkansas territory to the Union as a slave state in 1836. The leaders of Huntsville petitioned to become the county seat for Madison County in 1839 and forced the move of the post office to Huntsville. Lots in the newly formed town were sold at a public auction in May 1839.

Joel D. Blair opened the first store in Huntsville. Located on the northeast corner of the public square it soon faced the grocery store of George Sanders on the opposite corner. By 1840 John Long had built a hotel on the west side of the square, Thomas Elsey had started a blacksmith business, and H.S. Wilson had opened the second general store on the square. The 1840 census

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

also listed a sawmill, five grist mills and two distillers.

Many of Madison County's early settlers were well educated and brought with them strong educational values. Huntsville boasted of having one of the first schools in the area, with an enrollment of thirty students and seven teachers by 1840 according to the U.S. Census in that year. The school was located at Lowe's Spring just northeast of town, and served the community for fifteen years.

The Huntsville Masonic Institute was chartered in December 1854 by the Arkansas General Assembly with the power to confer college degrees in the arts and sciences. Less than three weeks later, the Pleasant View Female Academy was incorporated, offering a five-month tuition of \$8.00 or \$10.00 for more difficult courses like ancient history, logic, philosophy, and astronomy. Isaac Murphy, who later became the eighth governor of Arkansas, was appointed as head of the Masonic Institute that was housed in a building at the corner of Main and Hughes. He and two of his daughters were asked to assist in running the Female Academy located in a new building one-fourth of a mile from Huntsville on land donated by John Sanders. Both schools were forced to close by the on-going regional conflicts of the Civil War. The Female Academy building was burned by Federal troops toward the end of the war.

After the war, Huntsville School District No.1 was created in 1868. The school struggled due to lack of funds that was fostered by the economic strain of the Civil War. In 1881 Dr. Knight, a noted physician and author of the widely respected *Knight's Medical Advisor*, proposed rebuilding the destroyed Female Academy building. He and others soon sold enough subscriptions to finance construction of a two-story education building on the old grounds. This school served the area over fifty years.

Around 1890 Professor Jesse Bird opened Bird College on a hill overlooking Huntsville. It offered a sixteen-week fall term with shorter spring and winter terms for \$2.00 to \$4.00 per month. Professor Bird a noted educator had taught in Tennessee and Kentucky before coming to Arkansas. Bird College operated less than ten years, but left an important imprint on the families of the Huntsville area.

Huntsville Academy provided common school education from 1900 to 1928 in a two-story

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

building on College Street with grades one through eight. Students who wanted to go on to become teachers could receive additional training. In 1927 the Arkansas General Assembly provided for the creation and maintenance of public schools for vocational education. The act required a \$15,000.00 matching fund from any community considering such a school. Huntsville was one of only two towns in Arkansas with enough public commitment to raise the money and provide the land for construction of the school. The Huntsville State Vocational School was located on part of the original Polk Farm with the first building known as "Old Main" completed in 1928. The Vocational School grew, gaining respect through out the 1930s.

The continued development and support of educational institutes is an outward indication of the sense of community service felt so strongly by the founding families of Huntsville. This has produced, over the years, many teachers, educators, publishers and public servants. The most noted public servant from Huntsville is Oval E. Faubus, teacher, editor and a former publisher of the *Madison County Record*, and the longest serving governor of Arkansas from 1954 to 1967. Orval Faubus was not the only governor from Huntsville.

The eighth governor of Arkansas, Isaac Murphy, was also a teacher, and like Faubus, had to deal with a national polarizing events during his time in office. He was twice elected to the Arkansas General Assembly but ended his legislative career with the distinction of being the only Representative to vote against the secession of Arkansas from the United States. Later he joined the Federal Army in Missouri. During this time Federal forces rounded up ten to twelve prominent citizens of Huntsville and executed them by firing squad the next day in what became know as the Huntsville Massacre.

After the war Isaac Murphy returned to Huntsville. In 1864 he was appointed the first post-war Governor of Arkansas. One of two governors serving Arkansas at the same time. Murphy governed the northern part of the state from Little Rock and Harrison Flannigan governed the south from Old Washington.

The history of the newsprint business in Huntsville is a reflection of the importance of political expression for its residents. The first local paper appeared in the fall of 1852. Although named the *Independent* and highly anticipated, it garnered little acceptance from either side of the political fence and survived for only a few months.

Huntsville Commercial Historic
District

Name of Property

Madison County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Four years later the *Mountaineer* a democratic leaning newspaper, was established by J.P. Owens then moved to Springfield, Missouri the next year. On May 31, 1879 J. H. Daugherty began publishing the *Madison County Record*. It burned after only six months of operation but resumed publishing in February 1880.

In December 1884, J.W. Elsey took charge of the *Madison County Record* and changed the name to the *Madison County Democrat*. After a year and half, Augusta Lowe bought the newspaper and changed the name to the *War Eagle Republican* then moved the plant to the nearby St. Paul community.

Within three months a new journalistic effort was established in Huntsville. J.W. Baldwin called his newspaper simply the "*Democrat*". May of 1886, J. T. Gage became the third publisher of the *Democrat*. Not to be out done by the other party, Augusta Lowe moved the *War Eagle Republican* back to Huntsville in 1890 and changed the name to the *Huntsville Republican*. That same year Gage changed the name of the *Democrat* to the *Madison County Democrat*.

Both papers continued to compete for local readership until July, 1919 when Alfred Hawn merged the *Huntsville Republican* and the *Madison County Democrat* into one newspaper. He moved the newspaper into the Hawn Building at 112 West Main Street and reclaimed a non-partisan name discarded some twenty-five years before, the *Madison County Record*. Later, the *Madison County Record* moved off the square but continued to provide quality newspaper to the citizen of Huntsville.

Although Huntsville's community commitment was strong, it was difficult to overcome the fact that the railroad did not build near the town in the 1880's and 1890s as rail lines were laid in the region. Railroad access was crucial to the continued development into the twentieth century. Huntsville remained a largely rural community where county government and local commerce were the largest industry and residents found it necessary to travel to other town and cities for jobs in manufacturing.

A strong sense of commitment and community shaped the town and growth of Huntsville. Above all other factors, one recurring event, fire, played the greatest influence in defining the physical

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

and architectural appearance of Huntsville's existing commercial and governmental district today. The intent of Huntsville's public square was to provide land that would be used by all of the citizens. The first four Court Houses were built in the center of it. Unfortunately the arrangement of tightly packed business around a Court House square proved time and again to be devastating for Huntsville.

The first Court House built in the center of the public square in 1838, was rough hand hewed log cabin. In 1845 a two-story brick building Court House was constructed on the same site using brick made at Evan Polk's farm. This second courthouse building was destroyed by fire during the Civil War and all of the county's records were burned.

A third Court House was completed in 1871, erected as a frame structure on the same site as the previous two. A chemical used to clean the printing press of the *Madison County Record* that was located in the basement, is credited with causing the blaze in 1879 that completely destroyed the building and put the newspaper out of business for a year. That same year Huntsville's second jail was burned by an escaping prisoner.

Again a new courthouse was built on the same site in the town square. The fourth version, constructed of brick was one-story, forty feet by fifty feet. It was completed in October 1882 and served Madison County citizens until a December night in 1902. Fire erupted on the north side of the square. It quickly spread east and west destroying the Madison County Bank, two grocery stores, a doctor's office, two drug stores, a hardware store, telephone company, a hotel, six residences, three other businesses and the fourth Madison County Courthouse.

The overriding consensus among the citizens of Huntsville was that the fifth Court House should be constructed of stone and in a different location. A lot adjoining the square on the north side was selected. The building was completed in 1905. As hoped, it did survive the next major fire in 1925.

The 1925 fire started on the morning of April 10th in the southwest corner of the public square. Fifteen buildings were destroyed and the *Madison County Record* and the telephone company were temporarily out of business for some time.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

The fifth Court House continued in use until 1939 when it was replaced by the construction of a new building at 201 W. Main Street. This courthouse, the sixth built in Huntsville, is the first to not be constructed on or facing the town square. The Art Deco style building continues to serve as the Madison County Courthouse.

The 1925 fire gave Huntsville a chance to enlarge the town square. Through a series of land swaps the town acquired the lots on the west side of the square. With this addition, the Huntsville Public Square became long rectangular space. A spurt of growth and rebuilding after the 1925 fire was immediate.

In 1940 fire again damaged businesses on the square including the movie theater. The theater was reconstructed and opened less than a year after the fire. The southeast section of the square burned in 1946, again in 1961 and yet again in 1975. The north side of the square burned in 1995 and the most recent fire was on the southwest corner in 1999.

Governor Orval Faubus returned to his hometown in the late 1960's. He contracted renowned Fayetteville architect Fay Jones to design his retirement home built on the eastern hill (now known as Governor's Hill) overlooking downtown Huntsville. Fay Jones was then commissioned to design the last major addition to the fabric of downtown Huntsville, the *Madison County Record Building*.

Significance

The Huntsville Commercial Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and Criterion C with local significance. The Huntsville Commercial Historic District is in the center of the original 1839 plat of the town. Huntsville has served as the county seat of Madison County since 1839. The buildings located in the district are significant because they are the best extant representation of Huntsville's commercial and political history and architectural heritage. The uniqueness of the buildings in the Huntsville Commercial Historic District lies in their use of local sandstone in varying hues of brown, in natural form or cut.

Huntsville Commercial Historic
District

Name of Property

Madison County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Currie, Barton W. "There Ain't No Such Town", originally published December 14, 1914, reprinted in *Madison County Musings*, Volume XIII, No.2, Summer, 1994.

Early Huntsville History and Cemetery Enumeration. Published by the Madison County Genealogical and Historical Society, Huntsville, 2000, Revised July 2006.

"Fire Fiend Again Ravages Huntsville Business Section", *Madison County Record*, January 11, 1940, *Madison County Musings*, Fall, 1999.

Goodspeed History. *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Western Arkansas*. Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889.

"Huntsville (Madison County)", <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net>

"Madison County, Arkansas", http://www.myarkansasgenealogy.com/ar_county

Madison County Record, articles on the following dates: 8 April 1926,

Miscellaneous Records and Photographs, from the files of Madison County, AR Genealogical and Historical Society, Huntsville, Arkansas.

Stotts, James R. "A Sketch of Huntsville and the Huntsvilleites in 1897", *Madison County Musings*, Volume IX, No.2, Summer 1989.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

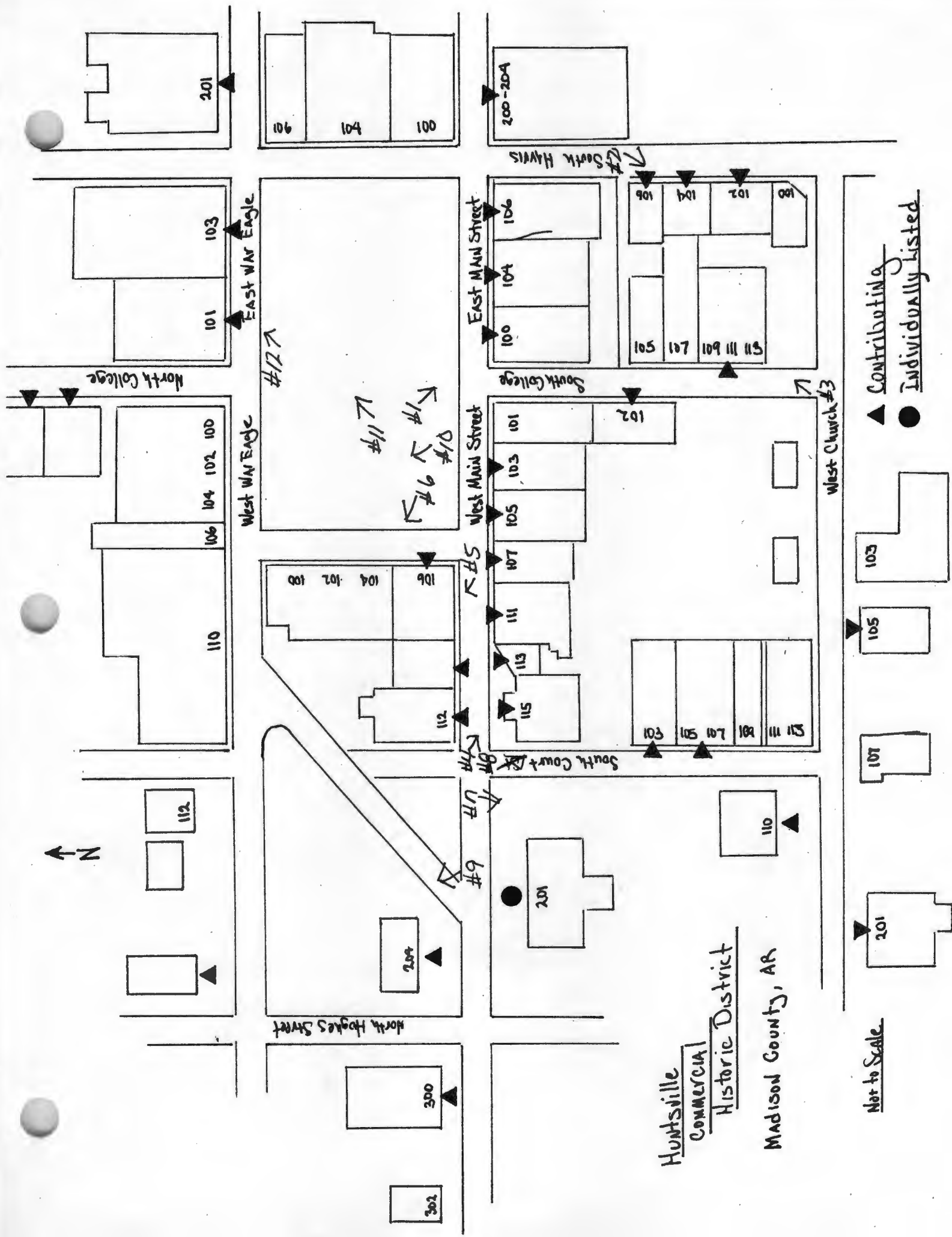
Section number 10 Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point on the southeast corner of the property line of the building located at 201 E. War Eagle, the boundary runs north to the building's rear property line where it turn to run due west along the rear property lines of 201 E. War Eagle and the 100 block of E. War Eagle to its intersection with North College Street. At this junction, the boundary turns to run north to the northeast corner of N. College St. building #2 where it turns and runs west to the rear elevation, where it turns to run south to a point on the rear property lines of buildings in the 100 block of W. War Eagle. The boundary runs along the rear (north) property lines of buildings in the 100 block of W. War Eagle to its intersection with N. Hughes Street. The boundary then runs south along N. Hughes Street to the rear property line of 300 W. Main Street. At this point the boundary runs west along the rear (north) property line of 300 W. Main and 302 W. Main to the northwest corner of the 302 W. Main property line. At this point the boundary runs south to its intersection with the centerline of W. Main Street where it runs east to the intersection with S. Hughes Street. The boundary then runs south along S. Hughes Street, across W. Church Street to the rear property line of 201 W. Church Street. The boundary turns to run east along the rear property lines on the south side of W. Church Street to the intersection of S. Harris Street. At S. Harris Street, the boundary turns and runs north to the rear property line of 200-204 E. Main Street where it turns and runs east to the eastern boundary of the building's property line. The boundary turns to run north along the rear property lines of buildings in the 100 block of N. Harris to its point of origin on E. War Eagle.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The district includes contiguous and intact historic resources at the center of Huntsville's commercial area whose original function were commercial and governmental in nature. This built environment documents Huntsville from 1902 through the 1950s. These resources, which surround the town square, in conjunction with the streets and lots upon which they are located provide an excellent picture of the development of Huntsville from 1902 to 1958. The boundaries of the district encompass the area that has always been Huntsville's commercial core and highlights those buildings that portray Huntsville's commercial development during the twentieth century.



Huntsville
 COMMERCIAL
 Historic District
 Madison County, AR

- ▲ Contributing
- Individually Listed

Not to Scale



1. 100-2 BLDGS E. MAIN ST.
HUNTSVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
2. MADISON CTY, AR
3. PHOTO BY SANDRA TAYLOR SMITH
4. 9-2-07
5. NEGATIVE AT AHRP
6. VIEW LOOKING SOUTHEAST FROM PUBLIC SQUARE
7. PHOTO #1



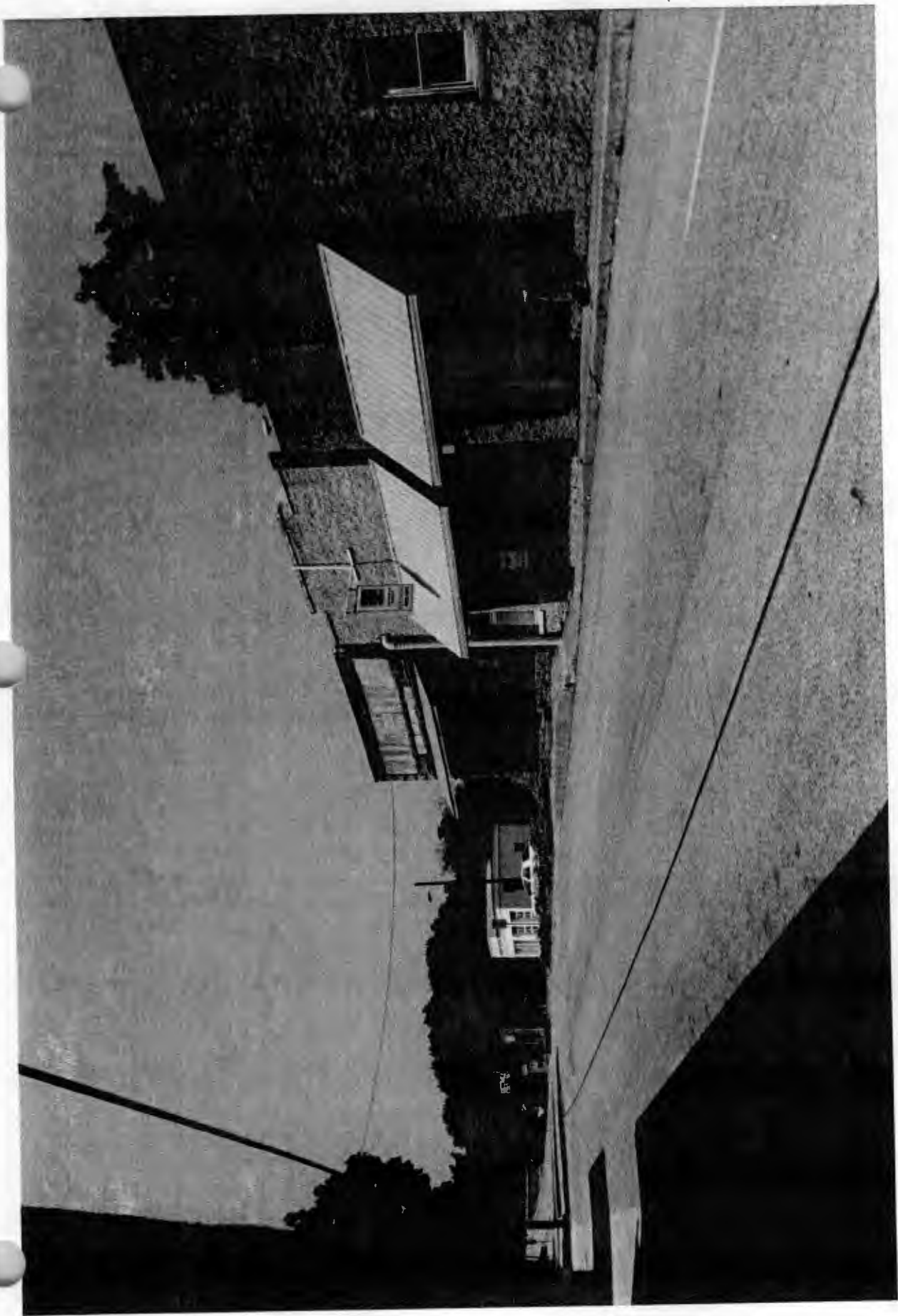
1. 100-106 S. HARRIS
HUNTSVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
2. MADISON CITY, AR
3. PHOTO BY SANDRA TAYLOR SMITH
4. 9-2-07
5. NEGATIVE AT AHPP
6. VIEW LOOKING SOUTHWEST FROM E. MAIN + S. HARRIS
7. PHOTO #2



1. 105-118 S. COLLEGE
HUNTSVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
2. MADISON CTY., AR
3. PHOTO BY SANDRA TAYLOR SMITH
4. 9-2-07
5. NEGATIVE AT AHPP
6. VIEW LOOKING NORTHEAST FROM SOUTH COLLEGE & WEST CHURCH
7. PHOTO #3



1. SOUTH SIDE 100 BLOCK W. MAIN ST.
HUNTSVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
2. MADISON CTY., AR
3. PHOTO BY SANDRA TAYLOR SMITH
4. 9-2-07
5. NEGATIVE AT AHPP
6. VIEW LOOKING SOUTHEAST FROM COURT + W. MAIN
7. PHOTO # 4



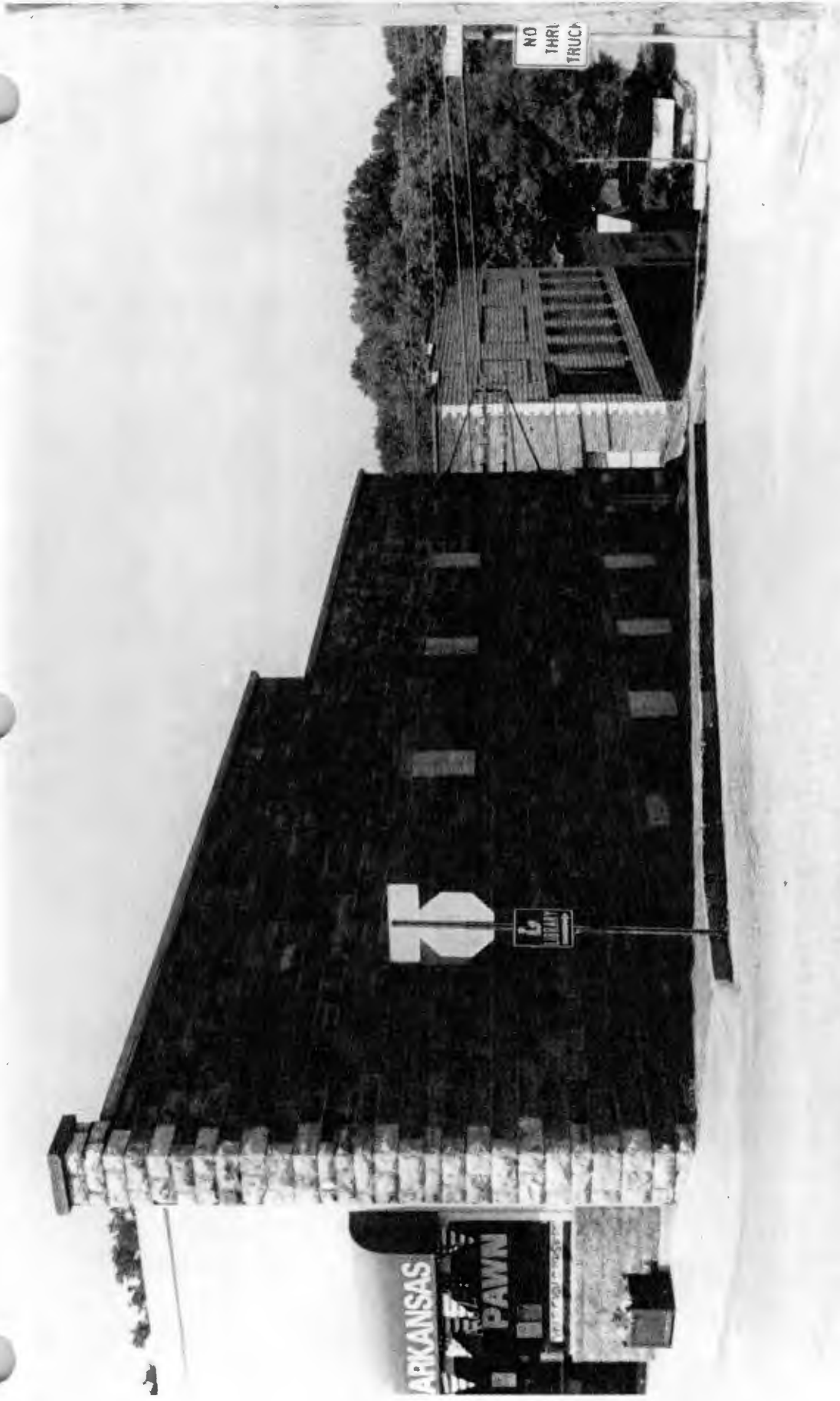
1. NORTH SLIDE 100 BLOCK W. MAIN
HUNTSVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
2. MADISON CITY, AR
3. PHOTO BY SANDRA TAYLOR SMITH
4. 9-2-07
5. NEGATIVE AT ALPP
6. VIEW LOOKING WEST
7. PHOTO #5



1. WEST END SQUARE 4100 BLOCK W. MAIN
HUNTSVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
2. MADISON CTY., AR
3. PHOTO BY SANDRA TAYLOR SMITH
4. 9-2-07
5. NEGATIVE AT AHPP
6. VIEW LOOKING NORTHEAST
7. PHOTO #6



1. MADISON COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 201 W. MON
HUNTSVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
2. MADISON CTY., AR
3. PHOTO BY SANDRA TAYLOR SMITH
4. 9-2-07
5. NEGATIVE AT AHPP
6. VIEW LOOKING SOUTHWEST
7. PHOTO #7



NO
THRU
TRUCK

5

6
M.P.H.

ARKANSAS

PAWN

1. 100 W. NAR EAGLE, 100 BLOCK N. COLLEGE
HUNTSVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
2. MADISON CTY, AR
3. PHOTO BY SANDRA TAYLOR SMITH
4. 9-2-07
5. NEGATIVE AT AHPP
6. VIEW LOOKING NORTH FROM NAR EAGLE + N. COLLEGE
7. PHOTO #13



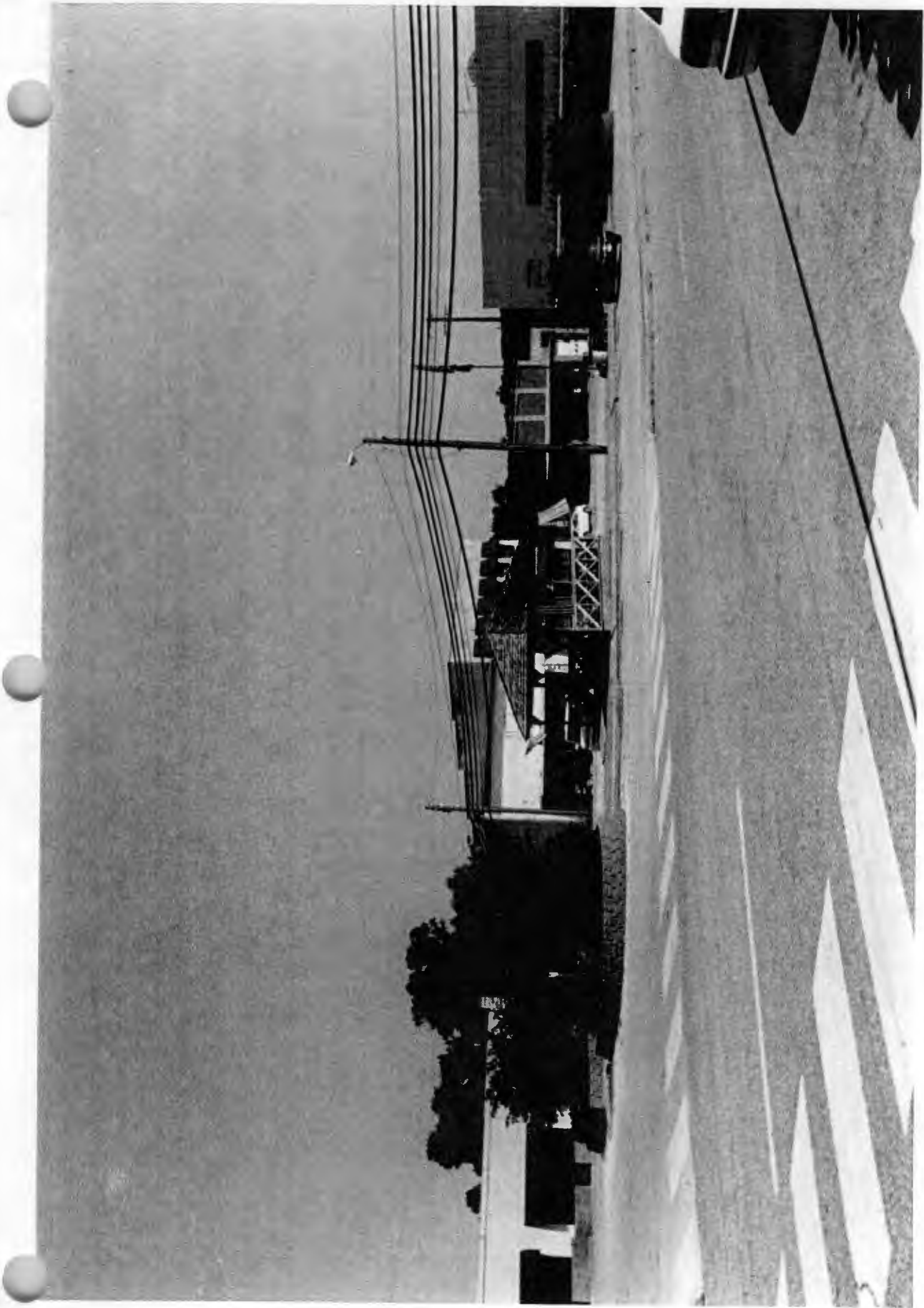
1. EAST SIDE 100 BLOCK S. COURT ST.
HUNTSVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
2. MADISON CTY, AR
3. PHOTO BY SANDRA TAYLOR SMITH
4. 9-2-07
5. NEGATIVE AT AHPP
6. VIEW LOOKING SOUTHEAST
7. PHOTO # 8



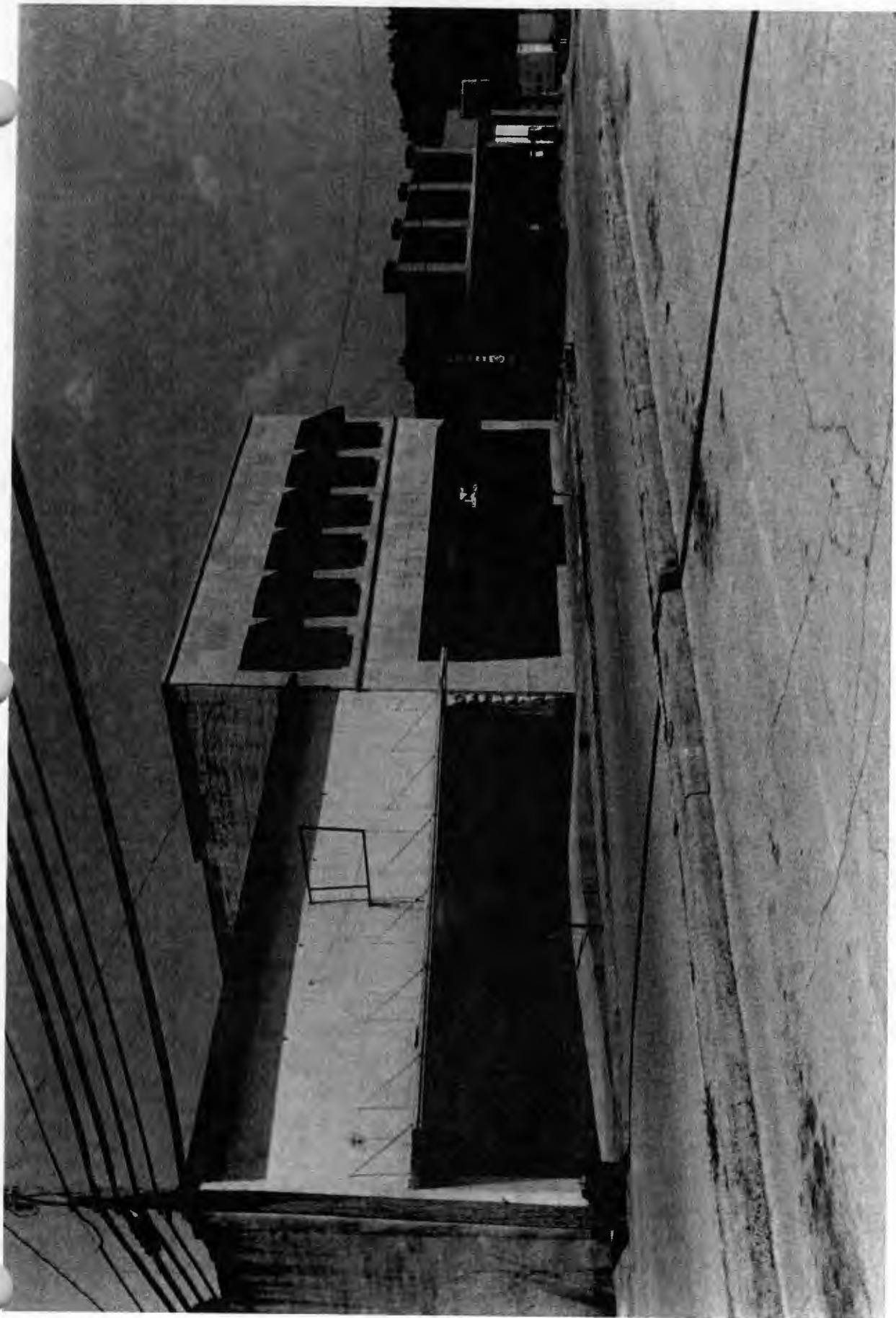
1. 100 BOOK W. WAR EAGLE
HUNTSVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
2. MADISON CTY., AR
3. PHOTO BY SANDRA TAYLOR SMITH
4. 9-2-07
5. NEGATIVE AT APP
6. VIEW LOOKING NORTH
7. PHOTO # 9



1. WILSON SQUARE (left) 100 Block W. 2nd St
2. Nashville Commercial St. 1st Fl.
3. photo by Sandra Thompson
4. 9-2-07
5. MESSINE #4 APP
6. MESSINE #5 APP
7. Photo #15



1. 100 + 20 BLOCKS W. WAR EAGLE, 100 BLOCK N. HARRIS
HUNTSVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
2. MADISON CTY., AR
3. PHOTO BY SANDRA TAYLOR SMITH
4. 9-2-07
5. NEGATIVE AT AHPP
6. VIEW LOOKING NORTHEAST
7. PHOTO # 11



1. 100-103 201 E. MAR EAGLE
HUNTSVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
2. MADISON CTY., AR
3. PHOTO BY SANDRA TAYLOR SMITH
4. 9-2-07
5. NEGATIVE AT AHPP
6. VIEW LOOKING NORTHEAST
7. PHOTO #12

Hudskville Commercial
H. Star District
Hinds County, AR
2771 Arkansas
1.15 4330893993905

7256 III SE
HARTWELL

WESLEY 12 MI.
8 MI. TO ARK. 295

SPRINGDALE 28 MI.
HINDSVILLE 8 MI.

