

NR 7-30-76

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

46-17-T020-73

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

Orr School

AND/OR COMMON

City Federation Community Center

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

831 Laurel Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Texarkana

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourth

STATE

Arkansas

VICINITY OF

CODE  
05

COUNTY  
Miller

CODE  
091

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs

STREET & NUMBER

831 Laurel Street

CITY, TOWN

Texarkana

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Circuit Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Miller County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Texarkana

STATE

Arkansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Orr School in Texarkana, Arkansas, is a rectangular-shaped building sheathed in white shiplap. The rectangular building is divided by a long central hall. The building is topped with a hip roof supported by exposed rafters.

The facade features an arched entry with double doors. A decorative recessed, fan-shaped transom is located over the doors. An overhang supported by brackets serves as an entry cover. Centered above the entry, a dormer with hip roof extends from the roof of the building. This dormer features two louvered air vents.

The northwest and southeast elevations of the building feature two separate sets of five double-hung windows with nine lites in each sash. To the southwest of these sets of windows on each elevation is a set of five double-hung windows identical to the sets toward the facade on each elevation.

According to city records, Orr School was constructed c. 1880 as a two-storey structure. In 1920 the second storey was removed and additions made onto the rear elevation (beginning with the small sets of windows) and the hip roof constructed to cover the enlarged structure. The City Federation of Women's Clubs purchased the building from the Texarkana (Arkansas) School System in December, 1958, at a cost of \$9,000. At this point, money was obtained from the Model Cities Program by the Women's Club, and the building was painted, central heat installed, some of the interior paneled and new front and rear doors added.

Despite the alterations, Orr School is an important historical structure. In excellent condition and on its original site, Orr School is representative of much black history.

# SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__ HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1499-1600	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1880

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Orr School in Texarkana, Arkansas, is a significant historical structure in its association with composer Scott Joplin, who is universally accepted as the "Father of Ragtime Music." Joplin was one of the most influential persons in the formation of twentieth century American music. Joplin attended Orr School and formulated many of his ideas there. Constructed c. 1880, Orr School is the only building still standing which can be directly associated with Joplin in his home town of Texarkana. Also, as a former black school, the building is a significant representative of minority history.

Scott Joplin was born on November 24, 1868, in Texarkana, Texas. His parents were an ex-slave, Giles Joplin of North Carolina, and Florence Givens Joplin, a free woman from Kentucky. Joplin was a serious and intensely musical child who played the guitar and bugle; he took music lessons from a local German music teacher. He was encouraged to play his white neighbors' pianos while his mother did their laundry. When he was in his teens, Joplin struck out on his own, taking the only career available to a black musician in the Mississippi Valley region during the 1890's -- an itinerant pianist entertaining the clientele at pool halls, saloons, bordellos, tenderloins, medicine shows and vaudeville tent shows.

These places were undoubtedly a rough "music conservatory" for a teenager, but one of vitality. Surrounded by the musical pulses and melodies Joplin began to absorb and define his own personal rag style. There was no "art" to rag music when Joplin found the basic elements in his youth. His style combined black rhythmic patterns to white honky-tonk tunes. A white boy of his talents would have been sent to Germany to study, but because of his poverty and race, Joplin was instead thrust into his "hard-living folk-conservatory of music."

In the 1890's Joplin began to center his life around St. Louis and Sedalia, Missouri. In 1899 music publisher John Stark heard Joplin play the piano and bought the piece of music on the spot for fifty dollars. This piece, The Maple Leaf Rag, became the first great instrumental sheet music hit in America (a million copies had been sold by 1904).

The royalties from this freed Joplin from financial problems, allowing him to spend all his time teaching and composing. In 1907 he moved to New York, met and married his second wife and began working on Treemonisha. Even though none of Joplin's famous works were written in Texarkana, he never

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forgot about his early musical heritage. The scene of Treemonisha was in the Red River Valley and the dense forest areas of eastern Texas and western Arkansas. The opera was published in 1911. By this time the ragtime craze and interest in Joplin's music was on the wane. Joplin became obsessed with producing the opera and poured his own finances into an informal, unstaged production which was a failure.

Joplin, defeated by the failure of his cherished opera, began to suffer from a serious mental depression and was committed to Manhattan State Hospital in the autumn of 1916, where he died the following April.

"What is scurrilously called ragtime is an invention that is here to stay," wrote Scott Joplin in 1908 in the introduction to his School of Ragtime, a book of six piano exercises designed to teach amateur rag players how to achieve that "waird and intoxicating effect intended by the composer." However ragtime flourished between 1895 and 1915 and was then replaced by another form of music called "jazz."

Joplin's complete catalogue of published piano works includes forty-four original pieces. His music has been arranged for the harpsichord, organ, violin, orchestra and even the Moog synthesizer. The academy-award-winning movie, "The Sting," introduced millions to ragtime by using a soundtrack score based entirely on Joplin's music. His opera, Treemonisha, has recently been produced on Broadway.

Joplin's musical genius is an accepted fact in the history of American music. He represents some of the most revered ideals of this country. He was born in poverty, and grew up in an environment where he was treated as a second-class human being. Yet Joplin achieved an originality in American music which is quite unique. The Orr School, as the only standing structure associated with Joplin in his home town, stands today as a reminder of the composer. The community takes great pride in the fact that Joplin originated there and is determined to see that he is given worthy recognition.

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Orr School

CONTINUATION SHEET

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Eighty-nine-year-old George Mosley of Texarkana recalls the Texarkana of his youth quite vividly. He attended Orr School with Joplin. Mosley remembers the school when it was a two-storey structure and offered "primer" (first through ninth grade) education. Mosley grew up in the same Laurel Street neighborhood as Joplin and attended the same church and school. To Mosley, Joplin and other residents of the Laurel Street area, the neighborhood was their world, Orr School a center of the children's life.

# MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Arkansas Gazette. September 10, 1972.

Atkins, Jerry L., Texarkana Centennial Program 1973, "Scott Joplin - American Master Composer."

Collier, James Lincoln. "Scott Joplin Rag", New York Times Magazine, September 21, 1975.

The Community Developer. March, 1973.

# GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 5	4 0, 3 0, 9, 0	3, 6 9, 9 2, 6, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

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

Sandra Taylor, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

STREET & NUMBER

300 West Markham

CITY OR TOWN

Little Rock

DATE

3-9-76

TELEPHONE

501-371-1639

STATE

Arkansas

# STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

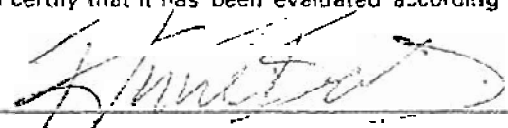
NATIONAL

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 Anne Bartley



TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 3-9-76

FOR NPS USE ONLY:

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Daily, Georgia, Personal Interview at Orr School, Texarkana, Arkansas,  
December 11, 1975.

Demopulos, Nick, Bicentennial Coordinator, Texarkana Joint Bicentennial  
Commission, Personal Interview, Texarkana, Arkansas, December 11, 1975.

Secrease, Juanita, President, City Federation of Women's Clubs, Personal  
Interview, Texarkana, Arkansas, December 11, 1975.

Miller County, Arkansas  
Entry on facade, note fan

- 1) Orr School
- 2) Texarkana, Arkansas
- 3) Sandra Taylor
- 4) November, 1975
- 5) Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
- 6) Entry on facade, note fanlite over doors
- 7) 3

Form No. 10-301  
10-74

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

**1** NAME

HISTORIC

Orr School

AND/OR COMMON

**2** LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Texarkana

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Miller

STATE

Arkansas

**3** MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE United States Geological Survey

SCALE 1:2400

DATE 1954 (photo revised 1970)

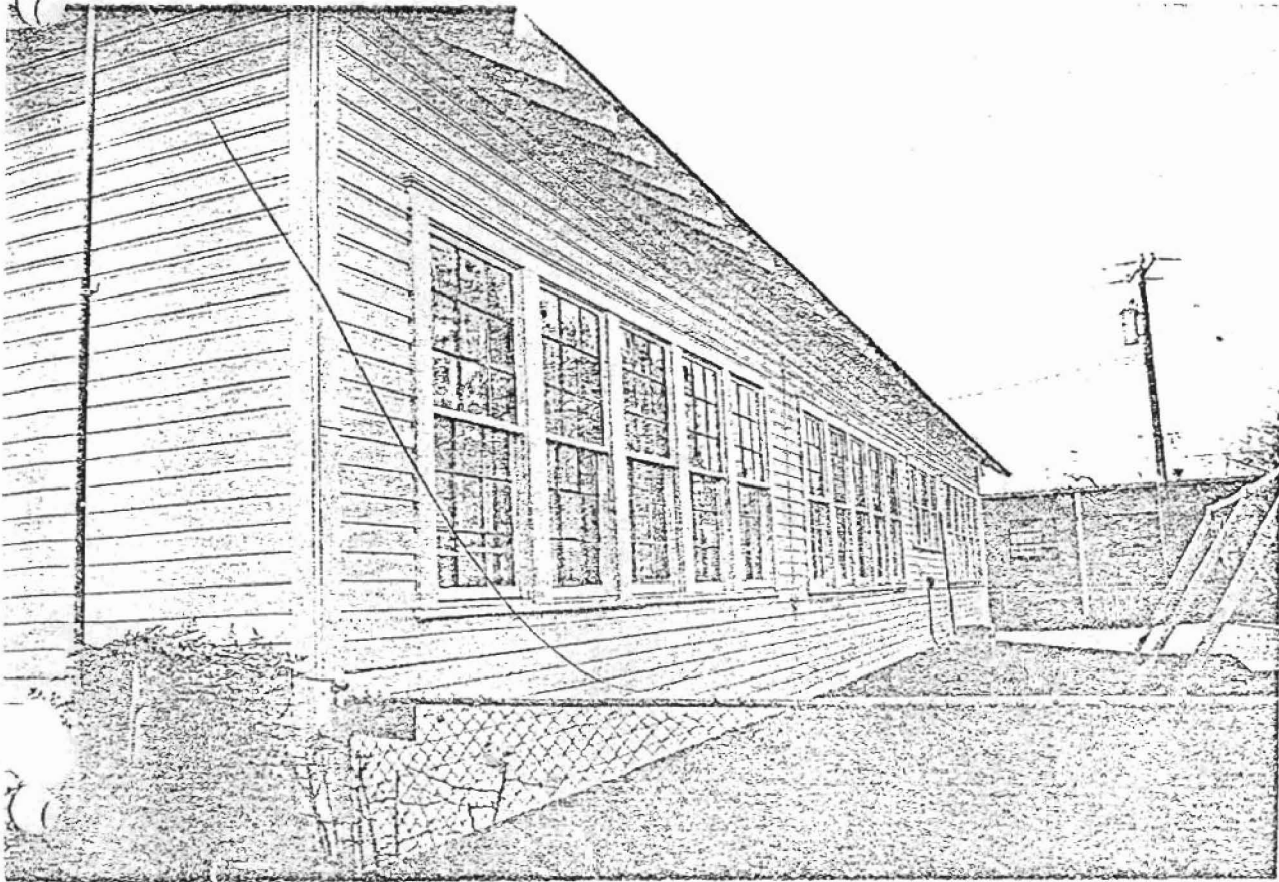
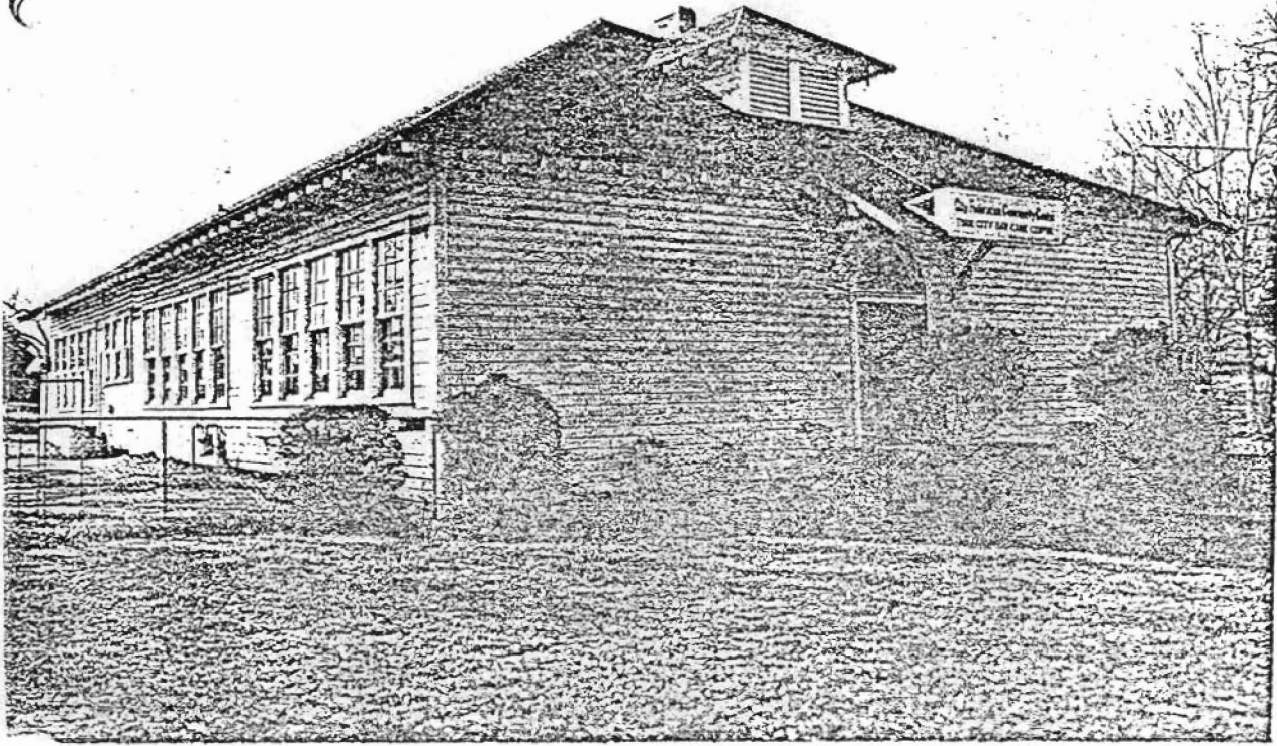
**4** REQUIREMENTS

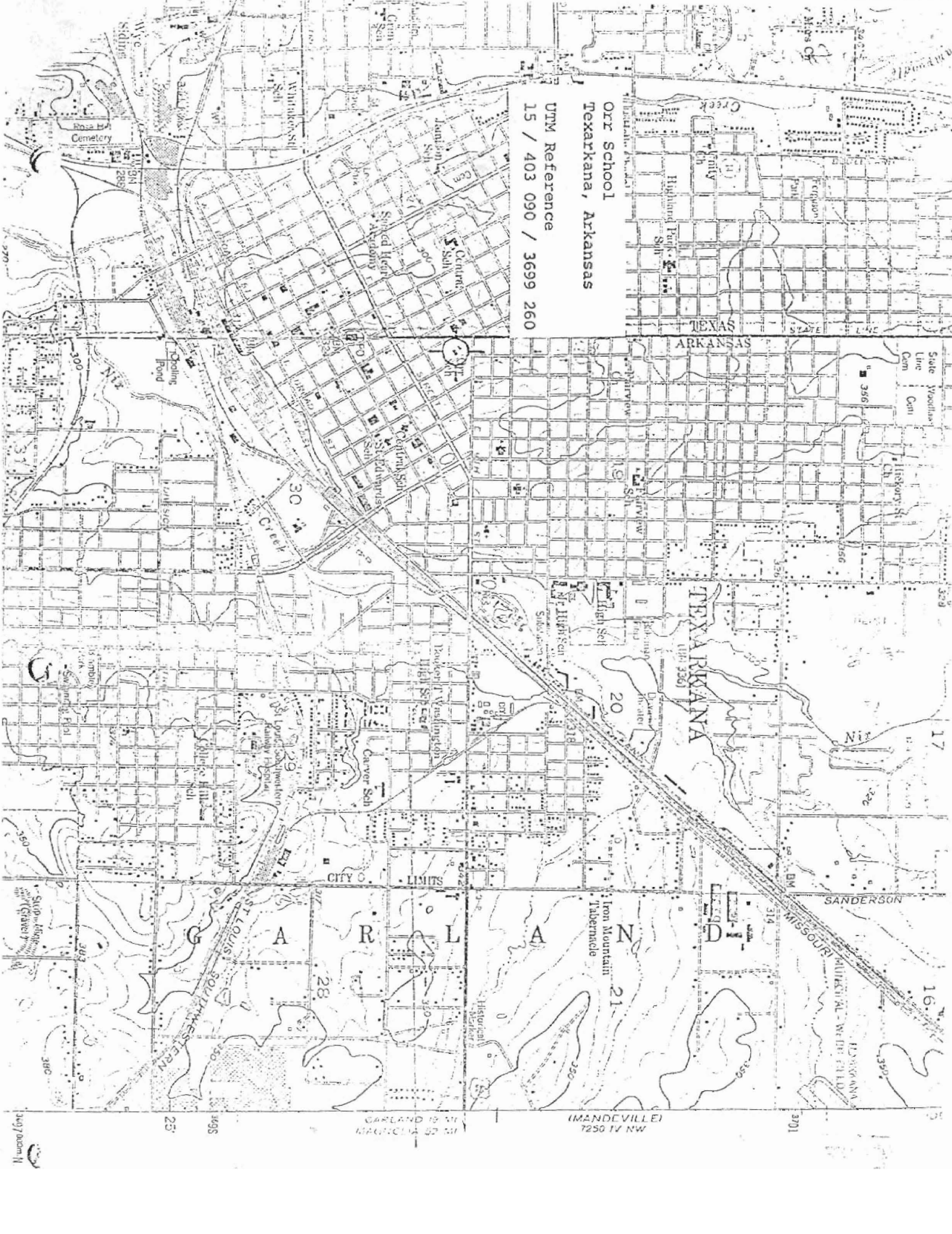
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES









Orr School  
Texarkana, Arkansas  
UTM Reference  
15 / 403 090 / 3699 260

TEXAS  
ARKANSAS

TEXARKANA  
(11th 336)

CITY LIMITS

ARLINGTON

SANDERSON

MISSOURI

Iron Mountain  
Tabernacle

ST. LOUIS

GARLAND 19 MI  
MAGNOLIA 57 MI

(MANDEVILLE)  
7250 TV NW

301

300

3000m N