

NR 7-18-86

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 Rusher Hotel

and/or common Great Southern Hotel

2. Location

street & number 127 West Cedar

N/A not for publication

city, town Brinkley

vicinity of

state Arkansas

code 05

county Monroe

code 095

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:

4. Owner of Property

name Stanley and Dorcas Prince

street & number 127 W. Cedar

city, town Brinkley

vicinity of

state Arkansas

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Monroe County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Clarendon

state Arkansas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date

federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY

Located at the junction of Brinkley's West Cypress and North New Orleans Streets, the Hotel Rusher faces the abandoned grade of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad.

The three story, load bearing brick hotel presents a U-plan which is interrupted only by a slightly recessed central section of the facade and a one-story kitchen attached to the rear elevation.

ELABORATION

The facade, or north elevation, is level with the Rock Island's raised grade, a testament to flooding which plagued railroad builders along the second division from DeVall's Bluff to Madison. A barely recessed center divides the facade into three equal sections. The central one-third contains no doors. Its lower floor is sheltered by a one-story, three-bay, flat-roofed wooden porch supported by slender, square brick columns. Three wide show windows light the former hotel dining room. Each window is composed of two large stationary panes, surmounted by three twelve lite casement windows. The second and third floors of the central facade have identical rows of four fifteen-over-one double-hung windows. Each vertical row of windows is flanked by a stacked brick header course. In the lower floor of the western one-third of the facade, a central show window, composed of two large stationary panes with a transom of three twelve lite casement windows, is bounded by two entries in the former restaurant. Both have double wooden doors with full glass panels, sidelights, and transoms of a central twenty-four lite casement window bordered by small six lite casement windows. A single door with sidelights and an eight lite transom is set in the center of the second floor. West of the doorway, two twelve-over-one double hung windows are symmetrically placed while, to the opposite side, a similar window, flanked by a door with four-lite transom completes the level. A two story porch with large, square brick columns which extend several feet above the upper deck projects from the facade. The second level balcony is circled by a plain wooden balustrade. Four twelve-over-one double-hung windows comprise the third floor. Window and door arrangement differ in the first two levels of the eastern one-third of the facade, which contains the hotel lobby. A double door similar to those in the restaurant is flanked by two show windows which are also identical to the restaurant windows. The second level contains only a single door with sidelights and an eight lite transom, bounded by two pairs of the predominant twelve-over-one double-hung windows. The two tiered porch is repeated on this portion of the facade, as well as the third level window arrangement. A classic, applied stone entablature spans the facade. Its cornice is emphasized by modillions which protrude from the frieze. Three attic vents rest above the cornice on each of the protruding ends of the facade, while a vent is set above each of the four windows in the central section. The brick parapet is relieved by square corner battlements and a gable-like central battlement on each of the projecting portions of the facade.

With the abandonment of passenger service by the Rock Island line, the importance of the facade as the hotel entrance was minimized. The east elevation now serves as the entry. This elevation, as well as the south and west elevations, rise slightly above ground level because of the raised railroad grade which the facade accommodated. A two story porch identical to those on the facade shelters the first two stories on the northern one-half the elevation. The lobby entry projects slightly on the east elevation and many of its features repeat those of the facade. Centered in the first floor level are double doors with sidelites and a three piece transom of a central twenty-four lite casement window and

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two secondary six light casement windows. The doors are bordered by two pairs of one-over-one double-hung windows with twelve light transoms. On the second level, a single door with a four light transom and a twelve-over-one double-hung window are framed in the central porch bay. A single, twelve-over-one window opens in each of the remaining bays. Four of the predominant double-hung windows are the only features of the third level. The facade's entablature wraps around the projection of the east elevation. Above the cornice, four evenly spaced attic vents and a parapet with battlements repeat the facade's characteristic features. The remainder of the elevation contains only four windows on each level. All are the characteristic twelve-over-one double-hung type, but the first level windows are distinguished by narrow four light transoms. Centered above each vertical row is an attic vent and the parapet which completes the elevation is unadorned.

The rear, or south, elevation of the hotel comprises two jutting wings which partly enclose a service area and a one-story kitchen. The eastern wing projects slightly farther than the western wing, but the features on their faces are identical. The first level of both contains a central door with transom flanked by twelve-over-one double-hung windows with four light transoms. The second and third levels offer three of the same windows, without the transoms. An attic vent is lodged over each vertical row. There is no parapet on their southern faces. The one-story kitchen is settled against the east face of the western wing and stretches almost the length of the wing. A small metal door, level with flanking two-over-two double-hung windows, comprises the parapeted southern face of the kitchen. A plain wooden door and a line of four two-over-two double-hung windows range along its eastern face from south to north. Above the kitchen, four twelve-over-one double-hung windows are evenly spaced on the second and third floors. Three attic vents are centered over the vertical rows nearest the recessed southern elevation. The exposed portion of this recessed elevation offers only three metal freight doors on its first level. Its second and third levels reprise the pattern of four twelve-over-one windows, surmounted by three attic vents arrayed between the vertical rows of windows. On the western face of the remaining wing, four twelve-over-one double-hung windows with four light transoms again appear on the first level. The second and third levels are lighted by the same style of windows without transoms. There are no attic vents on this face, but on the portion of the western face nearest the recessed south elevation, three nine-over-one double-hung windows are set between each floor, illuminating interior stairway landings. The uppermost window in the set is approximately one-half as large as the other two.

On the west elevation, the northern one-half projects slightly. Eight windows are symmetrically arrayed on each level of the elevation. All are twelve-over-one double-hung, but only those on the first level additionally possess four light transoms. On the north half of the elevation, the entablature from the facade wraps around the projection. Above the entablature, four centered attic vents and the parapet with battlements are maintained. On the remainder of the west elevation, only four centered attic vents and a plain parapet are evident. A small, one-story kitchen and pantry addition was removed from the west elevation sometime after 1930.

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The restored first floor interior houses the original hotel lobby, dining room, and restaurant. A banquet room previously served as a sample room where traveling salesmen displayed their wares. All the first floor rooms feature high, ornate pressed tin ceilings; plaster cornices; and wood clad columns with crown molding. Doors and windows are trimmed with classically-influenced pine molding, and wood and marble wainscoting continues throughout the first floor rooms. Decorative tile floors are well preserved in the lobby and restaurant.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1915

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SUMMARY

Completed in 1915, the Hotel Rusher was the most well furnished and elaborate of the commercial hotels which served during Brinkley's tenure as a railroad and manufacturing center. Established at the junction point of three major railroads, it also functioned as the social and recreational center for business men and travelers along all three lines and for the citizens of Brinkley and eastern Arkansas. The Hotel Rusher's size, location, and appointments represented the immeasurable importance of the railroads in the creation and continuance of most Arkansas towns, as well as their inseparable role in fostering commerce and industry.

ELABORATION

In 1854, construction began on Arkansas's first railroad. Chartered the year before, the Memphis and Little Rock Railroad battled an erratic system of supply, which required the transportation of the iron rails and locomotives by steamboat, and the uncertain, swampy terrain of eastern Arkansas. Despite these difficulties, crews of Irish laborers continued the work of grading and laying rails, often forced to string the track along the crests of levees. By 1862, two sections of the road were complete, the first division between Hopefield and Madison and the third division between DeVall's Bluff and Huntersville, later North Little Rock.

During the Civil War and for several years after, the second division between DeVall's Bluff and Madison remained barren, with passage between the completed sections provided by stage and steamboat relays. In 1870, work on the second division finally resumed and section camps, such as Lick Skillet, were established along the neglected route. On April 11, 1871, the Memphis and Little Rock was opened to through rail traffic and, the next year, Lick Skillet was incorporated as Brinkley, named in honor of railroad president R.C. Brinkley. In 1882, the through station of Brinkley became a junction town, as the Texas and St. Louis Railroad extended its Arkansas line from Bird's Point to Clarendon. Both main lines eventually underwent several reorganizations. In 1891, the Texas and St. Louis line became part of the St. Louis Southwestern, or Cotton Belt, Railroad. The Memphis and Little Rock was eventually acquired by the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf, which, on March 24, 1904, was leased to the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific system for 999 years.

In addition to its trunk routes, Brinkley attracted a number of short and branch lines eager to exploit the area's resources of timber and rice and its potential for manufactures. Narrow gauge roads, such as the Brinkley and Marianna, Batesville and Brinkley, and Brinkley and Cotton Plant, fed and timber and agricultural products into major markets through the Cotton Belt and Rock Island systems. A third major rail line, the Iron Mountain, entered Brinkley with its White River and Helena divisions. Finally, the Rock Island added the old Memphis and Little Rock to its revised and expanded Arkansas Division, which lured tourists from Memphis to the resorts at Hot Springs with its crack daily, "The Hot Springs Special". By 1916, Brinkley boasted of its railroads which diverged in seven different directions and carried a combined total of thirty passenger trains and

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Brinkley, AR

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	5	6	6	5	2	1	0	1	0	3	8	6	1	1	8	6	1	0
Zone			Easting						Northing									

B

Zone			Easting						Northing									

C

Zone			Easting						Northing									

D

Zone			Easting						Northing									

E

Zone			Easting						Northing									

F

Zone			Easting						Northing									

G

Zone			Easting						Northing									

H

Zone			Easting						Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification (See Continuation Sheet)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stanley Prince (edited by Steve Mitchell, AHPP staff)

organization date March 12, 1986

street & number 127 W. Cedar telephone

city or town Brinkley state AR

12. 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

title Arkansas State Historic Preservation Officer date

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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National Park Service

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five hundred passengers per day. An early resident, in his memoir of the town, recalled that, because of the proliferation of trains and traffic, "noise was an outstanding feature of life in Brinkley."

Brinkley's importance as a commercial center was conveyed by its location as a rail junction. This importance was reflected in the hotels which were apparent in the town from its establishment as a section camp. In the 1870s, a single story log house, which also served as a post office and store, provided lodging adequate for railroad laborers. With the abundance of rail lines, however, the influx of businessmen and travelers required more elaborate and expanded facilities. Both the Brinkley House and the Hoskin House, later renamed the Arlington Hotel, catered to the railroads' clientele. They were also similarly located, arranged on either side of the Rock Island's tracks near its junction with the Cotton Belt. On March 8, 1909, a cyclone virtually destroyed Brinkley and severely damaged the Arkington Hotel. Its owner city alderman Gus Rusher, rebuilt the two story, forty room building and later also bought the Brinkley House. After the two story frame Brinkley House burned in 1914, Rusher laid plans to construct a larger, more modern building.

In May 1914, construction of Rusher's new commercial hotel began on the site of the Brinkley House. At an initial estimated cost of \$35,000, the proposed three story, sixty room, brick and concrete building was lauded as "strictly modern (and) fireproof." Completed in January 1915, at a final cost of \$60,000, the Hotel Rusher was praised by newspapers as an "enduring monument" to its owner and "a credit to not only the city of Brinkley, but to the State at large." On January 28, the opening night banquet was attended by nearly three hundred business, social, and political leaders from the cities served by Brinkley's railroads, including Memphis, St. Louis, Little Rock, Helena, Pine Bluff, and Hot Springs. The event was lauded as "without a doubt the largest social event ever in Brinkley."

With its frontage on the Rock Island tracks and its location adjacent to the Rock Island's Union Passenger Depot, the Rusher was bound inseparably to the fate of the railroad in Brinkley. Following World War II, with the proliferation of automobiles and the refinement of the much deferred highway system in Arkansas, passenger service on all rail lines declined and was eventually abandoned. The once prosperous Rock Island system was especially hard hit and finally declared bankruptcy. With the removal of the Rock Island rails, the Rusher faced a vacant grade and the flow of patrons from the empty Union Depot ended. In the 1960s, a local businessman acquired the hotel and renamed it the Malmar. A portion of its third floor was converted to apartments, and a pool hall, barbershop, liquor store, and bar were installed in the lobby and dining room. In 1981, a new set of owners restored the again renamed Great Southern Hotel's first floor lobby, restaurant, and guest rooms.

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Verbal Boundary Description/Legal Description:

All of lots 1 and 2, Block 28, City of Brinkley, except a tract more particularly described as follows: from a point 40 feet north of the centerline of Cypress Street which is also the present southwest corner of the former Bank of Brinkley building, thence run north along the eastern edge of New Orleans Avenue 100 feet to the point of beginning; thence 90° east 75.4 feet; thence north 13° 42' west 74 feet; thence 90° west 50.6 feet; thence south along the east line of New Orleans Avenue to the point of beginning.

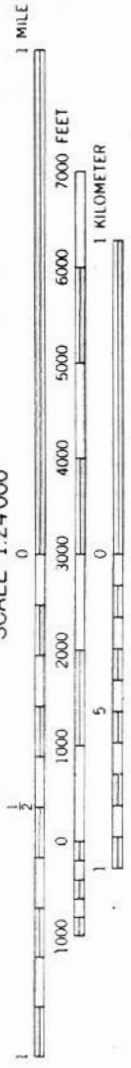
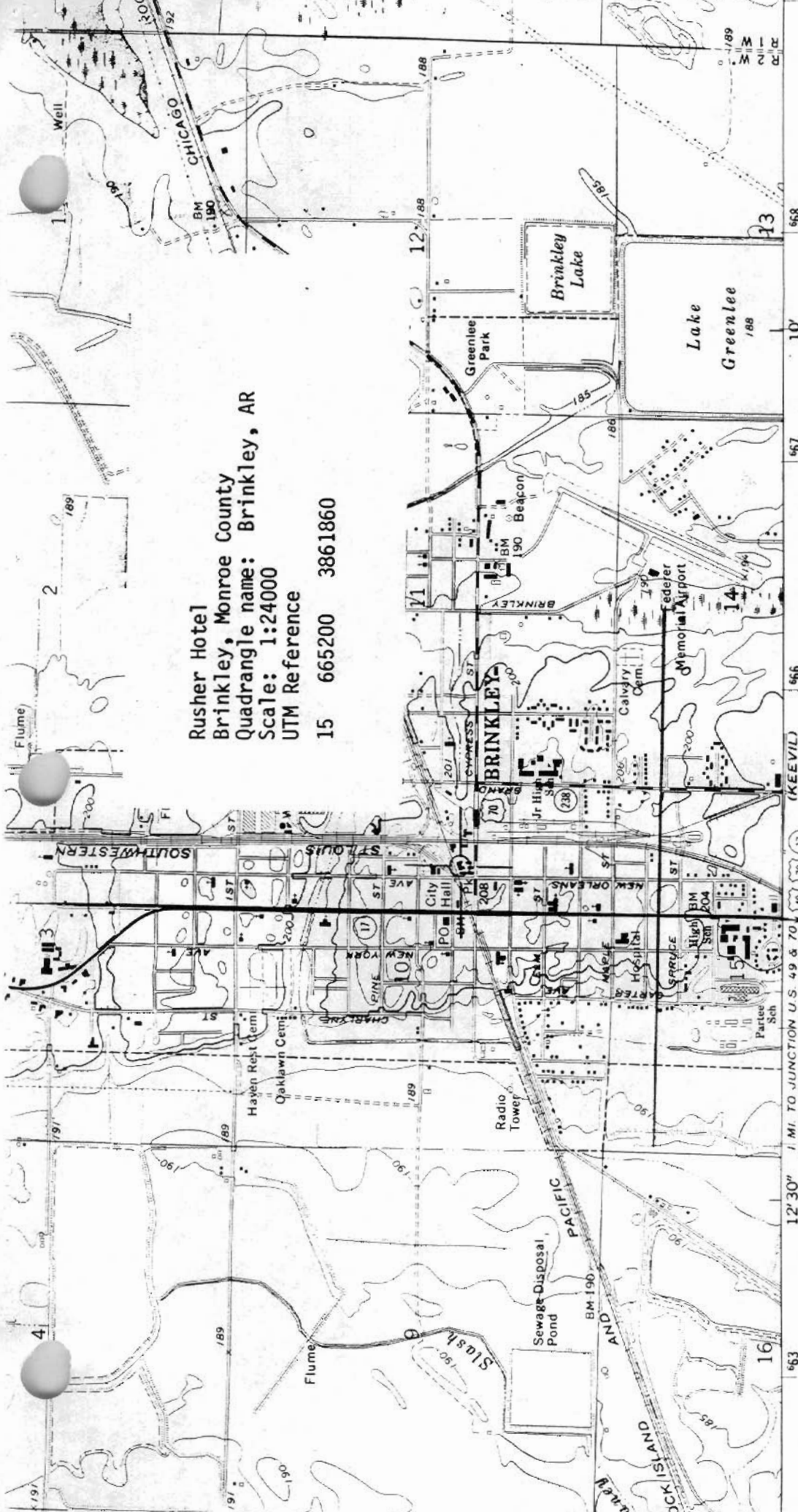








Rusher Hotel
 Brinkley, Monroe County
 Quadrangle name: Brinkley, AR
 Scale: 1:24000
 UTM Reference
 15 665200 3861860



CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
 DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

UTM GRID AND 1971 MAGNETIC NORTH
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
 AND BY THE ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

SCALE 1:24000
 1 MI. TO JUNCTION U.S. 49 & 70
 (KEEVIL)
 7753 / SW
 1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
 1 0 5 10 KILOMETER

