

54-10-1040-53

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED <i>Phillips</i>
DATE ENTERED <i>Helena NP Dist</i>

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

Courthouse

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Phillips County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

Phillips County Courthouse Listed: 7/5/77

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

622 Cherry

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Helena

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Arkansas

VICINITY OF

CODE

05

COUNTY

Phillips

CODE

107

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Phillips County

STREET & NUMBER

622 Cherry

CITY, TOWN

Helena

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Circuit Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Phillips County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Helena

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

The Phillips County Courthouse in Helena, Arkansas was constructed in 1914 at a cost of \$250,000. Little Rock Architect Frank W. Gibb designed the building. He is also responsible for the design of several southern Arkansas courthouses. As the third official Phillips County Courthouse, the structure has served since 1914 as the political and governmental center of the historic Mississippi River town.

Basically rectangular in shape, the Phillips County Courthouse is a two-story, brick structure with a flat roof. A pent roof runs around the building detailed as classical cornices with dentils. A cast-stone water table encircles the building. A somewhat unusual feature of the building is that both the north and west elevations contain main entrances.

The most distinctive feature of the building are the sections of engaged fluted Corinthian columns on north, south and west elevations. These columns are two stories tall and are set one story above ground level. On the north elevation five columns set into a recessed panel of stone blocks mark the north entry. This four-bay wide section is identical to the recessed section on the south elevation with the exception that there is no entry on the south. The main entry to the Phillips County Courthouse is located on the west elevation. A seven-bay wide recessed panel with eight engaged columns features denticulated entablatures with decorative medallions over the entry door and the two windows flanking either side.

Decorative cast-stone medallions are found in pairs on the brick portion of the building at the frieze line. Window treatment is simple with those in the brick sections featuring keystones.

The east elevation houses the Phillips County Jail. Architecture on this elevation is devoid of ornamentation. Pairs of double-hung windows with transoms are spaced regularly on this elevation.

The interiors of the Phillips County Courthouse are ornate and rich in design. A central symmetrical divided flights stairway of marble serves as the focal point of the lobby. Decorative plaster-work abounds on the ceiling.

Ornate plaster brackets support ceiling beams in the lobby. Other distinctive features of the exterior are patterned ceramic tile floors, marble wainscotting, original brass hardware, and the original wood moldings around doors and windows. Only minor alterations have taken place in the structure.

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As the most architecturally and politically important structure in Phillips County, the courthouse is a local landmark. Resting on its original site and in excellent condition, the Phillips County Courthouse is a significant historical structure.

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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1914 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Frank W. Gibb

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The largest number of architecturally significant public buildings in Arkansas are the courthouses scattered over the state's seventy-five counties. A structural symbol of American government, the courthouse serves as the center of local political activity. Often the largest and most costly building in the county, the courthouse is almost always a source of pride to the citizens who financed and made use of its facilities.

Phillips County was established May 1, 1820, from territory taken from Arkansas County. It was the second county to be established by the Arkansas Territorial Legislature. It was named in honor of Sylvanus Phillips who settled near the mouth of the St. Francis River in 1797. Phillips County covers 704 square miles and is bounded by Lee County on the north, by the Mississippi River on the east, Desha County on the south and Arkansas and Monroe Counties on the west. There are two distinct topographical divisions in the county: (1) Alluvial river bottom lowlands and (2) Crowley's Ridge in the north-east section.

Helena, situated on the Mississippi River, was made the county seat in 1830 and officially incorporated as a city in 1833. According to local sources, the first county building in Phillips County was a two-story log structure. This building housed a courtroom on its second floor and a jail on the first floor. Records indicate that the lot on which the building stood was not owned by the county, but was the property of a private citizen.

In 1845 a lot was purchased for the purpose of constructing a county jail. In January, 1847, three commissioners were appointed to receive proposals and contracts for building a courthouse, cost not to exceed \$6,000. Built in 1847, the structure was a two-story frame building 50 feet square.

In 1861 the courthouse burned and no attempt was made to build another courthouse until after the Civil War. According to records, no courts were held from June, 1862, to May 29, 1865. In 1867 the second floor

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of a building was rented for court purposes. From 1868 to 1870 while a new courthouse was under construction, a privately owned building was rented for court purposes and county offices.

In 1869 a large two-story brick courthouse with a dome was constructed at a cost of over \$44,000. This building was razed when the present courthouse was completed and the lot given for the purpose of establishing a public playground.

In 1911 the Quorum Court of Phillips County appropriated \$10,000 for the purpose of building a new courthouse and jail for the county. The County Court also authorized the erection of a new building provided that the United States government would cede to Phillips County two-and-one-half lots. By act of Congress approved December, 1912, the lots were ceded to the county, conditional that construction would begin within one year. F. F. Kitchens was appointed Commissioner of Public Buildings to superintend the erection of a courthouse and jail, for which \$250,000 was appropriated. In July, 1913, Phillips County contracted with F. W. Gibbs and Company, Architects, to design the new building. In April, 1914, L. R. Wright and Company of Dallas, Texas was awarded the contract for construction. On June 14, 1915, the completed building was officially accepted by the county.

This historical structure is also significant architecturally. It is a rectangular-shaped building of brick construction. The two-story courthouse features a flat roof with a pent roof running around the structure detailed as classical cornices. The most distinctive features of the building are the recessed sections of cast-stone blocks with engaged fluted Corinthian columns set into the north, south and west elevations. Interiors are exceptionally ornate with ceramic tile floors, marble wainscotting, decorative plaster molding and the central symmetrical stairway of marble.

Constructed in 1914, the Phillips County Courthouse commands a prominent corner in Helena's downtown. Its governmental and architectural significance combine to make the Phillips County Courthouse a historically significant structure.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

A Survey of Arkansas Courthouses. Compiled by the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the state of Arkansas, Mrs. W. G. McDonald, Chairperson, Historical Activities Committee. Arkansas Room, Little Rock Public Library.

Phillips County Historical Society. Historic Helena and West Helena. Phillips County Chamber of Commerce: Helena, 1973.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre.

UTM REFERENCES

A	15	72116510	3821321000	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

12-14-76

ORGANIZATION

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

Suite 500 Continental Building, Main & Markham

TELEPHONE

(501) 371-2763

CITY OR TOWN

Little Rock

STATE

Arkansas

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

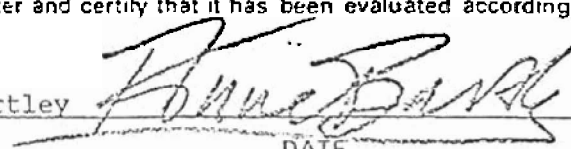
STATE

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

12-14-76

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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Works Project Administration "Phillips County." 1941, Archives
Archives Arkansas History Commission:

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PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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1 NAME

HISTORIC

Phillips County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Helena

____VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Phillips

STATE

Arkansas

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

CREDIT

Sandra Taylor

DATE OF PHOTO July, 1976

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

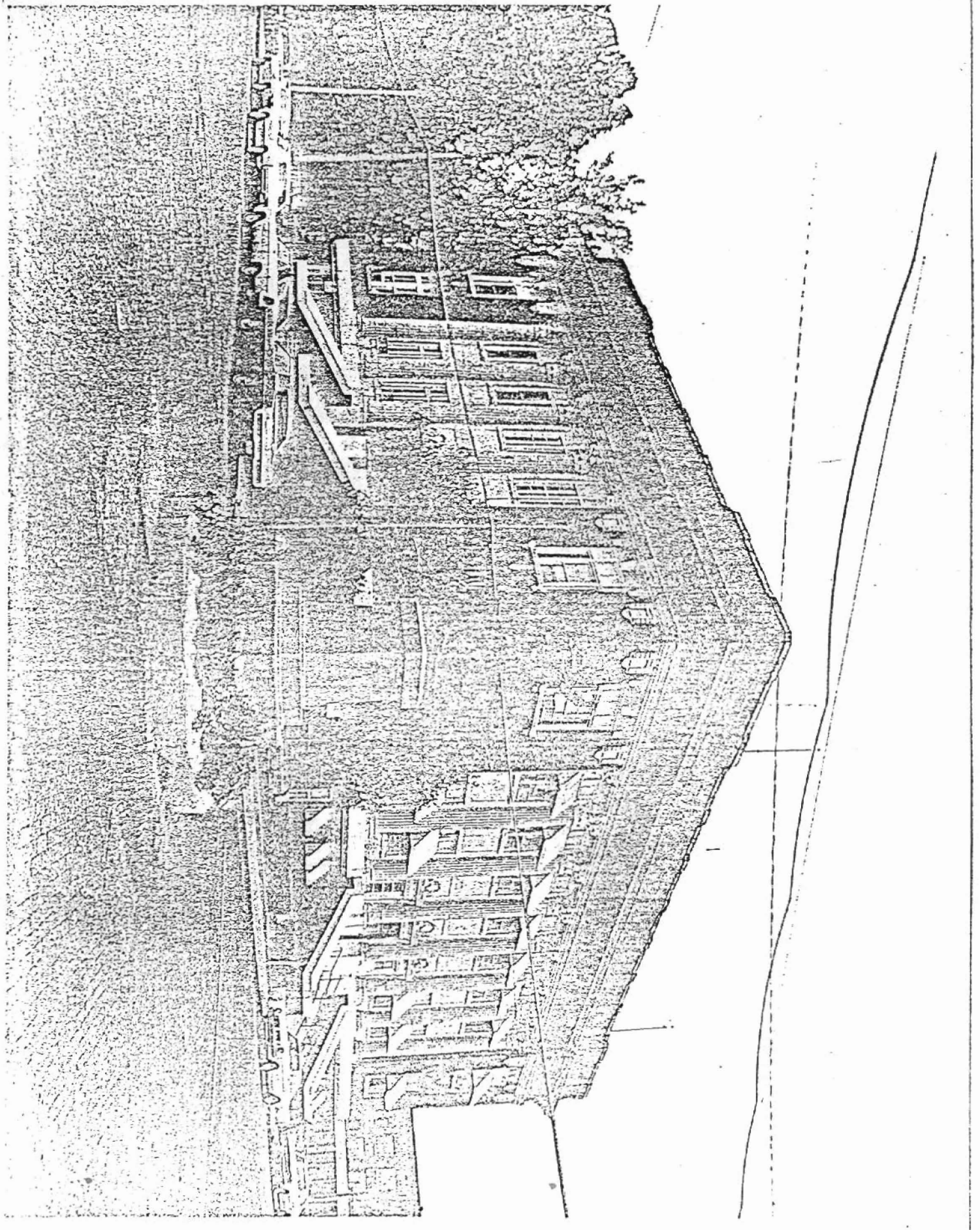
4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

North and west elevations, viewed from the northwest

PHOTO NO.

1



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STATE

Arkansas


 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Sandra Taylor

DATE OF PHOTO

July 1976

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

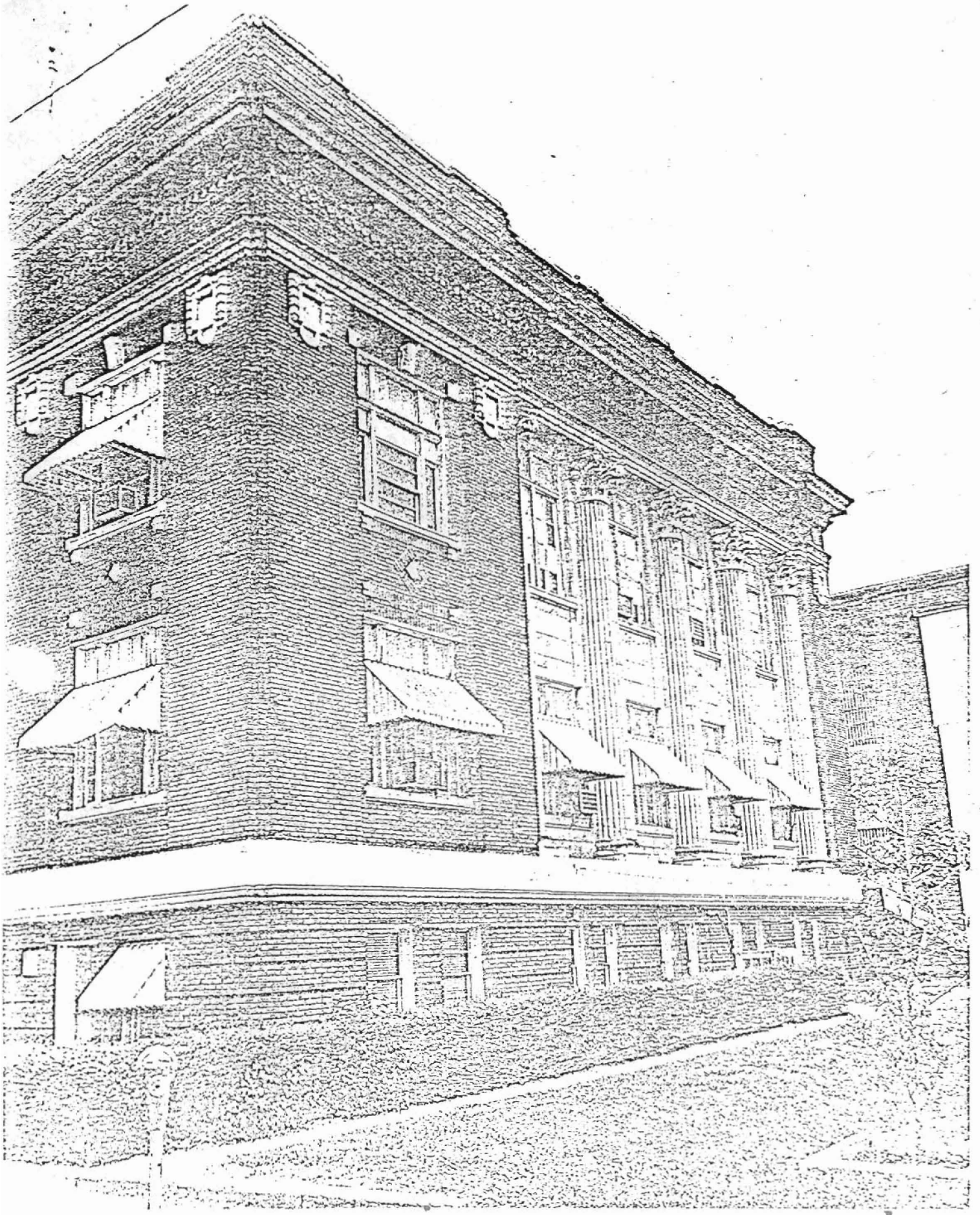
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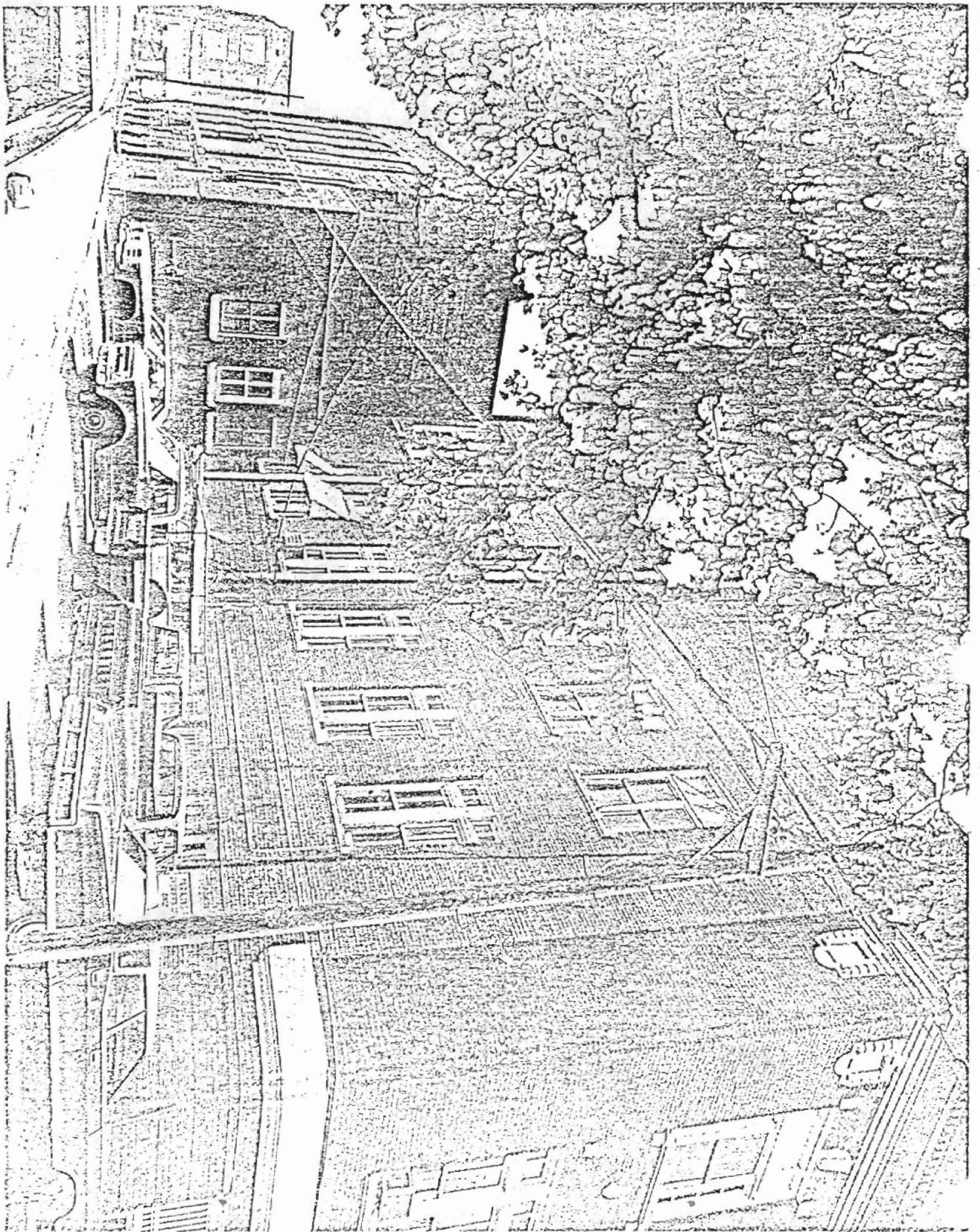
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.

South elevation, viewed from the southwest.

2





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3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Sandra Taylor

DATE OF PHOTO

July 1976

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Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

East elevation, viewed from the northeast.

PHOTO NO.

3

INT: 2983-75

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3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Sandra Taylor

DATE OF PHOTO July, 1976

NEGATIVE FILED AT Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

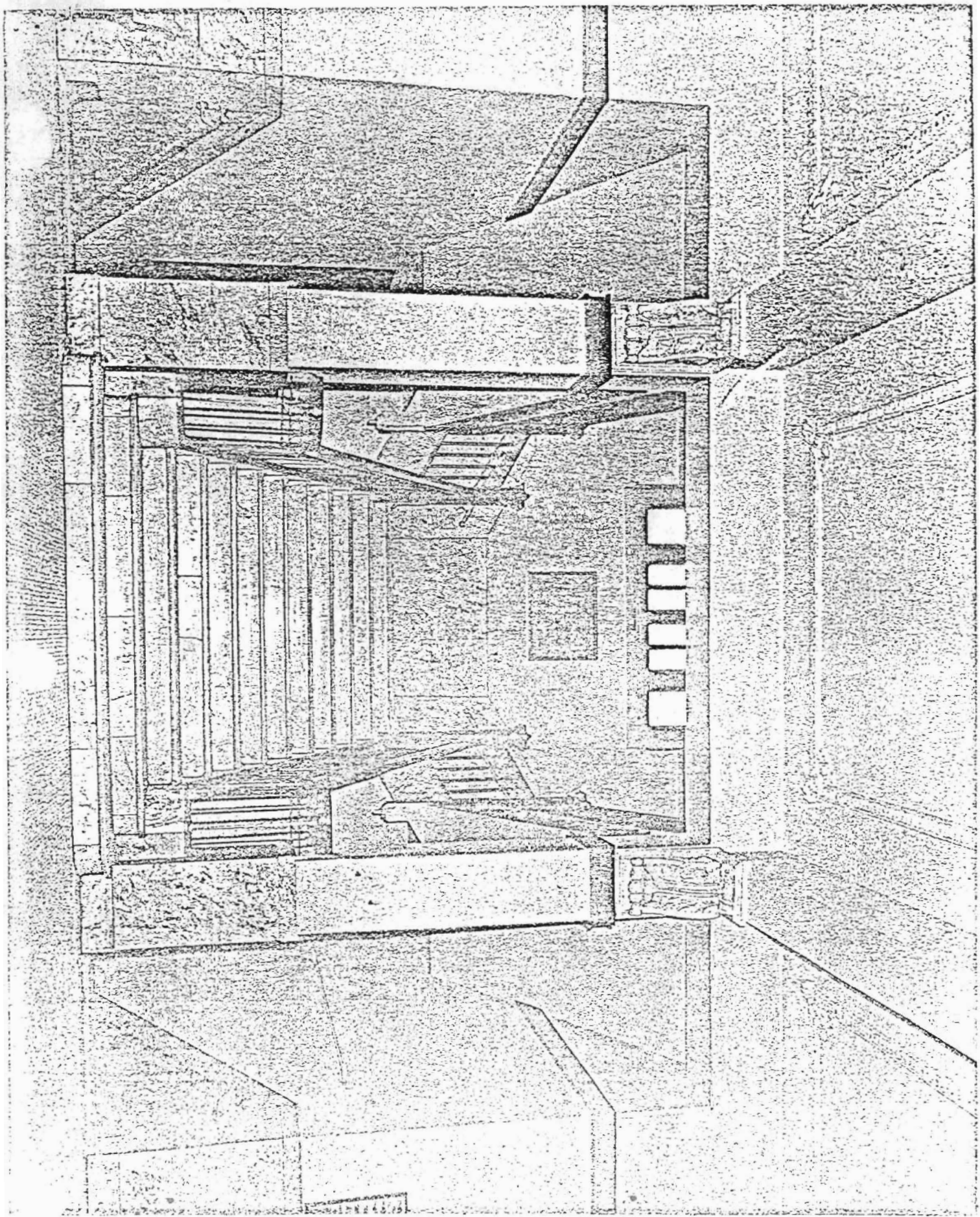
4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.

Central stairway

4



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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PROPERTY MAP FORM

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AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Helena

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Phillips

STATE

Arkansas

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE U.S. Geological Survey

SCALE 1:62,500

DATE 1961

4 REQUIREMENTS

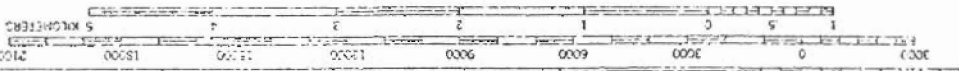
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

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

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



CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 AND 20 FEET
 DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



Phillips County Courthouse
 Helena, Arkansas
 UTM Reference
 15/ 721 650 / 3823 200

