

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

NR LISTED  
JUN 04 1998  
AHPP

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Elks Lodge

Other Name/Site Number: PLO029

2. Location

Street & Number: 500 Mena Street

Not for Publication: N/A

City/Town: Mena

Vicinity: N/A

State: AR County: Polk

Code: AR113 Zip Code: 71953

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

1  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
1

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
0

Buildings  
Sites  
Structures  
Objects  
Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_\_\_ ~~does not~~ meet the National Register Criteria.

William A. Salu \_\_\_\_\_ 4-14-98  
Signature of certifying official Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper Date  
Of action

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**6. Function or Use**

Historic: Social Sub: Meeting Hall  
Health Care Hospital

Current : Commerce/Trade Sub: Professional  
Education Specialty Store  
Library/Museum

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification:  
Colonial Revival  
Spanish/Colonial Revival

Materials: foundation Stone, Brick roof Composition Shingle  
walls Brick other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

**Summary**

The Elks Lodge at 500 Mena Street in Mena, Polk County is a rectangular plan, two-story red brick Colonial Revival commercial building on a continuous rough-cut stone foundation beneath a marble belt course. The building features a low hipped roof, double-hung windows with marble lintels, quoins on all corners, multiple porches and a Mission style shaped parapet. The Lodge was built circa 1908 on a sloping lot in the business area of Mena on a street of historic brick and stone structures. Due to fires and changing occupants the Lodge has been slightly altered but it retains its essential architectural integrity.

**Elaboration**

The Elks Lodge at 500 Mena Street in Mena, Polk County is a two-story, red brick Colonial Revival commercial building on a continuous rough-cut stone foundation beneath a marble belt course. A defining architectural element is the Mission style shaped parapet on the front facade. The building was raised to accommodate the Elks Lodge, No. 781 in 1908. Many changes have been made to the Lodge as a result of fires and remodeling by different tenants, but it retains its essential form and integrity.

The southwestern, or front facade is dominated by a full-width porch supported by four Tuscan columns. A span of decorative balustrades connects the columns and outlines the flat roof of the porch. This is not the original porch, which had a wood floor, (now concrete) but it has been recreated from historic photographs and is authentic in its design. A handicapped ramp leads

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to the southern corner of the porch. Brick quoins adorn the corners of the building. The wide, one-light paneled front door centered on the porch has adjoining sidelights and a transom under a marble lintel. Two eight-over-one windows with marble lintels and sills surround the front door. The second story is five-ranked with two six-over-one single windows flanking a ribbon of three centered under a shaped parapet. The center window of the ribbon is eight-over-one while the surrounding two are six-over-one. The parapet is detailed with a round nine-light window. At the date of construction the Elks had elaborated this parapet with a pair of mounted elk horns.

The southeastern elevation is simple with six-over-one windows in a variety of sizes with marble lintels and sills. A pair of larger windows open on the southwest corner next to a medium window. Two shorter, wider windows lead to another medium window and a second large window is adjacent to a one-light paneled door with a transom at the northeast. This door opens onto a small wooden stoop with trellised handrail to the east. A marble beltcourse that surrounds the building is visible above the stone foundation. Quoins are the only embellishment. The second story features three six-over-one windows and one short and one tall three-over-one window.

The rear, or northeastern elevation features a series of windows as well. Three louvered openings run across the foundation. The first story is lit left to right by a short window, a set of double windows and two single windows. The second story contains four regular size windows. Quoins adorn the corners of this facade.

The northwestern facade is more symmetrical and in keeping with the front elevation. Four Tuscan columns support a central two-story porch with a balustrade like that seen on the front porch. The decorative railing continues uncovered to the western corner. This facade has a slight U-shape to it and contains the porch. A ribbon of three windows to the northeast of the porch. Within the porch are three windows surrounding a single leaf glass door with fanlight and marble lintel. This door is not original, being heavily damaged in a 1984 fire, but traces of a wider door remain in the brick around the casing. The southwest corner of the building contains another ribbon of three windows. Quoins are also present on this facade.

The second story holds seven windows, two to the left and right, and three in the central recessed area surrounding a single door opening onto the second story porch. Historic photos show a second shaped parapet on this elevation that is no longer extant.

The first floor of the interior is an open lobby with a small store and library in the rear. Two beams running northwest to southeast are supported by four square wood posts which help support the ceiling. The beams and posts were installed during renovations to counteract structural damage after the 1984 fire. The wooden trim on windows and doors is original as are the oak hardwood floors. On the southeastern wall within an inglenook is a large brick fireplace. A central staircase leads to the second story from the northeastern, rear wall. Five steps lead to a landing containing bookshelves. Two posts at the landing attach to a stick balustrade that encloses the landing and serves as a short handrail for the flight of steps leading northwest to the upper story. The second story rooms are divided into several small offices. Wood trim on this floor is not original.



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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Local

Applicable National Register Criteria: C,A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture  
Entertainment/Recreation  
Health/Medicine  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: 1908 - 1948

Significant Dates: 1908

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and period of significance noted above:

**Summary**

The Elks Lodge at 500 Mena Street in Mena, Polk County is a two story red brick Colonial Revival commercial building on a continuous rough-cut stone foundation. A defining architectural element is a Mission style shaped parapet on the front, southwestern facade. In 1908 the Elks Lodge 781 constructed the building in the business section of Mena near such other important landmarks of the community as the post office and City Hall. The building suffered a fire, one of two, in 1984 and was vacant until 1996 when it was rehabilitated and leased to various businesses. It has been restored as closely as possible to its original appearance. A cornerstone of the community since 1908, the Elks Lodge has served local organizations, hosted notable politicians and entertainers and tended to the medical needs of Mena through its tenure as the Mena General Hospital during 1935 to 1951. These historical associations qualify the building for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A. It is also being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best extant example in Mena of a Colonial Revival commercial building.

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**Elaboration**

The town of Mena, county seat of Polk County, was founded in 1896 with the introduction of the Kansas City Southern Railway. The line was financed by Mr. Arthur Stillwell and backed by Dutch investors. Jan DeGoeijen was a personal friend of Mr. Stillwell so as a tribute to his friend and his help in establishing the community, he named the town after Mr. DeGoeijen's mother, Mena. Due to heavy public relations efforts to promote Mena, 1000 people were camped at the townsite when the railroad reached the area. It was incorporated soon after.

In 1902, twenty-six people banded together to form the "Hello Bills", a forerunner to the Elks Lodge, 781. The group met in the second story of the Watkins Building across the street from the postoffice. The popularity of the Elks necessitated a move to larger quarters. Their next lodge hall was in the Davis block on Mena Street, later known as the Opera House block. By 1908 the Elks needed even more space so the Elks Lodge was constructed on the corner of Mena and Port Arthur streets. The organization shared their new home with other associations and allowed it to be utilized as a community center. A sizable roof fire in 1925 caused heavy damage to the Elks Lodge which probably accounts for the missing shaped parapet on the northwestern wall.

The Redman Hospital in Mena had outgrown its space in 1935 so the Elks rented the building for medical use to the Mena General Hospital until 1951. At that time the Elks regained control of the building. By this time the wooden porches had begun to rot so they were removed. It is thought that the side porch was removed earlier by the hospital in order to use the side door as an emergency entrance. A metal awning and small concrete porches were added later to the front and west elevations. Other changes included painting the windows white to hide the drinking activities of the Lodge members, partitions on the interior and a false stair over the original staircase.

During its stint as the Elks Lodge the building was the site of a 1908 reception for William Jennings Bryan during his bid for the White House. Actor and Mena resident Chet Lauck, served as the Exalted Ruler of the Elks Lodge for two years in 1928 and 1929. Many other clubs and organizations like the Lions Club and the Girl Scouts utilized the Lodge during the years and numerous community events took place there. From 1935 to 1951 the Mena General Hospital occupied the building while serving the medical needs of the residents of Mena. These associations with the Elks and other important personages and community groups call for the Elks Lodge to be nominated to the National Register under Criterion A.

The Elks Lodge in Mena is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion C for its imposing Colonial Revival architecture. The Lodge features a Mission influenced parapet, marble lintels and sills, brick quoins and historically correct decorative porches.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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Materials submitted by Mary Rawlins, Mena, Arkansas. 1997.

*Goodspeeds Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Western Arkansas*, Southern Publishing Company, Chicago and Nashville, 1891.

Stillwell, Arthur E. and James R. Crowell, "I had A Hunch," reprinted from *The Saturday Evening Post*, LaBelle Printing Company, Port Athur, Texas.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary Location of Additional Data: \_\_\_\_\_

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property: Less than one.

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>386490</u>	<u>3827630</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary includes lots 16, 17, and 18 in block 43 of the original townsite of Mena, Polk County, Arkansas.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes all of the property historically associated with the Elks Lodge.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

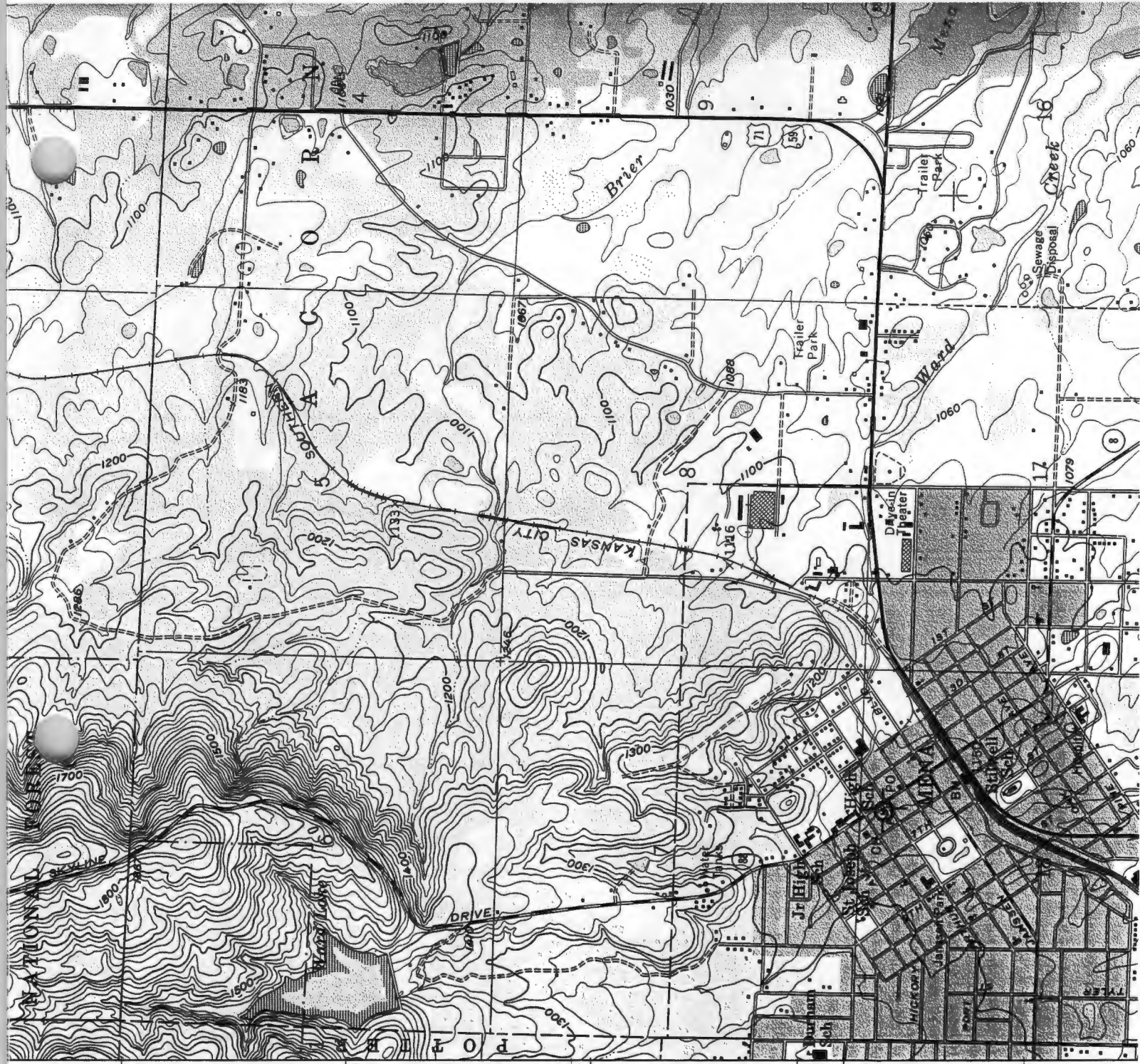
Name/Title: Holly Hope/Survey Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 3/31/98

Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg., 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

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





T. 1 S.  
 3831 000m N  
 T. 2 S.

3830

ELKS LODGE  
 MENA  
 POLK CO, AR  
 UTM  
 15/386490/  
 3827630

3820

Rockly 6.8 MI.

38

35'

3827



2125 10000

Re County, Arkansas  
Photo by Amy Bennett  
October 3, 1997  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of front door



Part County, Atkin SOS  
Photo by Amy Bennett  
October 10, 1991  
negative on file at AHPP  
View from west





Elk's Lodge  
Poudre Country, Arkansas  
Photo by Amy Bennett  
October 16, 1997  
Negative on file at APP  
View of Staircase

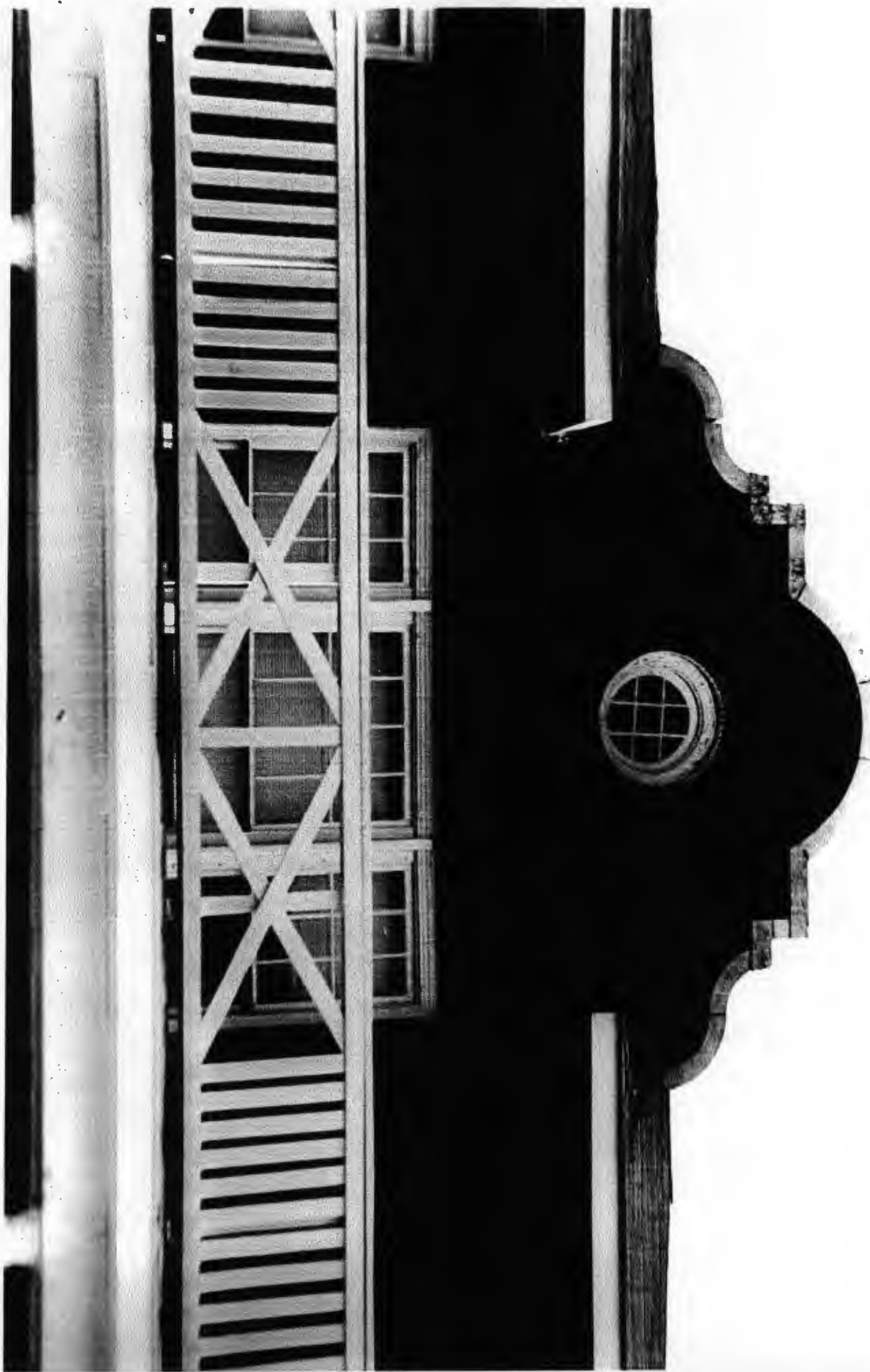


212 1000  
Folk County, Arkansas  
Photo by Hwy Smith  
October 3, 1991  
Negative on file at AHPP  
view of lobby

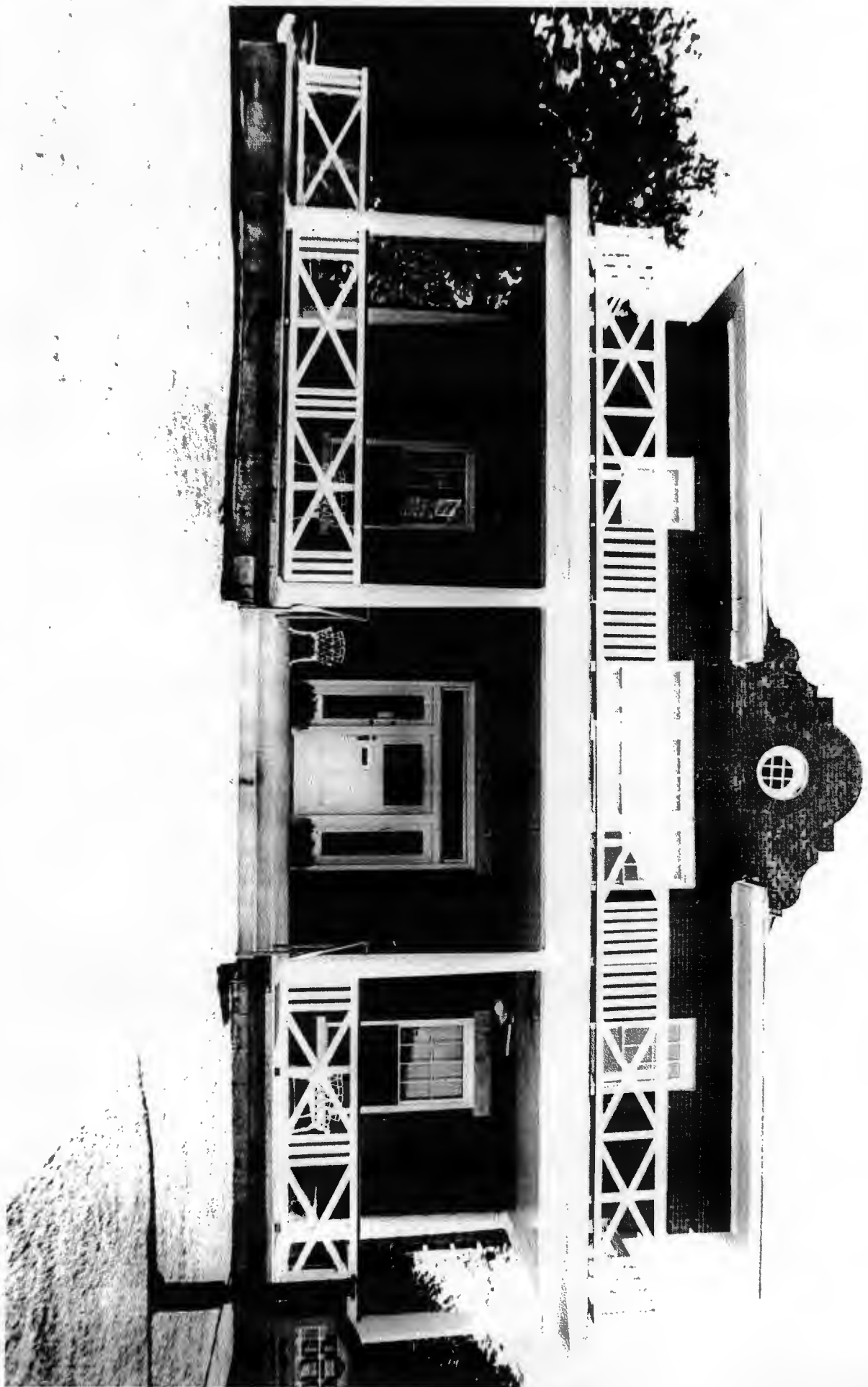




Elks Lodge  
Poudre County, A-1 on 505  
Photo by Amy Bennett  
October 5, 1997  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of 2nd story



216's Lodge  
P. County Arkansas  
Photo by Army Bennett  
October 3, 1997  
Negative on file at AHP  
View of Mission Parapet



2125 Lodge

Pe County, Arkansas

Photo by Arny Bennett

October 3, 1997

Negative on file at AHP

View from South





Pettie County, Arkansas  
Placed by Hwy Bennett  
October 3, 1997  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of lobby



Site location  
Pope County, Arkansas  
Plots by Amy Bennett  
October 3, 1997  
Map here on file at AHP  
View from east





Popo County, Arkansas;  
Plains by Amy Bennett  
October 3, 1941  
Negative on file at AHP  
View from North