

NR 10-09-86

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 Poinsett Community Club

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Main & Poinsett Streets

N/A not for publication

city, town Trumann

N/A vicinity of

state Arkansas

code 05

county Poinsett

72472

code 111

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: Community Center

4. Owner of Property

name Arbor Incorporated

street & number 200 W. Main Street

city, town Trumann

vicinity of

state Arkansas

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Poinsett County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Harrisburg

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

Conceived and completed in 1927 as a ambitious vernacular interpretation of the prevailing Craftsman style, the Poinsett Community Club reposes on the southern fringe of the old eighty acre Singer complex at the intersection of East Main and Poinsett Streets in Trumann. The Community Club's broad, low proportions and lack of ornamentation conform to many of Gustav Stickley's ideals for the simple bungalow, while its plain lines and unbroken wall surfaces reflect the dictates of Craftsman philosophy applied to the more massive forms of construction. The frame building rests on cast concrete piers, two feet ten inches above ground level, with a four foot two inch high poured footing, etched to resemble blocks, serving as header and stringer joists for its timber floor joists. The Community Club's stucco exterior is applied over longitudinal backing wires. A gable roof surmounted by a wide monitor shelters the community rooms, while an unusual hipped roof with bent edges covers the gymnasium.

ELABORATION

Its multiple functions and resources of the Poinsett Community Club, as well as its size, strained Watson B. Boggs's interpretation of the Craftsman style in his design of the community and recreation house. Boggs's final plan, prompted and amended by Singer official Count Albert Carlson, offered the unexpected imposition of the features of a simple bungalow on the community rooms, melded to the sparse and unwieldy industrial blandness of the gymnasium. The facade, or south elevation, is dominated by the prow-like projection which houses an assembly room, kitchen and the old city library room, and imparts a T-shaped plan to the structure. A wide monitor sits on the projection's low-pitched gable roof, and both display characteristic knee braces. The expansive wrap-around porch is supported by cast concrete piers and rests on a cast concrete balustrade which is divided into bays by recessed panels. The porch extends one-half the length of the prow's west and east sides and engaged piers let into the stucco walls mark its limits. Concrete railings flank the entryway, which is emphasized by fluted concrete urns set on short, square concrete piers.

All windows in the prow-like projection are double-hung, with nine-over-nine lights. The assembly room repeats the prow's blunt projection, conveying the impression of the building's overall T-plan repeated on a smaller scale. Double wooden doors open into the assembly room and are framed by two sets of paired windows. On both the east and west sides of the central projection of the facade's prow, an additional window is set. Flanking the projecting entrance to the assembly room, in the remainder of the facade sheltered by the encircling porch, identical pairs of windows originally opened into both the kitchen and the library. One library window, on the west side of the assembly room, however, was filled c. 1979, while the other was partially filled and converted to a door. This is the only major alteration to the building's exterior. Three windows occupy the remaining half of the east and west sides of the projection which houses the community rooms, between the porch and the gymnasium. A pair of windows is located near the porch, while a single window is placed near the gymnasium.

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Awning windows beneath the monitor's eaves originally lighted the assembly room. Most of each side's seven windows, arrayed in two sets of three and a single window, have been painted, with one window on each side removed to admit heating and air conditioning ducts. The large, brick assembly room fireplace chimney rises from the monitor ridge line, at the connection of community rooms and gymnasium. While the roof of the facade's prow-like projection meets the gymnasium below its eaves, the monitor roof joins the hipped roof of the more massive portion of the structure.

Craftsman influences are minor in the gymnasium, which occupies the rear of the Community Club. The bent corners of its hipped roof suggest the clipped gables of more modest buildings, but its size (110 feet six inches by seventy feet, with eighteen foot eight inch high walls) precluded all but the simplest suggestions of the bungalow. All windows in the gymnasium are six light awning windows and, although a planned balcony was never constructed in its interior, there are two rows of windows on each elevation. On each side of the exposed remainder of the facade shared by the gymnasium, two windows comprise the first row and three complete the second row.

The only features on the east elevation of the gymnasium are two rows of four sets of triple awning windows. While the second row of windows on the west elevation is identical to those of the opposite elevation, the first row contains only three sets of the triple windows. Instead of the fourth set, on the north end of the elevation a pair of wooden doors opens into the gymnasium. A small gable hood supported by knee braces shields the doors. On the south end of the elevation, below the lower row of windows, a small, one-story, fireproof brick wing with a cast concrete roof projects from the stucco wall. This wing, added to Boggs's original plans but constructed at the same time as the main building, originally housed a coal furnace. Small wooden double doors open in the center of the gable end. The doors were bounded by small windows or vents, and two similar openings were located on the exposed north and south sides of the wing. Only the opening to the north of the door, fixed with a metal grill remains uncovered. A brick chimney rises from the wing, in the center of the gymnasium's west elevation.

The rear, or north, elevation offers two single door entries, as asymmetrically fixed. Both are defined by gable hoods with knee braces. On the east edge of the elevation, one pair of windows and a single window extend from the door to the building's corner. Eight pairs of windows range between the entries and a final pair of windows is inserted between the door and the west edge of the gymnasium. A cast concrete hose house and large fire bell crouch midway between the doors, below the window line. The second level is completed by thirteen symmetrically arranged pairs of windows.

Many of the interior features of the Community Club remain intact. Oak paneling extends around the walls in the assembly room and the old library, and oak flooring is used throughout the building. All wood used in the Community Club was milled in the Singer plant. Original plaster and lath ceilings remain in the kitchen and library and original light fixtures are suspended from the

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wooden trusses of the gymnasium. The gym and its stage are walled with irregular-sized, flush boards. Changes in the interior included a door opening, cut from the library into the gym. The opening was not framed and has been reclosed but not restored. The ceiling in the assembly room, originally open to the rafters and lighted with windows in the wide monitor on top of the porch, has been blocked by a drop ceiling. The large stone fireplace in the assembly room is plugged. Drop ceilings and paneling were installed in the restrooms.

In 1927, a wading pool was constructed to the rear of the Community Club, but it has been filled with dirt and is used as a planter. A brick smokehouse, where the annual barbecue was prepared, was built c. 1947, but was removed in 1977. The long, concrete block barbecue pits remain. An automatic sprinkler system installed on the porch and throughout the building's interior, originally supplied by the Singer water system, is also intact.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates

Builder Architect

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

SUMMARY

A massive and unusual example of Craftsman architecture expressed in a public building constructed by an industrial facility, the Poinsett Community Club, or Old Trumann Community House, served as the focus of social and recreational activities in Trumann. Although designed by the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company for its employees, school and civic life also revolved around the imposing symbol of a small, early twentieth-century, Southern industrial town. Finally, the building represented the essential contribution of the Singer Sewing Machine Company subsidiary to the development and persistence of Trumann.

ELABORATION

Early settlers in northeastern Arkansas were greeted by an expanse of low swampy wetlands, remnants of the prehistoric wanderings of the Mississippi River. Drainage problems were intensified by the New Madrid Earthquakes of 1811-1812, as caved banks and felled trees along the St. Francis and other rivers created vast rafts which inundated large portions of the area and convinced observers the region had subsided. Surveys in 1840 and 1842 mapped extensive tracts of rich timber lands as lakes or "Sunk Lands," which defied substantial settlement or development until the late nineteenth century.

In 1883 the Kansas City, Fort Scott and Memphis Railroad, later acquired by the St. Louis and San Francisco, or Frisco, was completed and threaded along the edge of the wetlands in the eastern part of Poinsett County. Coincident with the completion of the Frisco and other rail lines, the depletion of the timber resources of the Northwest and the Great Lakes regions compelled lumbermen to turn to the virtually untouched forests of the South. By 1889 the timber industry represented a "great source of income" to Poinsett County.

Trumann owed its creation to the railroads and the great, non-resident land and lumber corporations which exploited what turn-of-the-century editorialists described as the state's "wildlands." The town began as the site of the G.R. Minnick and Company mill in the 1890s, one of the countless sidings along the length of the railroads all over the state. The community was subsequently renamed Neona, Mosher, and, finally, Trumann, although all three names were employed interchangeably in its formative years. In 1903, the Singer Sewing Machine Company acquired the former Minnick properties and operated a tram line from the Frisco main line to its timber holdings southwest of Trumann. Most early railroad and timber settlements vanished after the forests in their area were exhausted. In 1911-1912, however, Trumann's continuance was assured when the Singer company's subsidiary, the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing (PL&M) Company, began operation of a factory which milled rough lumber from timber cut on Singer holdings in Cross and Lee counties and in Louisiana and supplied veneer to other Singer facilities.

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The boom which accompanied the establishment of the Singer plant brought both prosperity and a housing crisis to the settlement on the Frisco. In 1910, Trumann and the lumber towns of Tyronza and Waldenburg had a combined population of only four hundred. By 1913, six hundred men were employed by the PL&M Company and the Springfield Cooperage Company, which established a mill in Trumann in 1908. The railroad tracks and the major employers divided the town into two distinct communities. On the east side of the Frisco, the Springfield Company provided houses, direct current electric power, and other services for its employees. On the west side of the tracks, Singer built shotgun and pyramid-roof houses, supplied alternating current electricity, supported a fire brigade, and offered its workers recreations such as a tennis court within their eighty acre compound, annual Fourth of July picnics, and a company sponsored baseball team.

In March 1925, PL&M Company officials Count Albert Carlson, General Superintendent, and R. L. Davis, Assistant Superintendent, hired Mississippi engineer Watson B. "Billie" Boggs to draft plans for a community and recreation house. According to Boggs, Count Carlson, who conceived the project, also closely guided its planning: "If Mr. Carlson had made every line the building could not have been any nearer his design." In May 1927, Boggs's drawings were complete and construction began with materials donated by the company and labor contributed by its employees. The Singer company hired only one professional carpenter to assist its volunteer laborers. Carlson continued to suggest alterations and additions to the original design, including a large fireplace, furnace, and steel support bars on the lower chords of the building's wooden trusses. By the end of the year the Poinsett Community Club was completed.

The building housed an assembly room, kitchen, the city library, and a gymnasium with stage and dressing rooms. While the Community Club was constructed by the PL&M Company, it also hosted a variety of community activities, as well as company events, and served as the focal point of social and recreational activities in Trumann. Because the public school lacked a gymnasium, the Singer subsidiary provided their facilities for graduations, carnivals, dances, theatricals, and basketball games. Singer employees organized a Community Club basketball team which challenged other area groups, and the annual company barbecue was held in the building and on its grounds. Dances, wrestling and boxing matches, motion pictures, and functions accessible to all the town's citizens were also presented in the Community Club and families purchased an annual membership in the club for five dollars. The Lions Club and other civic and municipal groups utilized the assembly room for their meetings. In 1932, the Community Club gymnasium served as an improvised and temporary clinic and the kitchen as a surgery during an outbreak of tonsillitis among the town's children. During the 1937 overflow of the St. Francis and Mississippi Rivers, the building sheltered flood refugees.

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In 1982, Singer closed its Trumann plant and, the next year, Arbor, Incorporated, purchased the Singer properties in Trumann, including the Community Club. Although the frequency of events decreased and company sponsored activities ended, the building, now called the Old Community House, still houses a number of regular and special community and civic functions.

9. Major Bibliographical References

.See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.25

Quadrangle name Trumann

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	5	7	2	5	0	7	0	3	9	5	0	2	2	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

1	5	7	2	5	1	2	0	3	9	5	0	2	7	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

1	5	7	2	5	2	4	5	3	9	5	0	1	6	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

1	5	7	2	5	1	3	0	3	9	5	0	1	6	0
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 Ray Knight, Edward Mitchell, John Sadler

organization Trumann Chamber of Commerce date September 8, 1986

street & number P. O. Box 215 telephone (501) 371-2763

city or town Trumann state Arkansas

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 *William A. [Signature]*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 9-8-86

For NPS use only

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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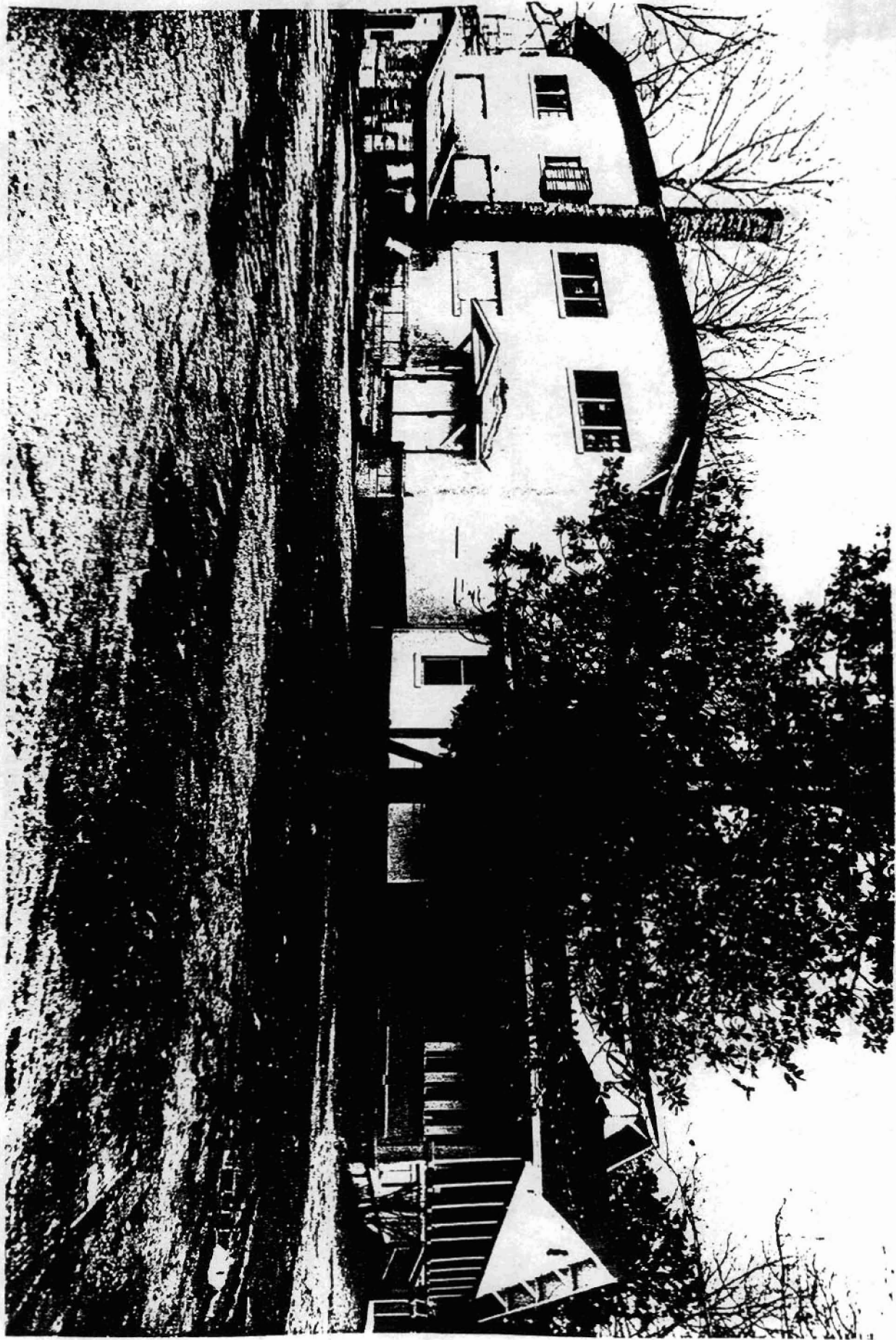
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VERBAL BOUNDARY

The Poinsett Community Club is located on part of Lot 1 of the City of Trumann, comprising the South one-half of group J of the Arbor Industrial Complex Horizontal Property Regime. The boundary begins on the North side of Poinsett Street. At the intersection of Poinsett and Main Streets, proceed northwest along the Poinsett Street right of way 208 feet to its intersection with the Whittle Plywood Access Road. Then proceed northeast along the Whittle Road 274 feet. Turn southeast and proceed 442 feet along the levee base of the old Singer reservoir to Main Street. Then proceed 318 feet southwest along the Main Street right of way to the point of beginning.

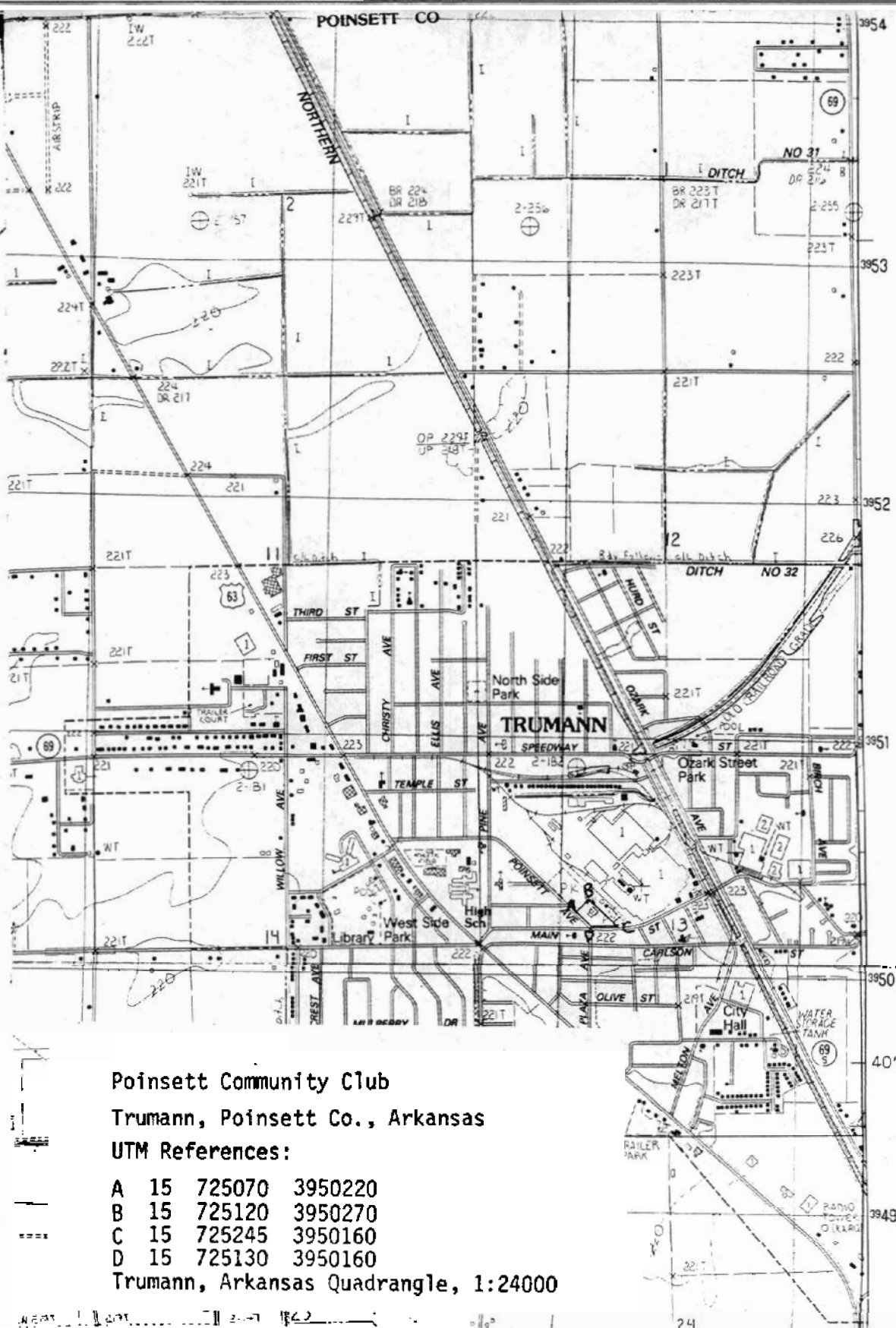




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100-50-100-100
100-50-100-100
100-50-100-100

100-50-100-100





Poinsett Community Club
 Trumann, Poinsett Co., Arkansas

UTM References:

A	15	725070	3950220
B	15	725120	3950270
C	15	725245	3950160
D	15	725130	3950160

Trumann, Arkansas Quadrangle, 1:24000