

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Allan Herschell/Herschell-Spillman Carousel

other names/site number "Over-the-Jumps" in War Memorial Park

2. Location

street & number War Memorial Park Midway

not for publication N/A

city, town Little Rock

vicinity N/A

state Arkansas

code 05

county Pulaski

code 119

zip code 72204

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
_____	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
<u>1</u>	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A. Byrd
Signature of certifying official

10-30-89
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: Work of Art
Recreation and Culture: Fair

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: Work of Art
Recreation and Culture: Fair

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Carousel with sculpted wood
Horses

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____
walls _____
roof _____
other wood
Cast-iron

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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Summary. The forty vertical jumping horses on Little Rock's "Over-the-Jumps" carousel in War Memorial Park were created by woodcarvers from three Allan Herschell Carousel Factories, and most of them date to c. 1920 (the date of the extant wooden sectional platform to which they are attached is more difficult to date though its original pieces were certainly manufactured by one of the Herschell factories also). The horses of the cropped-mane (Trojan or Roman) type are distinctively Allan Herschell horses (there are two on "Over-the-Jumps"). The other steeds are attributable to wood carvers of both the Herschell-Spillman Company and Spillman Engineering Company (Traub). However, there is no evidence indicating that Allan Herschell sculpted any of the horses himself. The horses of "Over-the-Jumps" are attached to a "hybrid" machine that is referred to as a carousel. In actuality, the track upon which the horses are attached is a machine described in midway catalogs of the 1960's as a "caterpillar," which had aluminum seats. Over the years, the track that was original to the horses deteriorated, and the horses and platform were saved and attached to a caterpillar track. This new track, however, duplicates the shape and effect of the original track and the wood platform, wheels, and sweeps are largely original to the earlier mechanism.

Elaboration. The diameter of the "Over-the-Jumps" carousel is 40 feet, with a center pole. Sweeps (tie-bars extending from the riding platform to the center pole) are alternately painted red, yellow or blue. The stationary walking platform surrounds the mobile riding platform, and both are constructed of wood planks. The riding platform is sectioned into five-foot segments (twenty-four segments in all) with one wooden wheel between each segment (twenty-four wheels). Each wheel between segments is approximately twenty-four inches in diameter, with thick wooden spokes, a cast-iron hub, and a cast-iron rim. Each wheel is covered with a wood well above the riding platform, but wheel movement can be seen from the walking platform level. Each segment carries two gallopers or one chariot, with one chariot occurring between each set of ten horses. Beneath the riding platform is a cast-iron undulating track (not original) along which the wheels of the riding platform move the horses in an up-and-down galloping motion. Stepped rounding boards on the edge of the riding platform are approximately six inches above the walking platform, to assist riders in mounting the riding platform. Steeds are mounted on the riding platform with triangular stands with stirrups and tie-bars between each horse in a pair. The wooden prancers are also secured to the riding platform with a steel cable. An electric motor powers the carousel.

All forty horses are hand-carved wooden jumpers; two of the forty are Arabian (roached, cropped-mane) in style, typical of other Allan Herschell carousels, while the thirty-eight others have rounded, carved tails and manes. All horses are either in jumping position with some legs extended or tucked. There are at least five styles of distinctively carved horses arranged randomly around the carousel, each displaying its creator's original interpretation.

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The faces of all horses on the carousel are artistically carved with emotionally charged expressions to maximize visual tension and urgency--to add excitement to the brief relationship of each rider to his/her steed. When viewed from different angles, an array of agitated expressions is created among the horses which must be closely observed to detect similarities between them. Mouths are open--teeth exposed--champing at rings and bits (painted). Heads are cocked, with stretched and tensed muscle structures emphasized in the jaws and neck of each horse. Nostrils are flared and painted red, and glass eyes of two hues (although some are painted) are carefully placed to increase the intensity in the expression of each face. An observant rider will notice two ear styles, both laid back, but tensed at different angles. The exposed teeth and curled-back lips of each horse add to the terror and agitation in each expression.

The bodies of the horses are muted in color (either dapple gray or cream) and are heavily caked in years of paint with deep weathering cracks, which adds an exciting contrast to the bright accessory of each jumper. Sculptured manes are painted in contrasting color variations of the body color of each galloper (i.e., light gray with dark-gray-to-black variations as accents and a cream color with value variations of the same hue in brown).

Complementary colors were used to decorate saddles, cartouches and bridles that adorn each horse. Each steed's trappings appear to be different from the rest, although they are simply repeated randomly (depending upon the assembler) around the carousel. The jumpers are fitted with decorative cut-glass jewels and carved flowers, eagle heads, shields and swords around the neck and at the shoulders of each. Bridles are shaped variously--some straight and some plain, while others have decorative curves. Some have fabric-like ruffles that punctuate the musculature of a jaw.

The site where the carousel found a permanent home is Little Rock's War Memorial Park. Presently 202 acres, War Memorial Park (historically called "Fair Park") was purchased by the Arkansas State Fair Commission in 1868 from William B. Wait and served as the State Fairgrounds until 1924, when it was acquired by the City of Little Rock to be developed as a municipal park. The landscape architectural firm of Pearse and Robinson of Chicago, Illinois, was commissioned to develop a master plan at the time, which included the present layout of golf course, zoo, midway (constructed 1929) and stadium locations. A golf clubhouse, swimming pool and bath house were added in the 1930's by Works Progress Administration (WPA) construction workers. The stadium was added in 1948 (designed by Bruce A. Anderson, architect). President Harry Truman presided at the 1949 ceremonies in the new stadium when the park was renamed "War Memorial Park;" however, the name "Fair Park" remains the identifying vernacular title to many citizens who remember the early twentieth century. A carillon located at the Jonesboro Street entrance was added to the park as a bicentennial project in 1976, emphasizing

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the park's continuing significance in the history of Little Rock, capitol city of the State of Arkansas.

The wood frame, domed structure which shelters the carousel is of later construction (late 1940's) and was designed locally. It is not associated with any of the Allan Hershell companies and thus is not included within this nomination.

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Summary. Allan Herschell's vertical jumpers and the "Over-the-Jumps" carousel in Little Rock's War Memorial Park to which they are attached survive as a rare collection of wooden sculptures carved by the artisans of his company, one of the earliest carousel manufacturers in the United States. They are rendered even more significant by their continued attachment to the largely-original sectional wooden riding platform which allows it unique motion. An assessment by experts of the Allan Herschell Carousel Factory Museum in North Tonawanda, New York, reveals that "Over-the-Jumps" is comprised of Allan Herschell horses but manufactured by three of his companies (in succession): Allan Herschell Company, Herschell-Spillman Company, and Spillman Engineering Company. Therefore, some of the wooden horses are earlier than others, although they are all of the same vintage (c. 1920's).

Elaboration. The "merry-go-round" originated in the 12th century, when Arab marksmen played a game wherein they rode horses in a circular pattern and threw clay balls that contained scented water at one another. During the Crusades, Spaniards and Italians brought the game back to their homelands and called it "carrosello"--little war (Huddleston). By the 17th century, the carousel was used as a training device for young horsemen. Suspended from rotating beams, wooden steeds carried jousters, who practiced spearing rings with short lances to increase marksmanship. In 1662, Louis XIV hosted one of the greatest carousel games in Paris for his friend, Louis de la Valliere. The Place du Carrousell in Paris was so named for this event, when hundreds of knights participated in the games by riding through this square spearing objects with their lances. This event inspired a Paris model maker to create a prototype child's toy with horses and menagerie animals nailed around a crude axle. From his model, larger carousels were constructed which were large enough for children to sit upon and spear brass rings affixed to the perimeter of the machine (Huddleston).

The first carousel was brought to the United States in 1847 by Michael Dentzel, a German immigrant and wheelwright by trade. The first model was a person- or horse-powered model (Fried).

By the time carnivals reached their height in popularity at the close of the 19th century, several companies began manufacturing operations in the United States to share in this profitable amusement. Such was the situation when Allan Herschell incorporated in 1880 with James Armitage (an Englishman), as the Armitage-Herschell Company (Fried).

Allan Herschell was born in Arbreath, Forfarshire, Scotland, on April 27, 1851, and immigrated to the United States with his parents on August 14, 1870. It was his intention to farm, but he had fewer farming skills than he needed to be successful and therefore turned to business during the years of the Industrial Revolution in the United States. He built his first factory in North Tonawanda, New York, in 1873--The Tonawanda Engine and Machine Company--but a series of

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fires and mishaps delayed the company's success. In 1883, Herschell married Ida Spillman, sister of his business partner, James Armitage. In 1883, his first steam-powered carousel came off the assembly line. The first carousel was sold to a carnival owner and he built another within two years. He sold the second machine for \$1,000 in New Orleans, Louisiana, and then crafted another, the sale of which catapulted him into business.

The wooden, hand-carved and painted carousel horse is considered a "rare breed" today and is a first indication that a carousel is historic. Prior to 1928, Allan Herschell's fiery chargers were handmade from applewood, basswood or poplar by skilled woodcrafters, who became harder to find and to employ in the golden age of the machine. These same craftsmen painted each steed carefully and meticulously with old paint that still contains mercury, arsenic and lead, as well as other toxic solvents and chemicals. This information enables experts to analyze and date carousel animals, once the original paint is detected, often under layers of newer paint. The process of detecting original paint, removing newer layers and preserving the historic object is both time-consuming and expensive. However, according to carousel preservationists, the protection--if not the restoration--of the original paint adds to the integrity and the historical value of carousel animals as folk art pieces (Ragan). Horses on "Over-the-Jumps" appear to have layers of weathered paint and probably extant paint underneath that may have been applied by the hands of the earliest Allan Herschell artisans.

Eventually, cast aluminum equines became the standard, weather-resistant breed of carousel horses, and Allan Herschell was the largest manufacturer (approximately 155,000) after 1928 (Fried). The wooden bodies of late Allan Herschell horses were made up of wood which had been glued together and carved by machine knives at 14,000 r.p.m., following the contours of the master design of earlier wooden horses (c. 1950). These powerful carving machines produced the bodies of four horses simultaneously at the rate of one per hour. The bodies were then sanded by machine and fitted with metal heads, tails and legs; the entire body was then painted and varnished in production-line fashion (Link-Belt News).

The Herschell-Spillman Company built the first "transportables," portable carousels that could be set-up and torn-down with a minimum of time and effort. These models travelled a midway circuit and could be transported in wagons or by train in the late 19th century. Individual components were compact: horses were designed to pack together in a minimum amount of space (heads and legs were tucked) to facilitate transportation. They were also characterized by plainly-carved trappings as opposed to ornate appliques with gold paint and glitter. In an interview in 1951 for the Tonawanda News, John Wendler (born in 1870), then president of Herschell-Spillman, related that in 1892, only one model was produced by the company--a forty-foot, two-abreast track machine that sold for \$2,400. By 1913, the Herschell-Spillman two-abreast was the most advanced model

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made. It could be acquired in 1913 with either steam power, gasoline engine or electric motor. The horses on "Over-the-Jumps" were originally mounted on one of these track machines.

The Allan Herschell Company occupied the same plant building from 1881-1958, where each new horse had its first test run under the old Herschell roundhouse (Dorang). In 1960, operations were moved from North Tonawanda to Buffalo, New York, when the Allan Herschell Company became a division of the Lisk-Savory Corporation, the nation's leading manufacturer of merry-go-rounds and carnival rides. Watson Bray, vice-president and general manager of Lisk-Savory, noted in 1962 that more than 2,000 Allan Herschell carousels had been manufactured by his firm and were scattered around the world. The oldest one serviced by the Company that year was built in 1908. According to a census by the National Carousel Association, only 150 historic carousels are extant in the United States and by some accounts, even fewer (Weller/Traub). The Allan Herschell Carousel Factory, 180 Thompson Street, North Tonawanda, New York, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The greatest threats to such historic wooden art and structures are fire and deterioration due to weathering. Carousel horses of the vintage of the "Over-the-Jumps" horses have been "pieced-out" to museums and private collectors, commanding prices as large as \$15,000, depending upon the quality of some distinctive steeds. Historic carousels with hand-carved wooden horses have been purchased in recent years within a cost range of \$630,000-1.4 million (Scanlon and Hinds). Little Rock's Allan Herschell horses and carousel are intact, representative resources from the "golden age of the carousel" (1875-1935)--the peak of the amusement park attraction in the United States. This carousel meets National Register Criterion C as a rare, well-preserved example of a functional yet creative art form and mechanical system developed specifically for this purpose.

"Over-the-Jumps" has been privately owned since it was first purchased. Its current owner is Loyd Choate.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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- Fried, Eunice J. "Merry-Go-Round Magic," Old Things, July, 1965.
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- Ragan, Rosa. "Saving Original Paint on Carousel Animals and Pieces," Merry-Go-Roundup, Winter, 1988. National Carousel Association, Milwaukie, Oregon.
- Traub, Don, Curator, Allan Herschell Carousel Factory Museum, North Tonawanda, New York, Interview with Mary Ann Anderson, April 13, 1989.
- Weller, Steve. "Merry-Go-Rounds 'Round the World," Buffalo Magazine, July 17, 1967.
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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is the outer circumference of the carousel track, located in the amusement midway of the War Memorial Park in Little Rock, Arkansas, and at a point 50 feet west of Midway Drive and 400 feet north of the intersection of Midway Drive and War Memorial Park Drive. War Memorial Park is located in the north half of Section 6, Township 1 North, Range 12 West, of the Little Rock, Arkansas Quadrangle. The boundary forms a circle with a diameter of 40 feet.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Art

Architecture

Period of Significance

1920-1935

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Armitage-Herschell/Herschell-Spillman

Carousel Factory

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A 15 561330 3845130
Zone Easting Northing

B _____
Zone Easting Northing

C _____

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

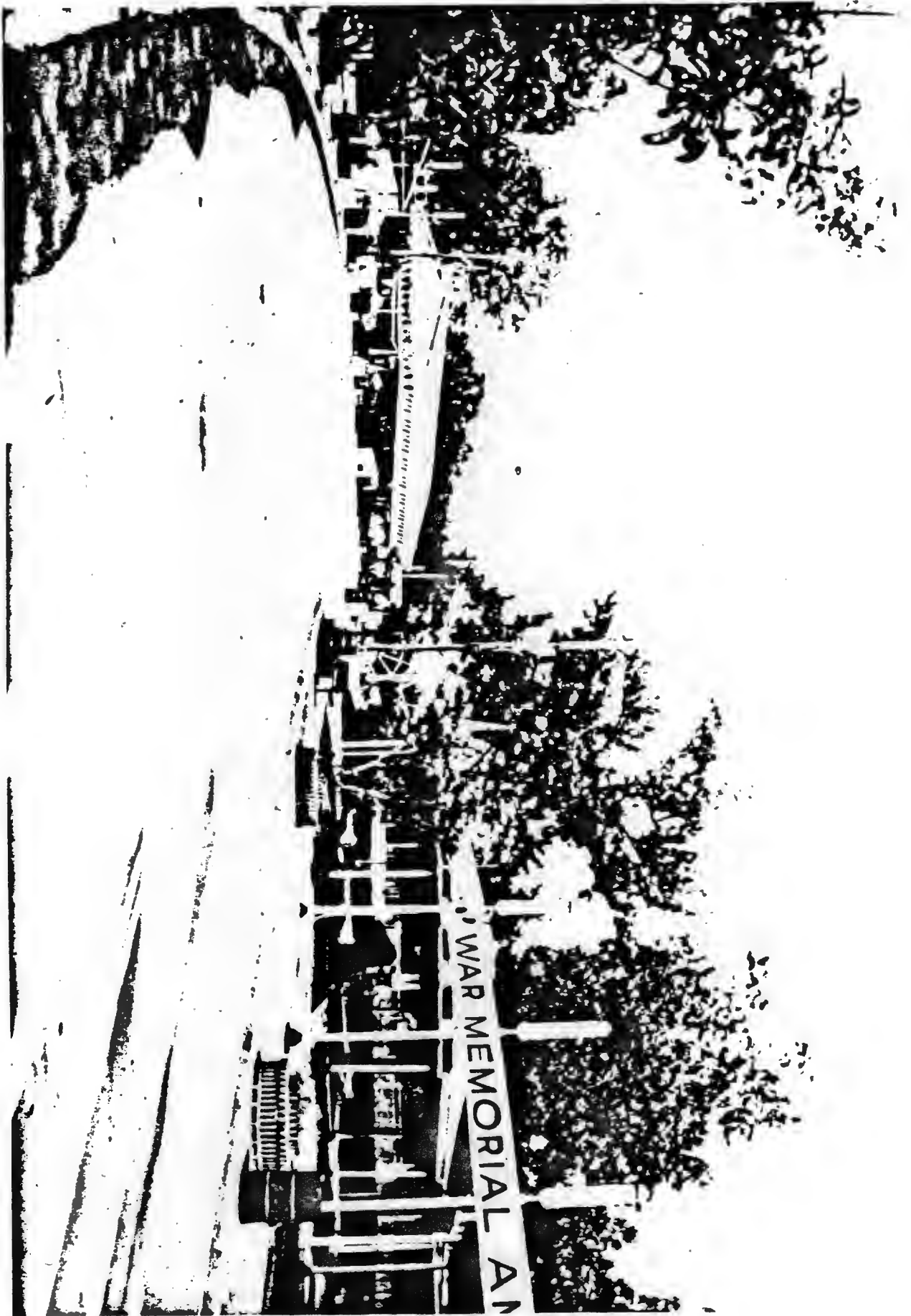
Boundary Justification

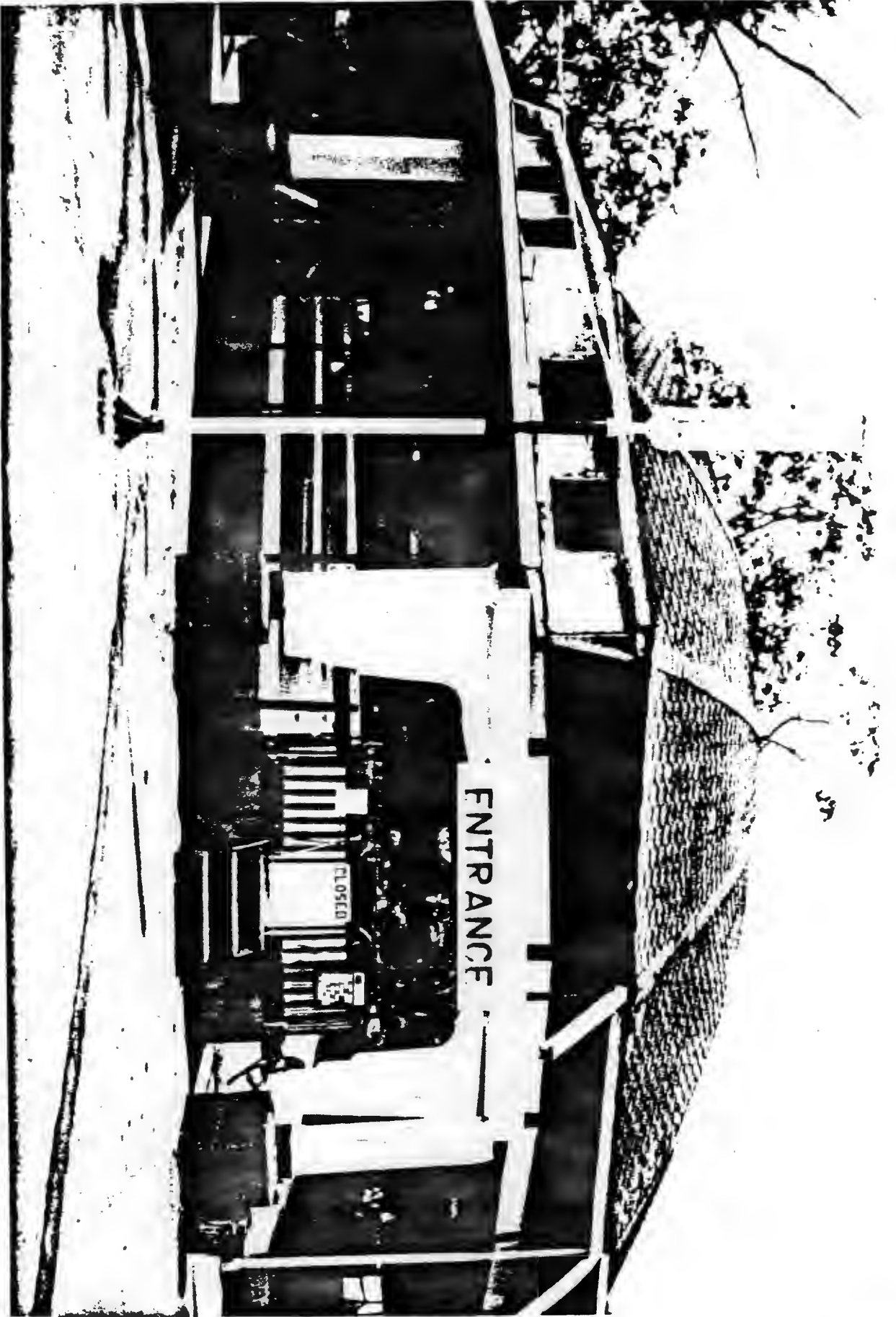
This boundary includes all the property historically associated with this resource and its significance.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Ann Anderson/Kenneth Story, Architectural Historian
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date October 16, 1989
street & number 225 E. Markham Street, Suite 300 telephone (501) 371-2763
city or town Little Rock state Arkansas zip code 72201









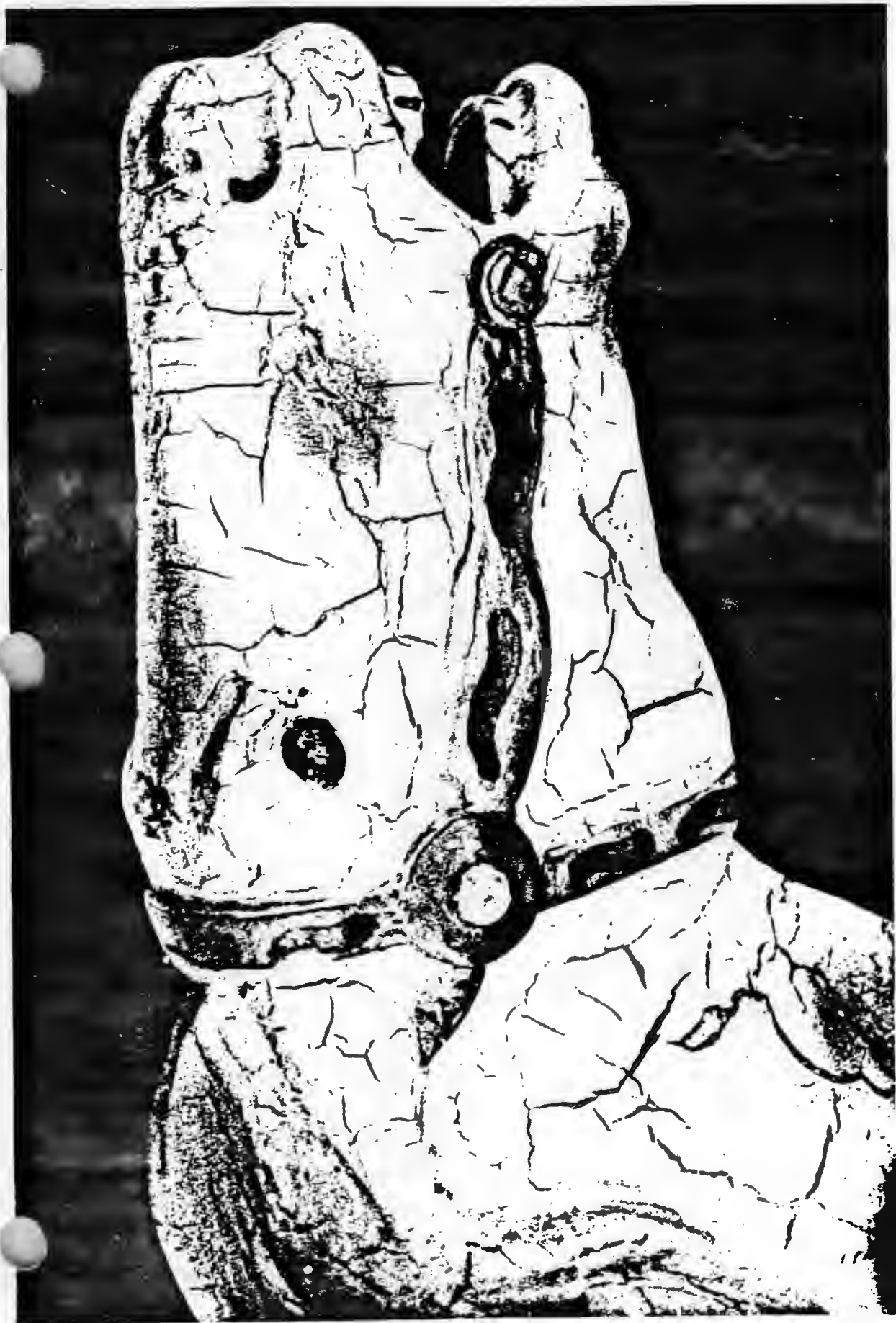
HERSCHELL-SPILLMAN CO.

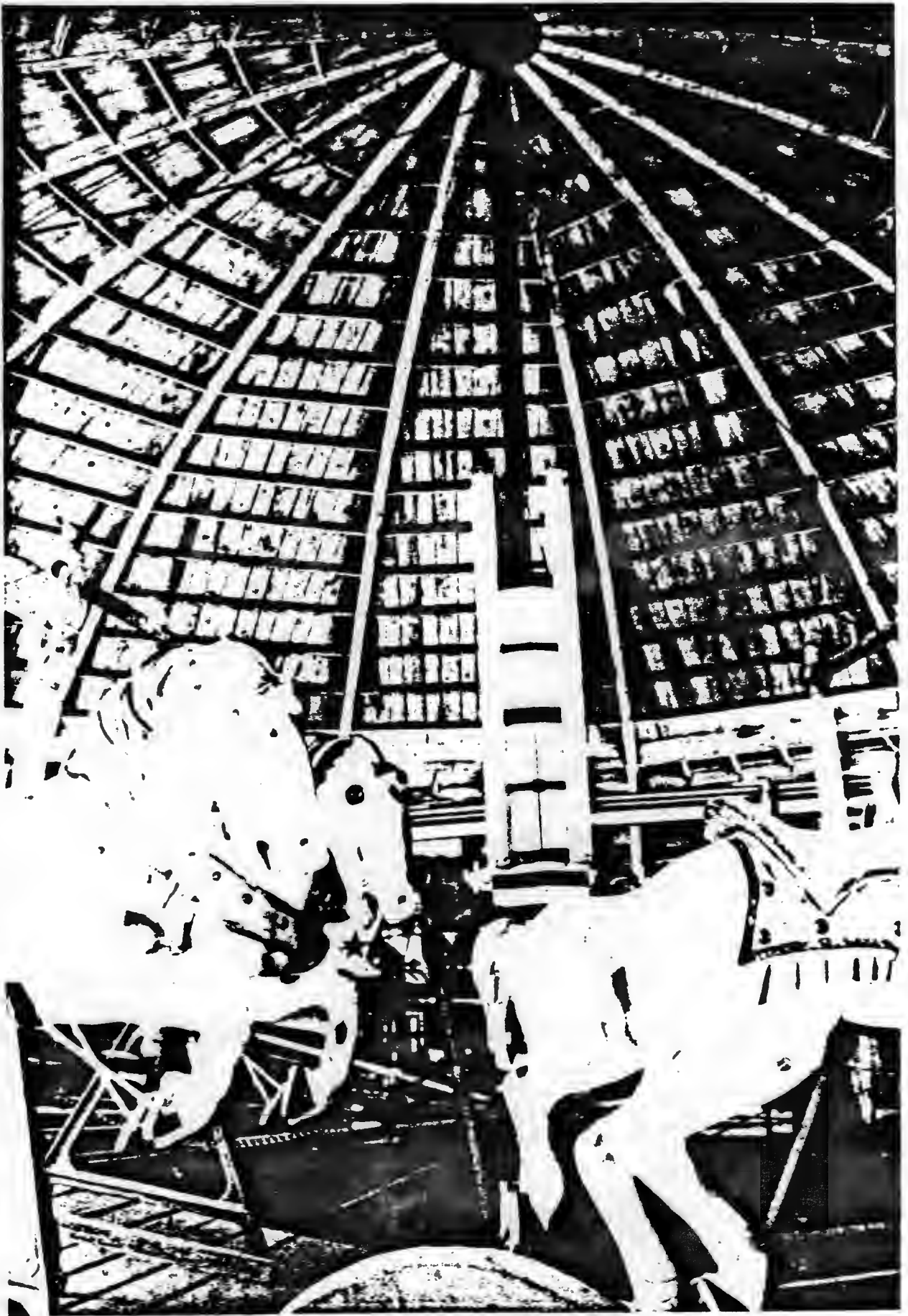
... LEFT IN USE TODAY
... ON THIS SPOT SINCE 1943.
... MAKE THE CIRCUIT INCLUDING THE
ARKANSAS STATE FAIRS.

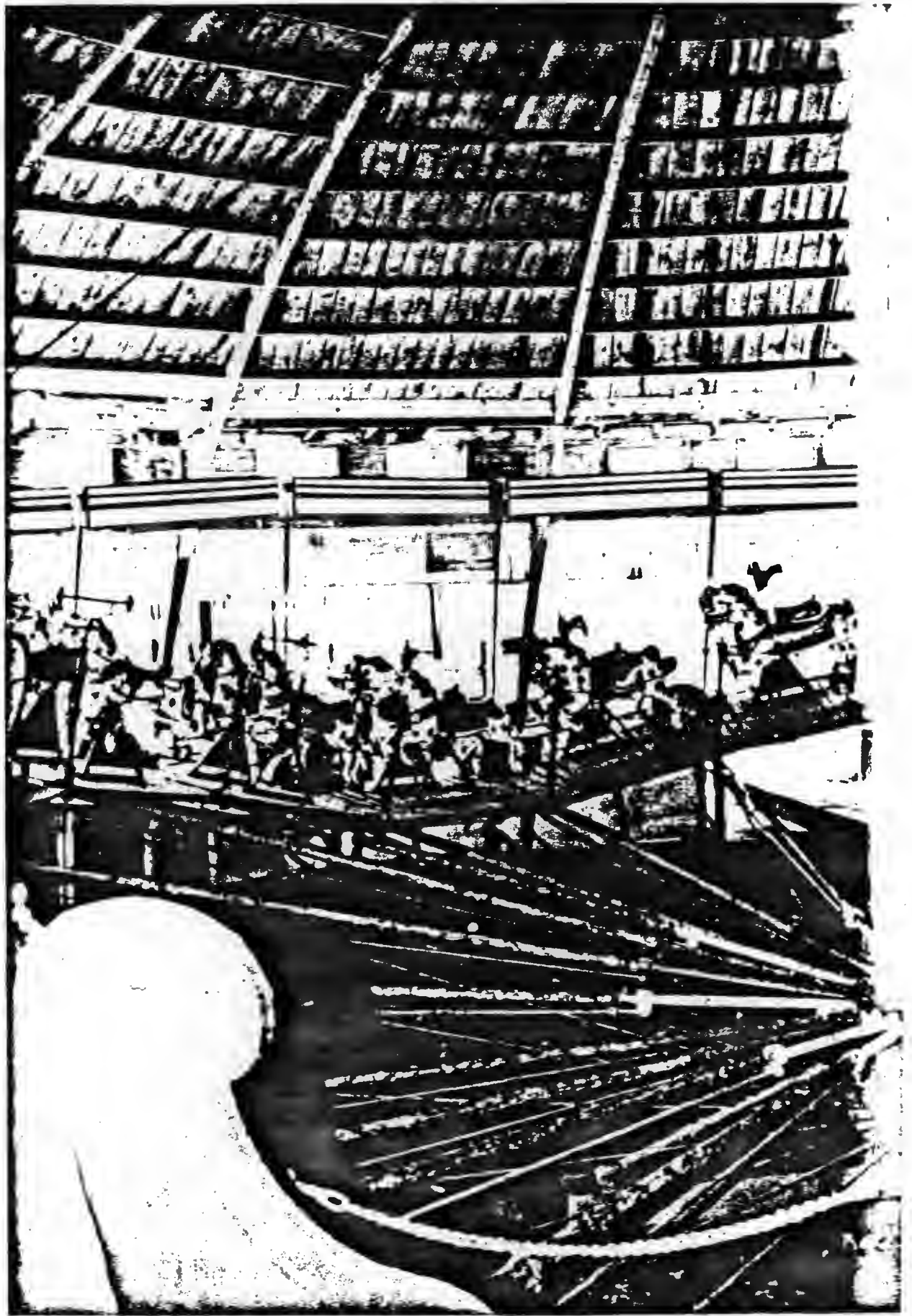














Little Rock, Arkansas
Pulaski County
15/561330/3845130
Little Rock Quadrangle
1:24000

METROPOLITAN
COMMISSION OF

