

NR Listed: 5-16-02

Pocahontas Post Office

Name of Property

Randolph County, Arkansas

County and State

NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

(Rev. 8-86)

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Pocahontas Post Office

Other Name/Site Number: RA0018

2. Location

Street & Number: 109 Van Bibber Street

Not for Publication: NA

City/Town: Pocahontas

Vicinity: NA

State: AR County: Randolph Code: 121 Zip Code: 72455

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Pocahontas Post Office  
Name of Property

Randolph County, Arkansas  
County and State

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing    Noncontributing

<u>  1  </u>	<u>  </u>	buildings
<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	sites
<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	structures
<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	objects
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:   0  

Name of related multiple property listing:   NA  

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**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**  
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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.    See continuation sheet.

*C. A. Matthews*                        4/02/02    
Signature of certifying official                      Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property   x   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 Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic: GOVERNMENT Sub: Post Office

Current : COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: Newspaper Office

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification:

Art Deco

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundation Concrete roof Asphalt  
walls Brick other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

SUMMARY:

The Pocahontas Post Office at 109 Van Bibber Street at Pocahontas in Randolph County is a one-story, brick-masonry structure built 1936-37 and designed in a restrained interpretation of the Art Deco style of architecture, and features a full basement. The structure is built on an essentially square plan with a small projecting loading dock in the rear. It has a flat roof and the entire structure is banded by a plain concrete cornice.

ELABORATION:

The Pocahontas Post Office is a one-story, brick-masonry structure designed in a restrained interpretation of the Art Deco style of architecture, and features a full basement. The structure is built on an essentially square plan with a small projecting loading dock in the rear. It has a flat roof and the entire structure is banded by a plain concrete cornice at the top and another concrete band just above ground level.

The front, or southeast, façade features, beginning from the southernmost corner and continuing to the northernmost, a set of three-over-three, double-hung windows set within a section of brick wall; another set of three-over-three, double-hung windows within a concrete pilaster; another vertical brick section; a set of aluminum double doors with an aluminum-framed transom; another vertical brick section; a second set of set of three-over-three, double-hung windows within a concrete pilaster; and a final set of three-over-three, double-hung windows within a section of brick wall. A broad set of stairs flanked by twin metal lamps lead to the sidewalk from the front doors. Deep wells on either side of the stairways provide light to the basement offices below. The westernmost pilaster is crowned by a stylized locomotive design, the area above the front doors is topped with a stylized airplane carving, and the easternmost pilaster features a stylized steamboat, the three providing an homage to some of the major modes of transportation of the day. It is the overall massing of this elevation, with its vertically oriented pilasters and brick segments, along with the stylized ornamental decorative elements within the concrete pilasters, that give the structure the minimal Art Deco feel that distinguished many of the United States post offices constructed during this period.

The northeast façade features five sets of three-over-three, double-hung windows, each separated by a vertical section of brick wall. The southernmost corner and northernmost ends of this elevation are flanked by stairs leading to doors providing access to the building's basement offices. This well area is fenestrated by five sets of double-hung windows and features a single-leaf door for entry to the basement area.

The rear, or northwest façade features, beginning from the east, a set sets of three-over-three, double-hung windows leading to a section of brick wall and the structure's brick chimney. The building then juts out slightly in a small projection fenestrated by two small one-over-one, double-hung windows. This projection gives access to a flat-roofed loading dock that was added to the structure ca. 1965; this dock features a concrete ramp on its westernmost

end. The projection is accessed on the northwest by a pair of double doors, each door featuring a single single-pane window. The projection then cuts back to the original façade with an area fenestrated by a single, one-over-one, double-hung window. The rear elevation continues westward with a brick wall fenestrated by two sets of three-over-three, double-hung windows.

The southwest elevation consists of a brick wall fenestrated by five separate sets of three-over-three, double-hung windows. A small well at the southernmost end of the elevation provides light to two subterranean window sets.

Significant interior features include the original wooden entryway and tile wainscoting, original message boards and postmaster's door and service desk, and an original wooden bench. The mailboxes have been removed, as has a mural that once surrounded the postmaster's door. Despite these alterations and the replacement of the original front door, the building still displays a high degree of physical integrity and retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

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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

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): NA

Areas of Significance: Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: 1936-1937

Significant Dates: 1936-1937

Significant Person(s): NA

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: F.L. Rice, Treasury Department Construction Engineer  
T. Jarvis Co., St. Louis, Builder

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

SUMMARY:

The Pocahontas Post Office is eligible for National Register recognition under Criterion C with local significance as the best example in Pocahontas and Randolph County of an Art Deco-style post office built during the Great Depression.

ELABORATION:

Randolph County, Arkansas, was formed by the legislature of Arkansas Territory on October 29, 1835, originally encompassing the area west of Cache River that now comprises Clay and Greene counties. It achieved its current configuration when the state General Assembly shaved off a twenty-five square mile portion of Lawrence County and added to Randolph on January 18, 1861. Two possible sites were selected as potential county seats, but boosters of Pocahontas held a free barbecue on the day of the 1836 election, which may or may not have influenced voters to choose Pocahontas as the seat of government. Not long afterward, the *Arkansas Gazette* reported that "a Post-Office has been established at Pocahontas, in Randolph County, in this Territory, and Thomas O. Man, appointed Postmaster."

One hundred years later, the Pocahontas Post Office was in need of a new home, having for the previous twenty years been located in the Spinnenwebber Building. Construction of the new post office under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration began in 1936 under the direction of F.L. Rice, a Treasury Department construction engineer. T. Jarvis and Company of St. Louis received the \$51,683.62 contract to build the new structure.

Construction apparently went smoothly as there was little mention of the project in local newspapers until May of 1937 when local boosters in the Pocahontas Chamber of Commerce began efforts through U.S. Sen. Joe T. Robinson's office to arrange for Postmaster General James E. Farley to attend the grand opening of the new structure. The *Pocahontas Star-Herald* gushed in the May 20, 1937, edition: "Arrangements for one of the largest celebrations Pocahontas has ever seen will likely be started at once, and people of this section should consider it a rare honor to have the distinguished cabinet member here for the opening of the new Federal building." Ultimately, Farley was unable to arrange his schedule to include a visit to Pocahontas.

Nonetheless, the people of Pocahontas were justly proud of their new post office when it opened for business on July 13, 1937, after a week of frenzied activity by postmaster Myrt Walrond and his staff. "It is constructed of red brick, practically fireproof, with interior tile and concrete. The modern lock-boxes are equipped with Yale locks," the *Star-Herald* reported. "The entire structure is built along the most modern lines, its safety, convenience and spaciousness assuring patrons of most efficient service at all times." The *Randolph County Democrat*, hailing the structure as "A Monument To Modern Architecture and Present Day Building," noted that "[I]t has been said by

several local citizens who are familiar with construction, that it is without doubt the most perfect and solidly erected building in this section of Arkansas.” Joe S. Decker, served by postmaster’s assistant Mrs. Mayme Haynes, was the first patron to buy a stamp in the new building.

As with other Arkansas post office buildings constructed during this period, the Pocahontas Post Office was selected to receive a mural through the Treasury Department’s Section of Painting and Sculpture. H. Louis Freund, who submitted a winning proposal to prepare the mural, visited Pocahontas on April 28, 1939, to look over the post office and gather historical information to use in creating a mural titled “Early Days of Pocahontas.” The finished work included depictions of life in Old Davidsonville around 1817, the old dam and mill at Birdell on the Eleven Point River, river traffic at Pocahontas, and scenes of downtown Pocahontas around 1900. The mural, badly deteriorated, was removed from the wall around the postmaster’s door years later and is now in storage at the new Pocahontas Post Office. This precludes the building from National Register listing as part of the **Arkansas Post Offices with Section Art** multiple-property submission. The 1937 building now serves as offices for the local newspaper.

The Pocahontas Post Office is eligible for National Register recognition under Criterion C with local significance as the best example in Pocahontas and Randolph County of an Art Deco-style post office built during the Great Depression. With its vertical massing and stylized transportation motifs above the windows on the front façade, the Pocahontas Post Office clearly demonstrates the simplified Art Deco design that was popular in U.S. Treasury Department design during the Great Depression.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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*The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeastern Arkansas.* (Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Company), 1889.

Early Steamboat & Telegraph History, 1819-1874. Microfilm, Arkansas History Commission.

*Arkansas Gazette*, September 10, 1939.

*Randolph County Democrat*, May 27, 1937; July 1, 1937; July 15, 1937.

*Pocahontas Star Herald*, May 13, 1937; May 20, 1937; July 15, 1937.

Web site at <http://www.uca.edu/divisions/academic/art/murals/Pages/Murals/Pocahontas/frame.htm>  
E-mail information from Dr. Gayle Seymour, University of Central Arkansas.

United States Postal Service, *History of Post Office Construction, 1900-1940*, July 1982.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses.* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf), 1996.

Pocahontas Post Office  
Name of Property

Randolph County, Arkansas  
County and State

Historic Significance Survey, Pocahontas, Arkansas 72455, Main Post Office, September 8, 1980. AHPP files.

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 682264 4014713</u>	B	_ _ _ _
C	_ _ _ _	D	_ _ _ _



Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point formed by the northwestern corner of Van Bibber and Everett Streets, proceed northerly along the edge of Everett Street for a distance of approximately 200 feet, thence proceed westerly along a perpendicular line for a distance of approximately 200 feet; thence proceed southerly along a perpendicular line for a distance of approximately 200 feet to the northern edge of Van Bibber Street; thence proceed easterly along said edge to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

This boundary contains all the property historically associated with this resource that retains its integrity.

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**11. Form Prepared By**  
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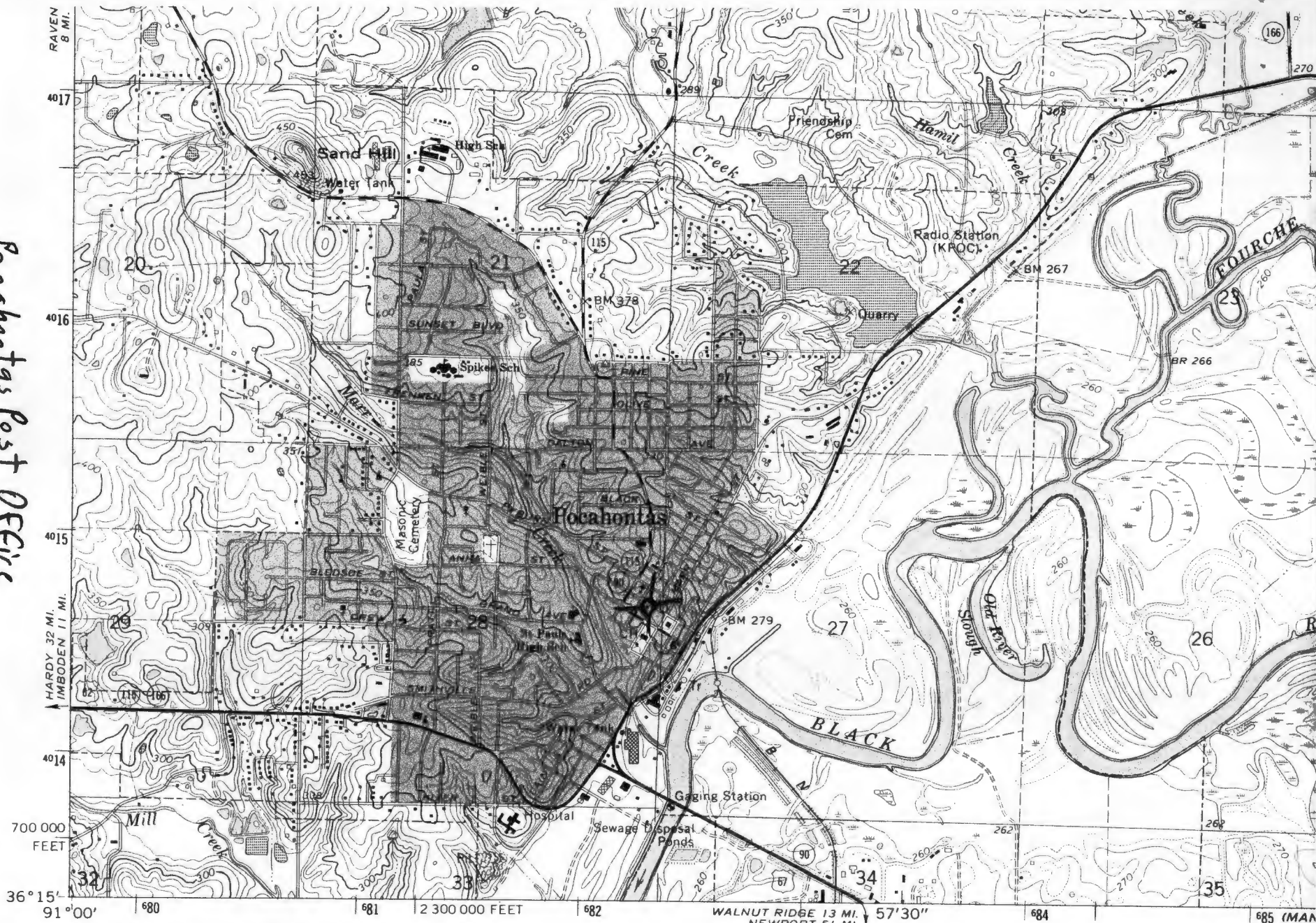
Name/Title: Mark Christ/Community Outreach Director

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 4-01-02

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

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

Pocahontas Post Office  
 Pocahontas, Randolph County, Arkansas  
 15/692264/4014714



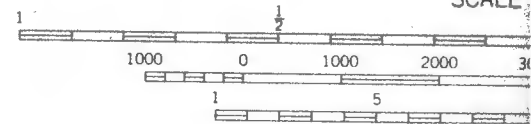
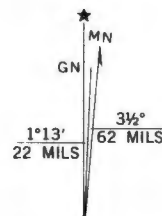
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Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1965 and planetable surveys 1966

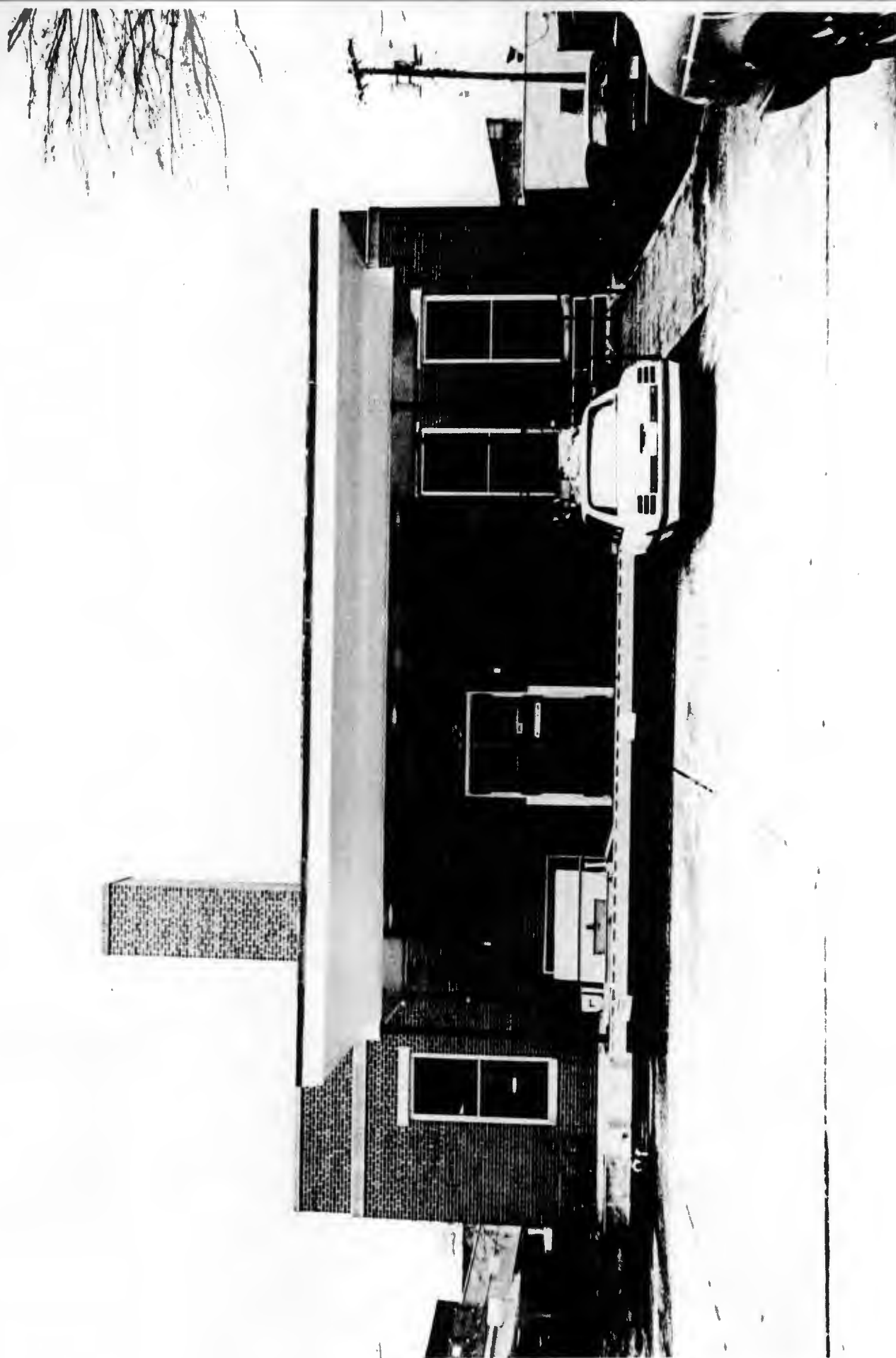
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Arkansas coordinate system, north zone  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
 zone 15, shown in blue



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 NATIONAL GEODETIC VE



Pocahontas Post Office  
Pocahontas, Randolph County, AR  
Amy Bennett  
January 2002  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View from southwest



Pocahontas Post Office

Pocahontas, Randolph County, AR

Amy Bennett

January 2002

Negative on file at AHPP

View from North





Parshant's Post Office  
Parshant's Randolph County AR  
Amy Bennett  
January 2002  
Negative on file at AAPP  
View from southeast





Pocahontas Post Office  
Pocahontas, Randolph County, AR  
Amy Bennett  
January 2002  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View from Northwest

WALK THE PLANK  
AS AFRICANS



Pocahontas Post Office  
Pocahontas, Randolph County, AR  
Amy Bennett  
January 2002  
Negative on file at AHPP  
Front facade detail

72455





Pocahontas Post Office  
Pocahontas, Randolph County, AR  
Ang Bennett  
January 2002  
Negative on file at AHPP  
Front facade detail

# POCCAHON



POCCAHON

Pocahontas Post Office  
Pocahontas, Randolph Co., AR  
Amy Bennett  
January 2002  
Negative on Fire at AHPP  
Front facade detail





Pocahontas Post Office

Pocahontas, Randolph Co, AR

Amy Bennett

January 2002

Negative on File at AHPP

~~Front facade shot~~

Interior detail