

NR LISTED

AUG 22 1996

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

AHPP

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Randolph County Courthouse

other name/site number: RA0039

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2. Location

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street & number: Southwest corner of intersection of Broadway and North
Marr Streets

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Pocahontas

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Randolph code: AR 121 zip code: 72455

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Public-local

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u>4</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	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
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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.

Cathryn A. Slater _____ 6-30-96
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. _____ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
5. National Park Service Certification
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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

Randolph County Courthouse
Name of Property

Randolph County, AR
County and State

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6. Function or Use

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Historic: GOVERNMENT Sub: Courthouse

Current: GOVERNMENT Sub: Courthouse

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

Art Deco

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation Concrete roof Asphalt
walls Brick/concrete other Brick chimney

Describe present and historic physical appearance. ___ See continuation sheet.

Summary

The Randolph County Courthouse, located southwest of the square in Pocahontas, Arkansas, was built as a WPA project in 1940 in the Art Deco style. It is constructed of buff brick, with gray concrete pillars, facade, and ornamentation. The building's plan is rectangular with three two-story projections. Sparse ornamentation and a flat roof are other characteristics of the exterior which present an austere and imposing appearance, situated in a depression within one city block. The surrounding streets are Broadway on the north side, Rice on the south, West Marr on the east, and Van Bibber on the west. Interior features include tiled floors, marble stairways, and wooden door moldings. The courtroom itself is located on the second floor with the judge's bench on the west (short) wall. Being in its essentially unchanged state, the courthouse, inside and out, is in very good condition despite the constant use characteristic of a public building.

Elaboration

The courthouse is situated in a natural depression, and the property occupies

one city block. In the corners of the square are two on-site monuments: a war memorial honoring county veterans in the northeast corner, and in the northwest corner, a memorial to a sergeant James Ray Hand who was shot in the line of duty for the Pocahontas Police Department. Concrete steps lead down to a short walkway lined with lampposts and benches from Broadway Street. In the center of the walkway there is a flagpole, and a puce-colored meteor rests on the east side of the walkway (all four of these objects are non-contributing). A rock wall surrounds the steps which lead to the gray concrete portico at the end of the walkway. The building faces a large parking lot to the south.

The courthouse was built in 1940 as a WPA project; the main portion of the building is constructed of buff brick, but the facade, pillars and ornamentation are of concrete. On the northern or front elevation, the portico consists of four square pillars, the small capitals of which are carved in stylized, shallow vegetal detailing loosely reminiscent of the Corinthian style. Along the edging of the flat roof is a simple, molded concrete design. On the facade, "Randolph County Courthouse" is inscribed on the upper portion. An Art Deco lamp made of cloudy white glass and decorated with four metal eagles hangs from the underside of the portico. The front entrance is a steel and glass double door with the state seal inset directly above it. To the left of the door hangs a plaque stating the date of construction, the advisory board at the time of construction, and the contractors. A second plaque to the right of the door includes the names of the judge, commissioners, and architect. Five windows line the back wall of the portico and two grace either side, facing inward.

The eastern elevation is anchored by a central, double-leaf entrance, and flanked by a pair of recessed window bays that contain windows on each of the two storys. Another single window is placed directly above the entrance. The western elevation is fenestrated with the two recessed window bays.

The central section of the southern elevation -- one story taller than the front due to the drop in grade -- is symmetrically fenestrated with one row of eight two-story window bays placed below an upper level containing five window bays. The eastern wing contains a single two-story window bay placed above a single basement window, while the western wing is dominated by the brick exterior chimney that separates the wing into two window bays to the east and a single window bay at the wing's western end.

Interior features include tiled floors, marble stairways, and wooden door moldings. Three-tiered moldings line the hallway walls and door jambs are set back from the walls in a concave fashion.

Alterations to the building include new doors in the main entrance and in interior office entries, and new wood tables in the courtroom.

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8. Statement of Significance
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certifying official has considered the significance of this property in

Randolph County Courthouse
Name of Property

Randolph County, AR
County and State

Relation to other properties: Locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1940

Significant Dates: 1940

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Stern, Eugene John

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

Summary Criterion C, local significance

The Randolph County Courthouse is a significant contribution to the representations of architectural styles in the community and is being nominated under Criterion C. Built as a WPA project, the buff brick and concrete structure reflects the Art Deco style.

Elaboration

Randolph County is located in the Northeastern corner of Arkansas, surrounded by Lawrence, Sharp, and Clay counties to the South, West, and East, respectively, with the Missouri State line to the North. The county was founded in 29 October 1835 by an Arkansas Territory legislative act. On 18 January 1861, part of the neighboring Lawrence County was added to Randolph. Pochontas was chosen as the county seat in the election which took place in 1836.

The owners of the area, then called Bettis Bluff, Thomas S. Drew and R. S. Bettis, donated some land to the county, this later became the public square on which the first and second courthouses were built. Drew was Bettis' son-in-law and later served as a governor of Arkansas.

The original county courthouse cost \$2,400 and was built by Thomas Marr between 1837 and 1839 (soon after the county was organized). Because of structural weakness, the first courthouse, which was brick, two stories, and measured forty feet by forty feet, fell in 1870 and a new courthouse was built on the same site.

After the first building was declared unsafe, the St. Charles Hotel was used as a courthouse until the second courthouse was finished in 1875. Confusions in regard to the contract for the second building led to many difficulties between the county and the contractor, John A. McKay, which resulted in a lawsuit (later settled by compromise). The second courthouse is still standing and is being used as the town's Chamber of Commerce. This courthouse was used until the citizens of Randolph county voted in favor of building a new courthouse in 1940.

After the election in 1940, Judge Joe S. Decker appointed an advisory board which included J.B. Weaver, Oscar Prince, Lantie Martin, A.J. Cooper, R.W. Sallee, George Promberger, Sr., F.W. Cox, and Harry Hite. Decker also appointed as building commissioners Ben A. Brown, G.W. Millon, Joe Snodgrass, Dee Mock, and G.H. Brooks all of whom were former county judges. The building contractor was E.V. Bird Construction Company and Eugene John Stern was the Architect.

A new jail was also built along with the new courthouse under a different contractor, Henry Dust. The jail is not presently remaining on the property. Local residents remember that the jail was located on a knoll sloping to a beautiful sunken garden with willow trees to the South of the courthouse.

The two city blocks that the property occupies had been an undeveloped thicket known as the "frog pond" to local residents. Some older residents believe there to have been an old blacksmith's shed and a grist-mill in the southeast corner of the property. This area has since been cement-filled and used as a parking lot.

Construction of the new courthouse began in February of 1940, was completed within the year, and dedicated on 28 December 1940. According to the Pocahontas Star Herald, a local newspaper, Deibert Roberts, 32, and Lena V. Dunkin, 18, were the first couple to be married in the courthouse. Construction of the courthouse, which cost approximately \$130,000 was financed by \$85,901.40 from a \$78,000 bond issue and a \$49,250 grant from the WPA.

The Randolph County Courthouse is a significant contribution to the catalog of national architectural styles represented in this northeast Arkansas community and is being nominated under Criterion C. Built as a WPA project, the buff brick and concrete structure reflects the Art Deco style in overall

assing and composition, as well as through its restrained employment of the typical, Classically-inspired ornamentation. It has been described as "one of the finest and most substantial county courthouses in the state" (Dalton, 61), and remains one of the most intact to this day.

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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Blueprints supplied by Randolph County Clerk's Office.

Dalton, Lawrence, The History of Randolph County, Little Rock Democrat Printing & Lithographing Company 1946.

Goodspeed Bibliographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeastern Arkansas, The. Chicago, Nashville, and St. Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1889.

Pocahontas Star Herald (Pocahontas), Feb. 1940 - Jan 1941.

Oral Historical Accounts by local residents.

Other information supplied by Randolph County Judge's Office.

— See continuation sheet.

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:

- X 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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Acreeage of Property: Approximately two

Randolph County Courthouse
Name of Property

Randolph County, AR
County and State

TM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A 15 682270 4014590 B 15 _____
C 15 _____ D 15 _____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ____ See continuation sheet.

The lot bounded on the north by Broadway, on the east by N. Marr Street, on the south by Rice Street, and on the west by Van Bibber Street.

Boundary Justification: ____ See continuation sheet.

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

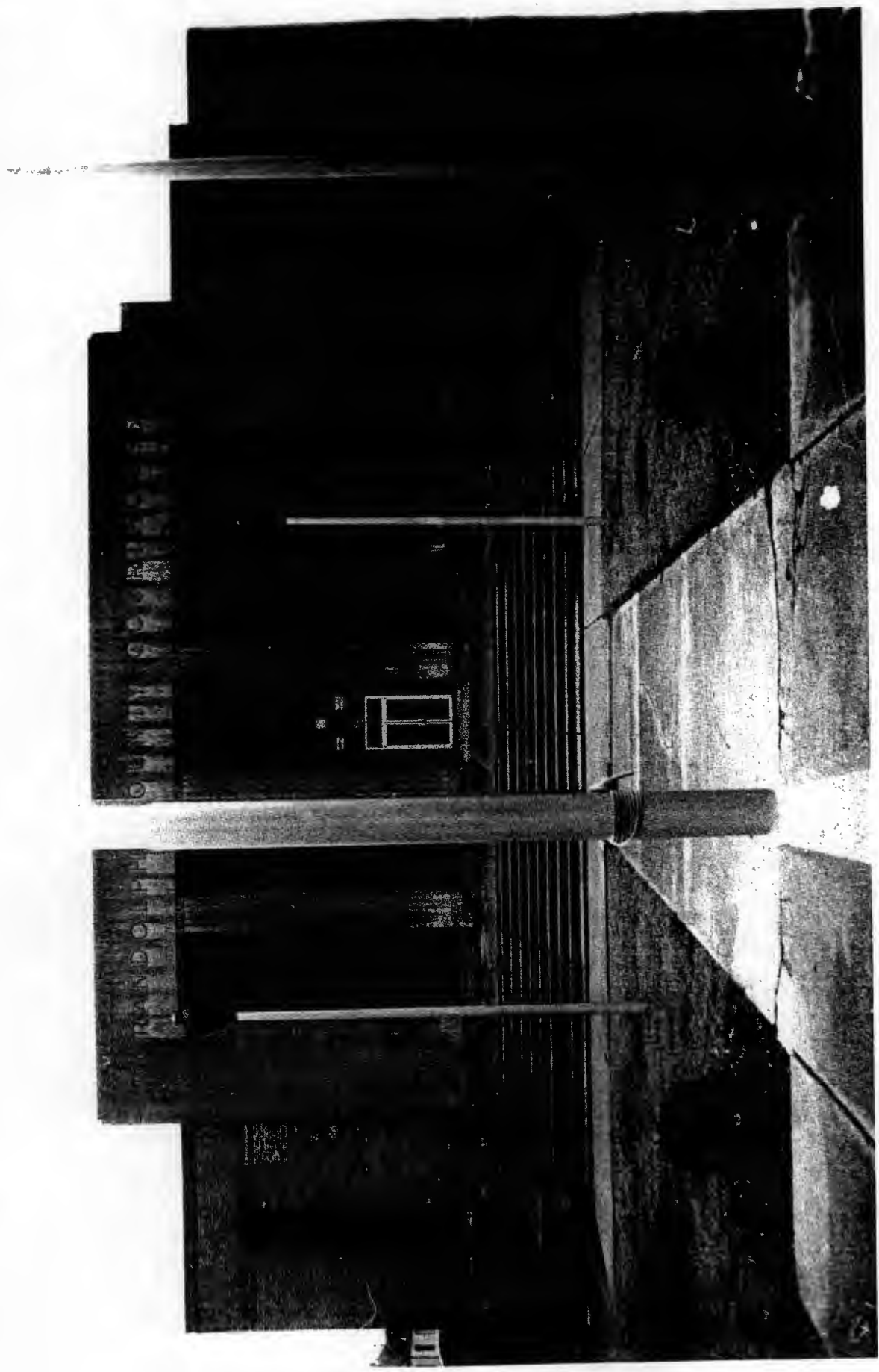
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11. Form Prepared By
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Name/Title: Kim LeBlanc and Anna Miller, AHPP Interns/AHPP Staff

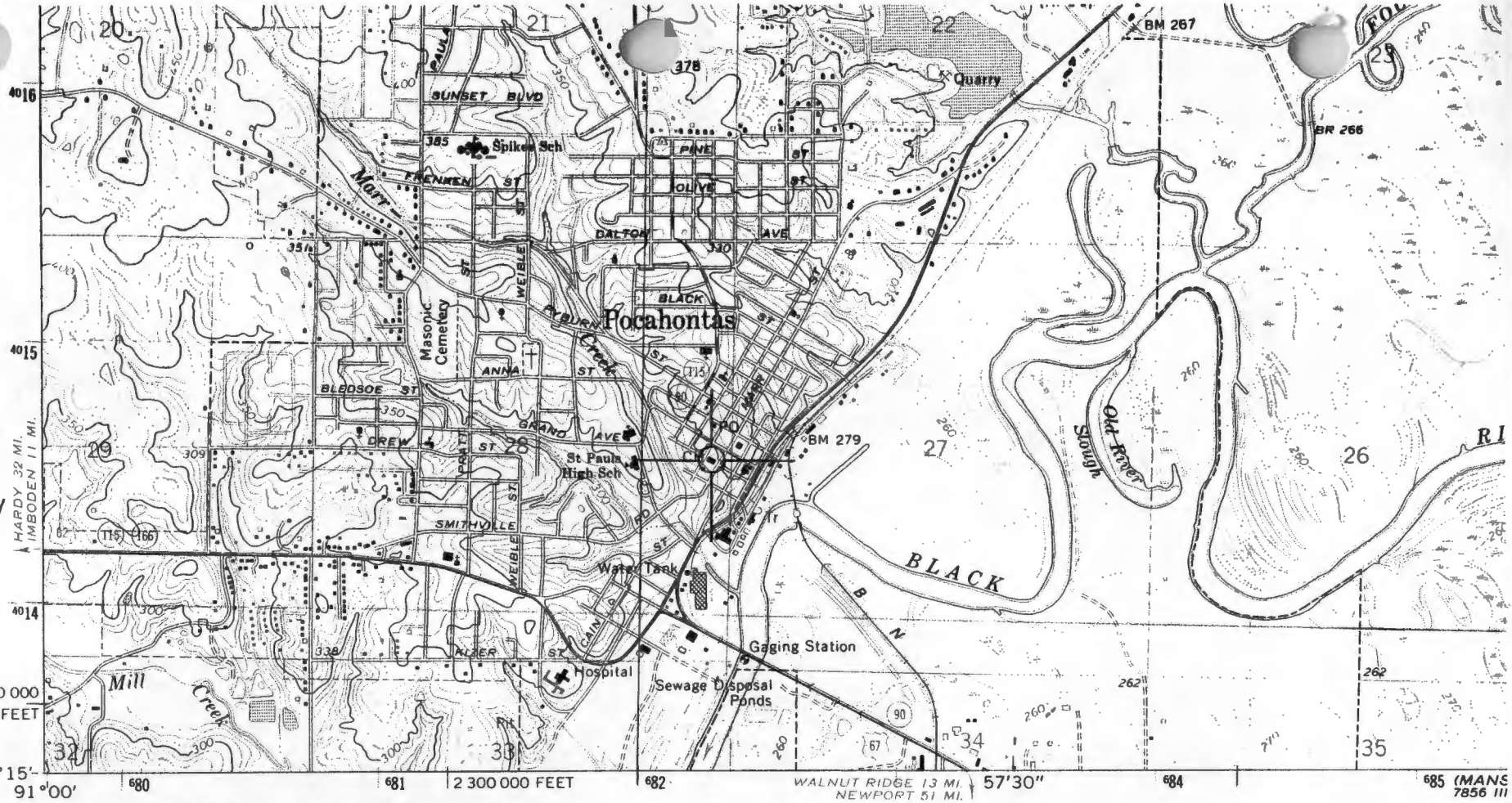
Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 06/27/96

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

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

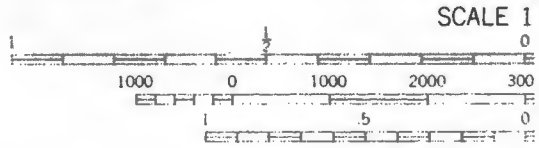
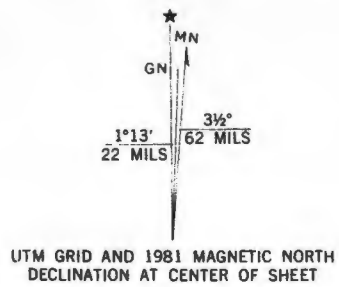


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(NO LAND)
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Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
 Control by USGS and USC&GS
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
 photographs taken 1965 and planetable surveys 1966
 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
 Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown
 To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
 move the projection lines 4 meters south and
 11 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
 Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken
 1980. Map edited 1981. This information not field checked
 Purple tint indicates extension of urban area



CONTOUR INTERRUPTED
 DOTTED LINES REPRESENT
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER,
 AND ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS

