

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

LISTED
6-24-88

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 Rucker House
other names/site number Caretaker's House

2. Location

street & number N/A not for publication
city, town Bauxite vicinity
state Arkansas code 05 county Saline code 123 zip code 72011

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u> </u>	<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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 St. Bonifant 5-11-88
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.
N/A
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)

Domestic - Single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic - Single dwelling

Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

other: vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY

The Rucker House, a vernacular style building in Bauxite, Saline Co., Arkansas, is representative of the early settlement of this company town. One of only two structures remaining from Bauxite's early history, the Rucker House was built in 1903 by employees of the Pittsburgh Reduction Company (now Alcoa) for the plant superintendent, W. A. Rucker. Rucker lived in the house until 1938.

Several alterations were made in the house during the time it was occupied by Rucker, most notably a shed addition to the projecting rear wing which forms an "L" with the main block of the original house. An enclosed screen porch was added to the west side of this rear addition in 1932. The front and side elevations remain intact except for the double-hung windows which replace the original casement windows of the second floor.

ELABORATION

The original house consists of a main, two-story block on an E-W axis, with a N-S cross wing on the western end, and a N-S wing at the eastern end, extending to the rear (north).

The main facade faces south, with the gabled end of the cross wing at the west end. A screened porch runs from the side of this projection to the eastern end of the house, covering the remaining 3/4 of the south facade on the lower level. This porch features 5 simple posts supporting a low shed roof. The posts divide the porch into 4 unequal bays, with the entry located in the second bay from the west end. The porch is enclosed by walls with horizontal board siding to a height of about 2 feet.

The gabled western end of the south facade features a pair of centered, four-over-four double hung windows. The front door is located directly to the east of this wing, on the main, two-story block of the house. The door features a large stationary window, with long, narrow, stationary windows flanking the door on either side. A six-light stationary transom is located directly above the door and flanking windows. A six-over-six double hung window with a six-light stationary transom is located to the east of the door. At the extreme eastern end of the facade is a pair of double hung, six-over-six windows, each with a stationary six-light transom above.

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The second-story windows of the south facade look out over the porch roof. There are five of these windows; they are equally sized and equally spaced. A historic photograph of the house (taken in 1934) shows that these windows were originally eight-light double casement windows. The windows now in use are one-over-one double hung windows.

The east elevation features a gable-over-gable configuration at the southern end, with the second-story gable set back from that of the first story. The first story gable intersects with the N-S ridge of the roof for this wing of the building. Centered in the southern gabled end of the elevation is a six-over-six double-hung window. Two pairs of identical windows are located in the central portion, with another identical, single window located at the northern end of the east elevation.

The northern elevation of the building largely consists of later additions to the original house. The gable ends of the east and west sides of the elevation are original. A shed addition was sited at the western edge of the east wing gable end (this is the wing that extends from the east rear of the building to the north); it is identifiable due to the lower pitch of its roof. Centered in the gable end of the original eastern wing is a single six-over-six double hung window. To the west of this window is a wooden door, located in the shed addition. West of the door there is an exterior brick chimney, which extends to approximately eight feet above the roof. This chimney is flanked by two six-over-six double hung windows. The chimney provides further evidence of being a later addition: it is located on the exterior, and lacks the brick barrel top common to the other three chimneys.

West of the addition, on the north facade, is another shed addition, built in 1932. This addition forms a back screen porch, and its later date is supported by the pitch of its roof, (higher than that of the previous addition) and the greater width of its horizontal board siding. There is a door opening on the eastern end of the porch addition, and a window opening on the western end. On the far western end of the north elevation is the gable end of an original wing of the building, with a centered, six-over-six double hung window.

The second story of the north facade features a projecting portion in the center (probably an addition) with two one-over-one double hung windows. These windows are probably not original--the originals were most likely similar to the original second-floor casement windows of the south elevation.

The west elevation features the porch addition at the north end, and an original wing on the south end. The porch has two large window openings at its north end, with a door and smaller window opening at the south end. The west facade

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of the original wing has a pair of small, two-over-two double hung windows in the north end, with a pair of larger, four-over-four double hung windows in the south end. The roof ridge of this wing intersects with the gable end of the main wing of the house.

The exterior of the original house is clad in narrow, horizontal board siding. The roof is gabled and clad in composition shingles, and rafters are exposed at the roof edges. Gable ends of the original house feature gable vents. The foundation is of brick and is continuous. There are four brick chimneys; three are original. Original chimneys are all interior and are located as follows: at the intersection of the main block and west cross-wing; where the rear, east wing meets the main block; and on the northern roof slope, approximately three feet from the north exterior wall, in the central portion of the main block. Additionally, there are two interior metal chimneys located on the east roof slope, about five feet from the east exterior wall, in the center of the rear, east wing.

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Exploration/settlement

Period of Significance

1905 - 1938

Significant Dates

1905

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Pittsburgh Reduction Company

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

SUMMARY

The Rucker House is significant as the only intact historic resource remaining from the settlement era of the company town Bauxite, established by the Pittsburgh Reduction Company (now Alcoa) in 1903. The Rucker House is eligible under Criterion A, because it was constructed by company employees for the plant supervisor, W. A. Rucker, and therefore is representative of the company's role in founding the town.

The Rucker House predates most of the worker housing and community buildings which were eventually constructed by the company in the town, so it originally had a rather isolated setting. Today, less than a dozen buildings remain from Bauxite's heyday of the 1940's and '50's, when the town was made up of over 500 buildings. The setting of the house today more closely resembles the pre-1910 setting when the town was founded than the 1940's - '50's setting when the town reached its population peak.

ELABORATION

The mineral ore now known as bauxite was discovered in Saline County in 1891. The General Bauxite Company, one of many interests which would mine the land, mined the first ore in 1896. In 1897 General Bauxite built a mill near the site of the present town of Bauxite, and constructed a tram line from the mill to a mine about one and one-half miles southeast of Bauxite.

John R. Gibbons, a representative of the Pittsburgh Reduction Company, was sent from Georgia to Saline County in 1899 to investigate the mining possibilities and to obtain options on bauxite lands. Around the same time, 1900, the Norton Company which used bauxite in making abrasives, purchased its first load of ore from the General Bauxite Company, and in 1901 the Rock Island Railroad extended its operations to Bauxite, making the transportation of the ore easier and more economical.

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General Bauxite was purchased by the Pittsburgh Reduction Company in 1905, and the Norton Company was purchased by the same in 1909. By this time Pittsburgh Reduction was known as Alcoa, having changed the company name in 1907. Alcoa was to be the main mining concern throughout the history of Bauxite, and was responsible for founding the town.

In 1903, the Pittsburgh Reduction Company (Alcoa) built an ore-drying plant near the present town site. Completion of the plant marked the beginning of the town of Bauxite. In 1903, worker housing began to be built on company-owned land with schools, churches, stores, and medical facilities being built shortly thereafter. The need for the town was evident. Roads were poor, housing was hard to find, and transportation to the area was virtually non-existent. Benton, the closest town, had a population of less than 1,500 people, and Little Rock was 22 miles to the north. At the time the town was founded, the company had 400 employees in the Bauxite area, with another 100 added by 1906. This was equal to the number employed by all of the other industries in Saline County combined.

The company's interest in providing adequate housing, education, and services did not end with the initial construction of the town. Bauxite is somewhat unique in that its residents benefited from technological advances and improvements as the industry developed. As the mining operations grew in scope, more houses and schools were built to support the growing population of the town. Introduction of modern conveniences kept the town at standard levels of progress for other, non-company, towns.

Bauxite's fortunes, linked inextricably to the aluminum industry, rose and fell with demand for aluminum and current market prices. The earliest of these fluctuations occurred in 1907, when a world-wide financial panic caused operations at Bauxite to temporarily cease. Many of the company employees remained in the town, and a ready crew was put back to work in September of 1908. By 1912 a large expansion of operations was underway in Bauxite. Shipments increased from five to forty cars per day.

The onset of World War I resulted in a further increase in mining in Bauxite. The war not only exerted a greater demand for aluminum; it also focused attention on research into the properties and applications of the material. This was important in that the number of practical applications of the material was greatly increased. Also, manufacturers compelled to use aluminum during the war had become familiar with the material and continued to use it in their peacetime products. Two new companies came into the town during this time. The Globe Bauxite Company and the National Bauxite Company had little significant impact on the town, as they ceased operation when the demand for bauxite declined.

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While no definite number for the increase in population during World War I is available, some accounts give a rough idea. One source states that "the number of people employed in 1917 was greater than in any other year to 1943." For comparison, the following account reflects employment figures in 1943: "The Republic Mining and Manufacturing Company increased their employment from 450 to 2,400 in 1943."

More housing was needed for the increasing numbers of employees. New settlements grew in the Bauxite town-area: Alexander Town, Crumbia Town, Alabama Town, Church Row, Caseyville, String Town, Peaceful Valley, Battle Row, Italy, Italy Farm, Mexico, Norton Town, Adams Hill, Swamp Poodle, and Africa.

Three of the larger settlements, Mexico, Italy, and Africa, deserve further mention. These settlements consisted of housing for workers and families of those respective nationalities and ethnic groups. In each of these communities, two families lived in each two-bedroom house. The Mexicans had their own page in the company-owned Bauxite News, written in Spanish. In 1920 the Mexico settlement had a minimum of 170 families, with at least 243 people. Italy was the smallest of the three settlements. The immigrants were good workers, but the language barrier proved to be problematic. The Negro workers and families lived in the Africa settlement. In December of 1920 there were 53 families and 140 single men living in the Africa settlement. Judging by the representative employment figures given earlier, the minority groups probably composed at least 10% of the total population of the town during this period.

By 1922 the company had 500 buildings in Bauxite and the small settlements mentioned previously. In addition to building new houses, the company had built a number of new community buildings and recreational facilities.

High school education in the town began in 1911 when the company built the brick school. The company maintained the building and paid the insurance premiums on it until the district could carry the cost in the mid-1940's. In addition, the company built four additional schoolrooms in Alabama Town in 1918, and paid for enlarging the brick school in 1920.

The company hospital was considered the best in the county and one of the finest in the state during the war years. The hospital provided for surgical cases as well as the injured or ill patient. Hospitalization was provided for employees who paid a minimal sum to the hospital fund each month. There was no charge for the use of medical facilities during periods of unemployment.

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Numerous recreational facilities were constructed for the workers in the first 25 years after settlement. As early as 1907 two tennis courts had been built. Other facilities included ball fields, a golf course, lakes for swimming and boating, and a theater, built in 1918. The company also provided funds for the support of a revolver club, a tennis club, and a boxing club. In 1926 the company constructed a community center, which had a basketball court, a kitchen, a lodge hall, a library, and meeting rooms for the Boy's Club and Girl Scouts.

Production in the Arkansas mines slowed considerably in the mid-1920's, due to increases in imported bauxite. Employment in the town dropped to about 400. Mining operations stabilized in the late 1920's, only to slow again at the onset of the Great Depression.

The company aided its unemployed workers during the 1930's in a number of ways. A company farm produced vegetables which were given free to employees. Rents on company-owned houses, already low, were drastically reduced and in some cases forgiven entirely until the employee was able to increase his earnings. Water was furnished free, and sometimes electricity was provided at no charge as well. Additionally, the company assisted the townspeople by providing food for school lunches.

Employment increased in the mid-1930's, as the company, anxious to retain its work force, began to stockpile ore. Although the increased production was intended primarily to keep the employees working, the stockpiling operation proved valuable as a source of ready ore in the early part of World War II. The industry made a remarkable recovery from the Depression, with production in 1937 reaching a level 28% higher than the previous peak year of 1930.

The town itself continued to develop during this period. The most notable sign of progress was the completion of a new school building in 1937. The structure cost approximately \$65,000., provided by a PWA loan. C. L. Rucker (son of W. A. Rucker) was school board chairman at this time and was instrumental in securing the funds for the new building.

Although the World War II era falls outside of the 50+ years required for establishing National Register significance, Bauxite's role in the war effort provides an interesting footnote to the town's history. The Arkansas mines became very important during this time, as supply lines to the South American bauxite deposits were interrupted by German submarines. Mining operations and population reached their peak during the war, as the population of the town grew to 7,000 to support the greater demand on the mines. The company's foresight in stockpiling ore was important to the early war effort, and the Arkansas mines continued to supply a crucial resource throughout the war years.

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W. A. Rucker served as assistant plant supervisor and liason between workers and the company until at least 1920, and probably longer. He continued to live in the house until 1938, through the entire period of significance. Additions were made to the house in the 1920's or 1930's, during the period of significance and while Rucker was living in the house, so they are integral to the period of significance.

The Rucker House is being nominated as an example of community planning and development. The only pre-1920 structure remaining in Bauxite, it was built c. 1905 by Alcoa employees for plant supervisor W. A. Rucker and represents the company's role in settling and developing the town.

The house itself is a two-story vernacular style building, lacking any traces of high-style influence. Stylistically it is very similar to the small, one-story workers' houses which once surrounded it. The original town is now almost completely gone; out of the over 500 buildings which once made up the town, there are only about 10 surviving. These include the 1926 community center (which has been so greatly altered that it has lost its integrity), the 1937 school building, and several company houses built after 1940. Therefore, the Rucker House is the only structure remaining which represents the founding of the town by Alcoa, and is one of very few buildings remaining from the entire history of the town.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Hogue, Etta Walker, 'A Brief Economic History of Saline County', unpublished research paper, Arkansas State Teachers College, Conway, Arkansas, 1959, p.13
2. Bachus, Gordon, "Background and Early History of a Company Town: Bauxite, Arkansas", Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Arkansas Historical Association, Winter, 1968, Volume XXVII, Number 4, pp. 330-357
3. Lewellan, J.S., Manual for the Workers Conference Director, Pittsburgh, Aluminum Company of America, 1949

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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

Acreage of property Between 1 and 1.5 acres

JTM References

A 1,5 54,49,4,0 3,82,36,9,0
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

From the intersection of State Highway #183 and Gibbons Road, proceed 1300 feet south on Gibbons Road to the southeast corner of the property and the point of beginning. Thence proceed 230 feet north, thence proceed 200 feet west, thence proceed 230 feet south, and thence proceed 200 feet east to the point of beginning. **This encloses the nominated property**

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

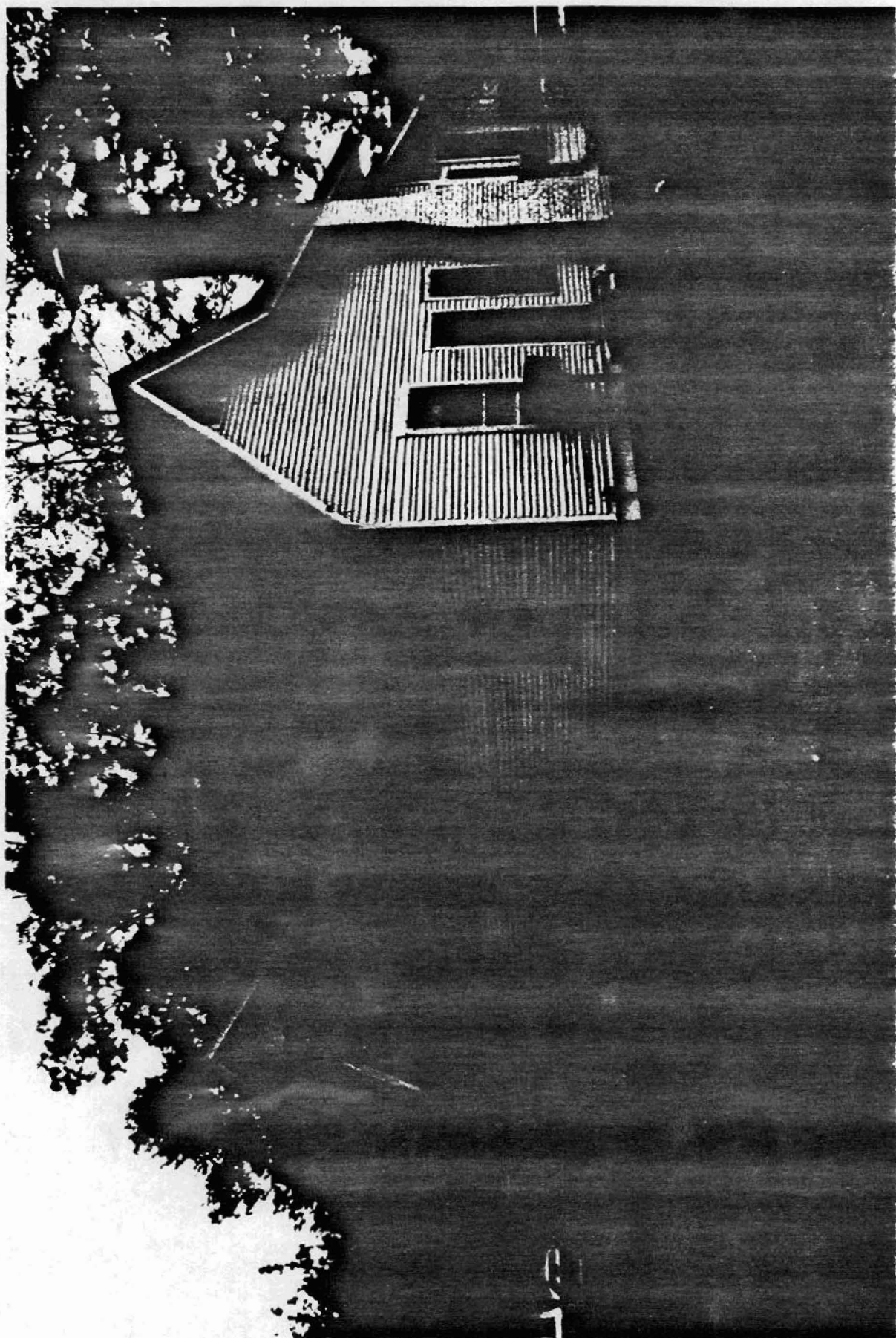
The boundary includes the house and yard that has been historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

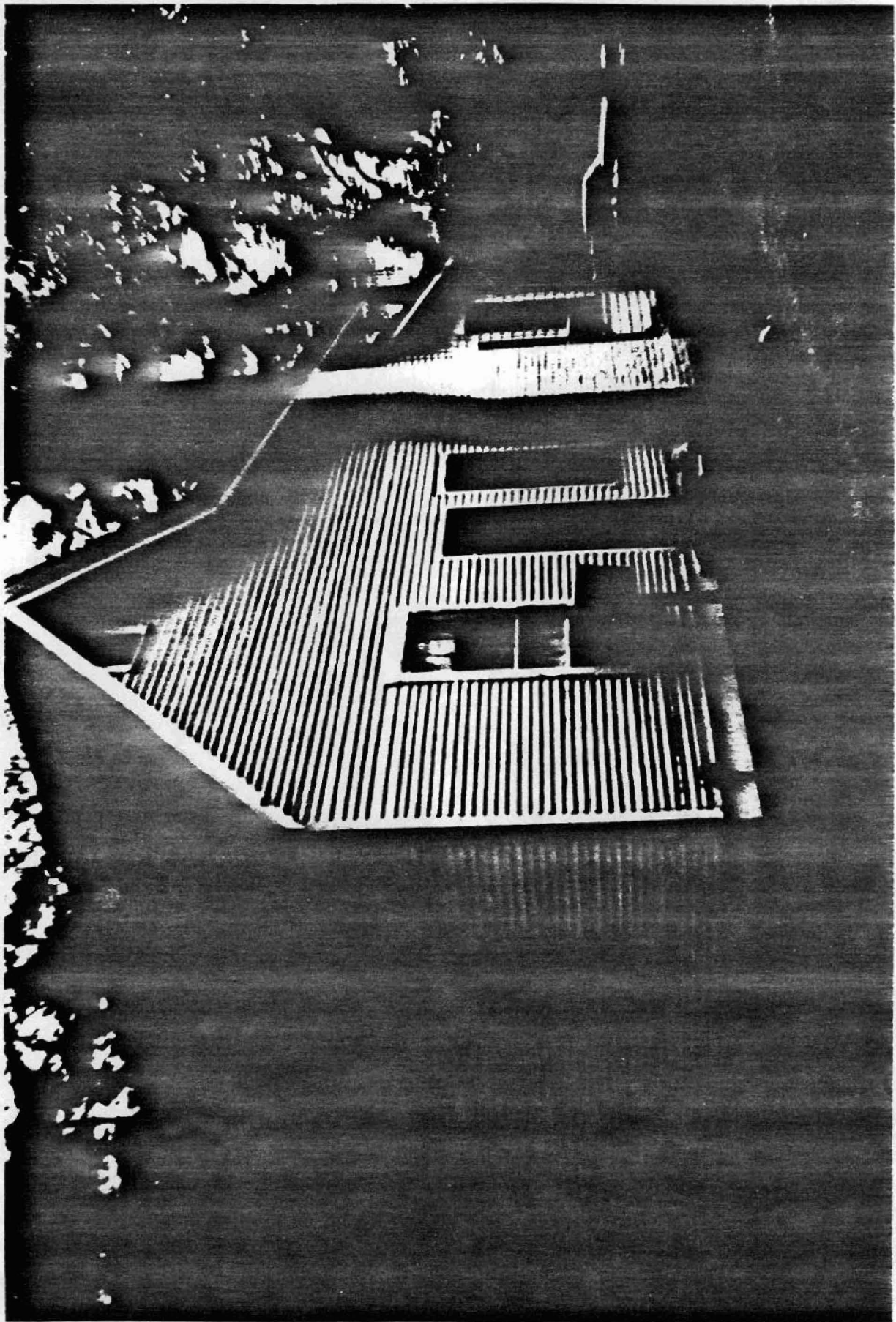
Name/title Jennifer Polk
 Organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 3/10/88
 Street & number 225 E. Markham, Suite 200 telephone (501) - 371-2763
 City or town Little Rock, state AR zip code 72201



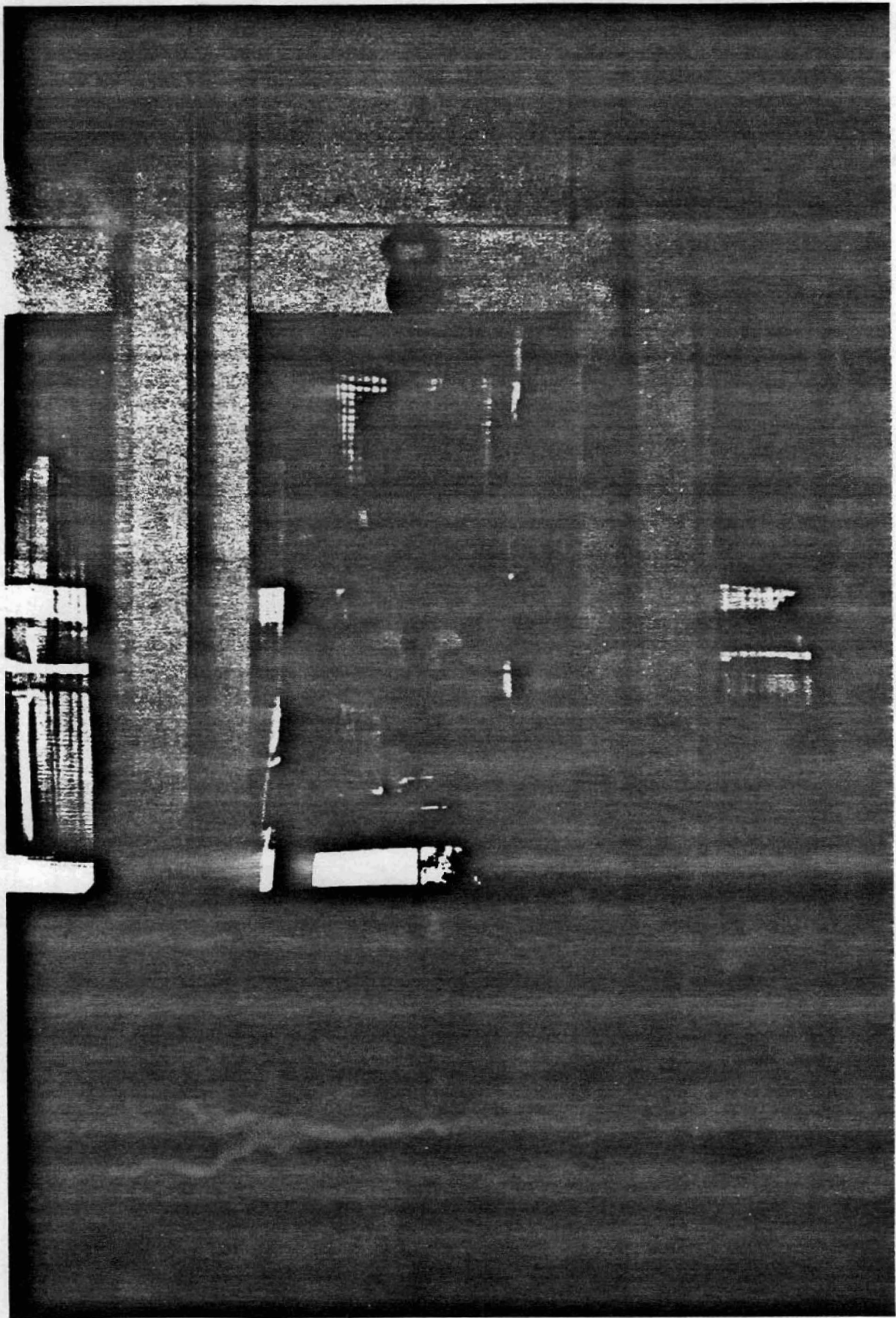


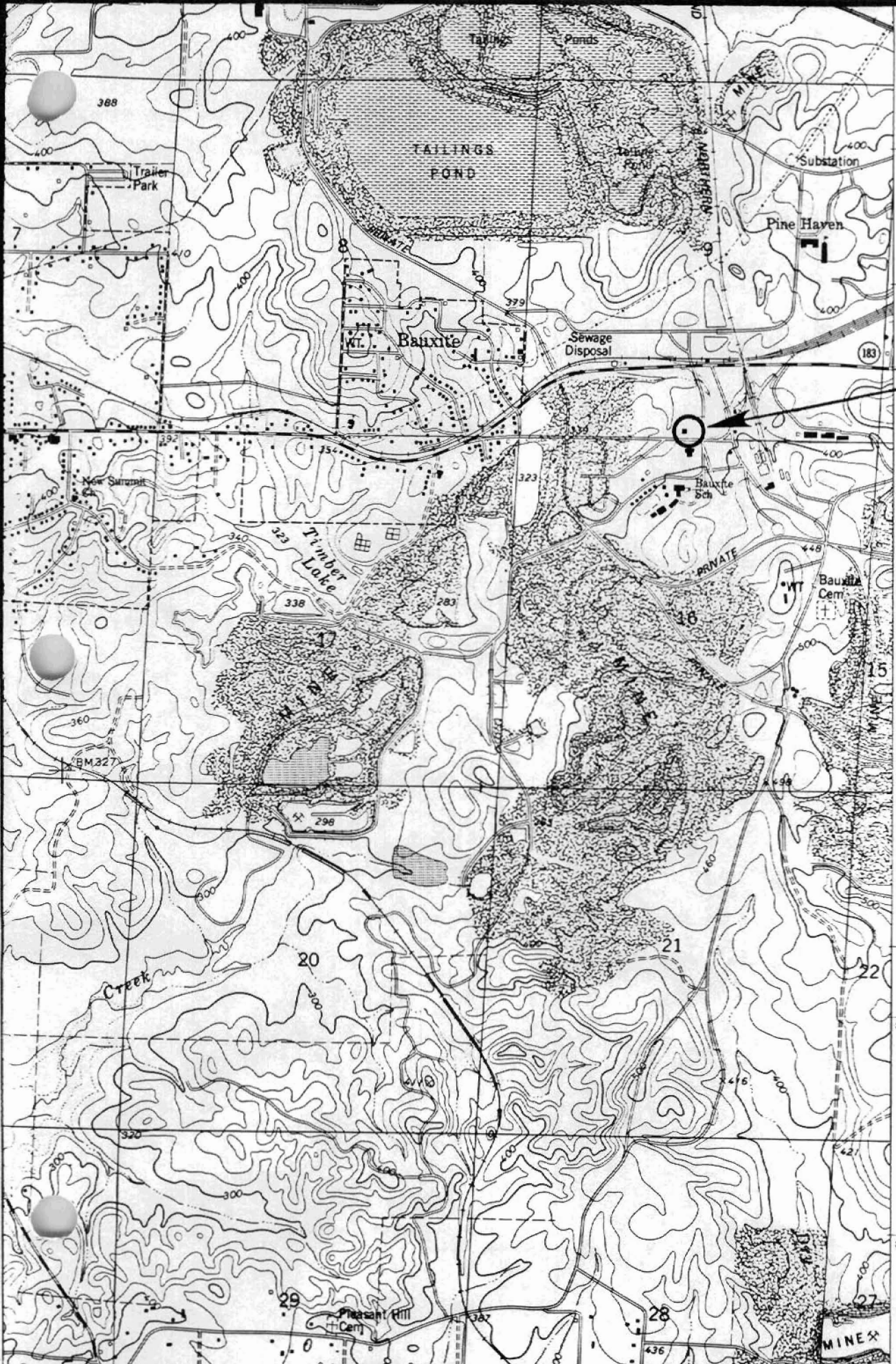
15











Rucker House
 Bauxite, SAINE CA
 Quad map:
 BENTON
 Scale - 1:24000
 UTM Ref:
 19/544940/
 3823690

3825
 (BRYANT)
 7553 III SW
 4.3 MI. TO INTERSTATE 20
 3823
 32'30"
 3822
 3821
 3820