

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: American Legion Post #131

other name/site number: SE0268

2. Location

street & number: Center Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Leslie

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Searcy code: AR 129 zip code: 72645

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

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: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic and Architectural Resources of Searcy County, Arkansas

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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.

Charles A. Slater
Signature of certifying official

10-8-93
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

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic: SOCIAL

Sub: Meeting Hall

Current: SOCIAL

Sub: Meeting Hall

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification:

Rustic

Other Description: N/A

Materials:	foundation	<u>Stone</u>	roof	<u>Asphalt</u>
	walls	<u>WOOD/Logs</u>	other	<u>Wood knee</u>
				<u>braces</u>

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

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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: Locally.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period(s) of Significance: c. 1935-1943

Significant Dates: c. 1935

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Harness, Lloyd
Works Progress Administration

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

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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See "Historic and Architectural Resources of Searcy County, Arkansas Section H.

___ 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: _____

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreeage of Property: Less than one

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>15</u>	<u>539750</u>	<u>3964930</u>	B	<u>15</u>	_____
C	<u>15</u>	_____	_____	D	<u>15</u>	_____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ___ See continuation sheet.

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the western edge of Center Street with a perpendicular line running parallel with the building's northern elevation and located approximately 25 feet to the north thereof, proceed westerly along said line for a distance of approximately 100 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel with the building's western elevation; thence proceed southerly along said line for a distance of approximately 50 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel with the building's southern elevation; thence proceed easterly along said line for a distance of approximately 100 feet to its intersection with the western edge of Center Street; thence proceed northerly along said line to the point of beginning.

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: Kenneth Story, Architectural Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 10/06/93

Street & Number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500 Telephone: (501) 324-9880

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

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Description

The American Legion Post #131 building is a single-story, wood log social meeting building designed in the Rustic style that was popular with the public works agency that provided the labor for its construction, the Works Progress Administration. Its rectangular plan is symmetrically-organized around a central axis running along the ridge line between the center of the northeastern facade and the southwestern elevation opposite. A single brick chimney rises through the ridge near the southwestern elevation. The asphalt shingle roof and saddle-notched log walls rest upon a continuous stone foundation.

The southwestern or front facade is dominated by the overhanging eaves that are ornamented with decorative Craftsman-influenced knee braces. It is accessed via a single-leaf door placed to the north. The northeastern elevation opposite is accessed via a central entrance that is flanked by two eight-over-eight windows. The northwestern and southeastern elevations are identical, each being lighted by three symmetrically-placed pairs of six-over-six wood sash windows.

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Significance

Criteria A and C, local significance

The American Legion was founded in France during the relatively quiet and uneventful days that followed the signing of the armistice that ended World War I. American enlisted men from all three of the principal branches of the service then in existence -- the Army, Navy and Marine Corps -- were billeted in various locations for the purpose of maintaining a military presence while the negotiators worked out the details of the treaty that would outline the political future of much of Europe for the next decade. These servicemen found life during the occupation uneventful and boring, and this only compounded the frustration felt by many at not being allowed to return home to family and friends. A small group of officers -- and especially Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. and Lieutenant Colonel George A. White -- met to discuss the possibility of establishing a veterans' organization which would include all branches of the military and which would serve the immediate purpose of providing an outlet for some of the energy and frustration felt by the occupation forces but which would also set as its larger goal the establishment of a nationwide veteran's organization that would provide its members with both a social organization and a vehicle for voicing their collective concerns about such issues as national defense, subversive activity, radical thought, domestic social programs and veterans' affairs.

Successive meetings over the course of the next several months in both Europe and America further defined the Legion's mandate and purpose. However, it was the shooting of four Legionnaires during an Armistice Day parade in the lumber town of Centralia, Washington in 1919 by socialist IWW organizers and the subsequent coverage of the trial that followed -- in which the Legionnaires were portrayed as the aggressors -- that both galvanized and tempered the Legionnaire spirit. Both the public and the Legion press recognized the dangers of extremism by any party while admitting the need for responsible vigilance against any activity that threatened the democratic form of government. The American Legion began to grow steadily thereafter through an organization that elected officers on the national, state and local levels and provided a voice for its members regarding a variety of national concerns. During the Depression the American Legion distinguished itself in particular through the expansion of local programs targeted at youth. Of particular note were the founding of American Legion Junior Baseball, the American Legion Oratorical Contest and Boys' State.

According to oral history, the construction of the American Legion Post #131 building in the mid-1930's was supervised by local resident Lloyd Harness and built with Works Progress Administration labor. The onset of the Great Depression in 1929 and the subsequent advent of such federal public works programs as the Works Progress Administration (WPA) brought a new American Legion building to Leslie c. 1935. The WPA -- an organization that hired unemployed

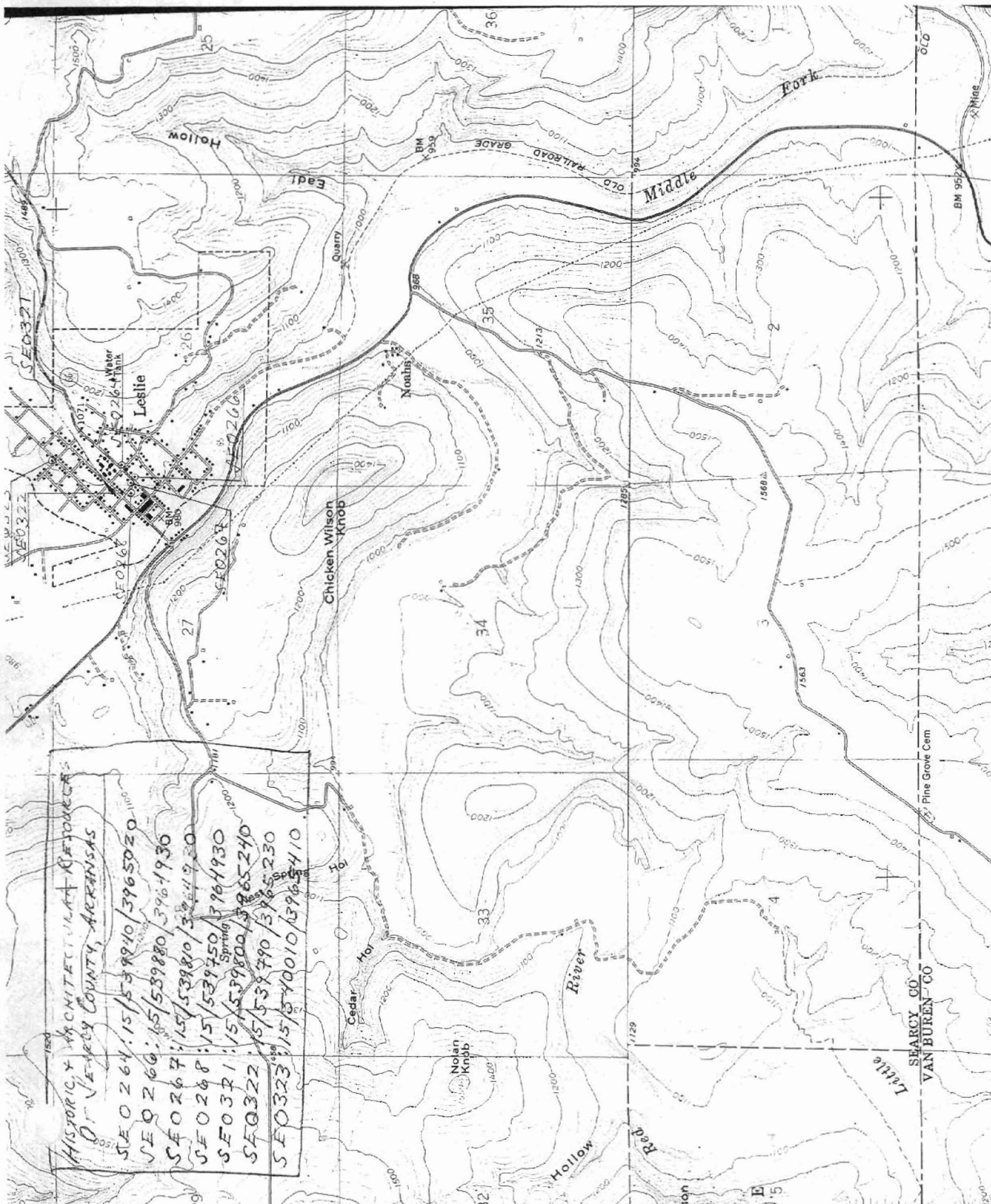
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adult men and women to work on a variety of public projects throughout the nation -- was established by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his administration as part of the federal response to the dire economic circumstances brought upon the American people by the Great Depression. The WPA was but one of many such public works organizations instituted by the Roosevelt Administration and managed under the aegis of the umbrella agency in charge of all such public works efforts, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA); other agencies under its direction included the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the short-lived Public Works and Civilian Works Administrations (PWA and CWA), and such regional projects as the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the Rural Colonization Projects in Arkansas established at such places as Dyess, Clover Bend and Plum Bayou. Among its various other projects, the WPA constructed or repaired a number of American Legion buildings throughout the state, and the American Legion #131 building was erected as part of this statewide effort.

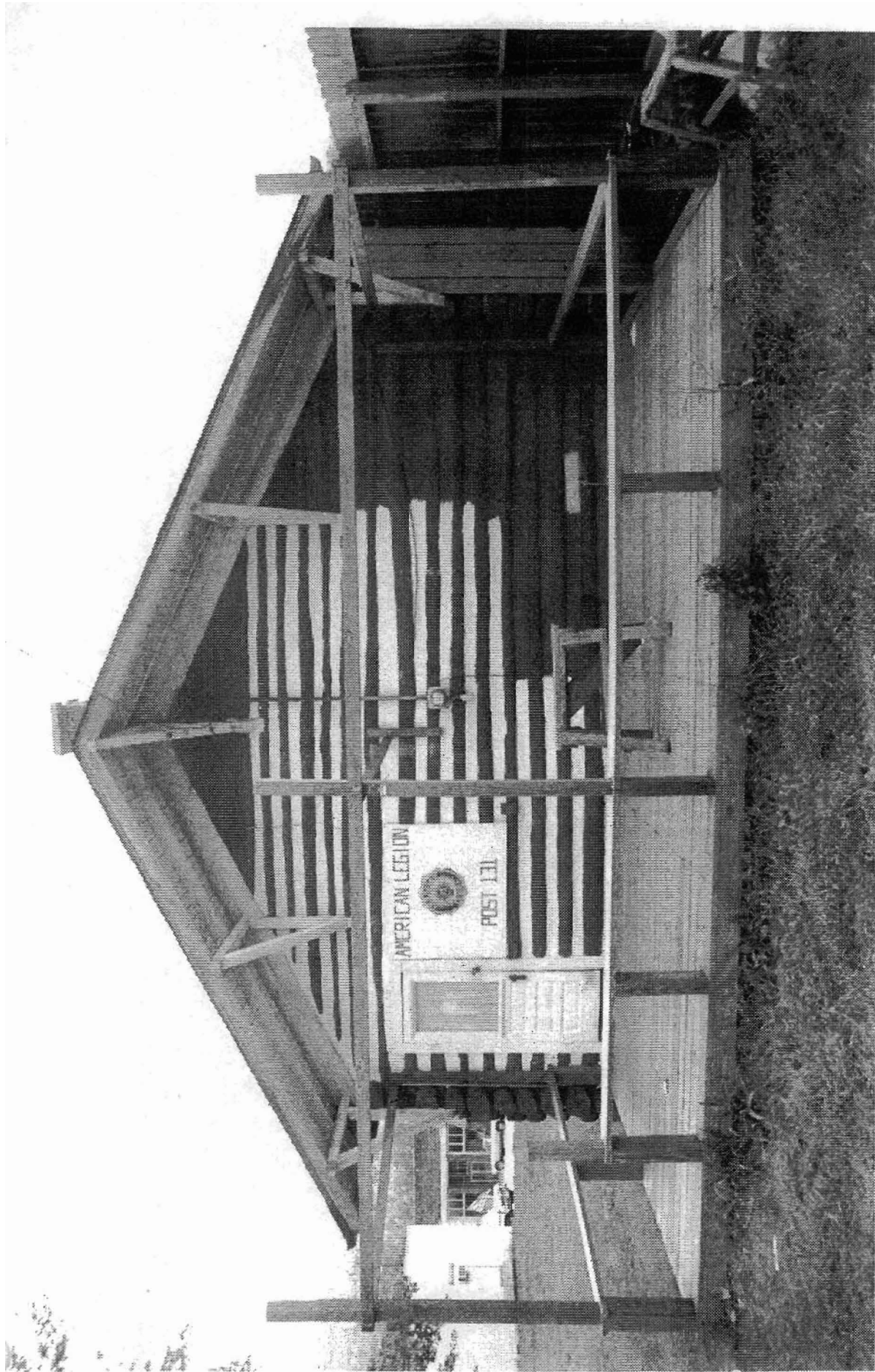
Its construction date of c. 1935 and its Rustic style represent the historic context *Searcy County in the World War Era, 1910-1945: Economic Realignment, The Great Depression and World War*. Though this was, generally speaking, a period of county-wide economic decline, some construction continued. With the long-standing presence of the railroad and the growing influence of the automobile, it was inevitable that new, national architectural styles would be reflected. The American Legion Post #131 building is eligible under Criterion A (Social History) by virtue of its direct associations with both the American Legion, for which it was built, and the Works Progress Administration, the public works agency that provided the labor for its construction. As a particularly good example of this popular, Depression-era style and the most intact example in the community of Leslie, the American Legion #131 building is also locally significant under Criterion C.



HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RECORDS
 OF SEARCY COUNTY, ARKANSAS
 SE 0264 15/539910/3965020
 SE 0266 15/539880/3961930
 SE 0267 15/539810/3964920
 SE 0268 15/539750/3961930
 SE 0321 15/539800/3965240
 SE 0322 15/539790/3965230
 SE 0323 15/540010/3965410

Leslie
 SEARCY CO
 VAN BUREN CO





AMERICAN LEGION

POST 131

American Legion Post # 231

Leslie, Seery Co., Arkansas

Photographed by T. Ferguson

August 1941

Negative on film at AHPH

View from No. 14

SE 0268



American Legion Post # 131

Leslie, Searcy Co., Arkansas

Photographed by T. Ferguson

August 1951

Negative on film at ARMS

View from South

SE 0268



American Legion Post #131
Leslie, Spang Co, Arkansas

Photographed by T. Ferguson

August 1991

Negative on film at AMW

View from Southwest

SE 0068