

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Bank of Commerce

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 200 North Washington N/A not for publication

city, town El Dorado N/A vicinity of congressional district 4th

state Arkansas code 05 county Union code 139

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Richard Mason

street & number 3737 Calion Road

city, town El Dorado vicinity of state Arkansas

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Union County Courthouse

street & number Main & Washington Streets

city, town El Dorado state Arkansas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town state

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

### SUMMARY

Situated one block northwest of the Union County Courthouse Square, the Bank of Commerce building occupies a corner site in a downtown El Dorado commercial block. The building's distinctive Classical facade is outstanding in a downtown business district that succumbed to aluminum storefront "remodeling" of the 1950s and 1960s. Built in 1919-20, the two story brick building is raised above street grade on an ashlar base and is capped with a high parapet with frontal gable and white stone coping. The Classical vocabulary is interpreted in stone decorative details and in the creation of the bank's distinctive temple front inspired principal elevation.

### ELABORATION

The principal (east) facade of the Bank of Commerce building clearly conveys the monumental potential of the Classical styles. This entry facade is eminently articulated with a temple front that reflects the impact of early twentieth-century Neo-Classicism and Renaissance Revivalism alike. Two prominent features create this impression and thus dominate the elevation: a projecting metal triangular pediment with broken base and a two-story Roman-arched entrance. Formed by a cornice-like projection, the pediment protrudes from the gabled parapet with truncated peak which rises slightly above it and spans almost the full width of the elevation. This distinctive feature is enriched by dentiling and a cartouche that appears in its tympanum on the central axis of the facade. The pediment base breaks to frame this cartouche. Although the base resembles gable-end returns, it is actually created by an entablature that wraps around the building, extending the full length of the south (side) elevation, and serves to organize and unify the building's two exposed elevations. This entablature consists of a banded stone architrave, brick frieze and over hanging dentiled metal cornice. On the principal facade, the entablature is carried on two pairs of brick Ionic pilasters which flank the two-story tall Roman-arched entrance. Emphasized with a cast stone surround, the arch articulates and frames the bank's main entrance, a deeply recessed double-door arrangement. The doors are composed of single lights over panels and are framed by wood pilasters. They are further accented by sidelights over panels and are capped by double segmental multi-light transoms. Vertical and horizontal lights fill the remaining upper extremes of the archway.

The seven bay, secondary (south) elevation is visually divided into two sections which distinguish the public banking room from the supporting office space. The three east bays of this elevation project slightly to identify the banking room, a two-story high space. The configuration of this area is communicated by the fenestration of this section of the facade. Each one-over-one double-hung window is almost floor-to-ceiling in height, extending from the elevation's ashlar base to its architrave, and has sidelights and a three light transom. The windows are slightly recessed in the Flemish bond brick wall. Most interesting and unusual features of these windows are the pairs of low brick piers with cast stone bases and copings that appear in front of each window on axis with the window frame. These piers are capped with a cast stone sphere.

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The remaining bays of the south elevation reflect the interior design of the rear of the building which is comprised of two stories of office space. A secondary entrance to the building, providing direct access to the offices, is asymmetrically located in the second bay from the west end of the facade. Though not as monumental as the principal entrance, it is carefully and Classically detailed. This entrance is faced with ashlar blocks and capped with an unembellished frieze and an overhanging cornice that is surmounted by a small triangular pediment. The doorway is recessed in a segmental arched opening with articulated keystone and is raised above grade with three steps offering access. Fenestration of the rear section of the south elevation, like the east end, is dominated by the rhythm of recessed windows and brick pilasters. The first and second stories are pierced by pairs of double-hung one-over-one light windows in each bay. However, the second story windows are slightly shorter than those below and have articulated cast stone sills. Raised brick panels appear between the first and second story windows. The building's aforementioned full entablature greatly enriches this facade. The parapet rises above it to cap the elevation. The north and west walls of the Bank of Commerce abut adjacent buildings and therefore are not visible.

The evolution of the building has been impacted by two renovation projects undertaken in 1947 and in 1954. Both of these construction projects removed and destroyed the original interior fabric of the bank building. The 1954 project involved covering the principal elevation with a new brick front. Fortunately, the south side of the building has never been altered and the principal elevation's original fabric remained largely intact beneath the 1954 facade. Recently, the Bank of Commerce has been restored to its original 1920 appearance. However, in the absence of surviving substantive original fabric, the interior of the building was adaptively reused to provide contemporary office space for a local petroleum/geology business firm. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program participated in and approved the character of the exterior restoration and the interior rehabilitation.

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## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1919-20 **Builder/Architect** unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bank of Commerce presents a sophisticated example of the Classically-derived architectural styles that were dominant in the Arkansas architecture of the first decades of the twentieth century. The building's temple-like principal facade, featuring a triangular pediment with broken base, prominent cornice and monumental Roman-arched entrance flanked by pairs of Ionic pilasters, reflects an interest in a Renaissance influenced Neo-Classicism unusual in the building stock of southwest Arkansas. In addition to its architectural significance, the Bank of Commerce represents a transitional phase in El Dorado's economic history. Built in 1919-20, the facility originally served the city when it was a small lumber and farming community of 3,887 citizens. However, within a year, the discovery of oil outside El Dorado in 1921 turned the rural town into a tumultuous industrial city with a population that fluctuated between 15,000 and 30,000 people. The impact of this growth led to a 1923 reorganization of the bank, which doubled its capital stocks and surplus, received a federal charter, and saw its resources skyrocket from \$802,465 in 1921 to \$2,935,643 by April 1923. Noted in a 1938 newspaper article as one of Arkansas' soundest financial institutions, the Bank of Commerce maintained its financial stability throughout the depression. Today the building stands as a vital representative of El Dorado's transformation from a small town into the "oil city" of Arkansas. The architectural and historical significance of this building and the importance of its recent restoration are underscored by the absence of other unaltered building fabric in downtown El Dorado.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

The Work Project Administration, Gas & Oil. (subject file) Arkansas State Archives.  
Little Rock, Arkansas.

"Record of Service Began in 1919 for New Bank", El Dorado Daily News-Times  
(El Dorado, Arkansas), August 24, 1973, p. 1.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name El Dorado, Ark. La.

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A 

1	5	5	3	1	2	7	5	3	6	7	4	7	0	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

South 30 feet of lots 7 & 8, Block 3 of original town of El Dorado, Union  
County, Arkansas

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ethel Goodstein, Architectural Historian - Donald R. Brown, Historian

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date June 9, 1981

street & number Suite 500, Continental Building telephone (501) 371-2763

city or town Little Rock state Arkansas

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature W. S.

title

date 2-11-82

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

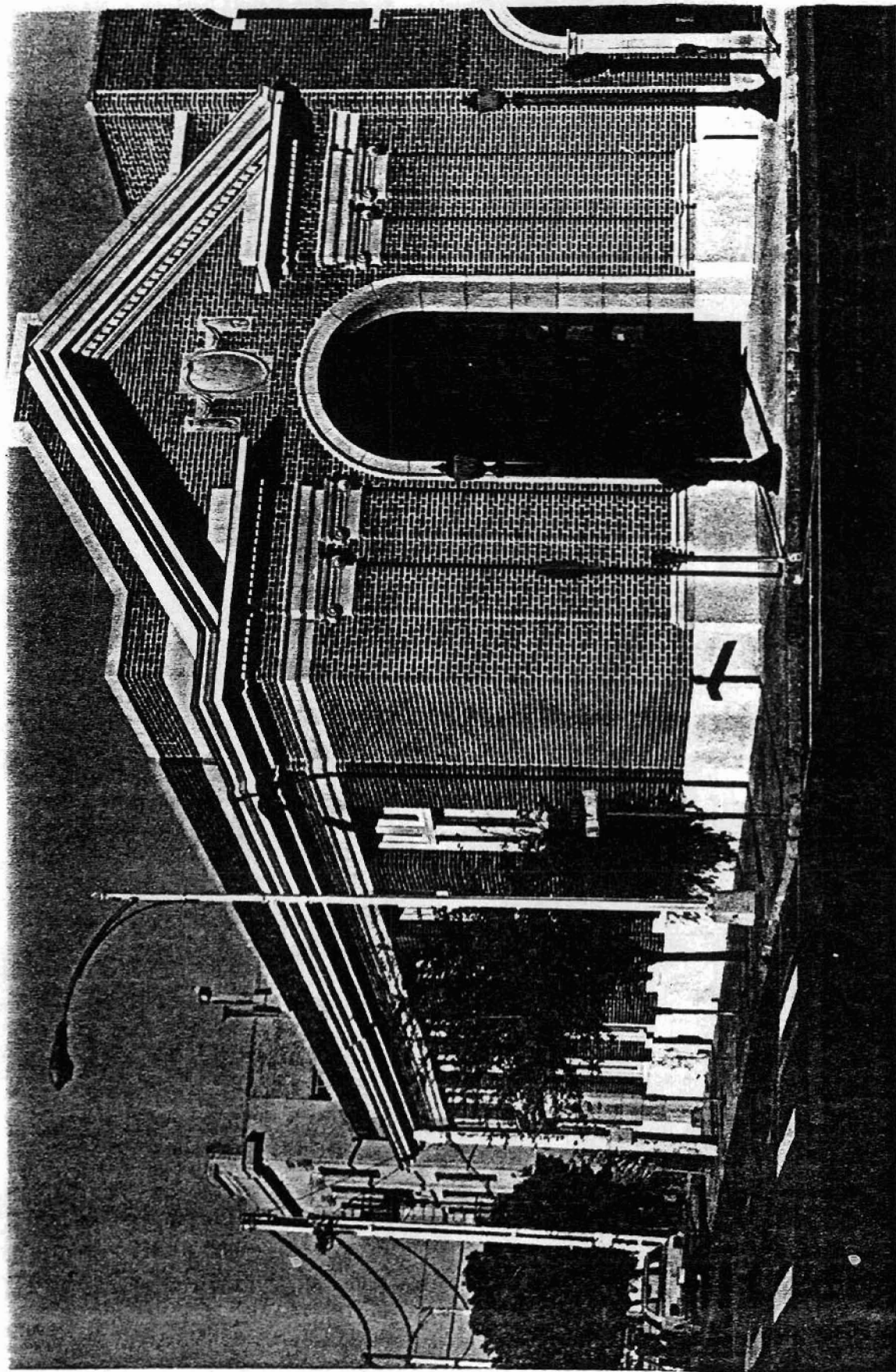
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

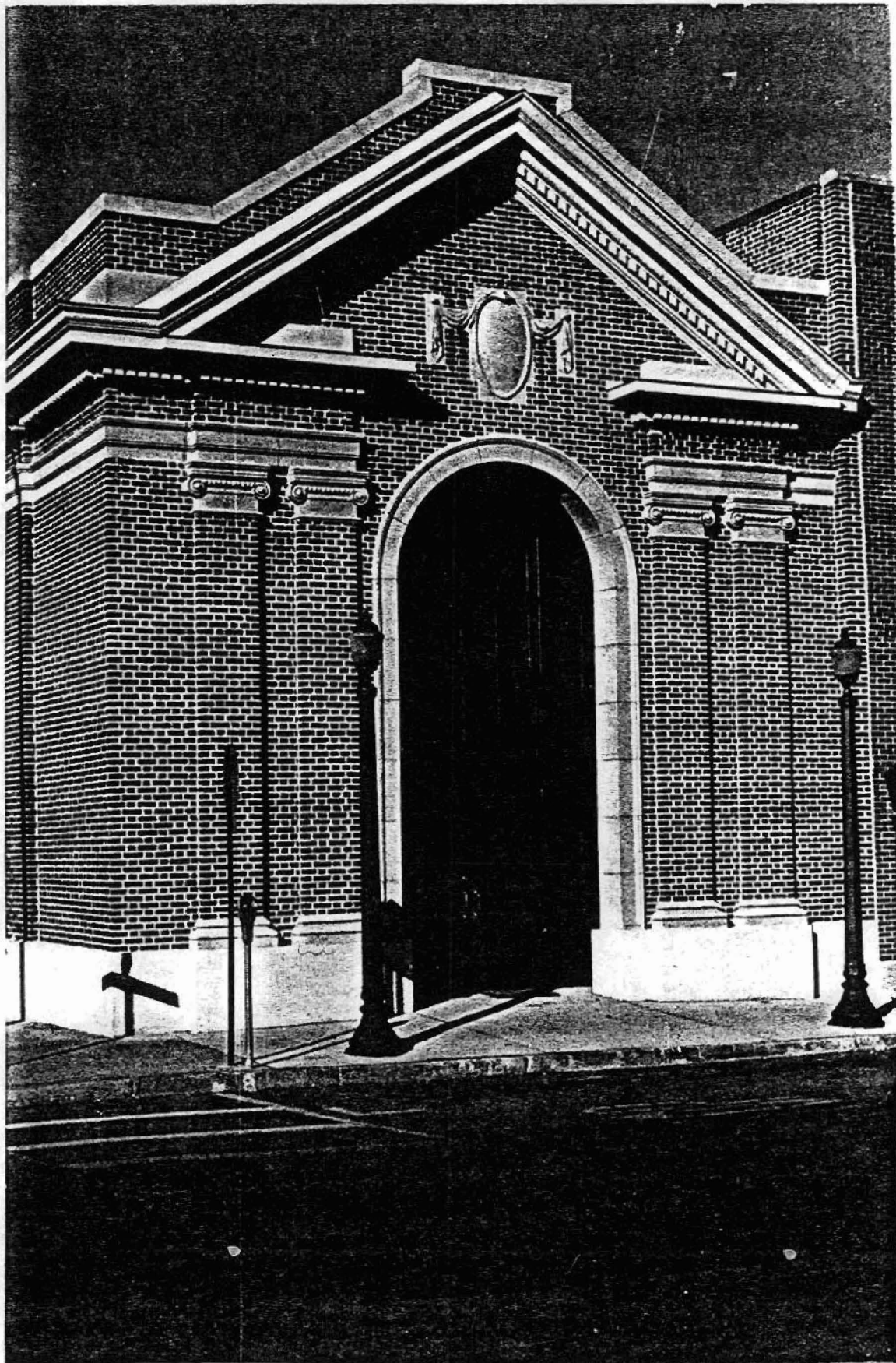
date

Chief of Registration

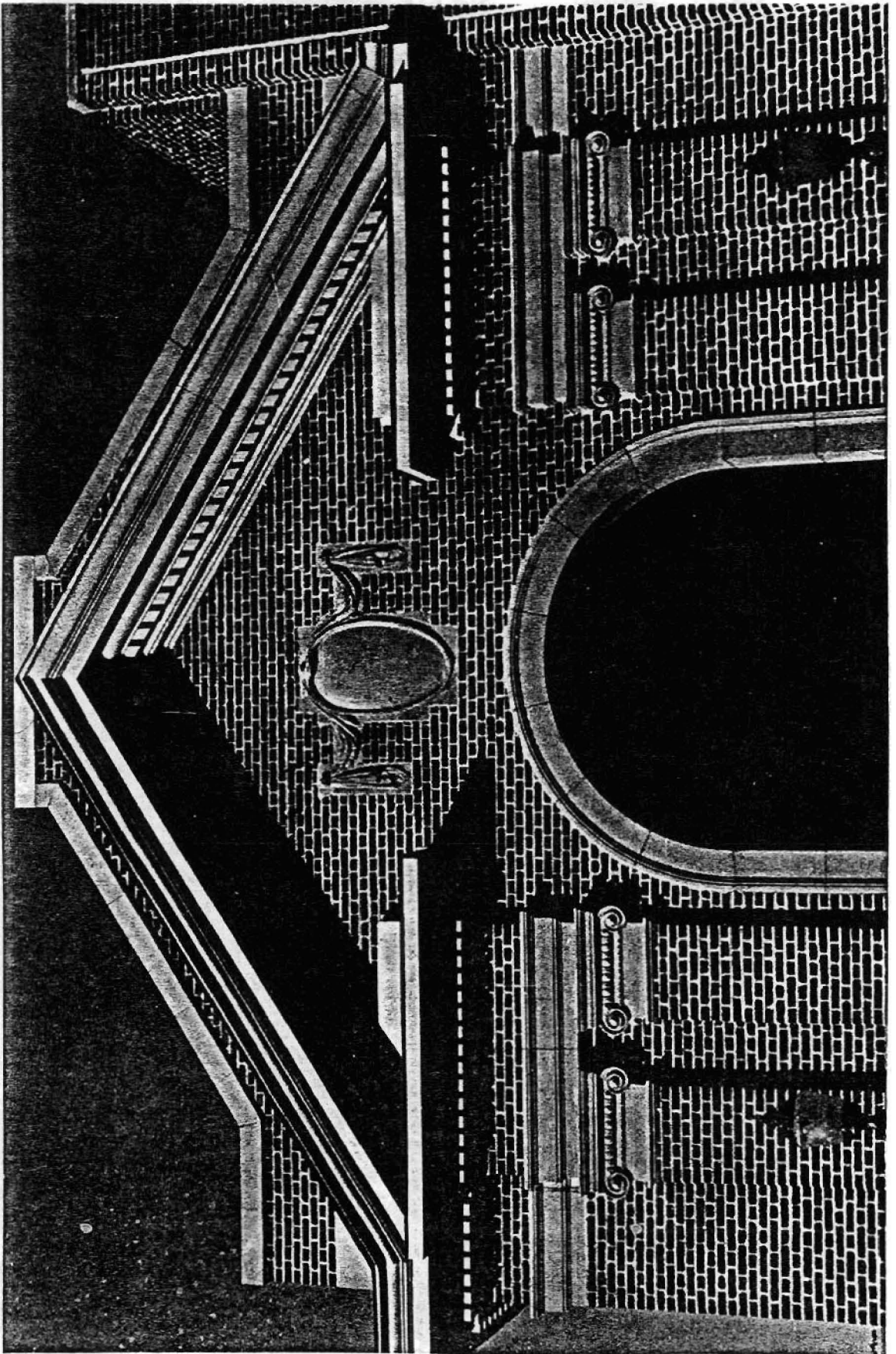


Bank of Commerce  
El Dorado, Arkansas  
Richard Mason, Photographer  
September, 1981  
Negative at Arkansas Historic Preservation  
Program  
East and south elevations taken from  
southeast  
Number 2 of 6

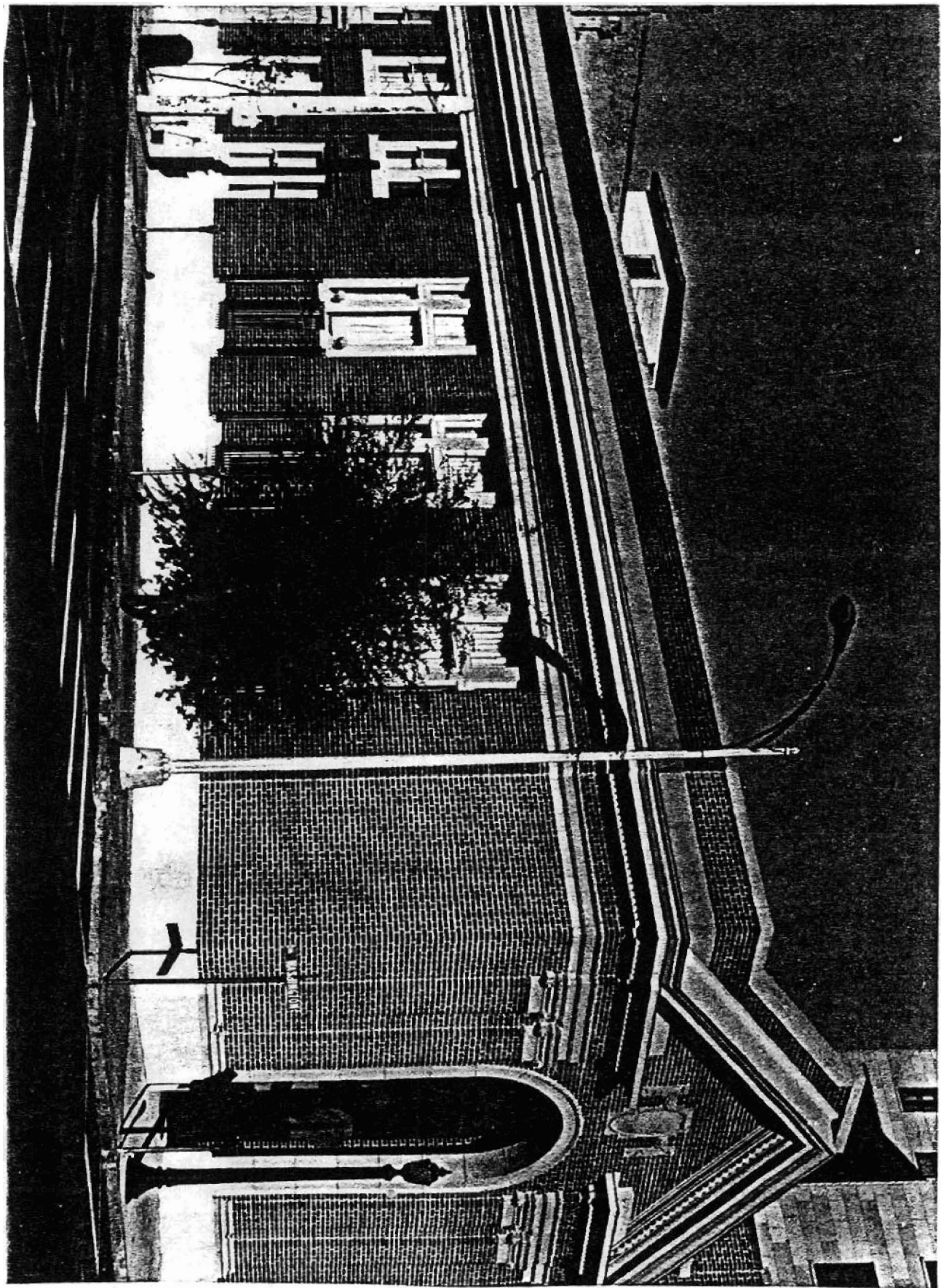




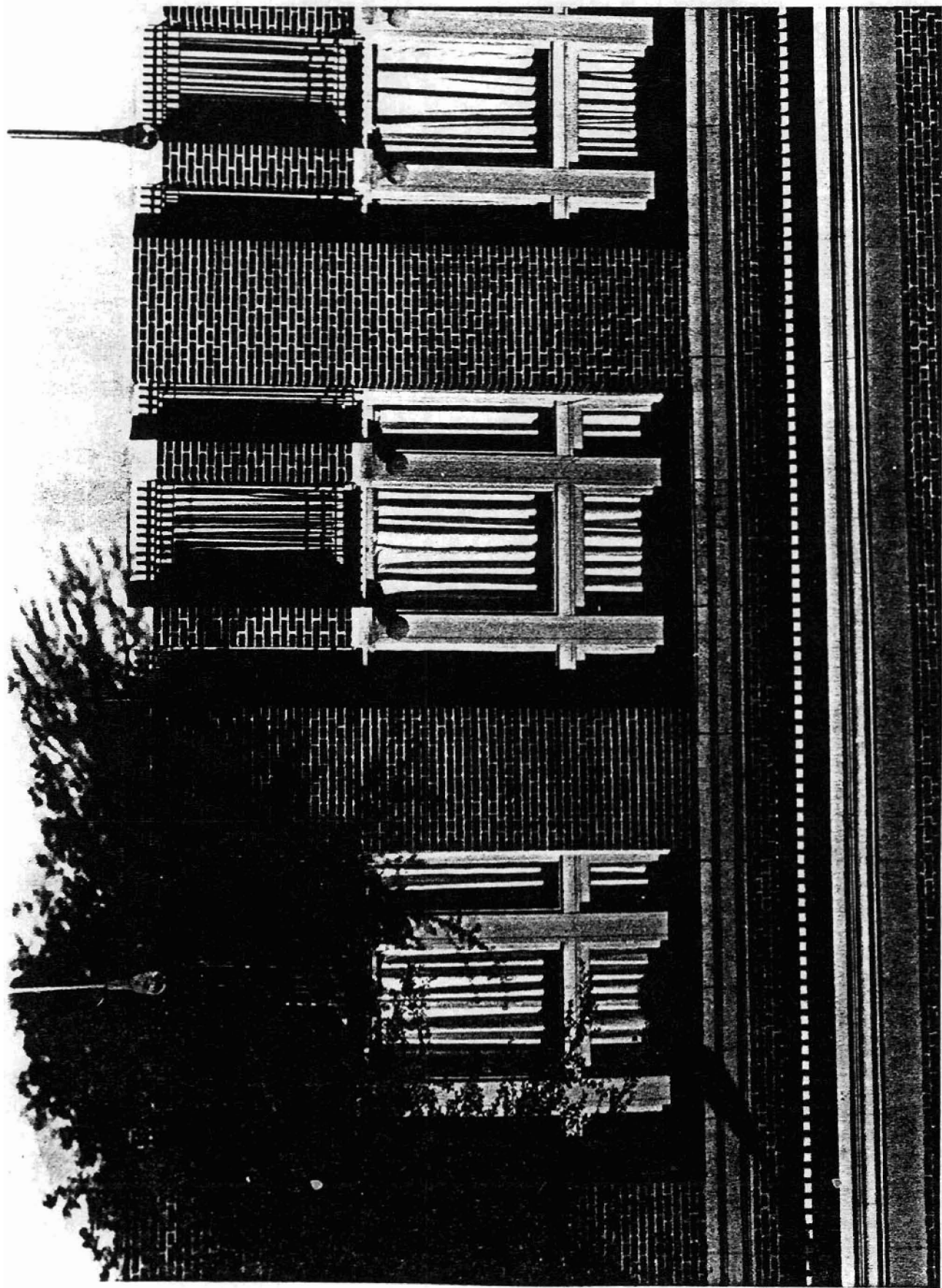
Bank of Commerce  
El Dorado, Arkansas  
Richard Mason, Photographer  
September, 1981  
Negative at Arkansas Historic Preservation  
Principal (east) elevation  
Number 1 of 6




Bank of Commerce  
E1 Dorado, Arkansas  
Richard Mason, Photographer  
September, 1981  
Negative at Arkansas Historic Preservation  
Program  
Detail: entrance  
Number 6 of 6



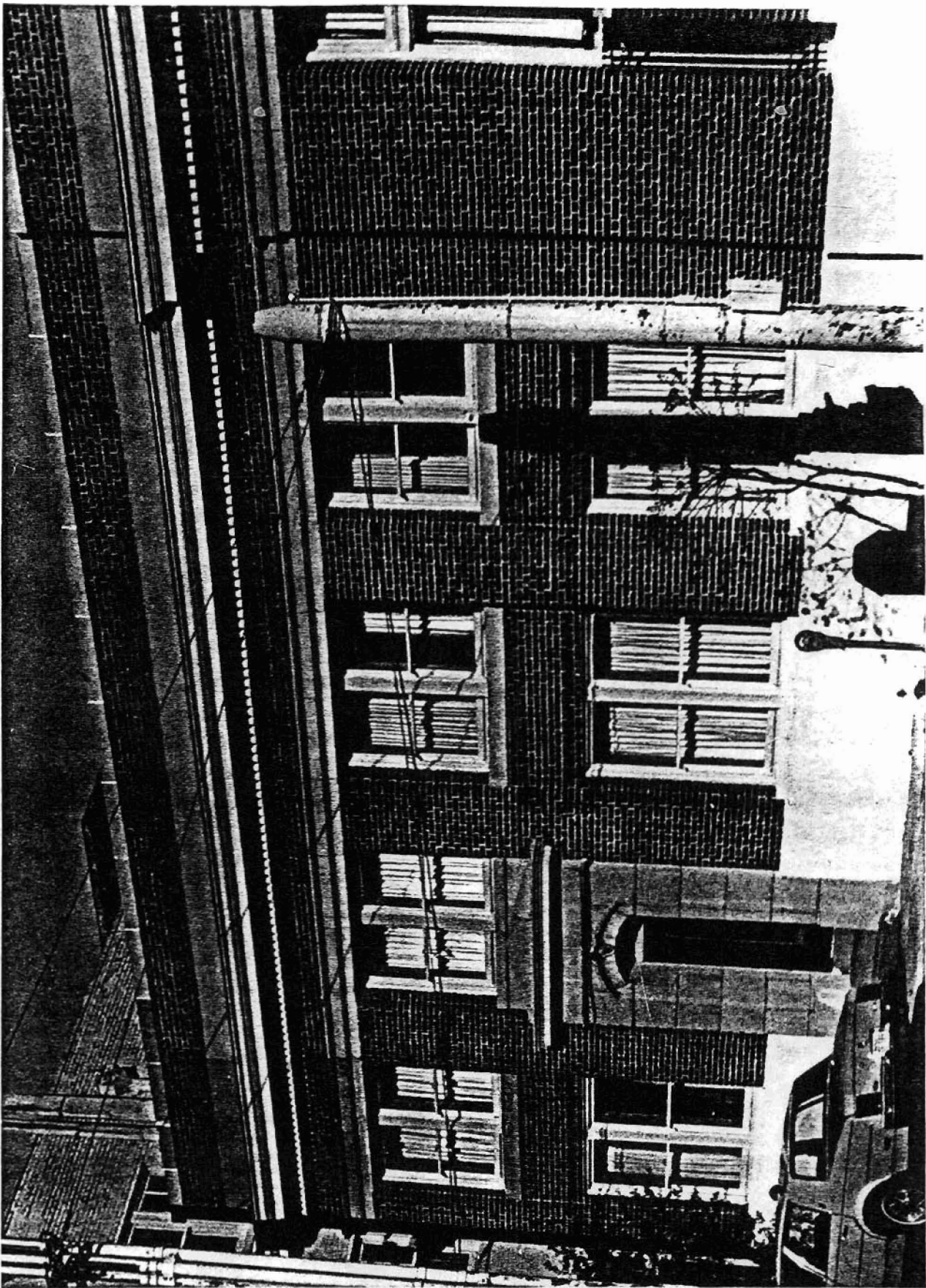
Bank of Commerce  
El Dorado, Arkansas  
Richard Mason, Photographer  
September, 1981  
Negative at Arkansas Historic Preservation  
Program  
South elevation  
Number 4 of 6





Bank of Commerce  
El Dorado, Arkansas  
Richard Mason, Photographer  
September, 1981  
Negative at Arkansas Historic Preservation  
Program  
Detail: windows on south elevation  
Number 5 of 6





Bank of Commerce  
El Dorado, Arkansas  
Richard Mason, Photographer  
September, 1981  
Negative of Arkansas Historic Preservation  
Program  
South elevation showing side entrance  
Number 3 of 6

Bank of Commerce  
El Dorado, Arkansas

UTM Reference:

3674700/531275

STATE  
GEOLOGICAL

