

Jess Norman Post 166 American Legion Hut
Name of Property

Woodruff County, Arkansas
County and State

Listed Date: 10-14-01

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Jess Norman Post 166 American Legion Hut

Other Name/Site Number: WO0041

2. Location

Street & Number: 222 South First Street

Not for Publication: NA

City/Town: Augusta

Vicinity: NA

State: AR County: Woodruff Code: 147 Zip Code: 72006-0211

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public-local

Category of Property: Building

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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>—</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

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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.

Cathie Matthews 8/21/01
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

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:

Other: square-notched log construction

Materials: foundation WOOD, STONE roof ASPHALT
walls WOOD/log other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

Summary:

The Jess Norman Post 166 American Legion Hut is a 70 foot by 30 foot rectangular structure that sits on the eastern bank of the White River at Augusta in Woodruff County. The square-notched cypress-log structure is supported on the east side by low stone piers and on the west by four-foot wooden piers. The structure features composition shingles on its end-gable roof and a stone chimney.

Elaboration:

The Jess Norman Post 166 American Legion Hut is a 70 foot by 30 foot rectangular structure that sits on the eastern bank of the White River at Augusta in Woodruff County. The square-notched cypress-log structure is supported on the east side by low stone piers and on the west by four-foot wooden piers. The structure features composition shingles on its end-gable roof and a stone chimney. The entire foundation is masked by sheet metal.

The east, or front façade, features a wood door at its northern extreme, which is accessed by three formed-concrete steps. Moving north, the façade features a single, double-hung, six-over-six window, then a pair of double-hung, six-over-six windows, followed by a simple wooden porch with a small shed roof supported by log posts and accessed by three wooden steps at the porch's northern end. Another pair of double-hung, six-over-six windows is located just north of the porch.

The southern façade features a six-pane window, which holds an air-conditioning unit. This window is flanked to the west by a stone chimney, which is itself flanked by another six-pane window.

The west, or rear, façade features an observation porch with eight log supports for the gable roof overhang. The entire porch was screened in during the 1950s and the north end was later enclosed with rough weatherboard to create a meeting space for the Legion Auxiliary's meetings. This façade is built over a low bluff atop four-foot piers, which hold the building above floodwaters of the White River. The unenclosed end of the porch features a wooden door flanked to the north by three double-hung, six-over-six windows. An additional wooden door opens into the south end of the enclosed Auxiliary room. The enclosed area is fenestrated by a pair of double-hung, four-over-four windows. The enclosure maintains the Rustic appearance of the rest of the structure.

The north façade is fenestrated by three separate double-hung, six-over-six windows.

The most prominent feature of the interior is the large cut-stone fireplace. The interior features a large, 30 foot by 48 foot room, with the 30 foot by 22 foot north end partitioned into a kitchen and restroom area.

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8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A and C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): NA

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period(s) of Significance: 1933-34

Significant Dates: 1933-34

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: CWA

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

SUMMARY:

The Jess Norman Post 166 American Legion Hut is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C with local significance by virtue of its status as the best example in Augusta of a vernacular log meeting hall and under Criterion A with local significance for its association with the local activities of the American Legion in Augusta.

ELABORATION:

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.

The Augusta American Legion post was named for Jess Norman, the first man from Augusta to be killed during World War I. It is unknown where the Legionnaires met previously, but on January 5, 1933, the *Augusta Advocate* announced that the Jess Norman Post planned to construct a hut on the banks of the White River for "a minimum amount of money" and with "all labor ... contributed by the Legionnaires." The article foresaw one of the structure's future uses, noting that "many of the younger set are urging the Legion to make the floor big enough for dancing, and they point to that as a possible means of revenue in the future." The Legionnaires planned a fund-raising event: a boxing match to be held in the largest courtroom in the Woodruff County Courthouse (NR 12/22/82) that would feature such local pugilists as Jelly Porter, Banty Geeham and Half Pint Thompson. Tickets would cost from 25 cents to one dollar. The *Advocate* article following the event fails to reveal how much money was raised for the building project, but does note that the crowd "filled about three fourths of the courthouse."

The land on which the Legion Hut was built was conveyed to the American Legion by two quitclaim deeds dated January 6, 1934. The first deed was from W.B., W.E., Daryl and Martha Conner and the second was from W.C. and Emily Berry. Each stated that the sale price was one dollar, with the stipulation that construction begin on the Legion

Hut within 90 days.

Despite the earlier fund-raising effort, when construction began on the building it was as a project of the Civil Works Administration, one of the earliest of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" program designed to put Americans back to work at the height of the Great Depression. The CWA proved \$1778.88 for the project, of which \$1,120 was earmarked for labor. By January 11, 1934, work was underway, as the *Advocate* reported:

"A dozen or more workmen are busy in the woods cutting the 300 logs that Wade Sale has donated for the exterior and another small crew is leveling ground for the building. ... The Stanley power boat 'Cut Off' will be used to bring the logs down the river to the building site."

By February, the Legionnaires realized that the CWA funds would be insufficient "since such items as the rock chimney, the chinking of the logs, etc. were not included in the original outlay" and the group began a membership drive in a bid to raise the money needed to complete the structure. They apparently succeeded, as a March 22 *Advocate* article noted that workers at the hut "have revived the lost art of making roof boards. The town had to be scowered (sic) to find froes and draw knives," but in two days the workers succeeded in making 6,000 of the 20,000 shakes needed for the roof. A week later, the city put in a road to the nearly finished hut, a kindness repaid by the Legionnaires by an offer to allow the city to hold its regular monthly council meetings in the building after its completion.

By May 24, 1934, everything was done except construction of the stone fireplace and chimney and the addition of a rail around the balcony, so the Legionnaires turned their thoughts to an appropriate way of inaugurating their new structure. On June 21, they announced that a barbecue would be held on the 4th of July to officially bring the Legion Hut into service.

Some 150 people attended the opening, and the *Advocate* provided a glowing review of the fare: "Although the event had been advertised as a barbeque, it turned out to be a banquet. Never before was such a dinner served here. There were three kinds of barbeque: -- Mutton, goat and pig, dishes and dishes of salad, cakes, pies, and every other good thing to eat."

Just over one week later, the Legionnaires showed that they had listened to the "younger set" back in January 1933, when they held the first dance at the Legion Hut, featuring Guy Willis and his orchestra at \$1 a couple. "The main room of the hut with its large floor space and the screened in porch that overlooks the river makes the hut one of the most attractive dancing places Augusta has ever had," the *Advocate* reported. The building would see many more dances in the years to come, including many for a new generation of servicemen called to duty in World War II, and was the site of many city celebrations. It remains in service today through the joint ownership of the Jess Norman Post 166 and the City of Augusta.

The Jess Norman Post 166 American Legion Hut remains the best example of a vernacular, square-notched log meeting hall in Augusta today. It is also noteworthy for its associations with the local activities of the American Legion and as a tribute to the Legionnaires who persevered through the depths of the Depression to see their building constructed.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Abstract of Title, Augusta Title Company

Augusta Advocate, January 5 and 12 and February 9, 1933; January 4, 11, and 25; February 8 and 22; March 22 and 29, April 26, May 24, June 21, and July 5 and 12, 1934.

Newport American Legion Community Building National Register nomination, 1991

Information provided by Charles H. Schmidt.

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

Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A 15 648450 3905290 B
C D

Verbal Boundary Description:

A tract or parcel of land west of Front Street in the Town of Augusta, Arkansas, described as follows:

Begin 40 feet west of the northwest corner of Block 9 of the Town of Augusta, Arkansas, and run South 100 feet to a point of beginning; thence run west to the low water mark on the White River; thence run down said River to a point directly east of the North Line of Mulberry Street, or the southwest corner of said Block 9, then run east to west side of Front Street, thence run north along said west side of Front Street to the point of beginning. All of said lands being a part of the NW 1/2 of Section 36, Township 8 North, Range 4 West.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary contains all of the historic resources associated with this property that retain integrity.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Mark Christ/Community Outreach Director

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: July 12, 2001

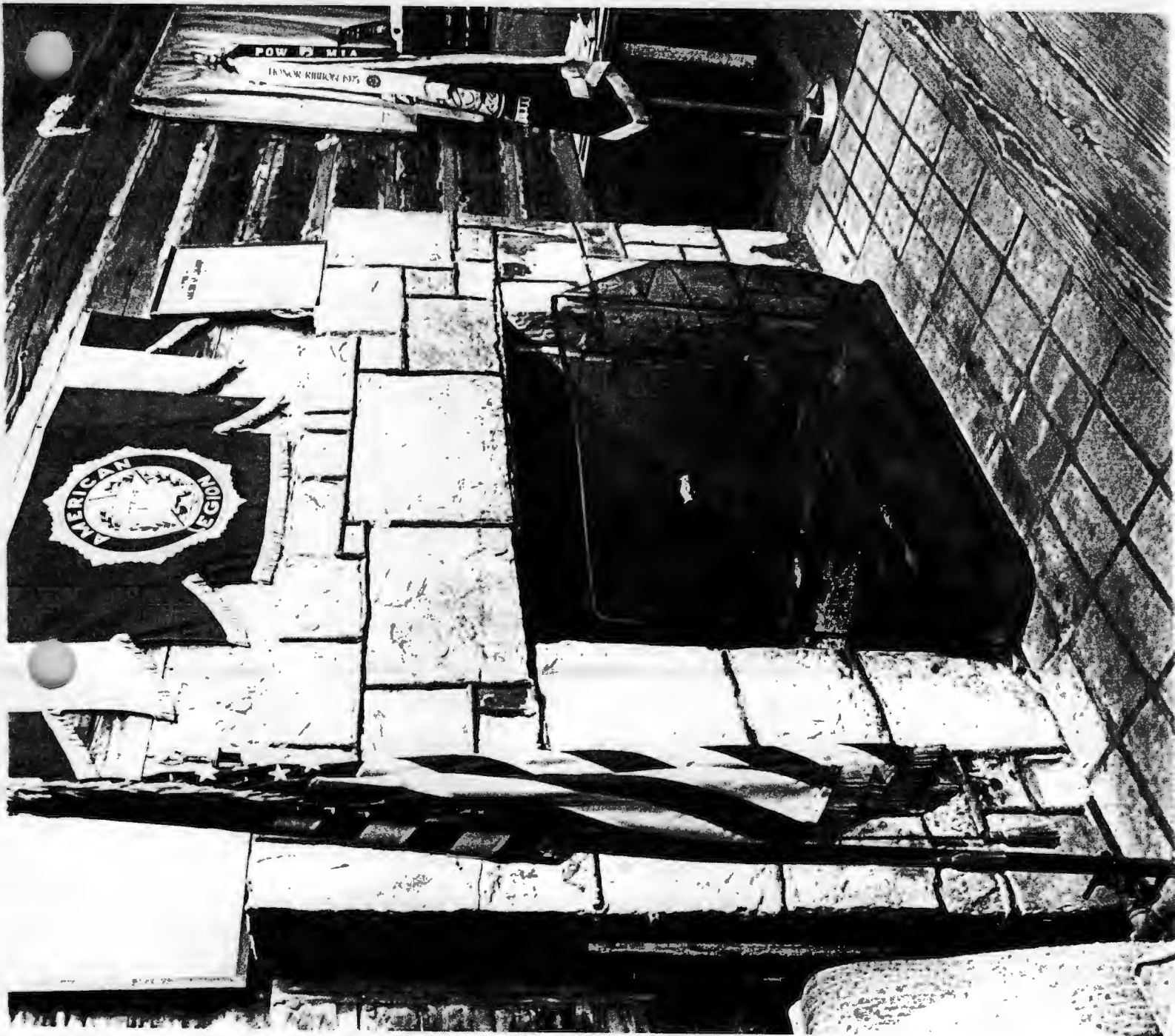
Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg., 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

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











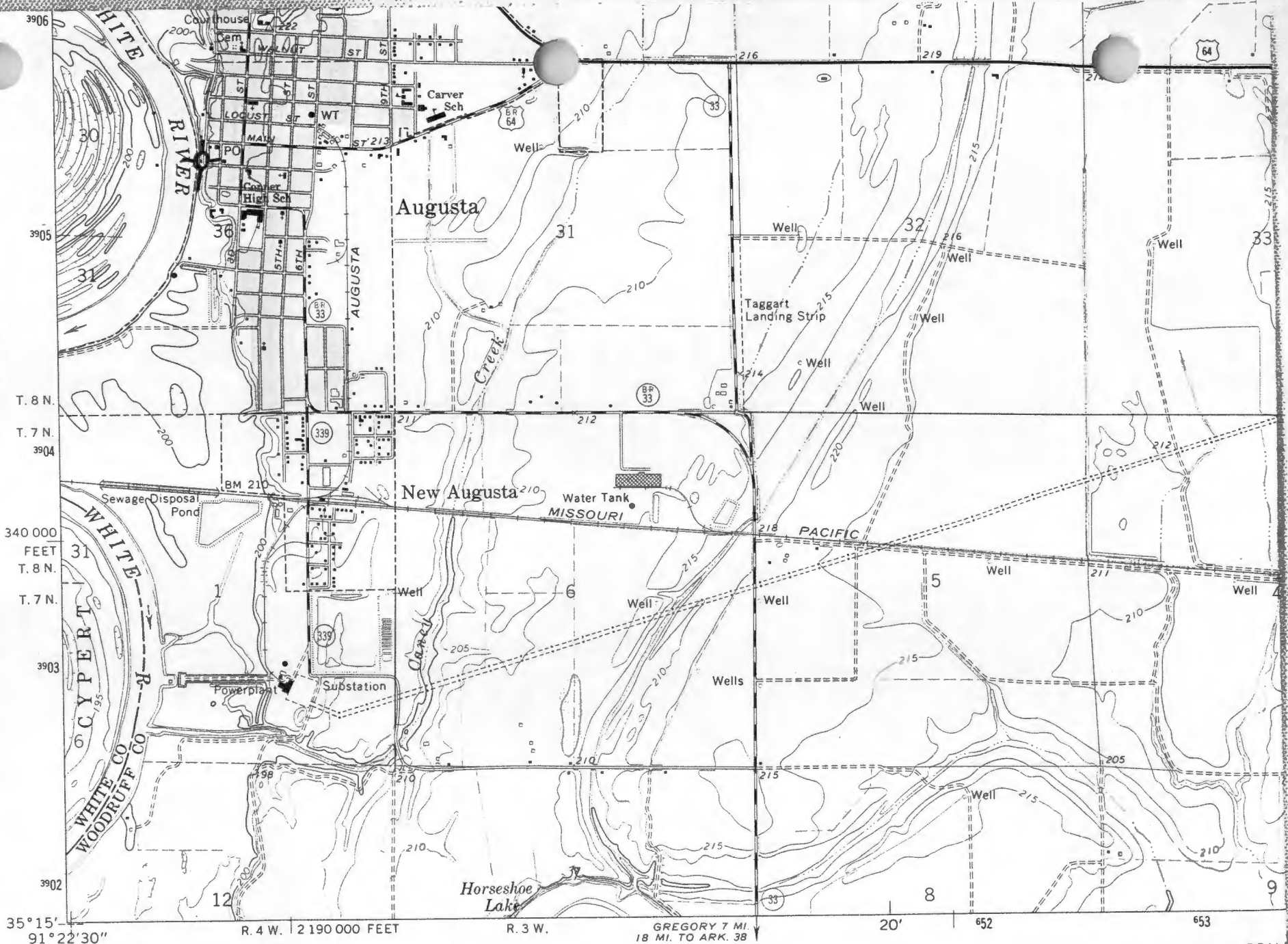




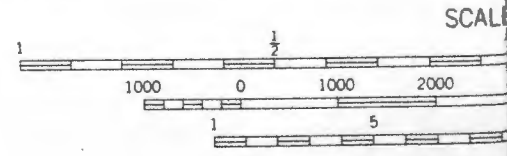
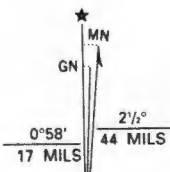




Jess Norman Post 106 American Legion 1st
 Augusta, Missouri (County, MO)
 10/18/1971, 3:00 PM



Produced by the United States Geological Survey
 Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
 taken 1966-67. Field checked 1968
 Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Arkansas coordinate
 system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue
 1927 North American Datum (NAD 27)



CONTOUR IN NATIONAL GEODETIC