

(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Dumas Commercial Historic District

other names/site number DE0339; DE 0340; DE0341; DE0039; DE0318; DE 0034; DE 0038; DE0163; DE 0164; DE 0166; DE 0342; DE 0338; DE 0037

2. Location

street & number South Main Street between Choctaw and Waterman Streets not for publication

city or town Dumas vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Desha code 041 zip code 71639

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant: nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cathie Matthews 3/12/07
Signature of certifying official/Title 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 for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
7	4	buildings
	1	sites
		structures
		objects
7	5	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- COMMERCE/TRADE / Financial Institution
- COMMERCE/TRADE / Specialty Store
- COMMERCE/TRADE / Department Store
- COMMERCE/TRADE / Restaurant
- COMMERCIAL/TRADE/ Business
- HEALTH/CARE/CLINIC

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- COMMERCE/TRADE / Business
- RECREATION AND CULTURE / Theater
- COMMERCE/TRADE / Civic
- COMMERCE/TRADE / Professional
- COMMERCE/TRADE / Specialty Store

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

- Late 19th and Early 20th Century Revival/Colonial Revival
- Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements/
- Standard Commercial Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Concrete/ Brick
- roof Tar Built-Up/ Metal/ Composition Shingles
- walls Brick/ Concrete/ Stucco/ Wood/Stone
- other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1905-1957

Significant Dates

1905-1957

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Bullder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository:

Dumas Commercial Historic District
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6 Acres

JTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
15	639439	3750737			

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara Smart

organization H & W Engineering, Inc. date February 2, 2007

street & number 110 Harrison St. telephone (870) 836-9331

city or town Camden state AR zip code 71701

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Dumas Commercial Historic District is located in the small town of Dumas, Arkansas. Dumas is located in Desha County in the Arkansas Delta. The Mississippi River runs along the eastern boundary of Desha County. The district is comprised of late 19th Century and early 20th Century Standard Commercial style buildings with Colonial Revival secondary influence. The core of the district is the Merchant and Farmer's Bank Building. Built in 1913, it is an excellent example of late 19th Century Colonial Revival Commercial style. Standing next to this building is the Banks Building, circa 1920. It was named for Sam Banks, a prominent Dumas businessman. The Porter Building built in 1905 is the oldest building in this district. The Banks Building is now owned by Main Street Dumas. The Dumas Chamber of Commerce is located in the Merchant and Farmer's Bank Building. The Banks Building, Merchant and Farmer's Bank Building, and the Porter Building possess excellent integrity. The Merchant and Farmer's Bank Building was placed on the National Register on 12/22/82.

ELABORATION

Located in Dumas, Desha County, the Dumas Commercial Historic District is representative of the architectural style of buildings that were popular during an important period of Dumas history. Cotton was the primary crop in this agricultural area and the merchants and bankers in this district catered to the needs of the growers and their families. There are 7 contributing and 4 non-contributing buildings and 1 non-contributing site in addition to one building listed on the National Register (12/22/82) in the Dumas Commercial Historic District.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 2

MERCHANT AND FARMER'S BANK BUILDING (1913) Contributing

The Merchant and Farmer's Bank Building was constructed in late 19th Century Standard Commercial style with secondary Colonial Revival influence in 1913 (N.R. 12/22/82). The architect was Charles Thompson. The Merchant and Farmer's Bank Building is a rectangular one and one-half story brick structure. The walls are brick and it has a flat roof with a parapet. The roof material is tar built-up and the foundation is concrete block.

Front/West Façade

There is a one-bay, central front porch with un-fluted Ionic columns with bases and the columns are topped with large volutes. A pediment spans the front elevation of the building. A marble door-surround encases the front entrance with narrow rectangular windows on either side of the door. The windows on the front façade are stationary windows with small, 40 pane arrangements. Narrow marble lintels adorn the windows.

Side/South Façade

The view of the south-facing façade is hindered by a five-foot wooden fence. The pediment that spans the front/west façade continues around the side/south façade three or four feet. The south façade is fenestrated by two stationary windows with a 40 small-pane arrangements, followed by three stationary one-over-one windows and three stationary glass windows. A single glass door is located between the second and third glass windows.

Rear/East Façade

A canvas awning covers the two stationary single pane windows located on each side of this façade.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 3

BANKS BUILDING (circa 1920) Contributing

The Banks Building is a rectangular one and one-half story, brick, early 20th Century Standard Commercial style building. The walls are brick and there is a brick foundation. The roof is flat with a parapet. The pressed tin ceiling inside the building has been refurbished.

Front/West Façade

A cornice with dentils adorns the upper façade. Four air vents are arranged in the bricks below the dentils. The double entry doors have four stationary glass windows on each side in a recessed front porch.

Rear/East Façade

A double metal door is centered in the rear facade of the building with two one-over-one windows on each side.

PORTER BUILDING (circa 1905) Contributing

The Porter building is a rectangular red brick structure. It has a flat roof with a cornice just below the roofline. There is a brick continuous foundation. The style is early 20th Century Standard Commercial.

Front/West Façade

There are three pairs of stationary glass windows. This building is entered by a door in the Porter Building on north side of this building. Four steel posts support the wood awning on this façade. The awning has a shed roof with composition shingles. The awning obstructs the view of the transoms just above the stationary glass windows. Most of the transoms have been covered with boards.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 4

Rear/East Façade

The rear of the building has been covered with a storage building made of plywood with a composition shingle shed roof. The walls of the storage building are painted red. One door is located in left side of façade.

PORTER BUILDING (circa 1925) Contributing

This is the second of three Porter buildings. It is a rectangular red brick one-and-one-half story building with a flat roof and a parapet. The style is early 20th Century Standard Commercial.

Front/West Facade

The Porter name is engraved on the center crest of the parapet. The door is off-center with one pair of stationary glass windows to the left and three pair of stationary glass windows to the right of the door. The entire width of the building is covered with a large wood awning. The shed roof of the awning is covered with composition shingles and is supported by five steel posts. The awning conceals the transoms across the front of the building above the stationary glass windows.

Rear/East Facade

The rear of the building has been covered with a storage building made of plywood with a composition shingle shed roof. The walls of the storage building are painted red. One door is located in left side of façade.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 5

PORTER BUILDING (circa 1925) Contributing

The two-story Porter building is the largest structure on the east side of South Main Street. It is a red brick structure built in early 20th Century Standard Commercial style. The walls are brick and the roof is flat with a parapet. The roof is tar built-up and the foundation is continuous brick construction.

Front/West Facade

The wood awning has a shed roof with composition shingles and is supported by seven steel posts. The first story windows are stationary, single-pane glass. There are three pairs and one single stationary window. Three wooden doors are in the front of the building, each with a single-pane glass window. The second-story windows have tall, narrow stationary windows with an arched brick cornice over each window. Transoms are concealed behind the awning. The Porter name is engraved in the center of the parapet.

Rear/West Facade

The rear of the building has been covered with a storage building made of plywood with a composition shingle shed roof. The walls of the storage building are painted red. One door is located in left side of façade. There are eight two-over-two double-hung windows on the second story façade. Three of the windows are covered with plywood. There are panes missing from three of the windows.

BUCK'S LIQUOR (circa 1938) Non-Contributing

Buck's Liquor is a one-story brick building with a gabled metal roof with a parapet. It was constructed in early 20th Century Standard Commercial style.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 6

Front/West Façade

Metal siding covers the top section, from roof-line to the top of the windows. The window on the left side of the door has been covered with stucco. The right side of the façade has a large stationary glass window with black metal bars covering it. A section of the wall between the door and the window has been covered with stucco. The metal door is slightly recessed and is covered with a white metal awning. There is a mis-matched awning covering the barred window.

Small black tiles cover the window facings and the area below the windows.

Rear/East Facade

The bricks on the rear façade are covered with stucco. The original bricks can be seen through the stucco in places. A drive-through for pick-up service is covered by a metal awning. The window is a two-pane sliding window that opens to accommodate customers. A carport with four iron posts and a metal shed roof is attached to the building.

HAYGOOD BUILDING (1938) Contributing

The Haygood Building is a one and one-half story brick structure. Rectangular in plan, it was built in the early 20th Century Standard Commercial style by Porter in 1938. The walls of the building are brick and the roof is flat with a parapet. Material used for the roof is tar built-up. Foundation material is brick.

Front/West Facade

There are three sections to this property. The windows and wall material on two sections are covered with a synthetic siding. The third section (southern) has the Porter name engraved in the bricks above the awning. Transoms extend

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 7

across all three sections. Transoms in the first section (northern) are above the metal awning. Transoms in the middle section are covered by wood and concealed by canvas awning. Transoms in the third section (southern) are covered by wood and above the metal awning. There is no door into the southern section, it is entered through the center section. The awning porch on the first (northern) and third (southern) section has a flat roof. A canvas awning spans the width of the center section. The Haygood name is on a name plate in the center of upper façade above the transoms of first (northern) section. The Porter name is on a name plate in the center of upper façade above the transoms of third (southern) section. In the first section, a recessed door has a pair of stationary glass windows on each side. Small square black tiles cover the area below the window frames in all sections of the building.

Rear/East Façade

The first section (northern) does not have windows or doors. The middle section of the building has four small stationary windows, all boarded. This section also has a metal door on each side with a flat metal awning with two posts. The third section (southern) has four small stationary windows, all boarded. This section also has a metal door on each side.

Side/North Façade

The north side of the building is a long expanse of red brick. Near the front of the building is a large stationary window with a cement surround. A metal door with a concrete surround is half-way down the side façade. Three-quarters of the way down the side façade, there is an off-set, where the line of the building drops back four feet. Near the rear façade is a large recessed stationary window with a cement surround and a metal single door.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 8

McKENNON BUILDING (circa 1925) Non-Contributing

The McKennon Building/Wolff Brothers Department Store was built in the early 20th Century Standard Commercial style. It is a rectangular building constructed in three sections; a one story, a one and one-half story, and a two story section. It is a brick construction with brick walls and a flat roof with a parapet. It has a brick foundation and a tar built-up roof. The original red bricks are visible above the metal awning which covers much of the front/east façade.

Front/East Façade

There are three recessed doors with two stationary glass windows on each side of each door in this facade. On the middle recessed double doors is a stone-siding surround. The same stone-siding is below all the windows and in a decorative pattern on this façade of the building. A McKennon name plate is in the center of the building on the original brick in the parapet which is visible above the metal awning that covers most of the façade.

Rear/West Facade

Original brick covers this façade of the building. Concrete lintels are over and under each of the windows on the rear facade of the three sections of this building. The windows are either boarded or covered with bricks. Double metal doors are on the two-story section. The one-and-one-half story middle section has a single metal door topped with a stone lintel. The one-story section has a one-over-one window with bars and a single metal door with a concrete lintel.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 9.

Side/South Facade

The south façade gives an excellent view of the castellated parapet. The first and second story windows are boarded. There is a single glass door with a lintel near the back of the building. There is also a Wolff Brothers sign hanging on this façade.

WOLFF BROTHERS WAREHOUSE (circa 1925) Non-Contributing

Wolff Brothers Warehouse is a one-story brick structure built in the early 20th Century Standard Commercial style. It is a rectangular building with a brick foundation and a flat roof with a parapet. The roof material is tar built-up.

Front/East Facade

The front façade is covered with a metal awning like the one that covers the McKennon Building. There are no windows in the building. Recessed double metal doors are centered on the front façade.

BILLY FREE MEMORIAL PARK (1986) Non-Contributing

Billy Free Memorial Park was built in honor of former Mayor Billy Free. The site features in this park are: a gazebo, two benches, a picnic table and a white fence across the back of the site.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 10

A NEW LOOK BARBER AND STYLIST (circa 1990) Non-Contributing

This building was built in the 20th Century Standard Commercial style. It is rectangular shaped and is a frame construction with a shed roof. The wall material is weatherboard and it has a metal roof. There is a cast concrete foundation.

Front/East Façade

There are two double-hung windows on the front façade with six-over-six pane arrangement. The two doors on this façade have nine-pane windows.

Side/South Façade

A six-over-six double hung window is on the east side of this façade. A single metal door is on west side of this façade

Rear/West Façade

Corrugated metal covers the rear façade. A small one-over-one window is on the north side of the façade with a single wooden door beside the window.

NICKEL GROCERY BUILDING (circa 1925) Contributing

The Nickel Grocery Building is built in early 20th Century Standard Commercial style with brick walls and a flat roof with a parapet. It has a brick foundation.

Front/East Façade

A pink canvas awning covers the front of the façade over the single glass door and two stationary windows. The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 11

windows have a single narrow pane beside a single wide pane. The bricks have been painted white.

Side/South Façade

A stationary one-over-one window is near the east end of this façade. There are two eight-paned stationary windows in the center section of this façade. Two metal doors are in the west end of this façade. The barber shop next door is attached to The Nickel Grocery building, just past the two metal doors on the west end of the southern façade.

Rear/West Façade

The rear façade has double doors that are cemented and a single door that is boarded. Another wood door appears to be in use currently. A window on the north side of this façade is boarded. The openings for windows and doors are arched and have a decorative brick pattern in the arch.

DANTE'S DEPARTMENT STORE (circa 1925) Contributing

Dante's Department Store is a large rectangular early 20th Century Standard Commercial style building. The walls are brick and it has a flat roof with a parapet. It has a brick foundation.

Front/East Façade

The building is divided into three sections. The first section has stationary glass double doors with a pair of stationary glass windows on each side. There are also five stationary glass windows on the right side of the doors. Two blue canvas awnings cover the doors and windows. On the upper façade is a Dante name plate with the construction date. There are advertisements painted on the building just below the name-plate. The second section of the building is fenestrated by two sets of five stationary windows and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 12

one set of double stationary windows with double glass doors in the center. There is a Dante name plate in the bricks above the windows. Dante's slogan "YOU FURNISH THE GIRL - WE FURNISH THE HOME" is above the three canvas awnings that cover the windows and doors of this section. The front façade of the third section of this building is painted blue. An Arts Center sign is centered above the two grey awnings covering the doors and windows. The fenestration is the same as the first section, with glass double doors with a pair of stationary windows on each side and five additional stationary windows on the right side of the door.

Side/North Façade

This façade is highly visible and has been used to advertise. DANTE'S DEPARTMENT STORE-SERVING DUMAS SINCE 1897 is emblazoned across this façade in large letters. When the building was painted, advertisements that were on the original brick façade were salvaged by painting around the artwork which resulted in five large blocks of advertising separated by small multi-paned windows. One of the windows has been boarded. A double door is located at the east side of this façade topped by a small paned horizontal stationary window. On the west side of the façade are two roll-up service doors and a white awning-covered single door. A stationary one-over-one window is on the west end of the façade, as well as a boarded door.

Rear/East Façade

A shed/storage area runs the width of the building. It is a one story building with a shed roof. The structure has bricks on the street side wall and corrugated metal siding across the rear façade. There are no windows or doors.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 14

<u>Resource #</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Current Occupant</u>	<u>Map ID #</u>	<u>C or NC</u>
DE0034	165 E. South Main	Chamber of Commerce	1	IL
DE0038	163 E. South Main	Main Street	2	C
DE0164	153 E. South Main	Gill Furniture	3	C
DE0163	153 E. South Main Street	Gill Furniture	4	C
DE0166	139 E. South Main Street	Christopher W. Hays, Attorney at Law and Gilead Resource Center	5	C
DE0318	129 E. South Main Street	Buck's Liquor	6	NC
DE0342	131 E. South Main Street	D's Clothing & Corner Barber Shop	7	C
DE0037	100 W. South Main Street	Phoenix Youth Opportunity Center and Dumas City Arts Center	8	C

Chart Reference: C—Contributing NC—Noncontributing IL—Individually Listed

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 14

DE0338	152 W. South Main Street	Holthoff Attorney at Law	9	C
DE0339	158 W. South Main Street	Vacant	10	NC
DE0340	Between 158 and 162 South Main Street	Park Site	11	NC
DE 0341	162 South Main Street	Vacant	12	NC
DE 0039	168 W. South Main Street	Vacant	13	NC

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Dumas Commercial Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criterion A for its associations with the agricultural and commercial history in Dumas and Desha County. Merchant and Farmers Bank, Banks Mercantile, and Porter Grocery Store were opened to assist the farmers with their personal, business and farming interests and are good examples of the District's association with agriculture and farmers.

In addition, the Dumas Commercial Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criterion C for its buildings which are good examples of early 20th Century Standard Commercial architectural styles with secondary Colonial Revival influence. Merchants and Farmers Bank building is an excellent example of early 20th Century Standard Commercial style with Colonial Revival secondary influence. The Banks Building and the Porter Building are early 20th Century Standard Commercial architectural style buildings. The Porter Building, built in 1905, is the oldest building in the District. At a time when most buildings in the area were wood construction, these buildings were brick with modern commercial architectural styles of the period.

ELABORATION

The Dumas Commercial Historic District straddles the railroad tracks that were the catalyst for growth and progress in this rural, agricultural town. The Saint Louis Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad placed its tracks through southeast Arkansas in 1870. The railroad not only brought people to Dumas to work the large plantations, but also provided a way for growers to get their cotton and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 2

other crops to market. The railroad crossed the 940 acre farm of W. B. Dumas. He had purchased the farm from the Holmes family, who came to the Arkansas Delta from Mississippi. When the railroad came through his plantation, William Dumas, seeing an opportunity, surveyed the area, and the town of Dumas began to take shape.

The City of Dumas was incorporated in 1904. Gus Waterman, a young Jewish immigrant from Germany, was Dumas's first Mayor. Julian Waterman, youngest child of Gus Waterman, was the first Dean of the University of Arkansas School of Law. Waterman Hall, on the Fayetteville campus, is named in his honor.

Reuben A. Pickens was a bookkeeper for Tillar & Co. when he began buying land. His first two attempts at farming were a failure but on his third try he became a successful farmer. It was said that the usual reason for failure was not because a farmer couldn't raise cotton, but because he couldn't raise enough corn to feed his mules. In the days before mechanization, it took between 1000 and 1200 mules to farm the Pickens acreage. Therefore, Pickens became an excellent corn farmer. In addition, he became a leader in agriculture husbandry. Burton C. Pickens succeeded his father as head of what became the largest plantation in Desha County. R.A. Pickens, II, grandson of R.A. Pickens, assumed control of the farm in 1932 and under his leadership the farm was mechanized.

S.A. Banks moved to Dumas in 1902 to work as a bookkeeper in a general mercantile store. He later bought the store, and renamed it S.A. Banks and Company. Banks also owned farming interests, ginning interests, and an ice company. The Banks Building in which he located his store was built circa 1920. The Banks Building is being renovated by Dumas Main Street program.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 3

During this renovation, transoms with original glass have been uncovered and restored. Pressed tin on the ceiling has been refurbished and re-used. In removing wall coverings, the party wall to the Porter Building was revealed. On this wall were hand-painted advertisements. One of the ads was for Dr. Tichenor's, the other for H.M. Fish & Son.

David Oscar Porter was another enterprising man who made a contribution to the economy of Dumas, specifically Main Street. Porter built five of the buildings on Main Street between 1905 and 1938. All of these buildings are in the proposed Dumas Commercial Historic District. The Porter Grocery was a thriving business, but the saloon Porter owned was most profitable. The saloon was one of five on Dumas' Main Street in the 1940s. The Porter buildings housed many types of businesses. Among them were general mercantile stores, pool halls, grocery stores, doctor's offices and barber and beauty shops. In one barber/beauty shop, there were small black and white tiles on the floor which remain in the building and can be seen today.

During the 1940s a sewing factory occupied the second story of the two-story Porter building. In the early 1950s, the Sears store was located in the first Porter building. Danny Gill bought the Porter buildings around 1985. Gill Furniture occupies two of the buildings and offices occupy the lower story of the two-story building.

Claude Reeve McKennon came to Dumas in the 1890s. By 1910 he owned a cotton gin and a growing farming operation. He stunned the southern business community in early 1947 by selling his entire cotton crop for \$1 million, an event which made headlines throughout the region.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 4

McKennon was joined in business by his son Joe Lee McKennon. Their gin grew into the largest public gin in the area. In 1930 the McKennon's opened a John Deere farm implement dealership. Thomas Francis Shea, Jr., joined his grandfather and uncle in the implement business, later acquiring full ownership of McKennon Implement Company. His sons, Thomas and William Shea now supervise the family's interests.

The McKennon Building, on the west side of Main Street was built by Claude Reeve McKennon in 1925. The same year, Sam Wolff opened Wolff Brothers Department Store in that building. Wolff later bought the building and he and his heirs operated a business in that same location until 2004. The building is divided into three sections; a two-story section, a one-and-one-half story section, and a one-story section. The first few years Wolff Brothers Department Store occupied the first section only. In the second section was the Gem Theatre, which Elaine Wolff, wife of Sam Wolff, said they laughingly (and affectionately) called "the Germ." The third section of the building housed the Dumas Cash Store. Wolff Brothers eventually occupied all three sections. Over the first section of the building, there were apartments rented to the Fletcher and the Huey families. Dr. Cook had his office above the Gem Theatre.

Charles Dante was a young Jewish immigrant from Poland. In 1894, he arrived in Dumas as a peddler. By 1897, Dante had saved enough money to open a store. He described his store as "the one boy store". He enlarged the store, naming it The Globe Store. By 1925 Dante had erected a much larger brick building on west Main Street for Dante's Department Store. The slogan "YOU FURNISH THE GIRL - WE'LL FURNISH THE HOME" was painted on the front facade.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 5

Dante also saw the wisdom of investing in land, raising cotton, and in public ginning of cotton. His son and later his grandson joined him in the family business. Dante became known throughout the Mid-South as a leader in the cotton industry. He was instrumental in establishing Dumas Cotton Gin with partners, the Baxter and Holthoff families. This gin was considered to be superior in efficiency and technology. At the time of its opening it was the most advanced cotton gin in the nation. Charles Dante and his son-in-law, Bernard Tanenbaum, also manufactured ladies apparel in Dumas under the name Dantan, Inc. The company prospered and in 1947 they sold the company. In 1957, Bernard Tanenbaum founded United Dollar Stores at the site of Dante's Department Store in Dumas. This venture grew into a chain of 242 stores operating in seven states and in Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and the Philippines. All of this was controlled from the company's home office and warehouse in Dumas. In 1977, this company was sold to the Dollar General Corporation.

Timber also added to the economy of Dumas and the surrounding area. The Stimson family owned 46,000 acres of timber and in the 1920s, they built two sawmills in Dumas. They built four other mills in Indiana, Tennessee, Helena, Arkansas and Floyd, Louisiana. In addition to timber, they owned interests in farming, cattle, ginning, and Allis-Chalmers farm implements. Today, Robert B. Stimson, Jr., manages the family interests.

The buildings in the Dumas Commercial Historic District are representative of the men of vision like Dante, Porter, Banks, McKennon, Shea, Waterman, Wolff, Stimson, and Pickens. They leave behind a legacy of commitment to commerce, farming and a city. The roots of tradition grow deep in this Delta soil.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Dumas Commercial Historic District
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 6.

The Dumas Commercial District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criterion A for its association with agricultural and commercial history in Dumas and Desha County. In addition, the Dumas Commercial Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criterion C for its buildings which are good examples of early 20th Century Standard Commercial styles.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 9 Page 1

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- Shea, Debbie. Personal Interview. 4 Dec. 2006. Dumas, AR.
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- Scheynayder, Charlotte T. Telephone Interview. 29 Nov. 2006. Dumas, AR.
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section Number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the center of Waterman Street in the alley behind East South Main Street, proceed northerly to the center of Choctaw Street; thence proceed westerly to the center of alley behind West South Main Street and proceed southerly to center of Waterman Street; thence easterly to point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

This boundary was drawn to include properties in the historic downtown Dumas commercial area that maintain the highest level of historic integrity.

DUMAS COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
Name of Property

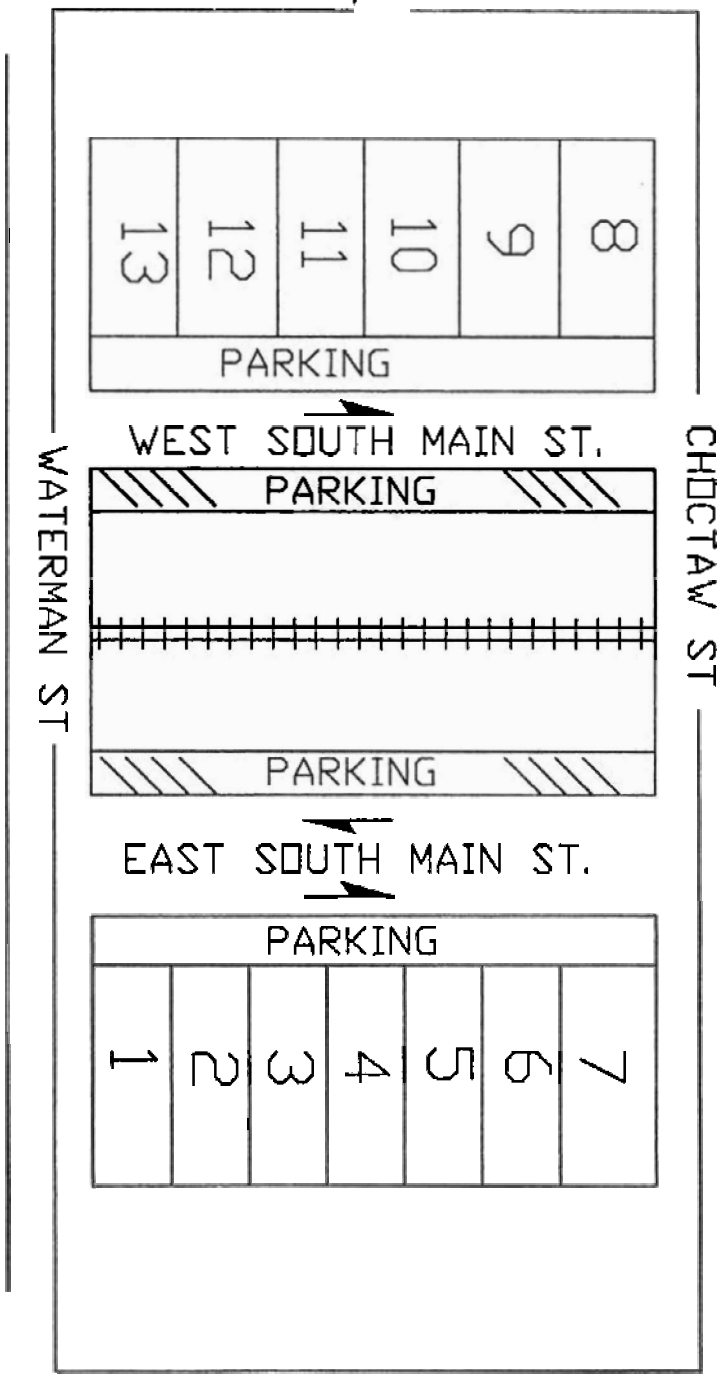
DESHA COUNTY
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 11 Page 1

SKETCH MAP



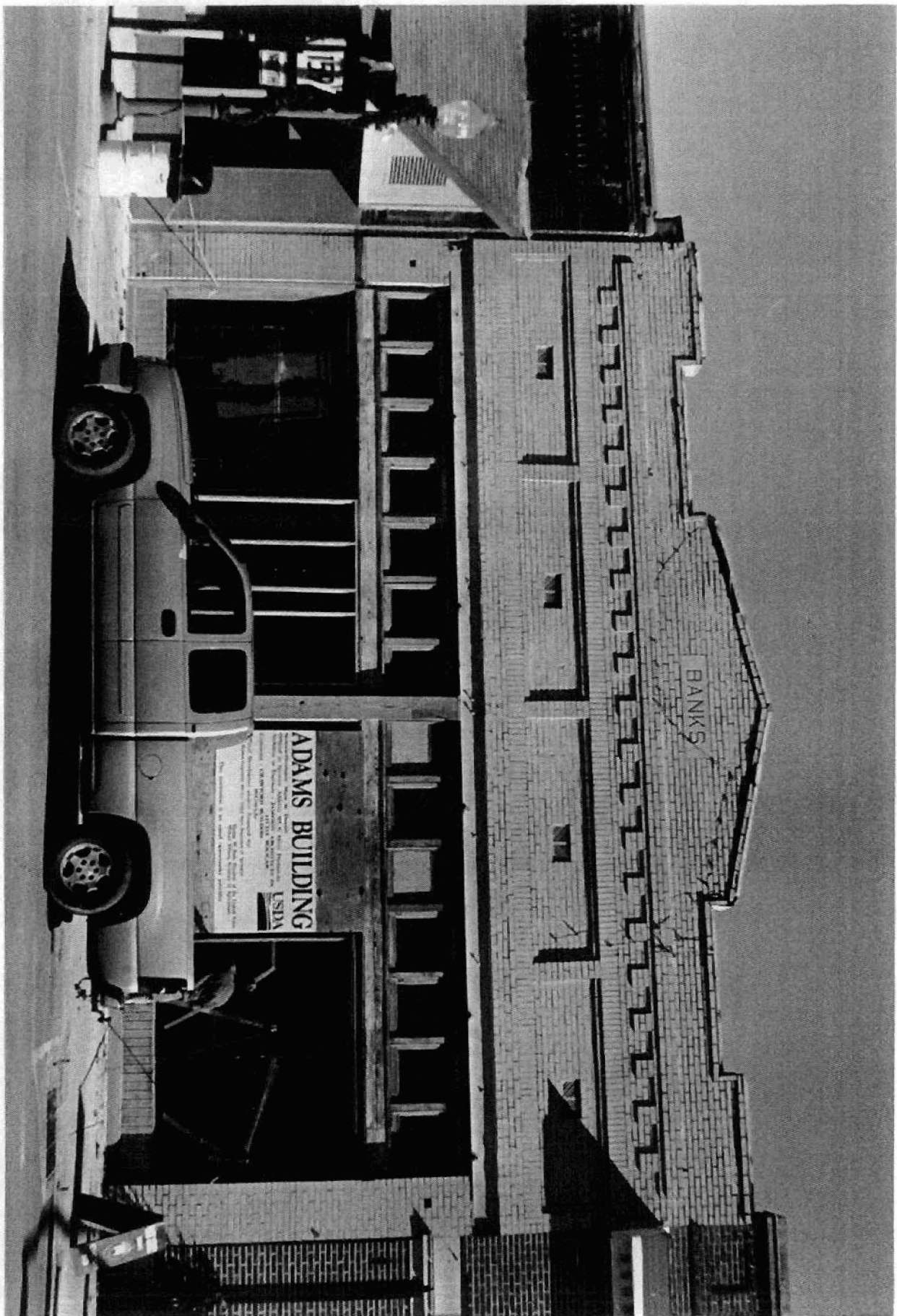
DUMAS COMMERCIAL
HISTORIC DISTRICT

LEGEND

- Boundary
- P Parking
- 12 Buildings
- X Non-Contributing
- > Photo Locations

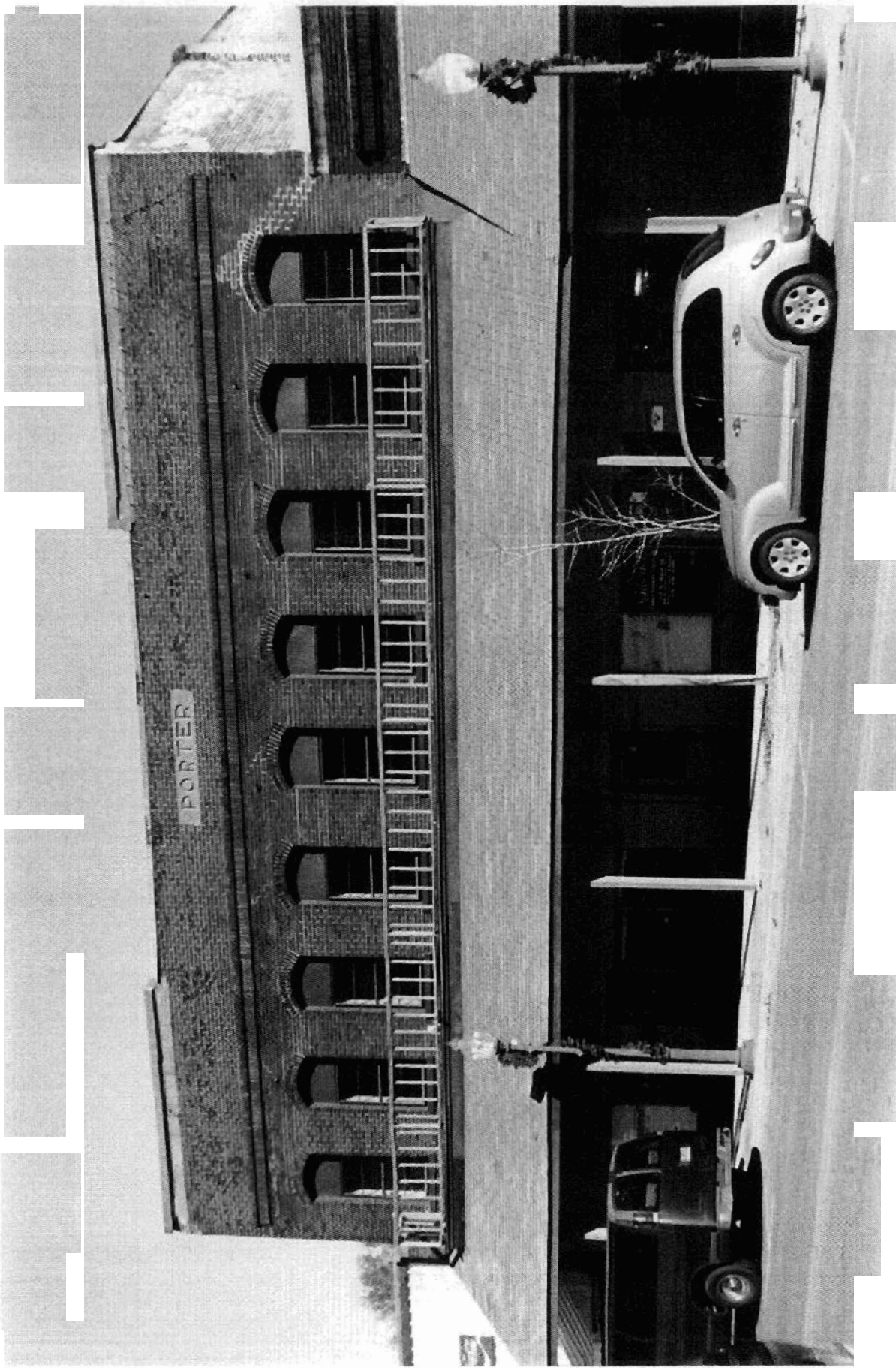




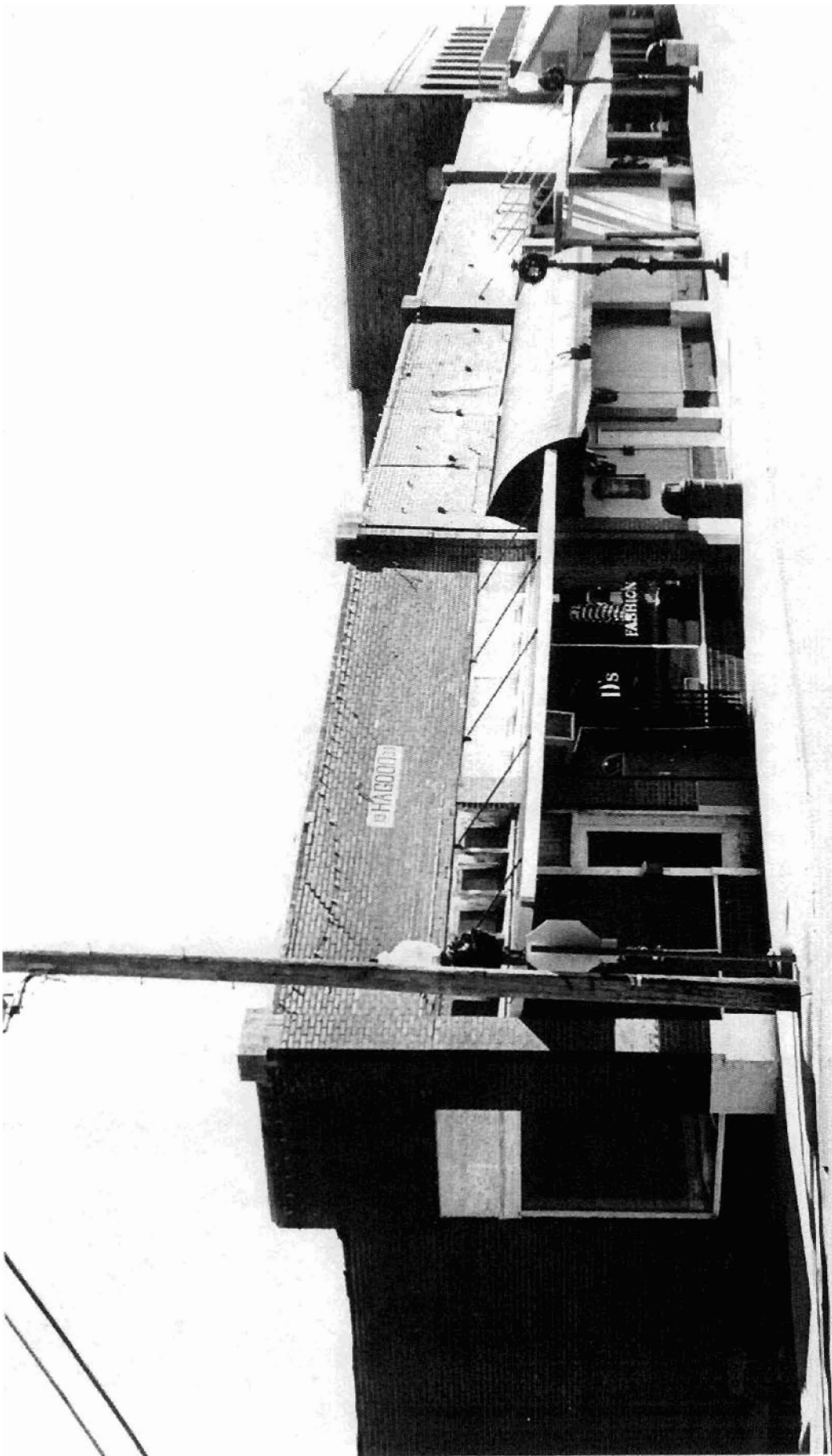








PORTER

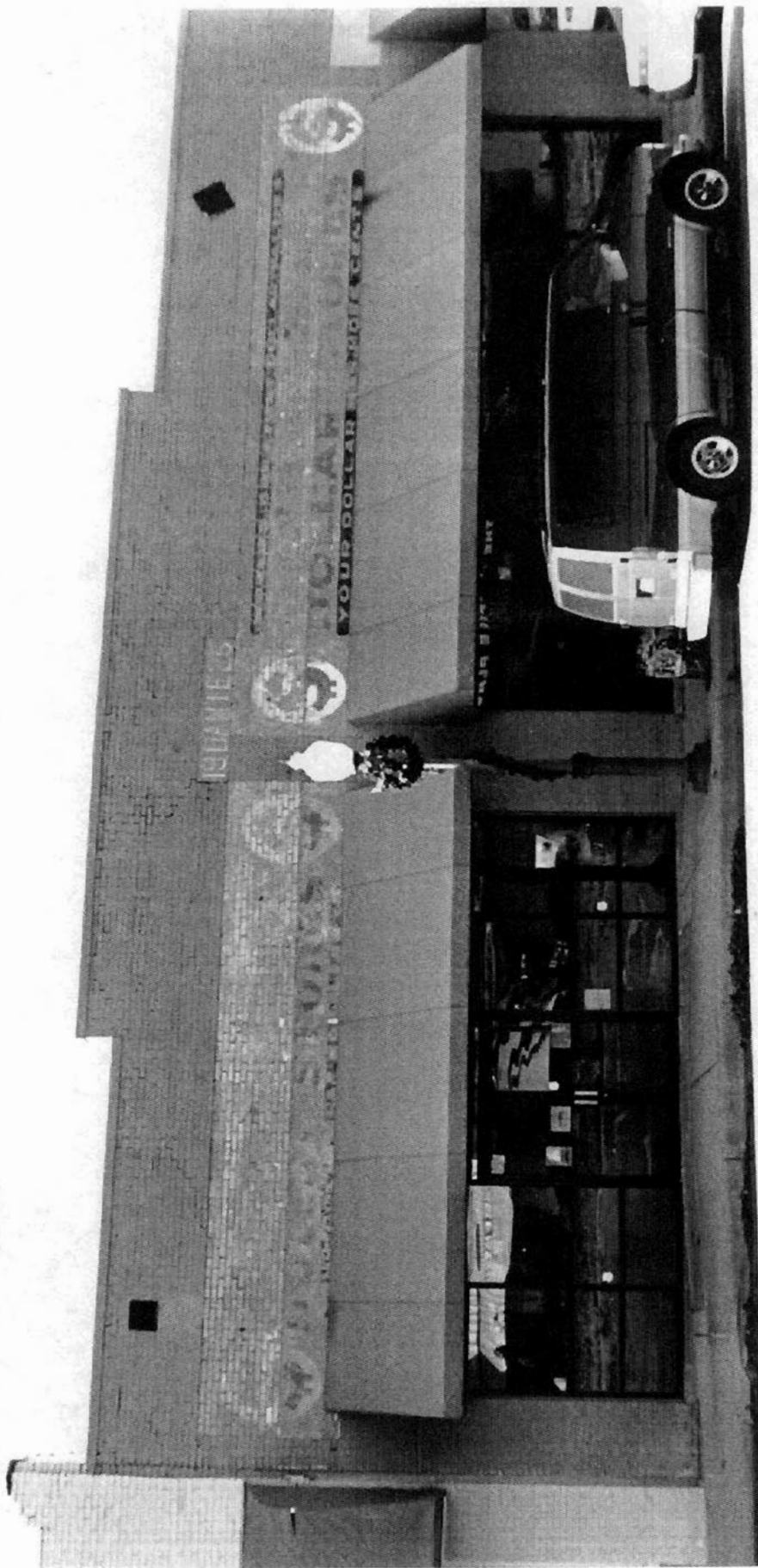


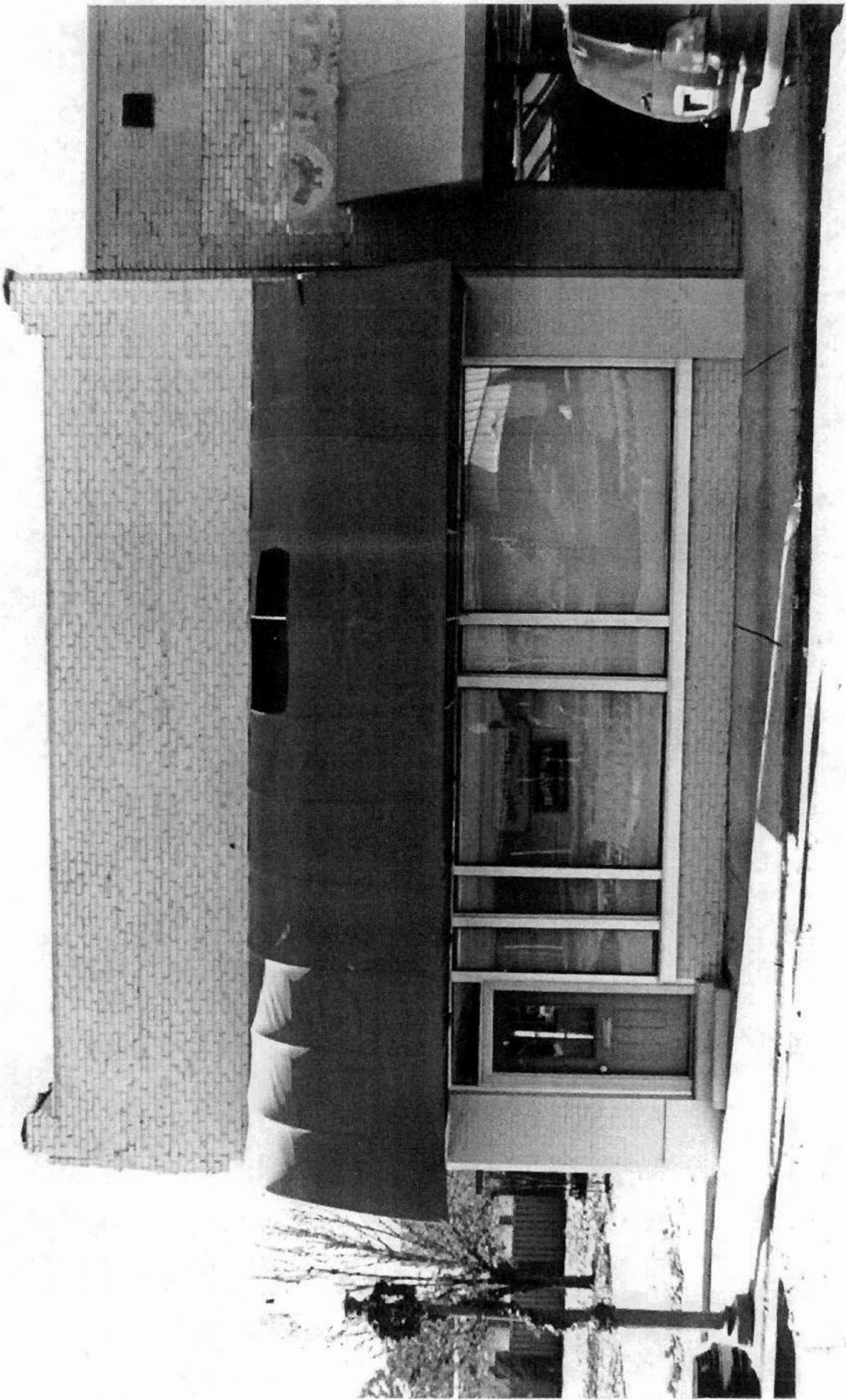
DANTES DEPARTMENT STORE

SERVING DUMAS SINCE 1897

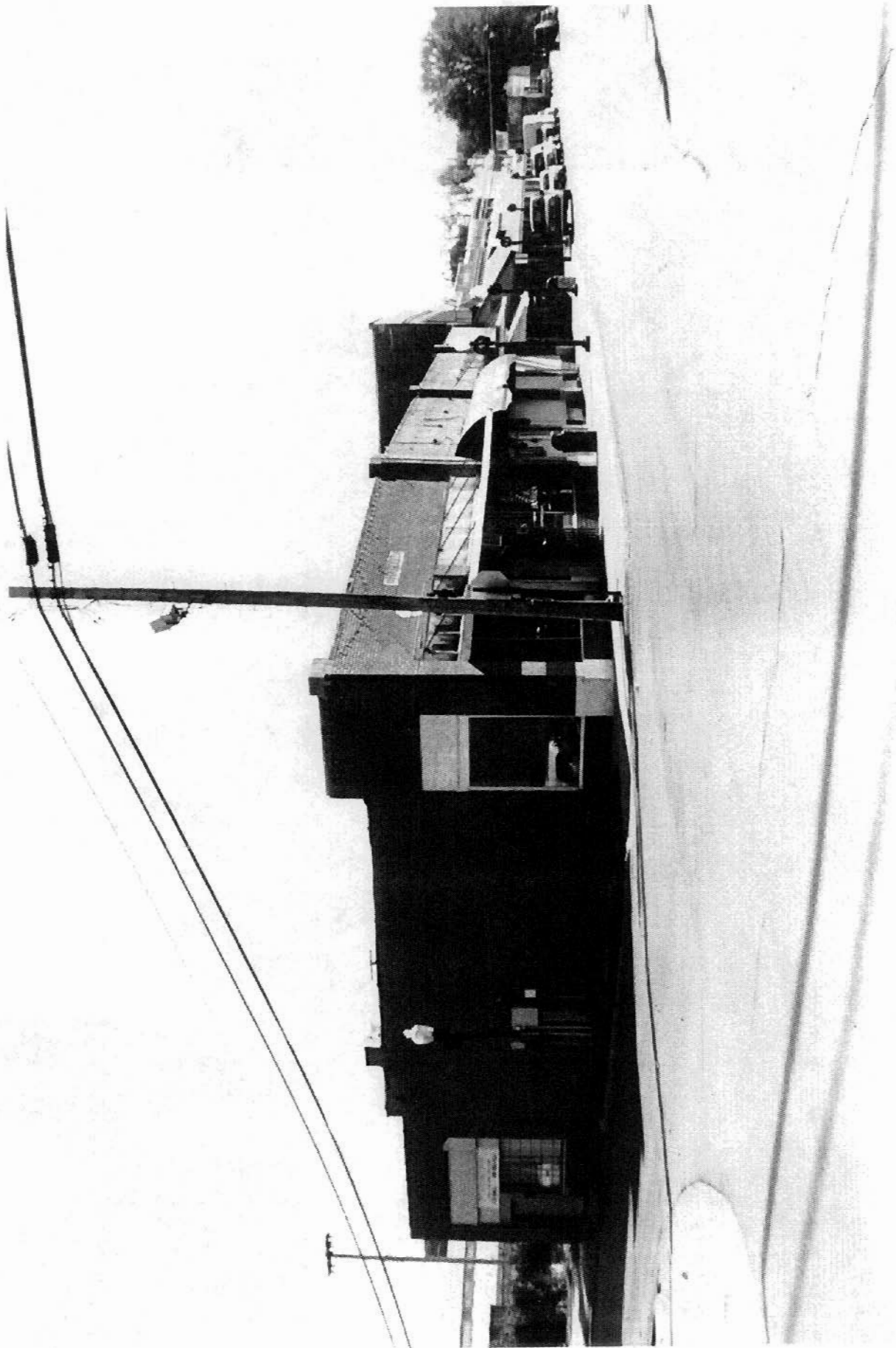


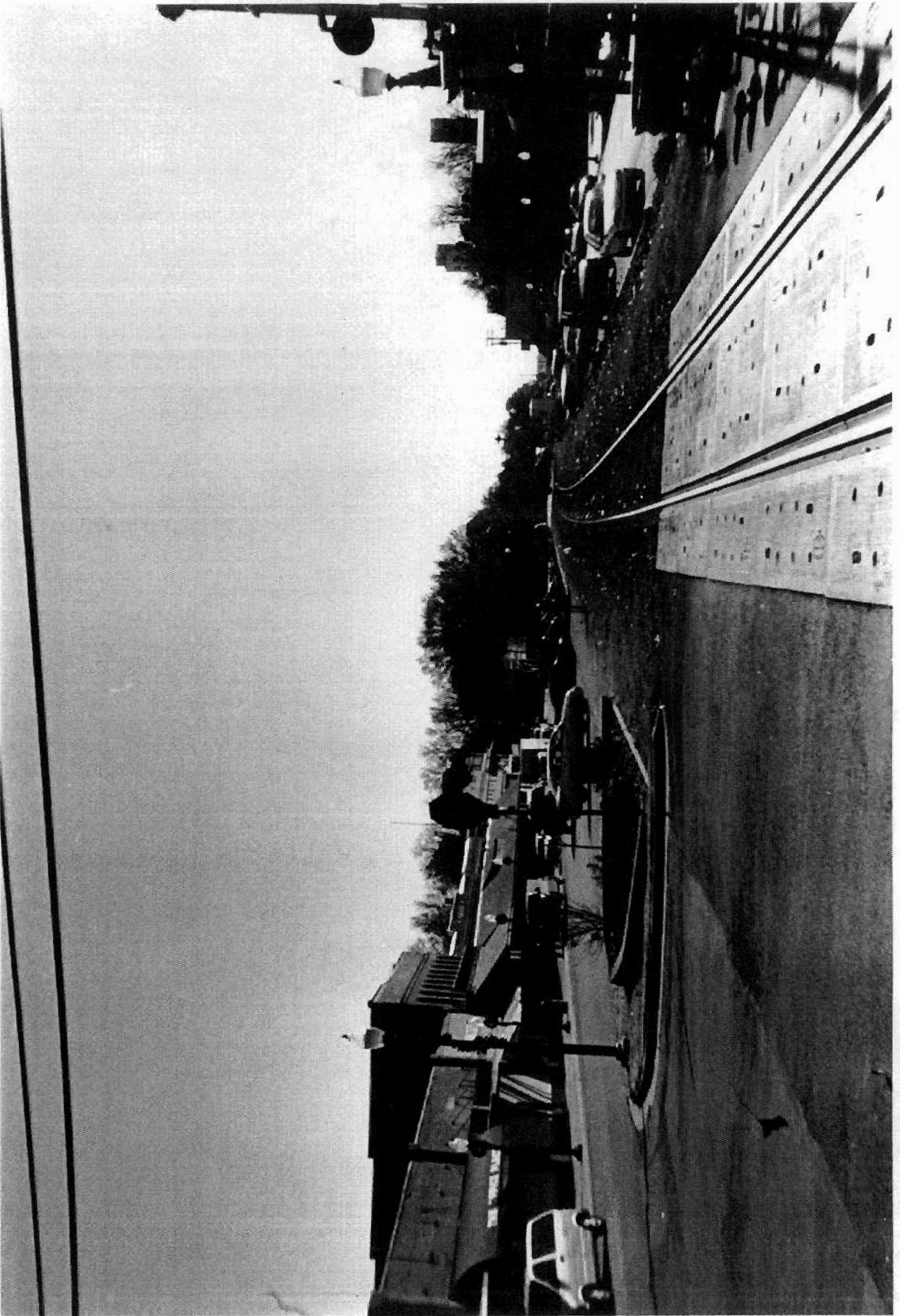


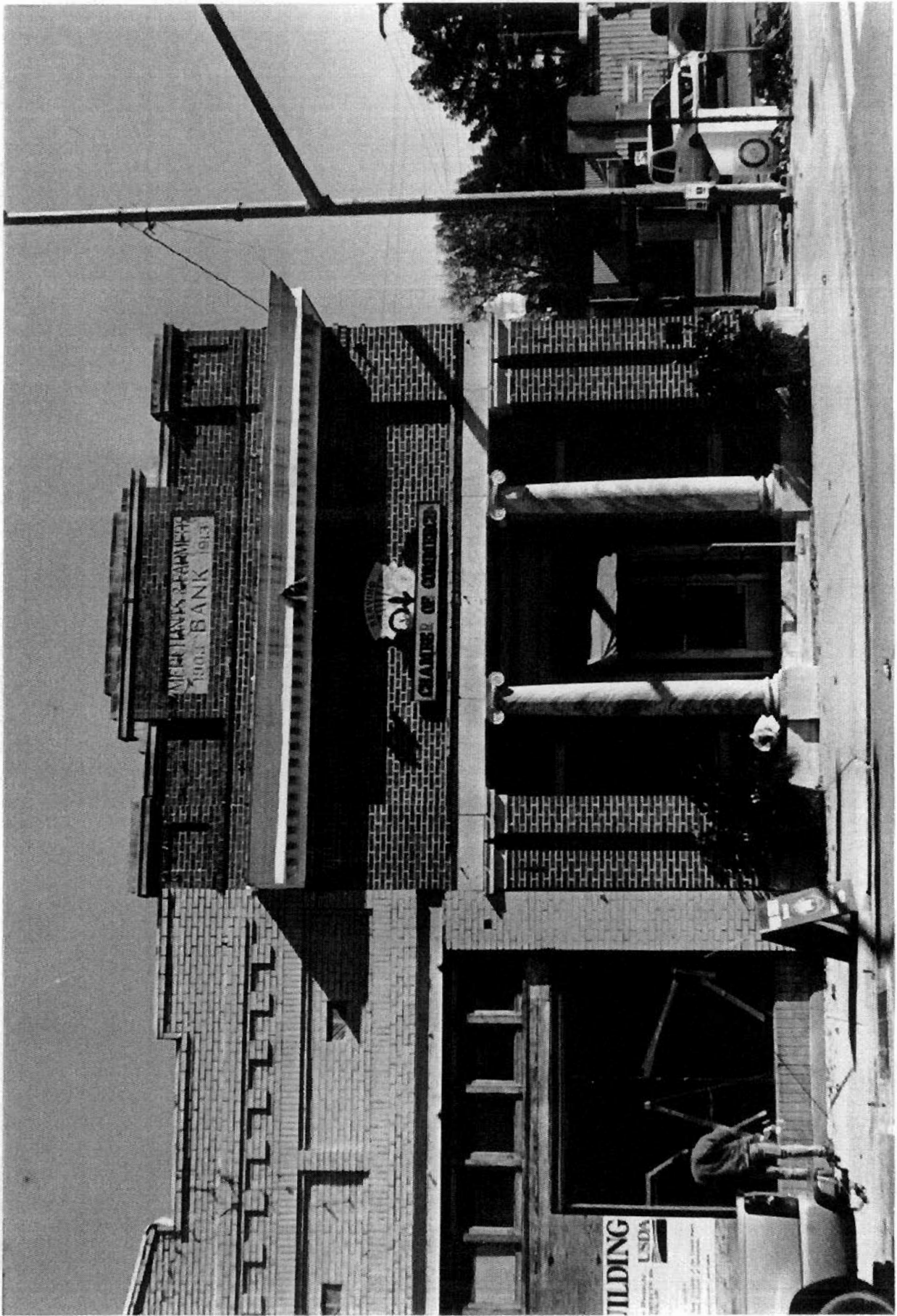


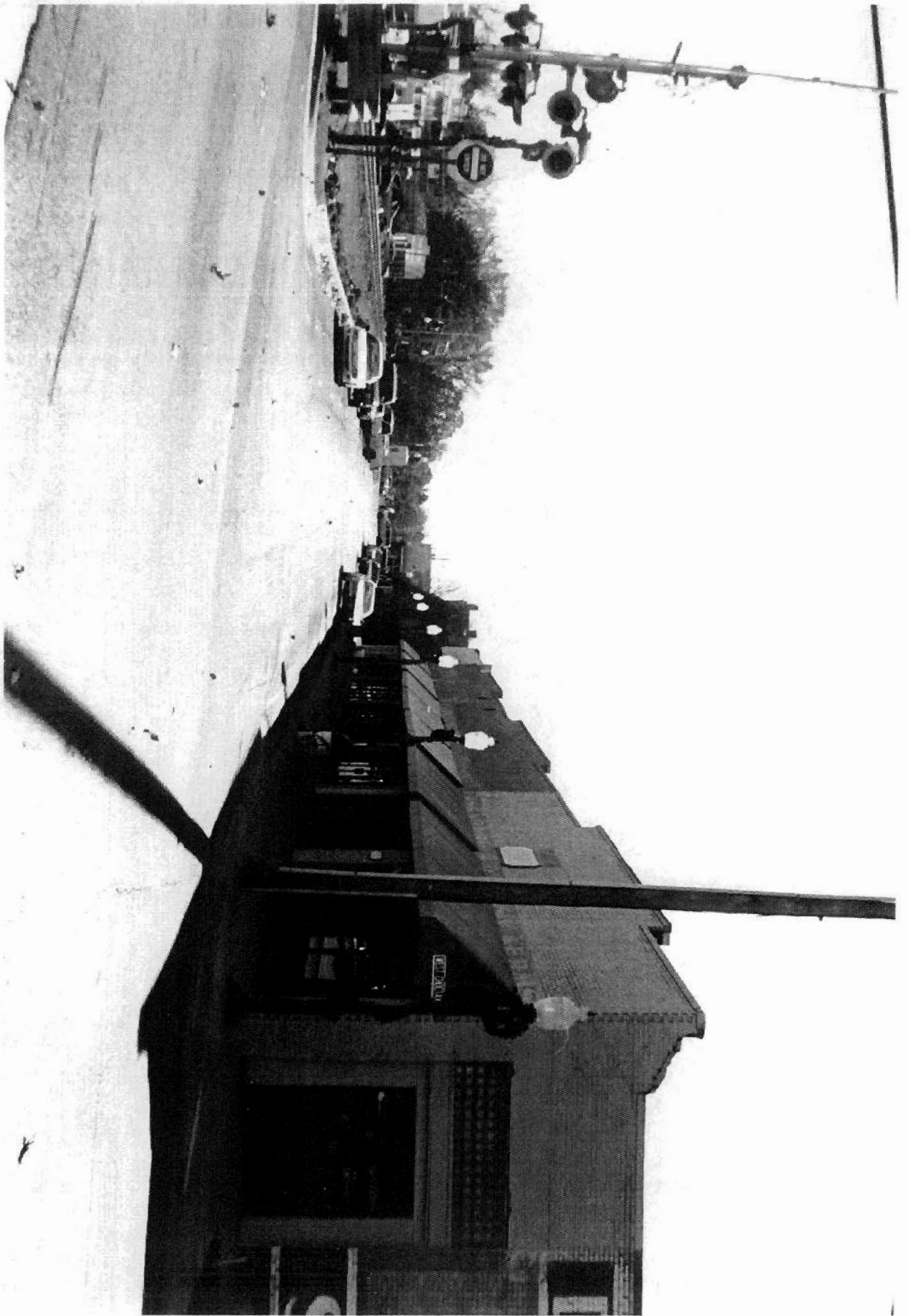




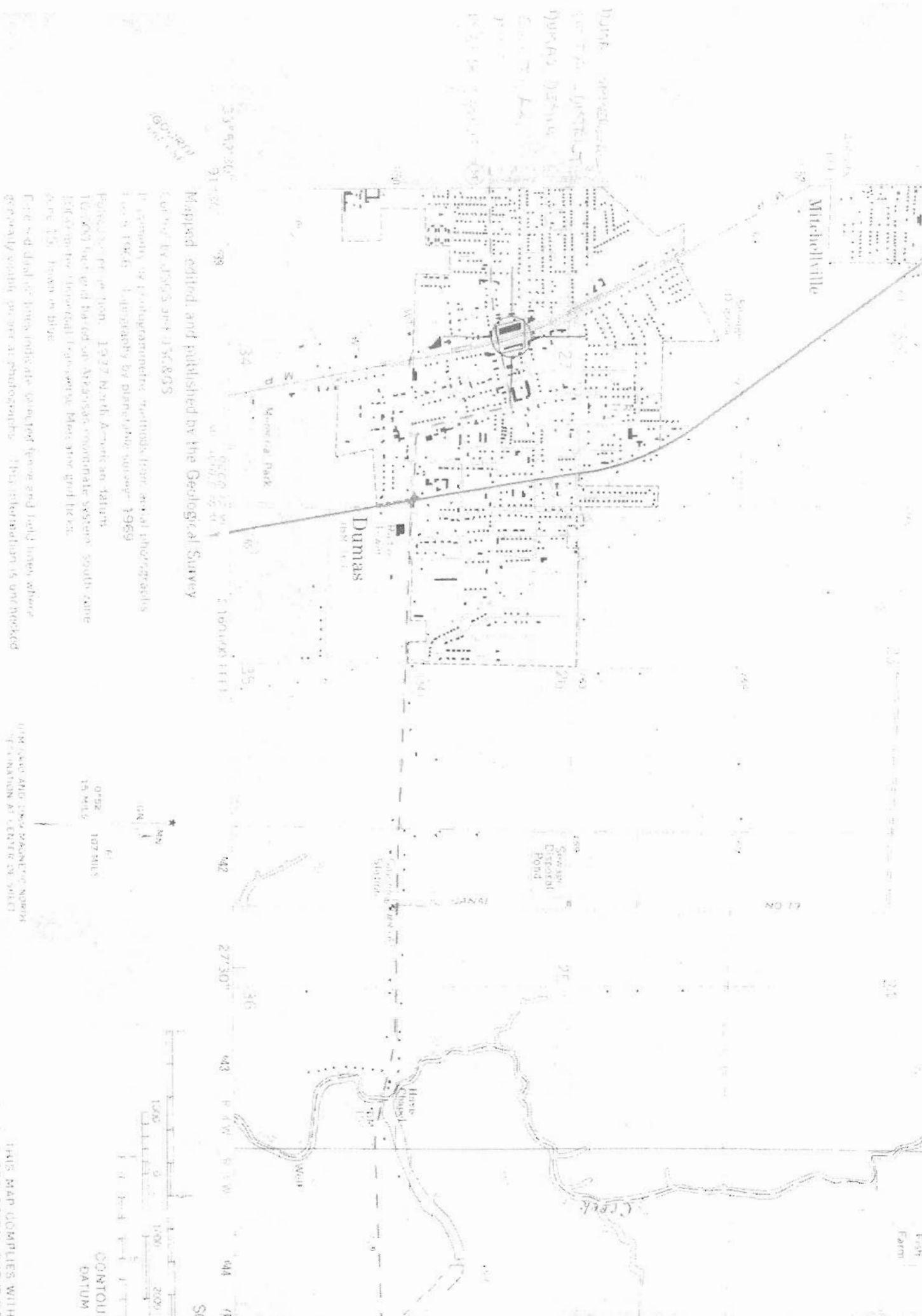












Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by 4565 and 456805
 by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
 taken in 1964. Elevation by plane-table survey, 1969
 by 1977 North American datum
 10,000 feet and based on Arkansas coordinate system. South zone
 reference to Universal Transverse Mercator grid lines
 zone 15, mean spheroid

Spot heights in feet indicate ground level and bench marks where
 generally within 50 feet of photographs. This information is unretouched

0.92 107 MILES
 15 MILES
 0.92 107 MILES
 15 MILES



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH THE
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 AND ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION
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