

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 an 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 Clinton Commercial Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Town Branch Creek to the north and northeast and by Highway 65B to the southwest and northwest. not for publication

city or town Clinton vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Van Buren code 141 zip code 72031

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for 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.)

C. Ed. Proctor
Signature of certifying official/Title

3/8/06
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 certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
56	43	buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
57	43	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

2 (VB0104 & VB0054)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC
- COMMERCE/TRADE
- GOVERNMENT
- RELIGION
- FUNERARY
- TRANSPORTATION

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC
- COMMERCE/TRADE
- GOVERNMENT
- FUNERARY

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- OTHER: (National)
- OTHER: (20TH Century Commercial Architecture)
- LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: (Tudor Revival)
- LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: (Bungalow/Craftsman)
- MODERN MOVEMENT: (Moderne & Art Deco)

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation CONCRETE, BRICK & STONE
- walls STONE, BRICK, STUCCO, METAL & WOOD.
- roof ASPHALT, METAL
- other

Narrative Description

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET, SECTION 7 PAGE 1.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for 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 birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
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

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1903 - 1956

Significant Dates

1903 (year of construction of the oldest known building)

1926 (fire)

1934 (construction of courthouse)

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Claud Horton, Sam Whillock, Art Hollaway, Sherman Ward, Cecil Jones

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET, SECTION 8 PAGE 7.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET, SECTION 9 PAGE 16.

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:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately 45 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Table with 4 columns: Reference Number, Zone, Easting, Northing. Rows 1-4.

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Prt S 1/2 Prt NE 1/4 and NE 1/4 SE 1/4 Section 15, Township 11N, Range 14 W and Prt W 1/2 NR 1/4 SW 1/4 Section 14, T11N, R14W The majority of the district lies south and west of Town Branch Creek and East of Highway 65B (also included are 9 properties lying on the west side of Hwy 65B).

Boundary Justification

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET, SECTION 10 PAGE 19.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kara Mills Oosterhous, Heritage Resource Consultant
organization Prepared for: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date January 29, 2006
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone 870.324.9880
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name N/A
street & number
city or town state zip code telephone

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 listing. 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 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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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SECTION 7

SUMMARY

Located in Clinton, Arkansas, Van Buren County, the Clinton Commercial Historic District is comprised of 102 historic resources – one site and 101 buildings. Two of these buildings are presently listed in the National Register of Historic Places: the Van Buren County Courthouse (Listed 1991) and the Walter Patterson Filling Station (Listed 2001). Of the 100 resources (excluding the two resources already listed in the NR), 57 resources (57%) maintain integrity and contribute to the district's significance while 43 (43%) do not contribute to the district's significance due to the lack of integrity or because they do not contribute to the district's period of significance of 1903 to 1956. The majority of the buildings are representative of twentieth century commercial architecture, while a few buildings display restrained interpretations of styles such as English Revival, Art Deco, Art Moderne, Craftsman, and National. All of the contributing buildings retain their overall massing and setback and remain true to the historic character of the district and substantiate the history and the development of Clinton as a political and commercial center.

ELABORATION

Van Buren County lies between the 35th and the 36th North Latitude and between the 92nd and 93rd West Longitude. Searcy and Stone Counties bound it on the north, Cleburne County on the east, Faulkner and Conway Counties on the south, and Pope County on the west. Van Buren County is approximately 709 square miles.¹ The county seat of Van Buren County is Clinton, which is located in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains, at an elevation of 505 feet, where the Archey Creek meets the Little Red River.² Clinton is approximately 11.4 square miles.³ In 1833, in the vicinity of present-day Clinton, a post office was opened and named Clinton. In 1842, George Counts founded the town of Clinton, which later became the county seat in 1844. Almost all of the historic fabric of the courthouse square area, which comprises the proposed Clinton Commercial Historic District, dates to the twentieth century, with the exception of the Clinton Cemetery established the mid 1800s.

The area that comprises the Clinton Commercial Historic District lies within the original 40-acre land grant acquired by George Counts in 1844. Fire destroyed most of Clinton's earliest records circa 1865 when the courthouse burned; therefore, to date, research has yet to reveal when lots in the downtown vicinity were first created and sold. Much of what is known about the early history and development of the commercial area comes from photographs, newspaper articles, and local knowledge. One thing is for certain, since the mid 1800s, the courthouse has been the anchor of Clinton. Clinton truly has "grown-up" around the courthouse square.

One of the earliest photographs of Clinton (late 1800s to early 1900s) shows the town laid out on a grid pattern with rectangular lots (Figure A, Page 21). The courthouse appears to be surrounded by frame one and two-story buildings with urban farmsteads appearing on the periphery. The earliest available edition of the Clinton Banner, 6 October 1881 contains advertisements for ten businesses in Clinton or close to the town. One advertisement states the location of a business as being "southside courthouse square." Using the courthouse as a point of reference once again validates the importance of the courthouse to the business district.⁴ By the late 1920s stone, concrete and brick buildings began replacing nineteenth-century frame buildings. It is hard to

¹ Greer, Tom and Lavell Cole Arkansas: The World Around Us. (New York: Macmillan/McGraw-Hill School Publishing Co., 1991), Appendix A38.

² City Data.Com, "Clinton Arkansas," <http://www.city-data.com/city/Clinton-Arkansas.html>.

³ Wales, Jimmy (founder of Wikipedia), "Clinton, Arkansas," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clinton%2C_AR

⁴ Van Buren County Historical Society, Calendar: "Yesteryear in Van Buren County," 2003, Vol. 7 (cover photo).

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document when improvements were made to the downtown area. Photographs from the late 1920s reveal that the roads in the commercial area were still dirt (See Fig. B, Page 21).⁵ A headline in the Van Buren County Democrat on 31 August 1928 states, "Clearing Right of Way for Highway 65 Through Clinton" (which serves as the districts boundary to the southwest and the northwest). It was along this section of road that many automobile related structures were constructed during the 1930s, 40s and 50s.⁶ A later article on 7 June 1929 announced, "...contract for graveling Highway 65 from Damascus to Clinton will be awarded June 19th or 20th i.e., if as many as 3 bids are received and the low bid is acceptable...". Light & Power Company of Saint Louis announced its impending arrival in November 1928, and punctuated its presence by erecting cedar poles.⁷ In addition to constructing the courthouse in the 1930s, the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) constructed sidewalks in Clinton.⁸ As for when the streets around the courthouse square were paved, an article in the Van Buren County Democrat dated 20 October 1938 stated, "The street improvement around the court square and on the two streets leading out onto Highway 65 is moving along nicely." It has yet to be determined when the streets were given their present names. One of the earliest references to date, of street names, occurs in an 1938 article in the Van Buren County Democrat that states that the Thompson garage was on Griggs Street. According to Cannady Abstract, R. C. Workman surveyed the city in 1941. The plat map and the county order state that the City of Clinton accepted the survey on 20 March 1947 and that the county accepted the survey on 20 March 1950.⁹

The layout of the downtown area and the concept of a courthouse square dates back to Clinton's nineteenth century. With the exception of the Clinton Cemetery (nineteenth century), all of the buildings in the proposed Clinton Commercial Historic District date to the early to mid twentieth century. Throughout the years commercial buildings in Clinton have come and gone, due in part to deterioration and natural disasters such as fire. The most significant fire, as far as impacting the built environment of the courthouse square, was the fire of 1926. The destruction of these frame buildings resulted in the desire to build more "fire-proof" buildings and to simply keep up with the changing trends in architecture. Almost all of the buildings in the immediate vicinity of the courthouse are commercial buildings, the majority of which were built in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, replacing earlier frame buildings. These buildings are either of concrete construction or frame buildings with a stone or brick veneer; most of which rest on a concrete slab foundation and are generally topped with a flat or gabled roof hidden behind a parapet. In addition to standard twentieth century commercial architecture, other buildings within the district display restrained interpretations of English Revival, Art Deco, Art Moderne, Craftsman, and National styles. Most of the information in the following style descriptions comes from personal observations and A Field Guide to American Houses by Virginia and Lee McAlester.

Twentieth-Century Commercial: Twentieth-Century Commercial Architecture as applied to historic buildings (pre-1955) are generally free standing buildings or a continuous row of buildings of brick or frame construction. Many buildings constructed during this time period, especially in the early to mid twentieth century, are solid brick or solid concrete block construction or at least present a veneer of brick, concrete, or stone. Twentieth-century commercial buildings vary in

⁵ A Town View From the Hill, 1929 & Away Back When, 1920-1930, photographs in Koone-Hollenbeck Scrapbook [GENIA], Van Buren County Historical Museum, Clinton, AR.

⁶ "Clearing Right of Way for Highway 65 Through Clinton," Van Buren County Democrat, 31 August 1928, pg. 1.

⁷ "Light and Ice Plant," Van Buren County Democrat, 23 November 1928, pg. 1.

⁸ A Pictorial History of Van Buren County Arkansas: Memories of a Century 1890-1990 [Glen Hackett, Decade of 1930], 1990; reprint, (Marceline, MO: Heritage House Publishing Company, 2005), 58.

⁹ Borecky, Dortha, Interview by Kara Oosterhous, 18 November 2005; Borecky, Dortha, Email Correspondence with Kara Oosterhous, 17 January 2006; and Workman, R. C. "Map of Clinton, Van Buren County Arkansas," (March 1947).

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height based upon when and where they were constructed and the technology employed. Twentieth-century commercial buildings in Clinton are modest in design; most are one or two stories and are clad in brick, stone, or stucco. Three good examples of this style of architecture are: The John Pate Building, constructed 1935, at 512 Main Street (VB0070); Charles Culpepper Meat Market building, constructed 1935 at 360 Main Street (VB0075); and Clinton Motor Company building, constructed circa 1927 at 393 Court Street (VB0103).

National: Buildings that are termed "National" in response to style were generally constructed from the mid 1800s through the late 1800s, with some adaptations of this style occurring as late as the 1930s – these generally being front-facing gable residences with restrained Craftsman-like features. This style of housing is also referred to as plain/traditional. These buildings are often termed "vernacular," displaying only modest architectural ornamentation. The earliest example of this "style" in the district is the Fred Kemp House, located at 669 Boykin Court (VB0089), which is a side-facing gable residence constructed circa 1903, purchased and remodeled by Fred and Minnie Ann Kemp in 1917. The A. S. Alexander House is a front-facing gable residence constructed circa 1920 that is a late representation of this style located on Church Street (VB0079).

English Revival: Steeply pitched, side-gable roofs that are usually dominated by one or more prominent cross gables characterize this style. Other features often include half timbering and stucco as well as stone, brick or wooden wall coverings. Constructed in 1937, the Walter Patterson Filling Station, located at 288 Highway 65B (VB0054 – NR Listed 02/09/01) is the only example of English Revival-inspired architecture in the district.

Craftsman: Popular throughout the United States during the early twentieth century, and influenced by the English Arts and Crafts Movement, the Craftsman Style displays low-pitched, gabled roofs with wide, unenclosed eave overhangs and exposed rafter tails. Other defining features include full or partial-width porches supported by tapered square columns often resting on pedestals. In some of the more elaborate Craftsman homes, local materials such as stone were used to help the building "harmonize" with its surroundings. The one-story, vernacular example of this style is referred to as a bungalow. There is one example of a bungalow within the district; the 1943 stone-clad residence is located along Highway 65B (VB0137).

Art Deco: Geometric motifs such as decorative elements on the façade, towers and other vertical projections that thrust above the roofline characterize Art Deco architecture. This style was emulated during the 1920s through the 1940s. Although simplistic in detail, the 1934 Van Buren County Courthouse at 1414 Highway 65 South (VB0104 – NR Listed 05/13/91) is an example of this style.

Art Moderne: The best example of this style is the Leffler Chevrolet building constructed in 1946 and located at 314 & 336 Highway 65B (VB0129). Some of the other automobile-related buildings display restrained characteristics of this style that was popular from the 1920s to the 1940s. Smooth, curved wall surfaces that are generally clad in stucco are associated with this style as are flat roofs, oftentimes with a small ledge or band at the roofline. One example of a service stations that exemplifies various elements of this style is located at 570 Highway 65B (VB0155).

Perhaps the most significant characteristic of many of Clinton's buildings is not their design or the style that they reflect, but the materials of which they are made. Approximately 16 buildings still display their stone-clad front facades, which gives them a "rustic" appearance. Most of the stone is sandstone and it appears to have been obtained from a nearby quarry in Dennard. In 1926, there was a large fire that destroyed several frame, wood-sided buildings on the east side of the courthouse square. As the burnt-out buildings were replaced, articles in subsequent issues of the Van Buren County Democrat announced the building of "fireproof" buildings. An article in the Van Buren County Democrat, 16 July 1926 described the new Patton Drug Company in the

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following way, "The building is of ten-inch concrete blocks, with metal roofing, metal ceiling and sidewalls, concrete floor, metal awning, plate glass front with modern ventilating skylight. It is practically a fireproof building."¹⁰ From 1926 through the 1940s, there are numerous references in newspaper articles to stone, concrete and brick buildings being constructed on the courthouse square area and along Highway 65.

It is uncertain whom the brick and stonemasons were that completed the work on every building. Several newspaper articles from the time reference Claud Horton as the contractor. In an article dated 15 January 1931 a reference was made to Claud Horton and his son-in-law Sam Whillock as being brick and stonemasons. Until, information proves otherwise, it is assumed that these two men did some of the masonry work on the downtown, stone-clad buildings.¹¹ The most common rock used on the exterior of most of Clinton's buildings was sandstone; however, there are a few buildings that are sheathed in cobblestone. According to Jim Burnett, Art Holloway was responsible for laying the cobblestone veneer on the building at 588 Main Street (VB0065) that was constructed for his father, as well as adjacent buildings now sheathed in stucco or other veneers. Holloway was a stonemason from Bellefonte (Boone County), who built several buildings of stone that area in conjunction with carpenter John Lane.¹² The other two "contractors" mentioned in newspaper articles were Sherman Ward and Cecil Jones.¹³ Despite the nation's depressed economy, business owners in Clinton's commercial area continued to build stone, concrete and brick buildings during the 1930s, 40s and 50s as evidenced by articles in the Van Buren County Democrat. The following excerpts from the Van Buren County Democrat are included for some of the buildings whose present-day location can be positively identified:

12 March 1926

The Pate Mercantile Company, owners of the north or corner lot will erect a building 30 X 70 feet but whether Of stone or concrete has not yet been determined [Pate Mercantile - VB0105]... The Patton Drug Company's building will be 27 x 70 feet, concrete and stone [Patton Drug Company - VB0106]... ..The next building will be put up by Burgess and Cheatham and will be built of concrete blocks [VB0107]...Purchased from Burgess April 1928 by M. B. Lefler]Ranzy Hays, owner of the next lot, will join in the erection of walls on either side of his lot, but may not compete his building at this time[VB0108].

12 July 1929

... The building is of cobblestone construction, metal ceiling, plastered walls, all nicely painted, metal awning sheltering concrete walk in front. A side entrance for receipt of mail obviates the annoyance heretofore encountered by patrons upon arrival of mail back... Postmaster Burnett, who owns the building, is to be complimented upon the enterprise displayed in the erection and furnishing of this building... [Post Office - VB0075]

15 January 1931

Claude Horton told us a few days since that he and his son-in-law, Sam Whilock [sic.], had bought a plot of ground 75 X 100 feet lying just across Highway 65 west from the Green Star Service Station on which they expected to erect a stone

¹⁰ "Patton Drug Company Hold Formal Opening," Van Buren County Democrat, 16 July 1926, pg. 1.

¹¹ "Walter Patterson Contracts for Cobblestone Business House," Van Buren County Democrat, 5 July 1929; and "New Filling Station," Van Buren County Democrat, 15 January 1931

¹² Phillips, Virginia Lane, Phone Interview by Kara Oosterhous, 12 January 2006.

¹³ Van Buren County Democrat, "Clinton to Have Another Stone Building," 14 November 1934, pg. 1; and Van Buren County Democrat, 14 March 1935, pg. 1.

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building 35 X 40 feet to be used as a service station and grocery...[VB0139 – by early 40s photos show it as an Esso Station and Trailways Bus Station]

8 July 1932

Claude Horton, local contractor, tells us he has been awarded the contract for the erection of a filling station, 20 x 22 feet, on a plot of ground leased by Burt Bradley, at the junction of highway no. 95 with highways Nos. 9 and 65, and immediately west of Lewis filling station. The contract was let by Virgil Blair of Leslie, distributing agent for the Sinclair Oil Company for Van Buren and Searcy counties... [Bradley Brothers Service Station – VB0149]

9 May 1935

A stone building belonging to J. A. Thompson which is being erected in the place of the old frame building housing the Thompson Motor Service, is also being pushed rapidly to completion...[Thompson Motor Service – VB0110]... Only a few frame business houses now remain in Clinton, practically all of them having been replaced in recent years by either concrete or native stone.

19 September 1935

The two nice native stone buildings being erected on the site where the printing office old building formerly stood by the Lefler boys – Roy and Bryan, are nearing completion and are expected to be ready for occupancy by the first of next month. Charles Culpepper, who owns and operates the meat market here will occupy the corner building...[Culpepper's Meat Market – VB0075 as well as VB0076].

1 April 1937

Walter Patterson is having a modern service station erected on his lot on Highway 65 just west of the light plant. When completed he has it leased to the City Service, a Louisiana Corporation. Claude Horton was awarded the contract for the erection of the stone building, the main part of which will be 16 x 10 feet. [Walter Patterson Filling Station – VB0054]

4 July 1941

Excavation for the foundation of the store room to be erected by T. E. Rhoades of Shirley just north of the post office building was started Monday morning. The building is to be 56x75 feet, plate glass front and stucco finish. [VB0081]

The oldest resource in the district that best represents the longevity and human element of the town is the Clinton Cemetery. Located in a green, open space, northwest of the courthouse, the earliest burials in the Clinton Cemetery occurred in the 1850s, 60s and 70s, some of whom were likely children of the first settlers due to the fact that the birth date of most of the people is post-1842 (Clinton's establishment). The earliest burials are as follows: Mrs. M. G. Bradley (1847 –1870), S. G. Bradley (1869 –1870), David Hargis (1809 –1876), John David Hargis (1856 –1858), W. H. Hatchett (1877 –1877), M. E. (1841 –1861/consort), J. Morrow (1812 –1814), Henry O. Patterson (1842 –1859), David Sanders (1826 –1878), Catherine Steele (1803 –1875), Allen Thornbrough (1807 –1865), Bob Thornbrough (1867 –1871), and Rachel Thornbrough (1810 –1871). Of those people interred in the cemetery only 22 were born in 1842 or before (the town was established in 1842) and they are: E. M. Beavers (1836), Ant Bradley (1836), Smith H. Bradley (1842), A. B. Brittin (1831), James H. Fraser (1840), Mary Elizabeth Fraser (1838), M. E. (1841/consort), J. T. McMahan (1835), Sarah E. McMahan (1841), J. Morrow (1812), America Pate (1842), James W. Pate (1841), Henry O. Patterson (1842), Mary J. Potter (1839), Amanda Sanders (1833), David Sanders (1826), Katie Smith (1825), Catherine Steele (1803), Allen Thornbrough (1807), Nancy Thornbrough (1834), Rachel Thornbrough (1810), and Mary Elizabeth York (1841). This cemetery documents some of the early and/or most well known families in Clinton's history such as: Boykin, Bradford, Bradley, Burnett, Culpepper, Fraser, Greeson, Hatchett, Sanders, Pate, Patterson, and Thornbrough to name a few; some of whose descendants still make Clinton their home. Square concrete coping, obelisks, tablet markers with curved and Gothic

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arches, and French urns are among the features that permeate the oldest section of the cemetery. Although the cemetery continues to be used, over 50% of its burials have occurred pre 1955. The cemetery continues to convey a strong sense of integrity and provide information about many of Clinton's early residents.

Integrity:

The Clinton Commercial Historic District is a cohesive grouping of buildings and one site that maintain the integrity needed to convey their architectural significance as well as their historic importance. The buildings possess integrity of location and setting as they still possess their original setbacks and configurations. The buildings which contribute to the district's significance are still true to their original design displaying the historic materials used in their construction as well as the attention to detail that validates the workmanship displayed when built. The buildings continue to maintain their integrity of association as they have continuously been used as places of commerce, as well as political and social gatherings and private residences. The cemetery is the oldest resource in the district and it too possesses a strong sense of integrity and represents Clinton's earliest history. The buildings and the cemetery serve as a reminder of how Clinton has evolved with the times while staying true to its original design around the courthouse square. Although the town has changed in appearance from its 1844 beginnings as the county seat, the extant buildings still convey a mid-twentieth century ambience.

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SECTION 8

SUMMARY

The Clinton Commercial Historic District, located in Clinton, Arkansas, Van Buren County, Section 15, Township 11 North, Range 14 West, is being submitted for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance**. The district, whose period of significance spans 1903 to 1955, is eligible for nomination under **Criteria A and C**.

ELABORATION

Originally hunting grounds to the Quapaw and Osage Indians, the area presently known as Van Buren County was surveyed by the United States beginning in 1819 and ending circa 1839. The 1830 Census documents some of the first settlers of this region. Created from Conway, Izard, and Independence Counties on 11 November 1833 Van Buren County experienced additional small boundary changes in 1853, 1859, 1873, and 1883, but the core of the county has never been altered.¹⁴ Named for Vice-president of the United States Martin Van Buren (1833-1837) and later president of the United States (1837-1841), Van Buren County presently comprises 709 square miles.¹⁵ Van Buren County is located in Arkansas' Ozark Mountain Region.

Clinton is located in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains where the Archey Creek meets the Little Red River. Prior to the founding of the town of Clinton in 1842 by George Counts, a post office had been in operation there since opening in 1833. Presumably the post office was named for Vice-President DeWitt Clinton (1833-1837). The town of Clinton was first incorporated in 1879.¹⁶

Clinton's Political, Economic & Social History: 1842 to 1900

In 1829 and 1830, surveyors first surveyed Section 15, Township 11 North, Range 14 West noting only that fields were present.¹⁷ An 1836 Arkansas Map shows Clinton (the site of the post office, est. 1833) located along a main road connecting Batesville on the White River and Lewisburg on the Arkansas River. By 1844, two years after the towns establishment, Clinton was the convergence point for several roads that led to various towns: Lebanon to the north, Dover to the west, Lewisburg to the southwest, Little Rock to the south, Searcy to the southeast, Batesville to the northeast, and Athens to the north.¹⁸ The road that extended from Batesville to Dover was known as the Batesville-Dover Military Road, a prominent thoroughfare. According to stories told by locals, the east end of Main Street once had a gate that was called the military gate where the military road came through town.¹⁹ Original land grants for this area were: George Counts, 40 acres (1844); Samuel B. Joslin, 80 acres (1844); Lemuel B. Joslin, 40 acres (1855), John T. Bradley, 40 acres (1859), Samuel Boykin, 40 acres (1860); Drewry Harrington, 120 acres (1875); Jacob Kies, 120 acres

¹⁴ Clark, Ruby Neal, Mae Shull Holloway, Elenor Bowling Ryman and Alma Dean Stroud, eds., A History of Van Buren County (Conway, AR: River Bend Press, 1976; reprint 2002), pg. 1, 8, 12.

¹⁵ Greer, Tom and Lavell Cole, Arkansas: The World Around Us (New York: Macmillan/McGraw-Hill School Publishing Co., 1991), Appendix A38.

¹⁶ Earngey, Bill, Arkansas Roadsides: A Guidebook for the State, edited by Ross Sackett (Eureka Springs, AR: East Mountain Press, 1987), pg. 19; Clark, et al., A History of Van Buren County, pg. 3-4, 17, 25.

¹⁷ Clark, et al., A History of Van Buren County, pg. 2.

¹⁸ Earngey, Arkansas Roadsides: A Guidebook for the State, pg. xv.

¹⁹ Van Buren County: An Arkansas Legacy, (Clinton, AR: Main Street Clinton, circa 2001), pg. 8

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(1876); and Perry C. Bennett, 120 acres (1895). The location of Clinton is within the original forty-acre land grant belonging to George Counts (who also owned land in the adjacent section).²⁰

Historians credit George Counts with establishing the town of Clinton in 1842. Two years later, in 1844, after much lobbying by Counts, officials moved the county seat from Bloomington (approximately 10 miles east) to Clinton. Since that time the courthouse square has been the political, economic and social hub of Clinton. Since 1869, the courthouse has been located on the site of the present-day courthouse (Junction of Main and Griggs Streets). The first courthouse in Clinton was a one-room log structure that was later replaced by a frame, two-story building with columns (located on the current site of the Morgan and Tester Law Firm at 264 Court Street (VB0127)). This frame building served as the courthouse until the end of the Civil War when fire destroyed it and most of Van Buren County's early records. After the fire, county business transpired at the Methodist Church until the county could build a new courthouse. In 1869, builders constructed another two-story frame courthouse at the location of the current courthouse (an annex was constructed in 1880 and a rock vault added in 1907).²¹ Clinton's early courthouses served as a place of operation for county business such as administering justice and also as a place for family reunions, fraternal organization meetings, and community gatherings. Since Clinton's early beginnings, the town of has "grown up" around and radiated out from the courthouse square.²²

Most people who settled in and around Clinton subsistence farmed while some also raised small cash crops like corn and cotton. In 1840 workers constructed the first cotton gin south of town. In the 1870s workers built a steam-powered mill that ground both corn and wheat; also on the premises was a sawmill. William Stobaugh and Hensley (first name unknown) ran the afore-mentioned operation through the early 1900s. Early settlers also harvested the abundant timber and used the wood for local building, firewood, fence posts and other products used around the home. An advertisement in the Clinton Banner on 6 October 1881 notes, "Clinton Saw and Grist Mill - 1 1/2 miles north of Clinton - William Currue".²³

Clinton in the mid 1800s was a small but self-sufficient town. The Methodist Church was the first church in Clinton. Other early institutions included: the Clinton Fraternal Order of Free Masons, known as Patterson Lodge No. 111, which received its charter on 5 November 1857 and the founding of the Clinton Banner by Mr. H. P. Fielding in 1878, the county's first known published newspaper. In 1879, James H. Fraser founded the Clinton Male and Female Academy, which offered an education beyond primary learning and drew students from the surrounding counties. The earliest buildings in Clinton were of log construction followed by buildings of wood frame construction. The first bank in Clinton was located west of the courthouse. The bank was a small wooden building with a tall front displaying the name CLINTON BANK in large black letters.²⁴ One of the earliest known photographs of the city, dating to the late 1800s or early 1900s (See Figure A, Page 21) shows: a courthouse with cupola, which would be

²⁰ Risener, Lynn Banard, "Original Grantee's Land, Van Buren County, Arkansas, Township 11N, Range 14 W," <http://www.rootsweb.com/~arvanbur/LandRecords/1114.html>.

²¹ Van Buren County: An Arkansas Legacy, pg. 15; Earngey, Arkansas Roadside: A Guidebook for the State, pg 19.

²² Clark, et al., A History of Van Buren County, pgs. 28-29.

²³ Clark, et al., A History of Van Buren County, pg. 39; Evans. Carroll B, "English 103b: A History of Clinton, Arkansas" [photocopy], 1940, In Clinton Community File, Van Buren County Historical Museum, Clinton, AR.; Gray, John Dr. "Arkansas Forest History," www.arkforests.org/favorite-history.html; [Advertisements], Clinton Banner, 6 October 1881.

²⁴ Clark, et al., A History of Van Buren County, pgs. 36, 58-59.

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Clinton's third courthouse (1869); a frame church with steeple, likely the Methodist church; one- and two-story commercial buildings, either log or frame construction; and what appear to be residential buildings and outbuildings, some of which appear to be part of farmsteads.²⁵ In a newspaper article published 29 June 1923 in the Van Buren County Democrat, T.J. Bradshaw recounted his memories of Clinton in 1866:

The first time I had a view of Clinton was 1866. We lived in a big old box house in the east end of town, known as "Catch All". A log house stood about sixty yards southeast and a large log house was on the corner northwest of court square. To the south was a double log house where for a long time Hartwell Greeson ran a hotel. South of this was another log house in which Dr. Thornbrough lived for a long time. West of this place stood the church a two story frame building, the upper story of which was used as a Masonic hall. Northwest of the church was a double log house occupied by the Boykin family as a residence. North of the church was a frame dwelling, and in the extreme northwest end of the town was a number of log cabins where the Pates lived afterwards. On the hill southwest of the church was an old horse mill owned by the Boykins. All of the unoccupied buildings were burned during the Civil War, among them being the courthouse and the jail. Just why the church was spared I do not know...²⁶

By 1881 the following businesses were in operation as advertised in the Clinton Banner:

James H. Fraser, editor and proprietor of the paper; **Sam W. Simpson**, Lawyer, located south of the courthouse square; **Bruce & Kimes**, Attorney at Law; **James H. Fraser**, Attorney at Law; **Bradshaw & Thornbrough Cash Store**, located northwest corner of town square; **W. T. Poe & Co. General Merchandise**; **Pate & Hatchett City Drug Store**; **Brittin & Pate General Merchandise Store**; **Clinton Saw & Grist Mill**, 1½ miles north of Clinton, operated by **William Currie**; **Steam Mill** (lumber and flour), 6 miles southeast of Clinton on Choctaw, operated by **William Stobaugh**.

According to an 1894-1896 publication that promoted the settlement of Van Buren County, the following are some of the business that served Clinton during the 1890s:

One of the leading firms of the town is that of **S. W. Simpson & Son**, who carry an unusually fine stock of general merchandise... **Thompson & Allison**...young, active and energetic, these gentlemen know the desires of the buying public, and try to supply their wants... **Greeson & Patterson**...carry a full stock of general merchandise... A good hotel is a necessity...the **Clinton House**, as kept by **Bennett & Leonard**... **Greeson & Potter**...will build you a better wagon and sell it for less money than any foreign firm... For furniture and cabinet work **R. M. Everson** stands ready to serve all... **R. J. Pleas** grocer and produce merchant... **S. W. Simpson** will attend to your legal affairs... **Dr. R. J. Steele** to look after your general health.²⁷

²⁵ Van Buren County Historical Society. Calendar: "Yesteryear in Van Buren County," 2003 (photograph on cover).

²⁶ Bradshaw, T. J., "Good Old Days," Van Buren County Democrat, 29 June 1923.

²⁷ "Van Buren, County, AR: Why the Home-seeker, Manufacturer and Laborer Should Seek a Home With Our People" [photocopy], In Clinton Community File, Van Buren County Historical Museum, Clinton, AR, pgs. 23-24.

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In his book, *Hill Folks: A History of Arkansas Ozarkers and Their Image*, Brooks Blevins notes that by the turn of the century, the Ozark region was completely settled in terms that the land had reached its maximum capacity for sustainability of life. He states that all of the northern Arkansas plateau had been purchased or homestead except for the most rocky and hilly parts.²⁸ During the late 1800s, Van Buren County was still very rural with roads that accommodated wagon and horse travel. At the turn of the century the county required men between the ages of 21 and 45 years of age to contribute five days of work per year or the monetary equivalent.²⁹ Blevins reminds us, "By the 1890s almost all Ozarkers lived within a "team haul" – the distance a team and wagon could travel round-trip in a day – of at least a crossroads store. Consequently, on any given road a traveler would probably have encountered a village, hamlet, or crossroads center every five miles."³⁰ Clinton was one of these crossroad towns. The oldest resource in town dating to the nineteenth century is the Clinton Cemetery located at the intersection of Park Street and Highway 65 B (VB00201), northwest of the courthouse square. Many of Clinton's early and/or well-known families are buried in this cemetery.

Political Economic & Social History: 1900 – 1960

At the turn of the century, Clinton was still very much a pioneer-like town. Only two extant buildings are known to date to the turn of the century, the Kemp House (ca. 1903 – date of newspapers found in wall during remodel) and the Patterson-Moss Hotel (in existence by 1910 as documented by a photograph).³¹ Because the railroad and automobile had not yet impacted Clinton at the turn of the century, the area and roads were still primitive and Clinton was self-sufficient. Citizens still subsistence farmed and raised row crops such as cotton and corn. In spite of the Clinton Male and Female Academy (1879), education in Clinton and the rest of the county was still basic, children attended school in one-room schoolhouses scattered throughout the county.³² Clinton's commercial area had many of the same businesses that small towns throughout the Ozarks had to meet the needs of the townspeople and those passing through. A turn of the century photograph shows some of the one and two-story frame buildings clad in lap siding located on the courthouse square.³³ In 1900, businesses in Clinton included:

Hotel – A.C. Bennett; **Justice** – S. H. Bradley; **Saw Mill and Gin** – W. A. Brittin; **General Store** – Brittin and Pate; **Clinton Democrat** – Myover and Collins (publishers); **Justice** – J. H. Greeson; **Blacksmith** – Greeson and Potter; **Grist Mill and Gin** – A. L. Johnson; **General Store** – Leonard Brothers; **General Store** – J. W. Pate and son; **Drugs** – Pate and Hatchett; **Grocer** – J. E. Sanders; **Lawyer** – S. W. Simpson; **General Store** – S. W. Simpson and Son; **General Store** – Dr. R. J. Steele; **Lawyer and P. M.** – J. J. Stobaugh; and **General Store** – S. B. Thornbrough.³⁴

²⁸ Blevins, Brooks, *Hill Folks: A History of Arkansas Ozarkers and Their Image*, (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), pg. 63.

²⁹ McLaren, Christie, "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910–1965," Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

³⁰ Blevins, *Hill Folks: A History of Arkansas Ozarkers and Their Image*, pg. 63.

³¹ Phillips, Judy, Phone Interview by Kara Oosterhous, 22 November 2005.

³² *A Pictorial History of Van Buren County Arkansas: Memories of a Century 1890-1990* [Mae Holloway, 1900 to 1910], pg. 10.

³³ Van Buren County Historical Society, Calendar: "Yesteryear in Van Buren County," 2003.

³⁴ "Van Buren County Cities and Towns in 1900" [photocopy], In *Clinton Community File*, Van

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Other turn of the century business endeavors included: the creation of the Van Buren County Bank, Charter No. 117, chartered by the State Bank Department, 21 February 1903; the establishment of the Van Buren County Democrat by J. B. Fraser in 1908; and the opening of the Graham Telephone Company that provided service for residents in Clinton by 1911 (and possibly earlier).³⁵

One of the most significant impacts on the county at the beginning of the Twentieth century was the construction of the Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad that eventually spanned from Neosho, Missouri, to Helena, Arkansas (1901-1909). The construction of the railroad provided jobs for locals. The railroad made it easier and more economical for timber and other commodities to be shipped from the Ozarks to other parts of the state and country. The closest depot to Clinton was in Shirley, approximately 11 miles away.³⁶ In 1909, during the "Pre-Forestry Exploitation Era", the lumber industry employed 73% of all factory wage earners in Arkansas.³⁷ Locals worked for the timber industry as hackers, timber cutters, and sawmill workers; they earned approximately \$1.00 per day for "Day Labor."³⁸ The harvesting of timber depleted much of Van Buren County and the surrounding area of its upland hardwoods and large pine trees in relatively a short time.³⁹ Families planted crops such as cotton and corn in the rocky soil of the newly cleared forests.⁴⁰ Many families in this area continued to plant row crops such as corn and cotton until county extension agents encouraged them to diversify during the mid to late twenties with such activities as: dairying, turkey raising, berry growing, hunting, trapping, canning in factories, growing legume hay for cows, and establishing permanent pastures.⁴¹

As late as 1920, there were still many families in Van Buren County that did not own an automobile, as roads still were not conducive to automobile travel. Starting in the 1920s, road construction began in earnest in Van Buren County, although the work was done a little at a time. Prior to the late 1920s, with the passage of the Martineau Law in 1927, which transferred some responsibility of road improvements to the state, commissioners of county road districts oversaw the construction of roads. Contracts that were "let" for highways in the Clinton vicinity during the early 20s included: the Shirley to Scotland Highway, the Clinton to Damascus Highway, and the Clinton to Leslie Highway. By 1920, parts of Highway 9 that would eventually connect Mammoth Spring to Hot Springs, were also under construction. By 1924,

Buren County Historical Museum, Clinton, AR.

³⁵ Clark, et al., A History of Van Buren County, pgs. 4, 36- 37.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 36, 70-71; Baker, William D, "Historic Railroad Depots of Arkansas, 1870-1940," (Arkansas Historic Preservation Program), pg. 13.

³⁷ Gray, "Arkansas Forest History".

³⁸ A Pictorial History of Van Buren County Arkansas: Memories of a Century 1890-1990 [Mae Holloway, 1900-1910], pg. 10.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Van Buren County: An Arkansas Legacy, pg. 11-12.

⁴¹ A Pictorial History of Van Buren County Arkansas: Memories of a Century 1890-1990 [Lloyd and Penzel Cooper, 1920s], pg 49.

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Highway 65 was paved all the way to the Conway County line at Damascus.⁴² A 1928 headline in the Van Buren County Democrat stated, "Clearing Right of Way for Highway 65 through Clinton."⁴³

In 1910, the first documented appearance of an automobile in Clinton occurred when Mr. Frank Greenhaw passed through town on his way home from Little Rock to Leslie.⁴⁴ However, it wasn't until the mid 20s that the automobile, due in part to the movement for better roads in Van Buren County, began influencing the built environment in Clinton. By 1927, Clinton Motor Company was present in Clinton and by late 1928 or early 1929 the Lefler-Patterson Chevrolet Company was serving customers. An article in the Van Buren County Democrat published 8 July 1932 notes that, "with the completion of these two stations, Clinton will be able to boast of eight filling stations."⁴⁵

All of the changes that occurred around the county in the early 1900s and 1920s had done little to alter the nineteenth-century appearance of Clinton's courthouse square. Business continued to come and go occupying the frame buildings that surrounded the courthouse. Dirt roads accommodated the automobiles that were beginning to replace wagons. The greatest change to the core of Clinton would occur in the late 1920s and continue through the 1940s. A catalyst for this change occurred on 29 January 1926, when a fire destroyed seven businesses on the east side of the courthouse. The businesses that the fire destroyed were: Pate Mercantile and Company (stock and building, \$12,500); Patton Drug Company (stock and building, \$10,000); Kemp and Son (stock and building, \$5,000); R.P. Hayes (stock and building, \$5,000); J. S. Burnett (building, \$1,000); Roy Lefler building, occupied by barbershop (\$500); Mrs. Kate Thompson building, occupied by Will Banks (\$800). Nearby businesses that were spared but incurred minor damage included: the courthouse, the Democrat building, A. L. Johnson's store room, A. R. Godfrey's blacksmith shop, Lay and Graddy's feed store and grist mill, Henry Graham's telephone exchange, Will Banks' restaurant, and Pate and Bradley's barbershop. It can be argued that this tragedy was the impetus for constructing buildings out of concrete, brick, and stone so that they would be "fireproof".⁴⁶ Newspaper articles for 1928 and 1929 reference the building of concrete, cobblestone, brick, and brick veneer buildings. Although refuted, it was first thought that a DELCO lighting plant at the Patton Drug Company

⁴² Johnson, Essie, "Description of Van Buren County," Van Buren County Democrat, 16 January 1920, pg. 1; Old State House, "New Land Gives State Government Major Responsibility for Roads," The Arkansas News, Spring 1989, pg. 1.; A Pictorial History of Van Buren County Arkansas: Memories of a Century 1890-1990 [Lloyd and Penzel Cooper, 1920s], pg. 49; and Van Buren County: An Arkansas Legacy, pg 9.

⁴³ "Clearing Right of Way for Highway 65 through Clinton," Van Buren County Democrat, 31 August 1928, pg. 1.

⁴⁴ "First Automobile Appears," Choctaw-Clinton Past-Times [photocopy], In Clinton Community File, Van Buren County Historical Museum, Clinton, AR.

⁴⁵ "Clinton Soon to Have Eight Filling Stations," Van Buren County Democrat, 8 July 1932, pg. 1; "Another Clinton Landmark Passing From View," Van Buren County Democrat, 16 September 1927, pg. 1; and "E. E. Canerday Buys Local Post-office Building." Van Buren County Democrat, 23 November 1928, pg. 1.

⁴⁶ Van Buren County Democrat, Volume xvii, No. 6, Friday, February 5, 1926, Page 1, "Seven Business Houses in Clinton Burn" and "Pate Mercantile Company Will Erect Concrete Building."

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caused the 1926 fire. Prior to 1928, when Electric Lights first came to Clinton, DELCO lighting plants were the only source of power.⁴⁷

In October of 1929, the "stock market crashed," propelling the country into the Great Depression. The fallout of the Great Depression impacted the citizens of Clinton, however the effects were compounded by poor weather. Clinton's Van Buren County Bank (chartered in 1903) was closed December 1930 and reopened January 1931. The bank closed for liquidation in February 1933 and again in April 1940. Later, in October of 1946, the State Bank Department chartered the Clinton State Bank.⁴⁸ Most families around Clinton were subsistence farmers, so the depressed state of the economy wasn't as detrimental to their way of life as the 1931-32 hot winds from Texas and the boll weevil that severely damaged the cotton fields - the county's main cash crop. These natural disasters ultimately resulted in the lay-off of workers at the cotton gins and low cotton prices. To further the economic hardships of locals, the stave and lumber mills that once employed many citizens early in the century through the 1920s laid off workers because the forests were virtually gone, which caused low timber production. Another employer, the M & NA railroad line laid off workers due to financial problems incurred in the mid 20s through the early 30s. Like so many other towns, Clinton's residents looked to President Theodore Roosevelt for an answer to the poor economy.⁴⁹

Many New Deal programs affected residents of Van Buren County and Clinton, such as the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), which brought electricity to farms and the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC), which employed young men to build roads, bridges, dams and plant trees, often times in the national forests and state parks located in Van Buren County. However, the New Deal program that most affected Clinton's built environment, specifically the downtown area, was the Works Progress Administration (WPA). In 1934, the WPA funded the construction of a new courthouse to replace the 1869 frame courthouse. The present-day Van Buren County Courthouse was WPA Project No. 3454. Selected architects were Earl and Carl Bird from the Little Rock firm of Frank Erhart and Howard Eichenbaum. The facades of the courthouse were clad in native stone, quarried from an area north of Dennard. The WPA constructed sidewalks in downtown Clinton.⁵⁰

It is possible that two other factors, in addition to the 1926 fire, also contributed to the use of stone on buildings in the commercial area: first, the availability of sandstone from nearby quarries such as the one located near Dennard; and second, the availability of skilled stonemasons who had honed their craft while working for the WPA and CCC. It is uncertain which stonemasons completed the work on all of these buildings. Several newspaper articles from the time reference Claud Horton as the contractor. In an article dated 15 January 1931 a reference was made to Claud Horton and his son-in-law Sam Whillock as being brick and stonemasons. Until, information proves otherwise it is assumed that these

⁴⁷ A Pictorial History of Van Buren County Arkansas: Memories of a Century 1890-1990 [Lloyd and Penzel Cooper, 1920s], pg. 49.

⁴⁸ ⁴⁸ Clark, et al., A History of Van Buren County, pgs. 36-37.

⁴⁹ A Pictorial History of Van Buren County Arkansas: Memories of a Century 1890-1990 [Glenn Hackett, Decade of 1930], 58.

⁵⁰ Zollner, Patrick, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Van Buren County Courthouse," (Completed for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1991), Section 8/Page 1.

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two men did some of the masonry work on the stone-clad commercial buildings.⁵¹ According to Jim Burnett, Art Holloway, a stonemason from Bellefonte, was responsible for the cobblestone veneer on the building at 588 Main Street (VB0065), constructed to serve as a post office, and adjacent buildings now sheathed in stucco or other veneers. The other two "contractors" mentioned in newspaper articles were Sherman Ward and Cecil Jones.⁵² Despite the nation's depressed economy, business owners in Clinton's commercial area continued to build stone, concrete and brick buildings during the 1930s, 40s and 50s.

The WWII and Post WWII era brought many changes to Van Buren County, as it did to the entire Ozark Region. From 1940 to 1960, Van Buren County lost more than 40% of its inhabitants.⁵³ During the depression years, young men in Clinton and neighboring towns signed up for the armed services and as a result ended up serving in some capacity in WWII. Clinton, like the rest of the world experienced rationing of items such as sugar, coffee, tea and other imported goods, as well as canned goods, shoes and gasoline. Farmers planted more peanuts, beans, and other vegetables and women raised more poultry and eggs. The outward migration of Van Buren County that had begun in the 30s, when families were leaving to find work on other farms as migrant workers, continued through the 40s as soldiers returning home from WWII applied for GI assistance and entered college or simply moved west to find work.⁵⁴ Yet despite this outward migration, primarily in the 40s, Clinton continued to build new buildings and expand its business base. In April of 1946, M. V. and Dorothy Hatchett built the first real estate office building in the county, Southern Ozarks Realty located at along Highway 65B (VB0152); Dorothy was also the first licensed lawyer in Van Buren County. June and Sid Latture opened June's Café adjacent to Southern Ozark Realty at 618 Highway 65B (VB0153) in the Spring of 1946. June's Café was a popular eating spot for residents and travelers passing through the area. Bryan Lefler built the Clinton Theater in 1941, formerly located on Griggs Street (demolished 2000), the price of admission for adults was twenty-five cents and eleven cents for children. The Sycamore Motel was also constructed during the 40s/50s, and is located at 616 Highway 65B (VB0151).⁵⁵ Another disappointment to the county occurred in 1946, when the M&NA Railroad discontinued service, leaving the county without a railroad, forcing residents to become dependant on private transportation and other modes of public transportation such as the bus. At that time there was a Trailways Bus stop located at the Esso Station at 477 Highway 65B (VB0139), the bus having been servicing Clinton since at least March of 1938.⁵⁶

⁵¹ "Walter Patterson Contracts for Cobblestone Business House," Van Buren County Democrat, 5 July 1929; and "New Filling Station," Van Buren County Democrat, 15 January 1931

⁵² Van Buren County Democrat, "Clinton to Have Another Stone Building," 14 November 1934, pg. 1; and Van Buren County Democrat, 14 March 1935, pg. 1.

⁵³ Blevins, Hill Folks: A History of Arkansas Ozarkers and Their Image, pg. 181.

⁵⁴ A Pictorial History of Van Buren County Arkansas: Memories of a Century 1890-1990 [Lillian Hall, 1940s], pg. 67.

⁵⁵ Van Buren County Historical Society, Calendar: "Yesteryear in Van Buren County," 2003 & 2005; Satterfield, Molly, "Survey Forms for Proposed Clinton Commercial Historic District," 2001.

⁵⁶ A Pictorial History of Van Buren County Arkansas: Memories of a Century 1890-1990 [Lillian Hall, 1940s], pg. 67; Borecky, Email Correspondence, 17 January 2006.

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The decline in population in Van Buren County continued through the 1950s, dropping from 12,000 people in 1940 to 7500 in 1960. Automobile travel in the county was prevalent; however, many roads still were not paved until the late 40s and early 50s: Highway 16 from Clinton to Shirley (1947), Highway 16 from Shirley to the Cleburne County line (1952), Highway 9 from Choctaw to the Conway County line (1952), Highway 92 from Bee Branch to Higden (1950s), Highway 124 from U.S. 65 to Quitman (1950s), Highway 95 from Clinton to Scotland (1950s), Highway 9 from Shirley to Mountain View (1950s), and Highway 16 from Shirley to Stark (1950s). The paving of these major roads made Clinton more easily accessible for those traveling through the area. Accessibility was very important once the dam spanning the Little Red River east of Heber Springs was completed. The damming of the Little Red River formed the tourist attraction Greers Ferry Lake. The building of the dam (1949-1964) provided jobs for locals and it provided a boost to the many local economies in and around the lake. Once Greers Ferry Lake was completed retirees began moving to Heber Springs, Fairfield Bay and Greers Ferry. Although Clinton is not located on the lake its closeness to the lake allowed it to benefit from those traveling to Greers Ferry Lake.⁵⁷

During the past twenty-five years Clinton's commercial area has survived many hurdles such as the 1980 flood which submerged much of the downtown area; being bypassed by the new route of Highway 65 circa 1965, which skirted the downtown area to the east; the growth of chain businesses along the Highway 65 corridor; and the coming of Wal-Mart in 1985. Perhaps, it is because Highway 65 bypassed this enclave of buildings, that it has been spared from new commercial development and still retains the authenticity and charm of an earlier time. Maintaining the integrity of the district while promoting the economic growth of the area is Main Street Clinton. Clinton has been part of the Main Street program since 2000.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Clinton Commercial Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** and **Criterion C**. The Clinton Commercial Historic District is part of the original, forty-acre land grant belonging to George Counts; Clinton has served as the county seat of Van Buren County since 1844. The early growth and development of the town began around the courthouse square and radiated outward in the ensuing years. The overall site is comprised of the cemetery and 101 buildings. Some of the oldest burials in the Clinton Cemetery appear to have perhaps been children of some of the earliest settlers, some of these children became business or property owners in downtown Clinton during the late 1800s and early 1900s. The buildings located in the proposed commercial district are significant because they are the best representation of Clinton's commercial, political and social history, as well as architectural styles from **1903 to 1956**. 1903 being the construction date of the oldest known building, the Kemp House (VB0089) and 1955 being the cutoff date for those resources deemed historic based on their 50-year age. The buildings located within the district are architecturally significant for the twentieth century commercial style that they portray, as well as the restrained versions of: English Revival, Art Deco, Art Moderne, Craftsman, and National styles. In addition, there is quite a collection of buildings within the district that are clad in sandstone and cobblestone from nearby quarries, this in itself contributes to Clinton's distinct and unique quality that reminds any observer that they are at the foothills of the Ozark Mountains. It is with **local significance** that the Clinton Commercial Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

⁵⁷ A Pictorial History of Van Buren County Arkansas: Memories of a Century 1890-1990 [Glen Hackett, Decade of 1950 and R.J. Boise, 1960s], pgs. 79 & 90.

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SECTION 10

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The district includes contiguous and intact historic resources at the center of Clinton's commercial area whose original functions were: commercial, residential, governmental, political, commemorative and religious in nature. This built environment documents Clinton from 1903 through the 1950s while the Clinton Cemetery commemorates some of Clinton's earliest and well-known families, the earliest burials dating to the 1850s, 60s and 70s. These resources, which radiate out from the courthouse square, in conjunction with the streets and lots upon which they are located provide an excellent picture of the development of Clinton from 1903 to 1955. 1903 being the construction date of the oldest known building, the Kemp House (VB0089) and 1955 being the cutoff date for those resources deemed historic based on their 50-year age. The boundaries chosen for the district are determined by roads such as Highway 65 and Highway 65B and natural features such as the rise of the land upwards to the west and southwest and Town Branch Creek. The boundaries encompass the area that has always been Clinton's commercial area and highlights those buildings that portray Clinton's commercial development during the twentieth-century. Due in part to being bypassed by Highway 65 to the east, these buildings have remained relatively unscathed by the new commercial development that is scattered along the Highway 65 corridor.

UTM REFERENCES

1	<u>15</u>	<u>548709E</u>	<u>3939155N</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>15</u>	<u>548853E</u>	<u>3939292N</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
3	<u>15</u>	<u>549299E</u>	<u>3938973N</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

4	<u>15</u>	<u>549292E</u>	<u>3938651N</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
5	<u>15</u>	<u>548933E</u>	<u>3938909N</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
6	<u>15</u>	<u>548896E</u>	<u>3938992N</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
7	<u>15</u>	<u>548798E</u>	<u>3938994N</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

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Historic Photographs (Courtesy of the Van Buren County Historical Society Museum)



Fig. A
Earliest Known Photo of Clinton
(Date Unknown – thought to be late 1800s – Looking down Court and Griggs Streets)

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Patterson-
Moss Hotel

Fig. B
Clinton
Circa 1930
(Looking down Griggs Street from up on the hill)

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Table of Resources within the District Boundaries

Keyed to Map								
* Map ID No.	AHPP Resource No.	NC/C	Earliest Known Occupant or Owner (May not be original occupant)	Current Occupant	Address		Const. Date	Source for Earliest Known Occupant
1	VB0054	NR	Walter Patterson Filling Station	Canal Wood Corp	288	Hwy 65B	1937	
2	VB0055	C	Dr. John A. Hall's Office	Rhonda's Kut Above Salon	688	Main St.	1956	Dortha Borecky
3	VB0057	C	Grocery	Master's Touch Printing	670	Main St.	1956	Dortha Borecky
4	VB0058	NC		Clinton Water/ Sewer Dept.	662	Main St.	1951	
5	VB0059	NC		Clinton City Hall/Police Dept.	658	Main St.	1951	
6	VB0060	C	Berkowitz Clothing Store	Colleen's Clothing Store	652	Main St.	1947	Dortha Borecky
	VB0061	C	The Baugh Building	Vacant/ Hensley's Auto Parts Supply	636/644	Main St.	1946	VBC Democrat, 03/22/46
8	VB0062	C	Love & Son Grocery		628	Main St.	1947	Name on Bldg.
9	VB0063	NC		Bonnie Aday Residence	620	Main St.	Ca. 2004	
10	VB0064	NC	Snead & Patton Grocery Store	Helping Hands Thrift Shop	606	Main St.	1939	Dortha Borecky
11	VB0065	NC	Post Office	Jim Burnett, Attorney	588	Main St.	1929	VBC Democrat, 07/12/29
12	VB0066	NC	Dr. J. S. McMahon's Office	Jim Burnett	588	Main St.	Ca. 1929	VBC Democrat, 07/05/29
13	VB0067	C	Walter Patterson Building	Van Buren Community Dev. Bldg/ Police	574	Main St.	Ca. 1929	VBC Democrat, 07/05/29
14	VB0068	C	Moss Café	Vacant	554	Main St.	Btw. 1929 -35	VBC Democrat, 05/09/35
15	VB0069	C	Bruce Pate's Cash Feed Store	Clinton Jewelry	534	Main St.	1935	VBC Democrat 05/09/35 & 06/25
16	VB0070	C	John Pate Building	A & G Shop	512	Main St.	1935	VBC Democrat 05/09/35
17	VB0071	NC		Adult Education Center	482	Main St.	1935	
18	VB0072	NC	Rogers Drug Store	Van Buren Assessor/Collector	462	Main St.		Dortha Borecky
19	VB0073	C	Burnett's Hardware Store	North Central Baptist Assoc	434	Main St.	1946	Dortha Borecky
20	VB0074	NC	Van Buren County Bank	Edward Jones Investments	424	Main St.	1946	Dortha Borecky
21	VB0075	C	Charles Culpepper Meat Market	KHPQ Radio Station	360	Main St.	1935	VBC Democrat, 06/20/35
22	VB0076	NC	Rented by Roy & Bryan Lefler	Clinton School of Dance	464	Griggs St.	1935	VBC Democrat, 06/20/35
23	VB0077	C		Patty Ann Foods	476	Griggs St.	1953	
24	VB0078	C		Pruitt Electric	518	Griggs St.	1953	

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* Map ID No.	AHPP Resource No.	NC/C	Earliest Known Occupant or Owner May not be original occupant)	Current Occupant	Address	Const. Date	Source for Earliest Known Occupant
25	VB0079	C	A. S. Alexander House	Residence	Church St.	Ca. 1920	Joe Fraser via Dortha Borecky
26	VB0080	NC	Kayla French Residence/Beauty Shop	Residence	Church St.	1965	Dortha Borecky
27	VB0081	C	Tom Rhoades Feed Store	Court Street Center - Cassell Trophy	523 Court St.	Ca. 1941	VBC Democrat, 07/ 04/41
	"	"		Court Street Center - Chips Café	567 Court St.	"	VBC Democrat, 07/ 04/41
28	VB0082	C	Dress Shop originally on Hwy 65	Danna's Beauty Shop	546 Bert Hensley Rd.		Dortha Borecky
29	VB0083	NC		Jack Lewis, Attorney	504 Boykin Ct.	1972	
30	VB0084	C	Coffman Funeral Home	Thrift Shop	534 Boykin Ct.		Dortha Borecky
31	VB0085	NC	Beauty Shop	Tax Filing Preparation	574 Boykin Ct.	1973	Dortha Borecky
32	VB0086	C		Ralph Kidd Tax	540 Church St.	1953	
33	VB0087	NC		Arkansas Telephone Company	528 Church St.		
34	VB0088	C	Barn on Boykin Court	AR Tel. Co. Shop	Boykin Ct.		
35	VB0089	C	Fred Kemp House (as of 1917)	Phillips Residence	669 Boykin Ct.	Ca. 1903	Judy Phillips
36	VB0090	C	Laundry Building (owned by Kemps)	Storage Building	Boykin Ct.	Ca. 1920	Judy Phillips
37	VB0091	C	First Baptist Church (annex 1947)	Ott's TV & Appliance	565 Boykin Ct.	1936	Church History
38	VB0092	C		Warehouse	Bert Hensley Rd.	1946	
39	VB0093	NC		Hobbs Roofing	669 Jim Bellinger Rd.		
	"	NC		Restaurant Equipment	657 Jim Bellinger Rd.		
40	VB0094	NC		Davis Cash Lumber	612 Park St.	1998	
41	VB0095	NC	Texaco Express	Van Buren Title Company	480 Hwy 65B	1964	
42	VB0096	NC		Winter Tree Gifts	687 Main St.	1951	
43	VB0097	NC		White River Insurance	683 Main St.	1983	
44	VB0098	C		Eoff Furniture	639 Main St.	1956	
45	VB0099	C	Lewis Building	Eoff Furniture & Residence	375 Boykin Ct.	1944/45	VBC Democrat 01/19 & 02/02/45
46	VB0100	C		Side Pocket	585 Main St.	1947	
47	VB0101	C	Hensley & Smith Grocery	Woodmen of the World	536 Main St.	1947	Dortha Borecky
48	VB0102	C	Bradley & Bradford	Tharp's Barber Shop	525 Main St.	1947	Dortha Borecky
	VB0103	C	Clinton Motor Company	Stone Vision	393 Court St.	Ca. 1927	VBC Democrat 09/16/1927
50	VB0104	NR	Van Buren County Court House	Van Buren County Court House	1414 Hwy 65 S	1934	
51	VB0105	NC	Pate's Grocery Store	Clinton Insurance	377 Griggs St.	1926	VBC Democrat 03/12/26

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* Map ID No.	AHPP Resource No.	NC/C	Earliest Known Occupant or Owner (May not be original occupant)	Current Occupant	Address	Const. Date	Source for Earliest Known Occupant
52	VB0106	NC	Patton Drug Company	Family Hair Salon	351 Griggs St.	1926	VBC Democrat 03/12/26
53	VB0107	C	Built by Burgess & Cheatham sold to Lefler as of 1928	Lefler's Store	343 Griggs St.	Ca. 1927	VBC Democrat 03/12/26 & 04/27
54	VB0108	C	Ranzy Hays	Lefler's Store	343 Griggs St.	Ca. 1927	VBC Democrat 03/12/26
55	VB0109	C		Community Service Office	329 Griggs St.	Ca. 1927	
56	VB0110	C	J. A. Thompson Motor Service	Danny Brown Storage	307 Griggs St.	1935	VBC Democrat 05/09/35
57	VB0111	C	Telephone Co. & Graham Residence	Ruby Long Residence	Elm & Moss Sts.	1914	Dortha Borecky
58	VB0112	NC		L & E Auto	369 Moss St.		
	VB0113	NC	Jail	Juvenile Office	370 Moss St.	1970s	Dortha Borecky
60	VB0114	NC		Susie Allen's Salon	336 Moss St.		
61	VB0115	C		Warehouse	266 Moss St.	1944	
62	VB0116	C	Patterson-Moss Hotel	Bruce's Antiques	216 Moss St.	1886	
63	VB0117	NC	Ford Auto Dealership	Clinton Tire & Retread	218 Hwy 65B	1941	
64	VB0118	NC	Petit Jean Electric Coop	Petit Jean Electric Coop Corp	274 Hwy 65B	Prior to 1959	VBC Democrat 05/07/59
65	VB0119	C		McCoy Eye Center	167 Griggs St.	1937	
66	VB0120	NC		Thompson House	Walnut & Moss Sts.		
67	VB0121	NC	North Arkansas Funeral Home	Hopper Bookkeeping Services	195 Griggs St.		Dortha Borecky
68	VB0122	NC		Vacant Building	Griggs & Walnut Sts.		
69	VB0123	NC	Cooper Café	Vacant Building	Griggs St.		Dortha Borecky
70	VB0124	NC		State Farm Insurance	207 Griggs St.	1979	
71	VB0125	C	Everett Griggs Meat Market	Danny Brown's	419 Elm St.	1946	Dortha Borecky
72	VB0126	NC	Therma Gas	Blagg Law Firm & EZ Bail Bonds	286 Court St.	1963	Dortha Borecky
73	VB0127	NC	Post Office	Morgan & Tester, PA	264 Court St.	1980	Dortha Borecky
74	VB0129	C	Lefler's Chevrolet	Johnny's Office Supply	314 Hwy 65B	Ca. 1946	VBC Democrat July 27, 1945
	"	C		Jones Body Shop	336 Hwy 65B	Ca. 1946	VBC Democrat July 27, 1945
75	VB0130	NC		Regions Bank	553 Elm St.	1967	
	VB0131	C	Clinton State Bank	Stephen James Law Office	307 Court St.	1948	Dortha Borecky
	VB0132	C	Post Office	Van Buren Democrat	319 Court St.	1947	Dortha Borecky
78	VB0133	C		John Aldworth Law Office	339 Court St.	1950	

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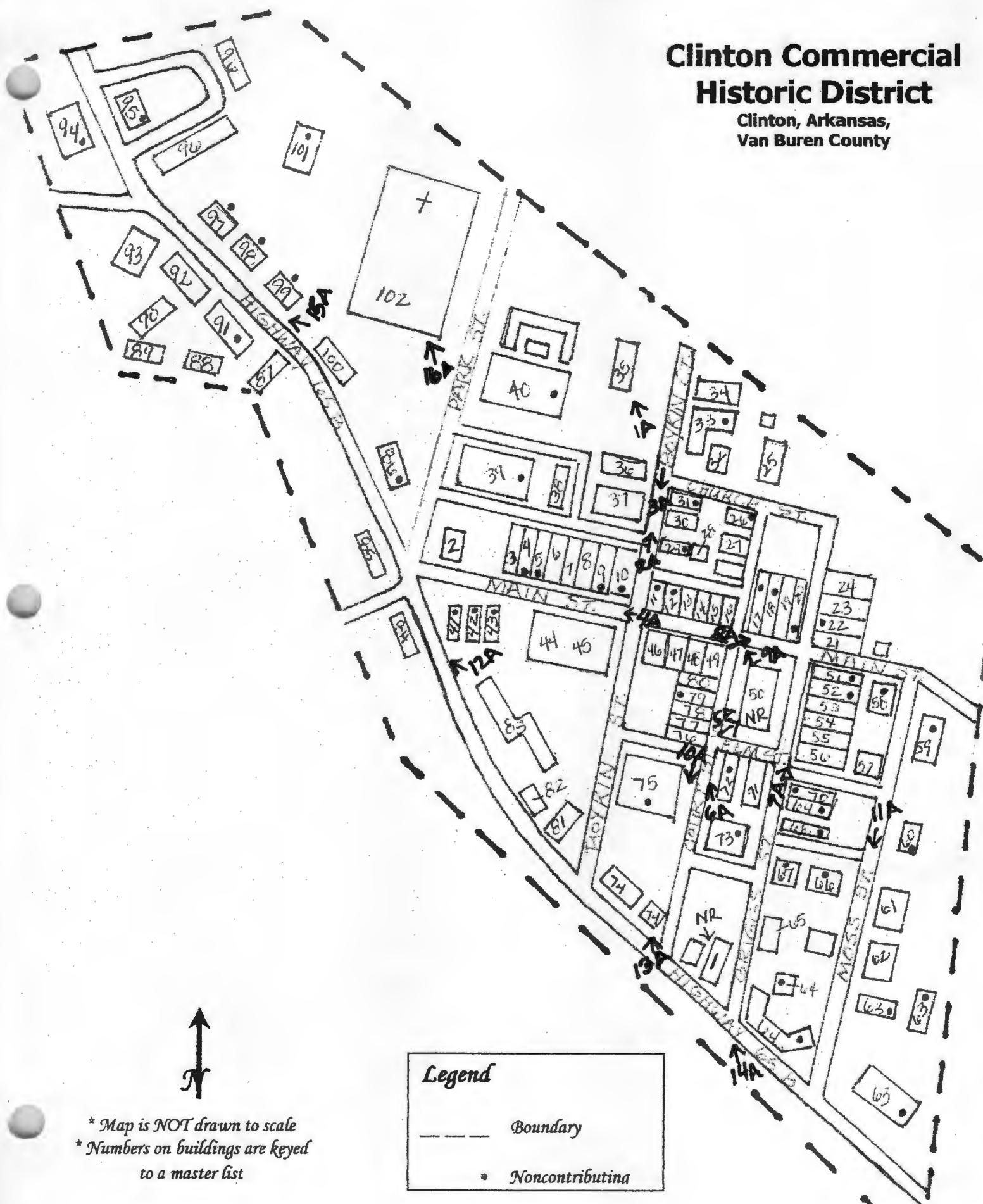
Section number Additional Documentation Page 25

* Map ID No.	AHPP Resource No.	NC/C	Earliest Known Occupant or Owner (May not be original occupant)	Current Occupant	Address	Const. Date	Source for Earliest Known Occupant
79	VB0134	NC	Bradford Barber Shop	Cannady Abstract	359 Court St.	1937	VBC Democrat 02/18/37
80	VB0135	C	Van Buren County Democrat Office	J. C. Penny Catalog Store	367 Court St.		
81	VB0136	C	Pate Radiator	Morrison Wrecker	364 Hwy 65B	1951	
82	VB0137	C		Residence	Hwy 65B	1943	
83	VB0138	C	Willock Motel	Executive Inn Motel	424 Hwy 65B	1950	Dortha Borecky
84	VB0139	C	Trailways Bus Station/Esso Station (named this by the 1940s)	Las Rositas	477 Hwy 65B	Ca. 1931	VBC Democrat 01/15/31
85	VB0140	C	(2) Duplexes	Morrison Apartments	Hwy 65B	1951	
86	VB0141	NC		Fire Dept.	437 Park St.		
	VB0142	C	Tourist Courts	Ingram Apartment #1	Hwy 65B	1937	
88	VB0143	C	Tourist Courts	Ingram Apartments #2	Hwy 65B	1937	
89	VB0144	C	Tourist Courts	Ingram Apartments #3	Hwy 65B	1937	
90	VB0145	C	Tourist Courts	Ingram Apartments #4	Hwy 65B	1937	
91	VB0146	NC		Van Buren Water	601 Hwy 65B	1973	
	"	NC		Food for Life	599 Hwy 65B	"	
92	VB0147	C	Brannon's Garage	Ingram Tires	265 Hwy 65B	Ca. 1946	VBC Democrat 02/22/46
93	VB0148	C		Feed Store	Hwy 65B		
94	VB0149	NC	Burt Bradley Filling Station	Bradley Brothers Service Station	Hwy 65B	Ca. 1932	VBC Democrat 07/8/32
95	VB0150	NC		Foreign Car Repair	Hwy 65B	1941	
96	VB0151	C	Motel	Sycamore Motel	616 Hwy 65B	1952	
97	VB0152	NC	Southern Ozark's Realty	Office Bldg.	Hwy 65B	1946	VBC Democrat 04/12/46
98	VB0153	NC	June's Café		618 Hwy 65B	1946	VBC Democrat 03/15/46
99	VB0154	NC		Residence	Hwy 65B	1964	
100	VB0155	C		McCasland Auto	Hwy 65B	1957	
101	VB0156	NC	C. C. Halbrook Cabinet Shop	Storage Building	Hwy 65B	Ca. 1946	VBC Democrat 02/22/46
102	VB0201	C	Clinton Cemetery		Between Park & Hwy 65 B	mid 1800s	

* Some of the names supplied by Dortha Borecky are her recollections back to the 40s/50s.

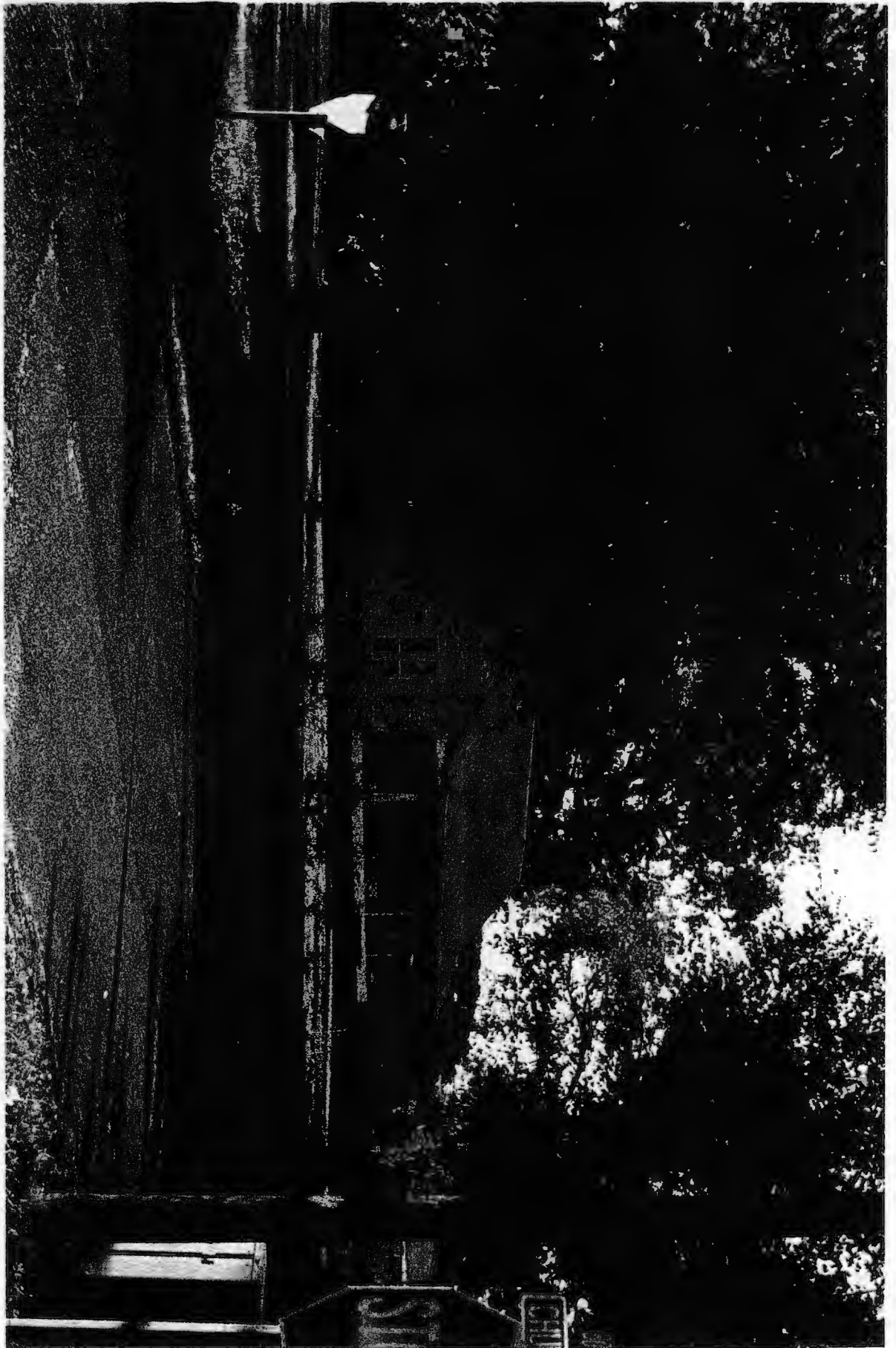
Clinton Commercial Historic District

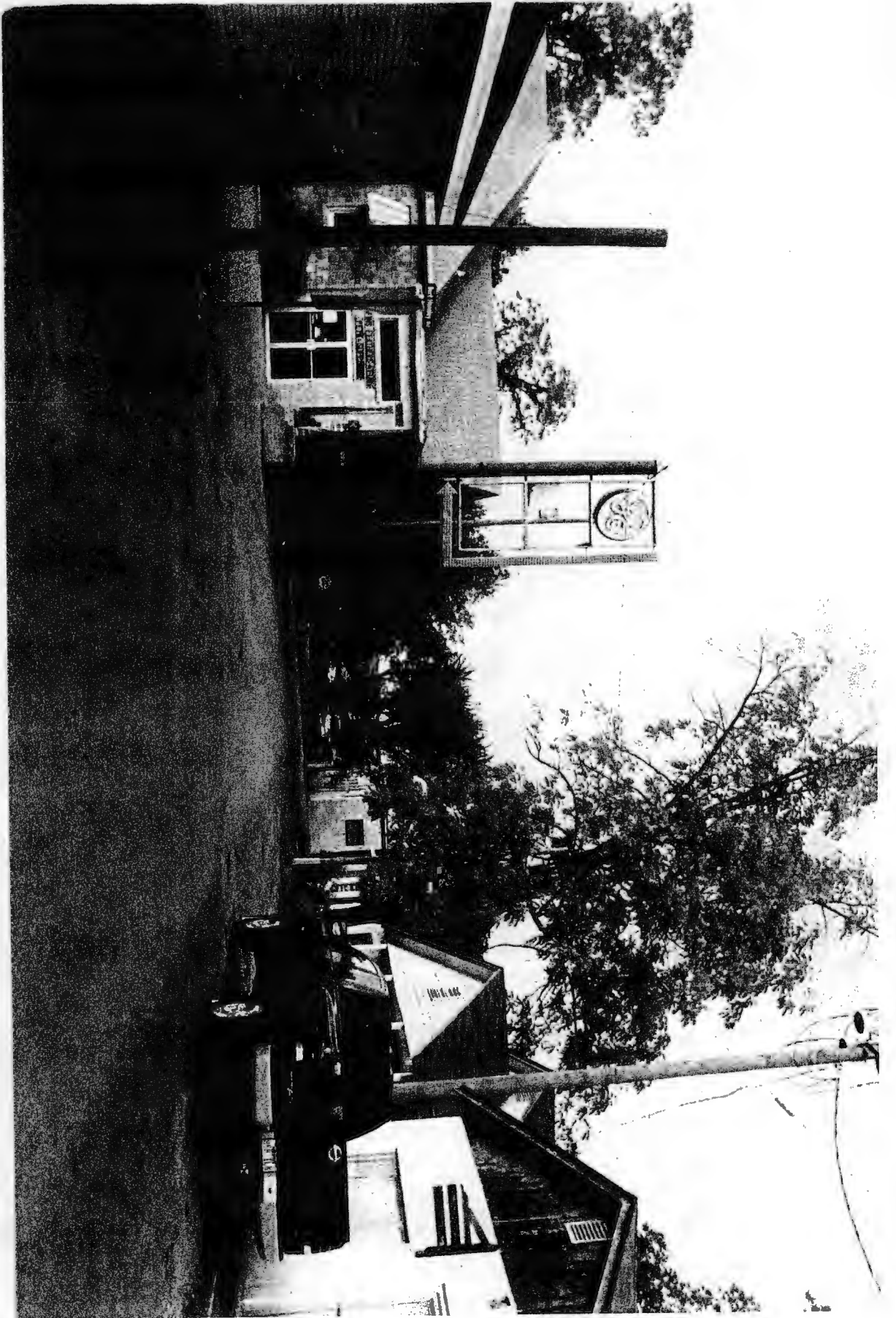
Clinton, Arkansas,
Van Buren County

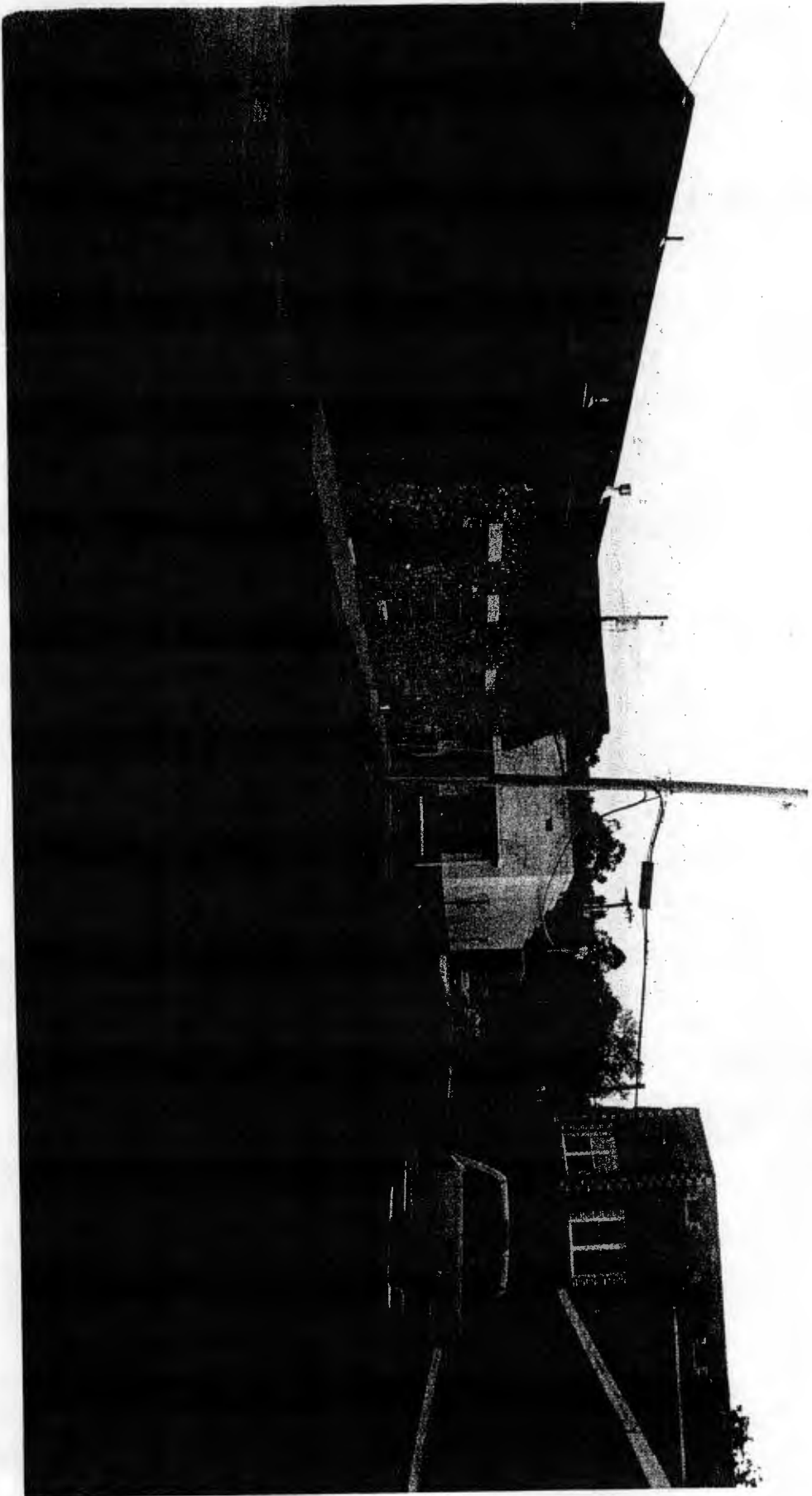


* Map is NOT drawn to scale
* Numbers on buildings are keyed to a master list

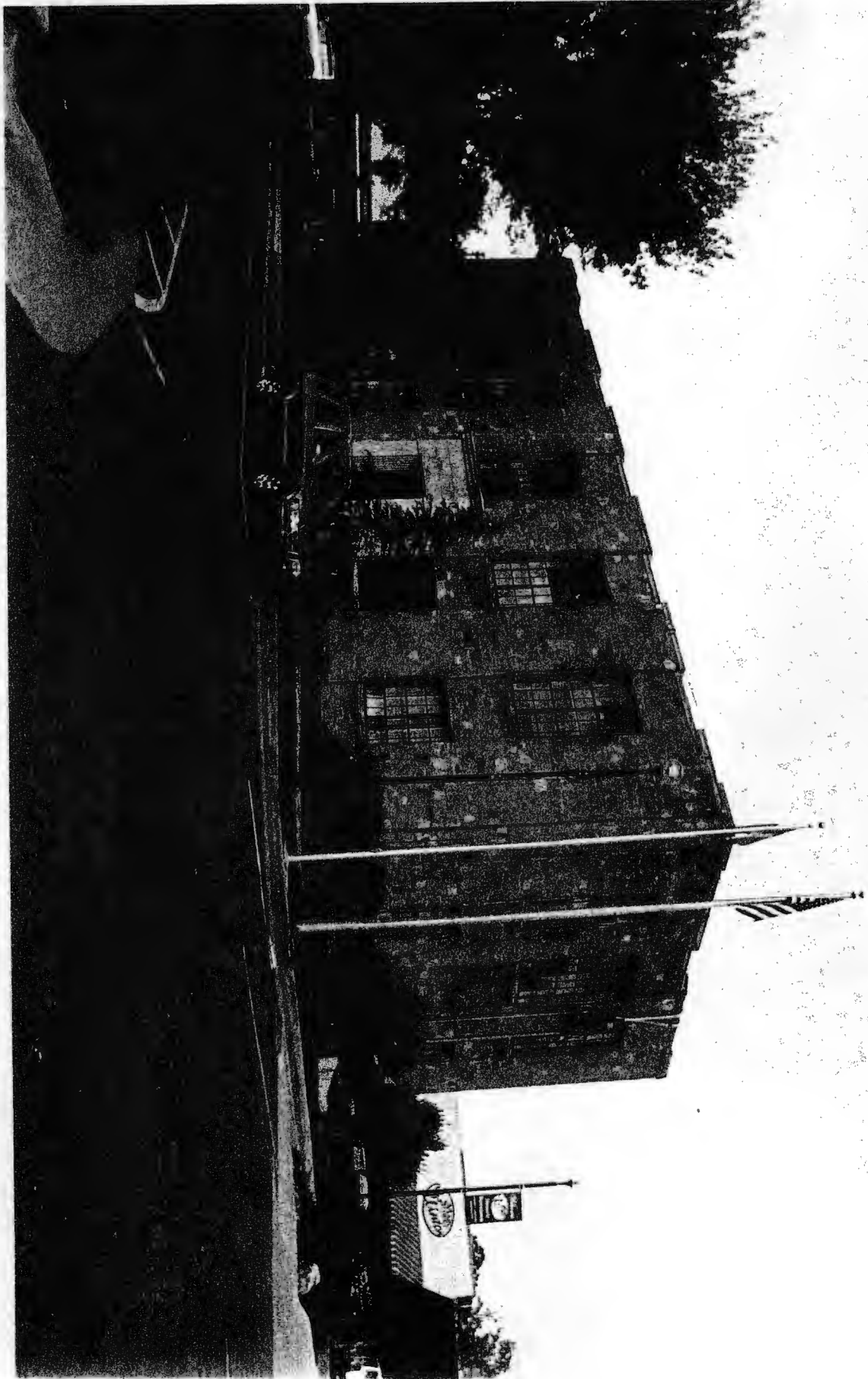
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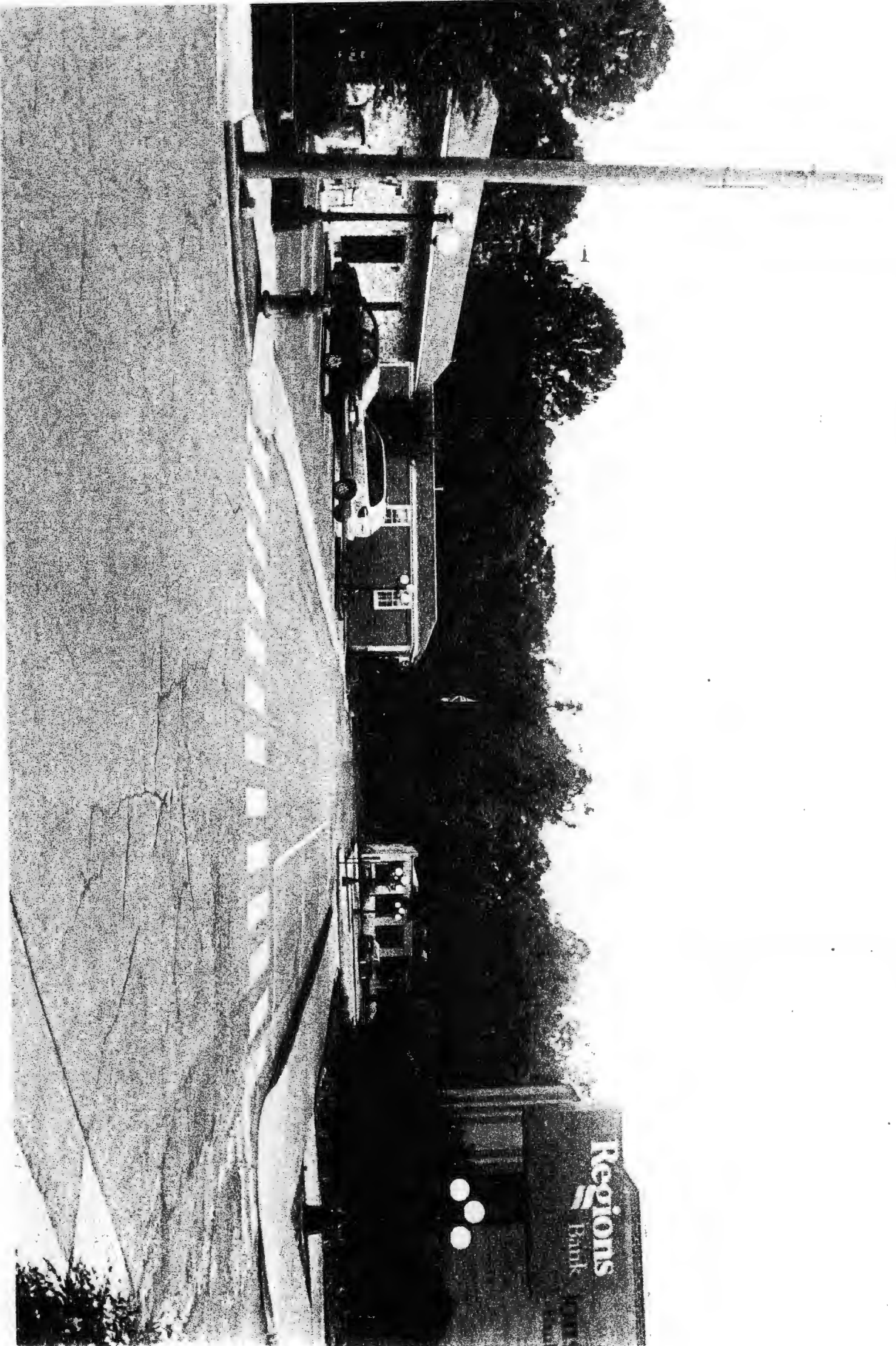


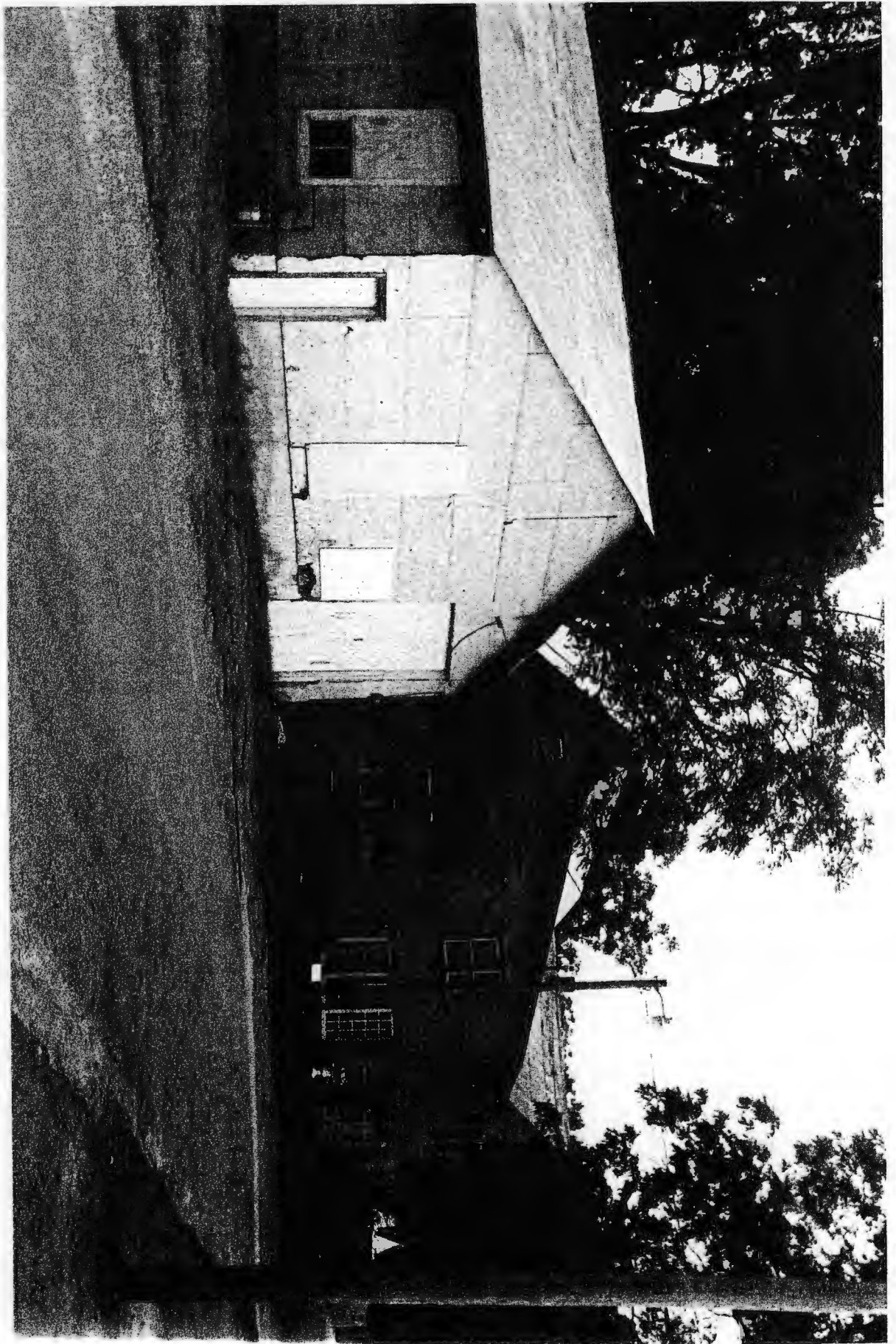




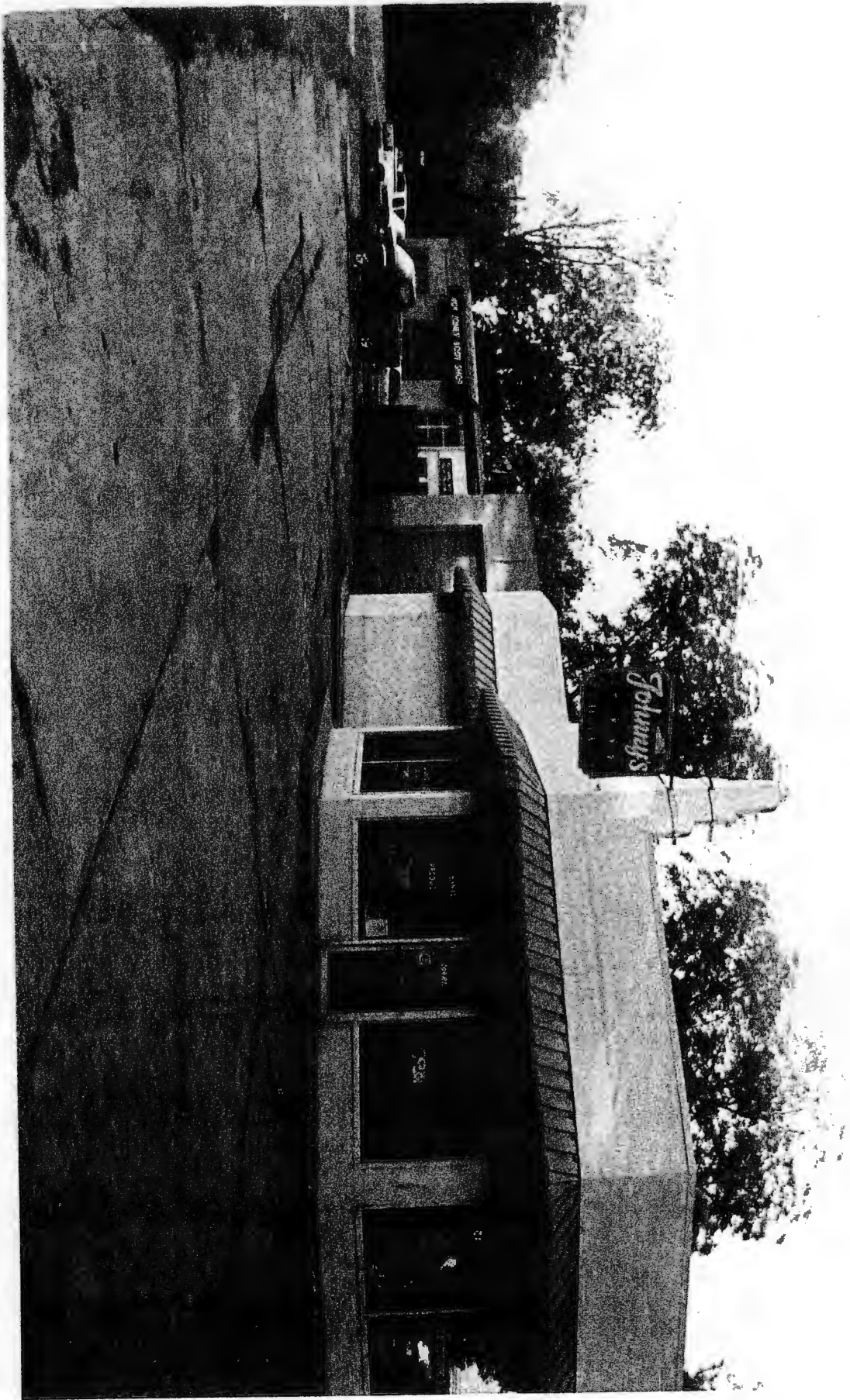


















DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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MORRILLTON 41 MI. WALNUT GROVE 4.1 MI.
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