

Nov. 24, 1989
CL0900

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Gurdon Jail

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Corner of West Joslyn and Front Streets

☐ not for publication N/A

city, town Gurdon

☐ vicinity N/A

state Arkansas

code AR

county Clark

code AR 019

zip code 71743

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> Total

name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

10-9-89

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/Correctional Facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Metal/Tin

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

Summary. The Gurdon Jail was designed and constructed in 1907 by Mr. M.D. Lowe, the co-owner of the Gurdon Brick Company. It is a single story, gable roof red brick masonry structure and features a simple, rectangular plan.

Elaboration. The Gurdon Jail was built in 1907 as a replacement for an earlier jail of similar plan which Sanborn Maps indicate existed on this site as of 1897, if not earlier. The jail was designed by M.D. Lowe, the co-owner of the local Gurdon Brick Company. It is a simple red brick masonry structure, of a single story in height, and laid out in a rectangular plan divided into two cells. It is covered with a metal gable roof.

The eastern and western elevations are blank except for a small, central horizontal window, faced with simple trim boards and filled with perforated metal screens instead of bars. The northern elevation is relieved by two of these windows, distributed one per cell. The southern or front elevation features two entries. The western, wood door entry is the earlier of the two, dating from the building's construction when it contained but one cell. The metal door to the east was added later, when a partition was installed and the second cell created. The interior has been renovated recently, though it retains its strip tongue-in-groove wood ceiling and early if not original toilet fixtures.

The only significant alterations to the structure are the concrete floor, which was added to keep out standing water, and the metal roof, which duplicates the form of the original roof.

The Gurdon Jail is the only jail building surviving in Gurdon.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1

Summary. The Gurdon Jail is being nominated under Criterion A with local significance for its association with the early social and civic development of Gurdon, a thriving southern Arkansas lumber town during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Elaboration. The Gurdon Jail is being nominated under Criterion A with local significance for its associations with the early social and civic development of Gurdon, a town which was sited and which grew because of its location at the intersections of several important lumbering railroads and because of its own proximity to large stands of virgin timber.

The construction of the railroads played an instrumental part in the birth and growth of a lumbering industry in what had earlier been unreachable stands of timber, and hence in the growth of Gurdon also. The community now known as Gurdon started as a construction camp on the Iron Mountain Railway, completed in 1873. Soon thereafter the Iron Mountain Railway constructed a branch to Camden leaving the main line from Gurdon, which only increased the activity and regional centrality of the town; and by 1906 the Gurdon-Fort Smith railroad connected Gurdon with the virgin forests of Montgomery County and the lumbering operations which were cutting throughout the Ouachita Forest.

This coincidental accessibility via modern transportation and rapid expansion of surrounding lumbering operations made Gurdon particularly attractive as a mill site and so allowed it to participate in the rapid expansion of the lumbering industry in the South which saw it take over the lead from the Great Lakes region in lumber production by 1899. The forests around Gurdon, and especially to the northwest, contained huge stands of yellow pine, a species particularly well-suited to a rapidly growing and building nation. A large segment of Clark County participated to some degree in the local expansion brought on by the lumbering industry, but Gurdon by far took the lead: in 1888, the mills in Gurdon (and especially the Gurdon Lumber Company) exceeded the number of shipments of cut lumber shipped by the other milling towns in Clark County combined (4,178 carloads vs. the combined total of 3,346 carloads from Arkadelphia, Smithton, Bierne, Whelen and Curtis).

This industrial development naturally led to the commercial growth of the town as well. By 1888 Gurdon could boast of a population of approximately one thousand, most of which were employed at the mills. Gurdon supported six general stores, groceries, meat markets, barber shops, mechanics' shops, two hotels, a livery stable, a weekly newspaper, post office, churches, etc. Four physicians also found sufficient work to remain. By the turn of the century Gurdon's other industries included cotton gins, a brick company, and an ice plant which supplied the Missouri-Pacific railroad as Gurdon was a re-icing stop; it also claimed a bank and several other "similar conveniences."

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

With all this activity and rapid growth it is not surprising that a need for a a jail would also arise. Arkadelphia, seventeen miles to the northeast, had a large jail, and major offenders and outsiders were sent here from Gurdon also. Typically local offenders only would be incarcerated in the Gurdon Jail, which renders it of even greater local importance. Local tradition has it constructed by 1907, but it may have been built as early as 1897, given the appearance on the Sanborn map of that year of a structure of identical plan in this location called a 'lock-up'. Its simplicity of design belies its significance as one of the few intact surviving structures from this 'boom' era in Gurdon's history, and the only jail.

8. Statement of Significance

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

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Law
Exploration/Settlement
Social History

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

1907

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Lowe, M.D.

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas, (1890).
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Gurdon, Arkansas.
Tarpley, Helen and Zela Taylor, Gurdon Centennial Album, (1890).
Thomas, David y., ed., Arkansas and Its People, (New York, 1930).
The WPA Guide to 1930's Arkansas, (orig. pub. 1941; republished 1987).

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 # _____

☐ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State historic preservation office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one

UTM References

A 15 485780 3753080
Zone Easting Northing
C _____

B _____
Zone Easting Northing
D _____

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 1, Block 1, Railroad Addition to the Town of Gurdon

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This boundary includes all the program historically associated with this resource.

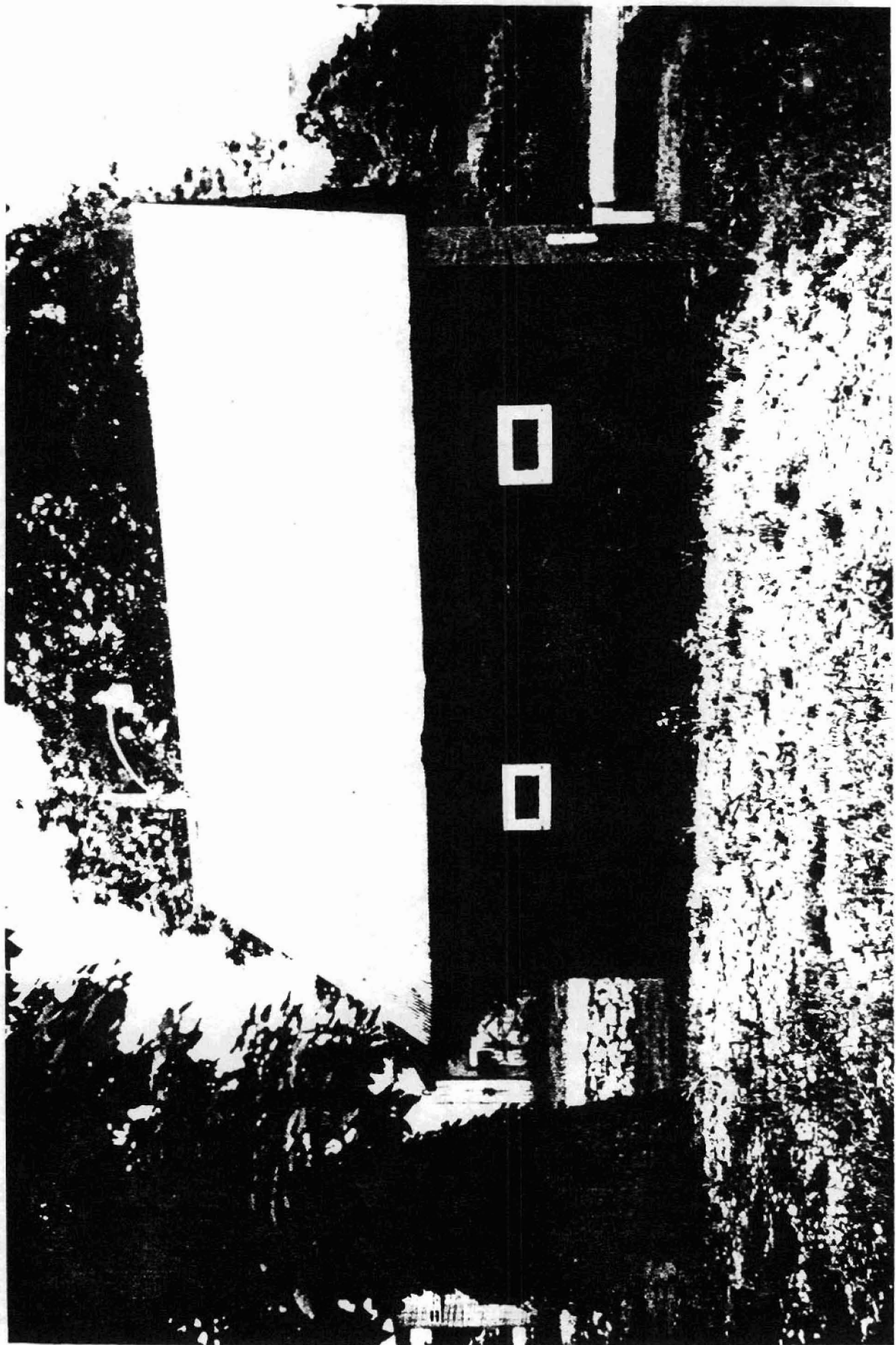
☐ See continuation sheet

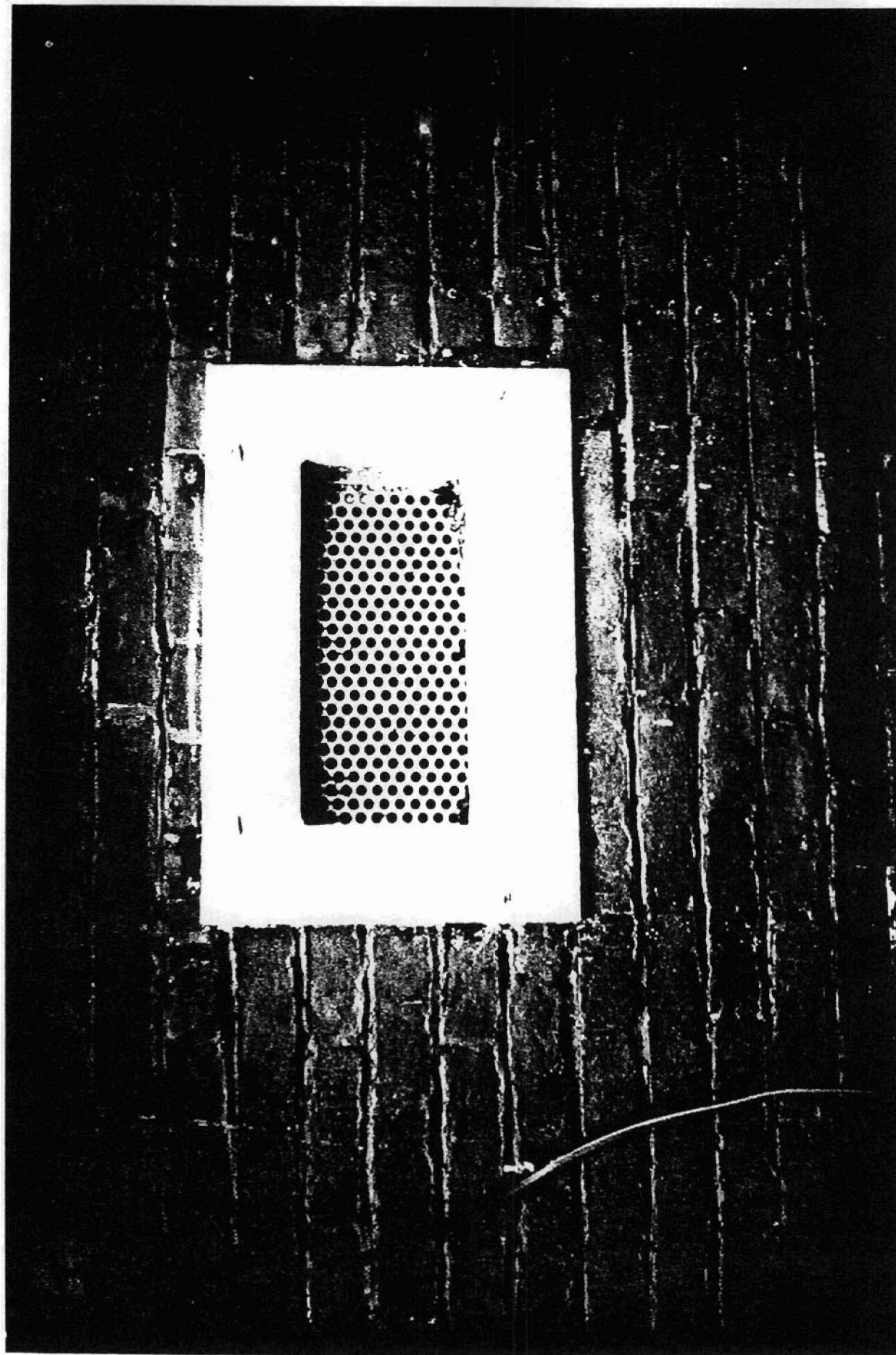
11. Form Prepared By

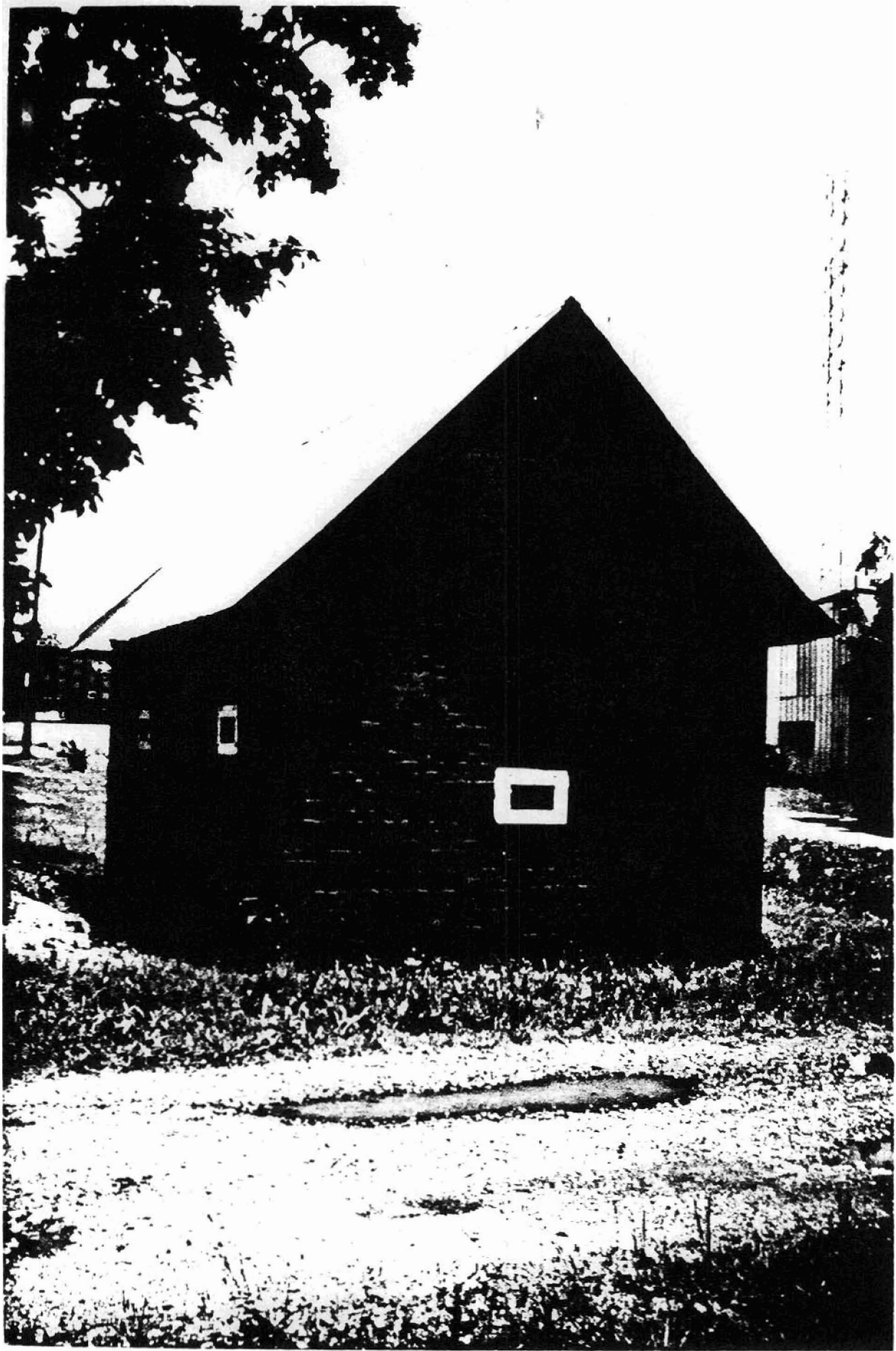
name/title Kenneth Storey, Architectural Historian/Melissa Calley, Historian
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date October 9, 1989
street & number 225 E. Markham, Suite 200 telephone (501) 371-2763
city or town Little Rock state Arkansas zip code 72201



GURDON
CALABOOSE
BUILT 1908
1985











Gurdon Jail
 Gurdon, Arkansas
 Clark County
 15/485780/3753080
 Gurdon Quadrangle
 1:24000

