

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NR 11-08-06

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 Whitman, Merle, Tourist Cabin

other names/site number Site #FR0164

2. Location

street & number 200 N. Bell Street

☐ not for publication

city or town Ozark

☐ vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Franklin code 047 zip code 72949

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.)

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 certifying official/Title

Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

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

Whitman, Merle, Tourist Cabin

Name of Property

Franklin County, Arkansas

County and State

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

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register****6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Plain-Traditional

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls STONE

roof CONCRETE

other

Narrative Description

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

Whitman, Merle, Tourist Cabin

Name of Property

Franklin County, Arkansas

County and State

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

Transportation

Period of Significance

1933-1934

Significant Dates

1933-1934

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Ed Taylor and Sam Langford, Builders

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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: U.S. Army Corp of Engineers

☒ Local Government: City of Ozark

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository:

Whitman, Merle, Tourist Cabin

Name of Property

Franklin County, Arkansas

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

☐ 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 Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

date July 1, 2004

street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street

telephone (501) 324-9787

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 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Little Rock District, Ozark Field Office

street & number 6042 Lock & Dam Road

telephone (501) 667-2129

city or town Ozark

state AR

zip code 72949

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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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SUMMARY

The Whitman Tourist Cabin is constructed of concrete, native fieldstone, and larger pieces of sandstone. The building's roof is a sloping concrete slab. The tourist cabin is devoid of any architectural design that would associate it with a nationally-known high style. Nonetheless, the cabin exhibits great craftsmanship and design as employed by the owner's builders. Crafted out of local materials, it possesses a vernacular style that is all its own.

ELABORATION

The Merle Whitman Tourist Cabin is located on the east side of Ozark in Franklin County, Arkansas. The building is located just north of U.S. 64 on Bell Street. The building was built in 1933-34, and the construction was done Ed Taylor and Sam Langford, who were Ozark residents.

The Whitman Tourist Cabin rests on a concrete foundation and has walls built out of native fieldstone and sandstone. The roof of the building is a sloping concrete slab.

West/Front Elevation

The cabin's front faces west and displays a façade of cut sandstone and fieldstone. On the south side of the façade is a door opening containing an aluminum storm door and a wood stile and rail entry door with half glass. Above the door opening is a metal awning. Three concrete steps are below the door.

To the north of the entry door there is a decorative element of cut stone. The stone element (design) is centered on the projected stone fireplace/chimney and consists of a projecting stone arch and rock shelf supported by stone brackets. Below the decorative shelf brackets is an infill area of fieldstones resting on a horizontal band of cut stone in a belt-like pattern at about the location of the interior concrete floor slab.

On the north side of the fireplace/chimney is an opening containing three wood-frame, double-hung, one-over-one windows. A formed concrete lintel supports the stone above the opening and there is a formed concrete sill. The sill and stone below the windows are recessed between the sides of the opening.

At the top of the rock wall on each side of the chimney, a crenellated stone parapet extends above the roofline. The elements of the parapet and chimney vary in heights and are capped with pre-cast concrete copings.

Below the floor line, centered on the window opening, is a vent opening, which opens below the floor slab to the basement area.

The north end of the rock front façade extends eastward beyond the adjoining perpendicular north sidewall and forms an irregular edge above the line of the window head to form a crenellated element of the parapet.

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North/Side Elevation

The north elevation includes a stucco-plastered concrete wall containing a wood door opening covered with plywood, with three concrete steps leading up to the opening. To the west of the door opening is a window opening with two one-over-one, double-hung wood windows side by side.

East/Rear Elevation

The rear elevation is of rock and stone with a projecting raised concrete floor area supported on poured concrete end walls (north and south) on which a wood frame structure was constructed for use as a toilet room and storage closet. The frame structure exterior walls are covered with asphalt shingles and include an aluminum double-hung window. The roof of the wood frame structure is sloped, corrugated sheet metal supported by steel piping roof framing. Below the projected area is a window opening to the basement area in a concrete block in-fill. Five concrete steps are on the south side of the projected area leading up to the projected concrete slab. It appears as though this area was originally a porch. The original exterior rock wall of the rear façade extends across the porch and contains a window and door opening matching the front elevation. The door opening provides access to the toilet room. The electric meter is located on this wall to the north of the porch.

South/Side Elevation

The east side of the elevation includes the wood-framed addition over the original concrete porch slab and the concrete steps up to it. There are three window openings. The single window on the east end is a double-hung, wood-frame, one-over-one window. There is a small window above a basement entry roof slab near the center of the wall, and it contains an air-conditioning unit. In the center of the wall, the basement entry alcove is constructed of stone and rock walls with plaster on the interior. The basement entry roof is a poured concrete slab sloping from the center to each side. The interior steps to the basement are concrete. To the west of the basement entry is an opening containing a pair of double-hung, one-over-one, wood windows. Over each of the three openings is a poured concrete lintel. The window sills are of troweled-on concrete over rock. The decorative patterned band continues from the front wall to the west wall of the basement entry alcove.

Integrity

The Merle Whitman Tourist Cabin possesses a strong sense of integrity as it has been altered only by a small addition on the rear porch. Otherwise it reflects the time of its construction in 1933-34. The setting of the building remains a small town setting as it would have been when it was built. It creatively displays the workmanship, design features, construction methods and materials used during the time of its construction. The use of native materials such as sandstone and fieldstone further contribute to the integrity of this vernacular building.

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Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

Constructed in 1933-34, the Merle Whitman Tourist Cabin is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** as the only historic tourist cabin in Ozark constructed of concrete and native sandstone and fieldstone. The building is also being nominated to the National Register under **Criterion A** for its association with highway culture in Arkansas. The nomination for the Merle Whitman Tourist Cabin is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple-property listing "Arkansas Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965" in conjunction with the historic context "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965."

ELABORATION

The Town of Ozark is the point at which the Arkansas River reaches the farthest north in the state. The name "Aux Arc," which was later simplified to Ozark, was given to this bend by the French explorers when they were mapping out this land. Although there are several interpretations of why the French named the area "Aux Arc," the most accepted explanation is that the translation of the name means "the big bend" or "the big bow," and it refers to the large bend in the Arkansas River at the location.

Early in the 1830s two hunters, Judge David Walker and Archibald Yell, wandered upon a view of the Arkansas River from the northwestern heights and decided that it would be a good site for a town. As shrewd lawyers and astute businessmen, they had in mind a possible location for the seat of justice of Franklin County, which was then in the making. They approached William Hail, a businessman who had purchased a large portion of the land that would become Ozark. In 1836, the three men proceeded to lay out the town. A year later when Franklin County was created, Ozark became the county seat. Ozark was an important area for river commerce, both northwest to Fort Smith and southeast to Little Rock. A landing place for boats on the Arkansas River was secured and the construction of business buildings was begun. The new town was advertised in newspapers as far away as New Orleans announcing that lots would be sold at a big barbeque.

The town of Ozark experienced a steady growth in the period from 1840 to 1860. Many brick buildings were constructed in this era, in particular a two-story brick courthouse in the center of the town site. Settlers in northern part of the county obtained most of their supplies through the steamboat landing at Ozark. This was possible in large part to an early road from Ozark to Huntsville that was "good enough for wagon travel." The many customers of the Ozark merchants were scattered up and down the Arkansas River and over miles of the Ozark Mountains.

Ozark was severely affected by the Civil War; nearly the entire town was burned. The brick courthouse was used as a Federal magazine, and gunports were dug in its walls. Although devastated by the Civil War, Ozark recuperated rapidly following the end of the war. Businesses rebuilt beginning in the courthouse square area. The arrival of the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad in Ozark in January 1876 heralded a

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significant period of growth in the city. The downtown commercial district grew, reflecting the two major sources of transportation and its status as the center of government in the southern region of Franklin County.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Ozark became the center of several coal-mining operations. The minerals found in Franklin County include coal, clay, iron and shale. Discovery and production of natural gas also helped to contribute to the growth of the community.

Agricultural enterprises abounded in the area; good soil and climatic conditions provided excellent growing opportunities. Nearby a group of German settlers established vineyards and a successful winery. A brochure published by the Ozark Chamber of Commerce in the early 1930s enticed that the area "...will furnish you as many different ways of earning a livelihood, or making an investment, as any county in the state. We can satisfy you, with either, Agriculture, Horticulture, Dairying, Poultry, Live Stock, Fruit, Truck, Mining, Lumbering, opportunities for Business Investments, Sports and Fishing, Hunting and Vacationing." In the first decades of the twentieth century, Franklin County was extensively advertised as "The Land of a Million Smiles", and "The Playground of America." Tourists flocked to the area in the summer to take advantage of the "Loveliest Scenic Spot in Arkansas."

Merle Whitman had lived in Ozark since at least the 1920s, and he wanted to cater to the needs of the tourists that flocked to the area. He ran a gas station that was built in the 1920s in front of the location of this building. The station was in business until the 1960s, and was demolished at an unknown date.

In 1933, Whitman decided to build the current building as a tourist cabin. Local residents Ed Taylor and Sam Langford helped in constructing the building, doing rock work and plaster work respectively. Although the building was intended to be part of a tourist court, it was the only one that was built. Whitman rented it to travelers until June 25, 1934, when it was used for a wedding reception and then the first home of Ralph Ledgerwood and Kathleen Gibbons. (Kathleen's brother, Dr. David Gibbons, still lives in Ozark.)

The property was purchased by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) in the 1960s for the construction of the Jeta Taylor Lock and Dam in 1966-1967. The Jeta Taylor Lock and Dam is a major unit in the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System for improvement of the Arkansas River and its tributaries in Arkansas and Oklahoma. The navigation system was authorized by the River and Harbor Act of 1946 and modified by subsequent acts of Congress.

Although the ACOE owns the building, it housed the Ozark Chamber of Commerce from 1976 until 1995 and is still leased by the city. However, the Merle Whitman Tourist Cabin remains a unique example of a concrete and native sandstone and fieldstone tourist cabin, and an important reminder of Ozark's highway culture heritage.

Whitman, Merle, Tourist Cabin
Name of Property

Franklin County, Arkansas
County and State

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1933-34, the Merle Whitman Tourist Cabin is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** as the only historic tourist cabin in Ozark constructed of concrete and native sandstone and fieldstone. The building is also being nominated to the National Register under **Criterion A** for its association with highway culture in Arkansas. The nomination for the Merle Whitman Tourist Cabin is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple-property listing "Arkansas Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965" in conjunction with the historic context "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965."

Whitman, Merle, Tourist Cabin

Name of Property

Franklin County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Information on Merle Whitman Tourist Cabin compiled by John Lane of Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Smith, Sandra Taylor. "Ozark Courthouse Square Historic District, Ozark, Franklin County, Arkansas."
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation
Program, 2002.

Whitman, Merle, Tourist Cabin

Name of Property

Franklin County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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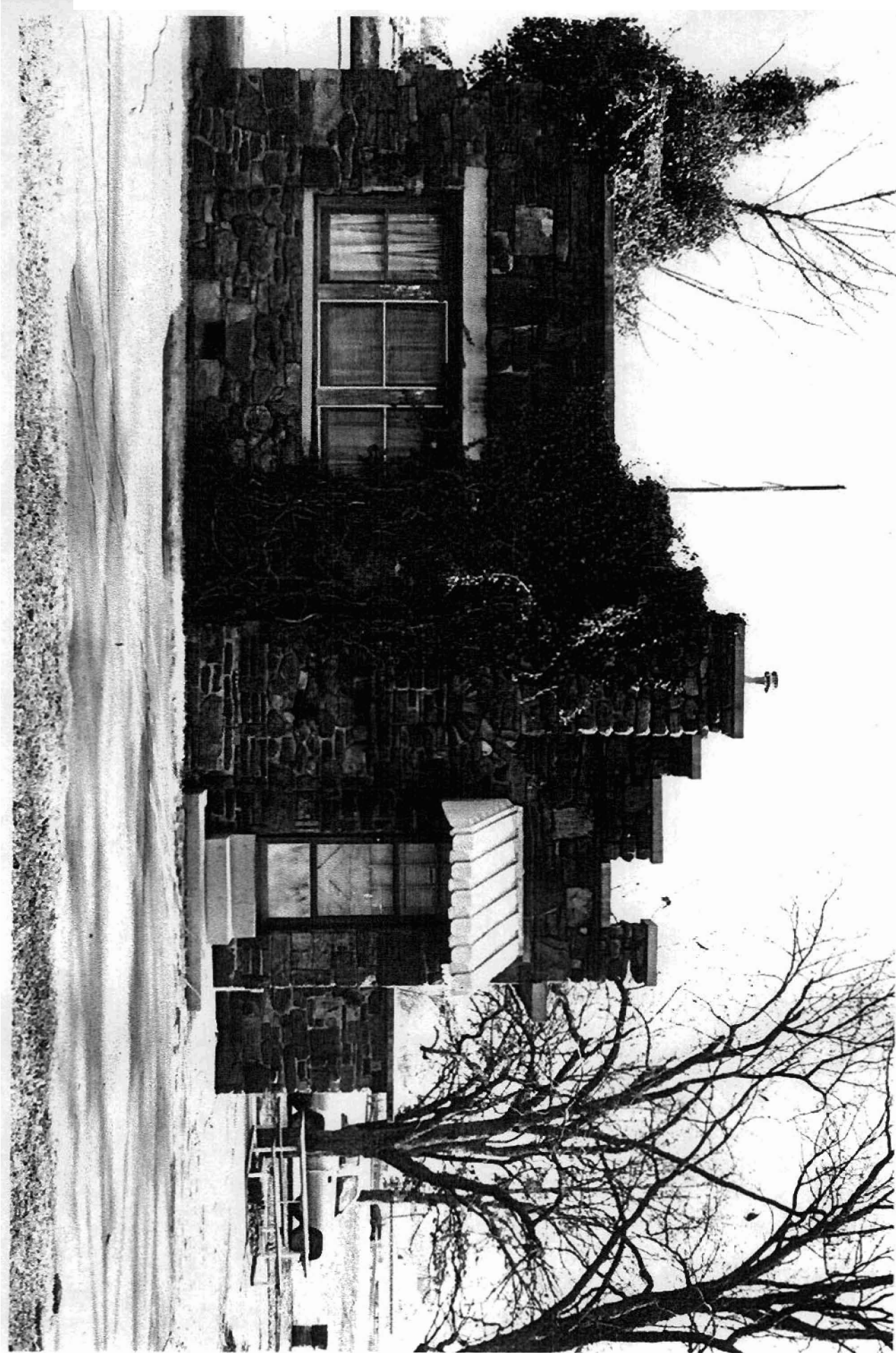
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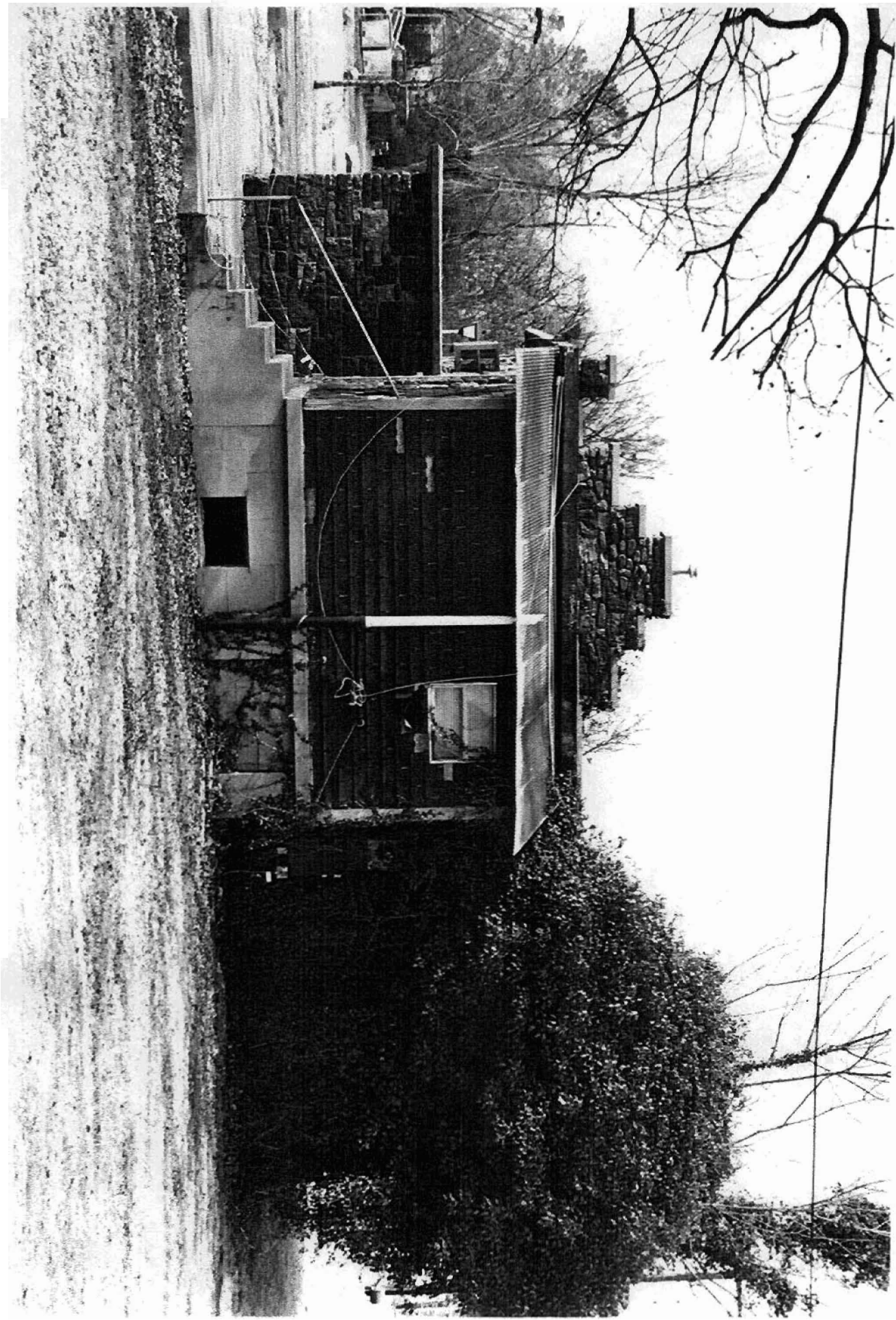
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Block 4 of Quaile's Addition to the City of Ozark

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary contains the land that is historically associated with the Merle Whitman Tourist Cabin.



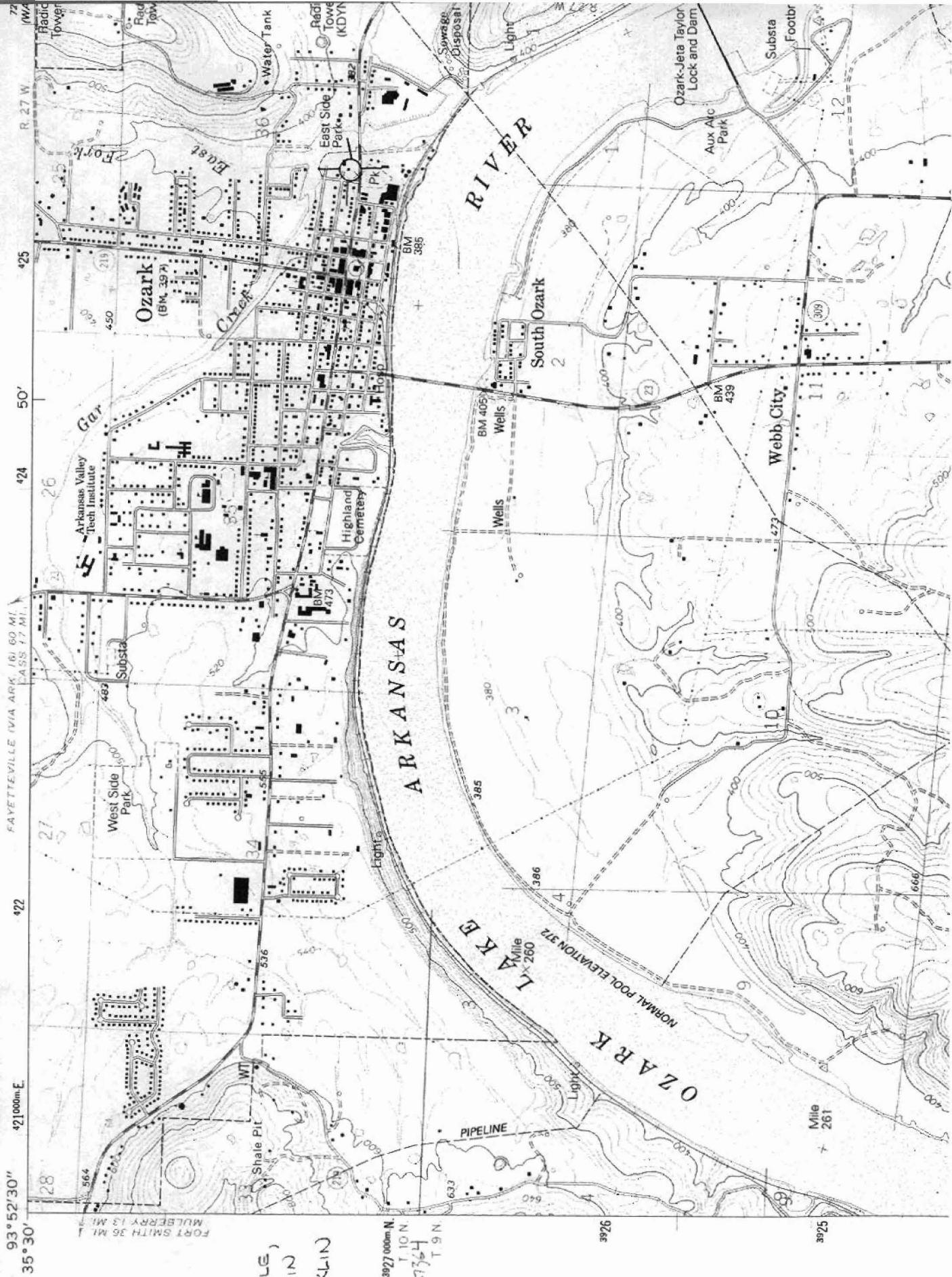






UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

7255 IR SW
(CRAVENS)



WHITMAN, MERLE,
TOURIST CABIN,
OZARK, FRANKLIN
COUNTY, AR

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