

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

7/8/08

## 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 Southwestern Proving Ground Officers Quarters Historic District

other names/site number Oakhaven Historic District, Sites #HE0192, HE0348, HE0721-HE737, HE850

### 2. Location

street & number 359-383 Oakhaven

☐ not for publication

city or town Oakhaven

☐ vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Hempstead code 057 zip code 71801

### 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.)

Cathy Haeckel  
Signature of certifying official/Title

6/10/08  
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

Southwestern Proving Ground Officers Quarters Historic District  
Name of Property

Hempstead 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

20

0

buildings

sites

1

structures

objects

21

0

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**

### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial

Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD

VINYL

roof ASPHALT

other

**Narrative Description**

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

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Eligible 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)

Statewide

### Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

MILITARY

### Period of Significance

1941-1945

### Significant Dates

1941

### Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

### Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

### Architect/Builder

Howard, Needles, Tammen & Bergendorff, Architect  
W. E. Callahan Construction Company, Builder

### 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
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Southwestern Proving Ground Officers Quarters Historic District  
Name of Property

Hempstead County, Arkansas  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 70 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

|   |           |               |                |
|---|-----------|---------------|----------------|
| 1 | <u>15</u> | <u>442383</u> | <u>3732464</u> |
|   | Zone      | Easting       | Northing       |
| 2 | <u>15</u> | <u>442565</u> | <u>3732321</u> |

|   |           |               |                |
|---|-----------|---------------|----------------|
| 3 | <u>15</u> | <u>442637</u> | <u>3732204</u> |
|   | Zone      | Easting       | Northing       |
| 4 | <u>15</u> | <u>442253</u> | <u>3732413</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      | <u>Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register &amp; Survey Coordinator</u> |
| organization    | <u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>                      |
| date            | <u>November 1, 2007</u>  |
| street & number | <u>1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street</u>                      |
| telephone       | <u>(501) 324-9787</u>  |
| city or town    | <u>Little Rock</u>   |
| state           | <u>AR</u>  |
| zip code        | <u>72201</u>   |

## 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></u> |           |         |
| street & number | <u></u> | telephone | <u></u> |
| city or town    | <u></u> | state     | <u></u> |
|                 |         | zip code  | <u></u> |

**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 (7024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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### SUMMARY

The Southwestern Proving Ground Officers Quarters Historic District consists of twenty homes built in 1941 as the officers' quarters for the Southwestern Proving Ground. The buildings line both sides of the western end of Oakhaven Road, originally called Officer's Drive, a curvilinear road that connects at both ends with Arkansas Highway 32. The houses are all two stories in height with brick foundations, wood-frame construction, and most have hipped roofs. However, the houses for the highest ranking officers have gabled roofs. Each pair of homes originally shared a two-car garage, some which survive. The neighborhood is located to the southwest of the Southwestern Proving Ground's Administrative area.

### ELABORATION

The Southwestern Proving Ground Officers Quarters Historic District consists of twenty homes built in 1941 as the officer's quarters for the Southwestern Proving Ground, a World War II-era military facility located approximately five miles northwest of Hope, the county seat of Hempstead County. The buildings line both sides of the western end of Oakhaven Road, a curvilinear road that connects at both ends with Arkansas Highway 32 and that was originally called Officer's Drive. The neighborhood is located to the southwest of the Southwestern Proving Ground's former Administrative area.

The houses are all two stories in height with continuous brick foundations, wood-frame construction, and most have hipped roofs and some have rounded, louvered attic vents. The typical officer's house (Photos #1, 5-10) in the community is three bays wide with a central entrance on the first floor. The entrance is ornamented with a gabled pediment and small stoop with iron railings. However, some of the properties, such as those at 369 Oakhaven (HE0736, Photo #5) and 373 Oakhaven (HE0735) have had small roof structures constructed over the front stoops. The entrance is flanked on each side by a single, double-hung window. Although the windows were originally wood-frame, six-over-six, double-hung windows on the second floor and six-over-nine windows on the first floor, some of the homes have had them replaced with vinyl, one-over-one replacement windows. The second story has three, evenly-spaced, double-hung windows. The windows originally all had shutters, and some of the houses in the development retain shutters today.

The side façade of a typical officer's house is two bays deep and each façade has two double-hung windows on each floor. On the side of the house that has the living room, the windows are evenly-spaced and flank the chimney. On the other side, however, the second story windows are closer together. The side planes of the hipped roof are also where the rounded, louvered attic vents. Vents are still found on several of the homes in the development, including those at 382 Oakhaven (HE0723), 380 Oakhaven (HE0724, Photo #1), and 373 Oakhaven (HE0735).

The rear façade of the typical officer's house contains three evenly-spaced, double-hung windows on the second floor. The first floor of the typical officer's house had the screened-in sun porch, and many of the homes have had this area altered with additions and the enclosure of the porch.

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The interior layout of the typical officer's house is oriented around the central hall and staircase. On the first floor, the hall is flanked on one side by the living room and on the other side by the kitchen, utility area, and dining room. Interestingly, under the utility area and hallway, each house features a concrete bunker. The second floor contains the bedrooms and bathroom.

Unlike the typical officer's house, the houses for the facility's highest ranking officers have gabled roofs and are located near the center of the development on the north side of the street (376 Oakhaven – HE0726, 374 Oakhaven – HE0727, 366 Oakhaven – HE0729, and 364 Oakhaven – HE0348, Photo #3). These houses, like the typical officer's house in the community, are three bays wide with a central entrance on the first floor. The entrance is ornamented with a surround and the houses have full-length front porches. The entrance is flanked on each side by a single, double-hung window. Although the windows were originally wood-frame, six-over-six, double-hung windows on the second floor and six-over-nine windows on the first floor, some of the homes have had them replaced with vinyl, one-over-one replacement windows. The second story has three, evenly-spaced, double-hung windows. The windows originally all had shutters, and some of the houses in the development retain shutters today.

The side façade of a typical higher ranking officer's house is two bays deep and each façade has two double-hung windows on each floor. On the side of the house that has the living room, the windows are evenly-spaced and flank the chimney. On the other side, however, the second story windows are closer together and three windows are present on the first floor. The louvered attic vents are located in the gable peak, with pie-piece shaped vents on the chimney side and a semi-circular vent on the other side.

Like the typical officer's house, the rear façades of these homes contain three evenly-spaced, double-hung windows on the second floor. The first floor of the homes had screened-in sun porches, and many of the homes have had this area altered with additions and the enclosure of the porch.

The commanding officer's house (372 Oakhaven - HE0728, Photo #2), which is naturally the largest house in the development, sits back from the north side of the street in the center of the development. This house is larger than the other homes, being five bays wide on the first floor with a central entrance. The entrance is flanked on each side by two double-hung windows. Like the other homes, the second story has three evenly-spaced double-hung windows.

The side façades of the commanding officer's house is similar to the other higher ranking officer's houses. The side façade of the house is two bays deep and each façade has two double-hung windows on each floor. On one side of the house, the windows are evenly-spaced and flank the chimney. On the other side, however, the second story windows are closer together and three bays are present on the first floor.

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The rear façade of the commanding officer's house has a rear ell, which appears to be original to the house, along with a couple of recent one-story additions. The windows on the rear ell and the rear facades are double-hung windows of various sizes.

In addition to the houses, the development contained two-car garages that were shared by pairs of houses. Each pair of houses were mirror images of each other with the garage located in between the houses. The garages were one-story structures with two single car garage doors on the front façade with a warehouse style light above each bay. One side façade had a six-over-six, double-hung window while the other side façade had a door to the garage. The rear façade of the garage had two six-over-six windows that provided light to each bay. Good examples of original garages remain at 363 Oakhaven (HE0192), 366 Oakhaven (HE0729, Photo #4) and 379 Oakhaven (HE0732, Photo #11). One single-car garage, although altered, also exists at 382 Oakhaven (HE0723), which never had its mirror-image neighboring house.

The layout of the neighborhood is also an important component of the district's design and character. The curvilinear nature of the road adds some visual interest to the neighborhood and is different in appearance than the predominantly grid road pattern found throughout the rest of the installation. The layout of the neighborhood was directly influenced by the "Garden City" concepts of suburban planning that came into being in the first part of the twentieth century. Even the placement of the homes was planned, with the commanding officer's house in the center of the development and the higher ranking officers' houses flanking it. The rest of the officers' houses are located on the outer edges of the development. The planned layout of the neighborhood is still readily apparent today.

### Integrity

The Southwestern Proving Ground Officers Quarters Historic District still retains good integrity. Although the houses in the district have had alterations over the years, with siding, rear additions, and replacement windows being the most pervasive, they retain their original form, massing, and rhythm of solids and voids. Some houses have also had their chimneys removed or shortened, mainly as a result of shifting soil underneath, including the houses at 361 Oakhaven (HE0721) and 378 Oakhaven (HE0725). However, the setting around the district remains relatively rural, and although most of the buildings at the Southwestern Proving Ground have been removed, the area is now an industrial park, which still reflects its industrial origins.

The garages have also not escaped alteration, such as the garages at 369 Oakhaven (HE0736) and 378 Oakhaven (HE0724), which have been expanded or altered. Also, newer outbuildings have also been built at some homes, such as 376 Oakhaven (HE0726).

The Southwestern Proving Ground Officers Quarters Historic District still reflects its original function as officers' housing for the Southwestern Proving Ground. The uniformity in the homes' design is a

Southwestern Proving Ground Officers Quarters Historic District

Name of Property

Hempstead County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

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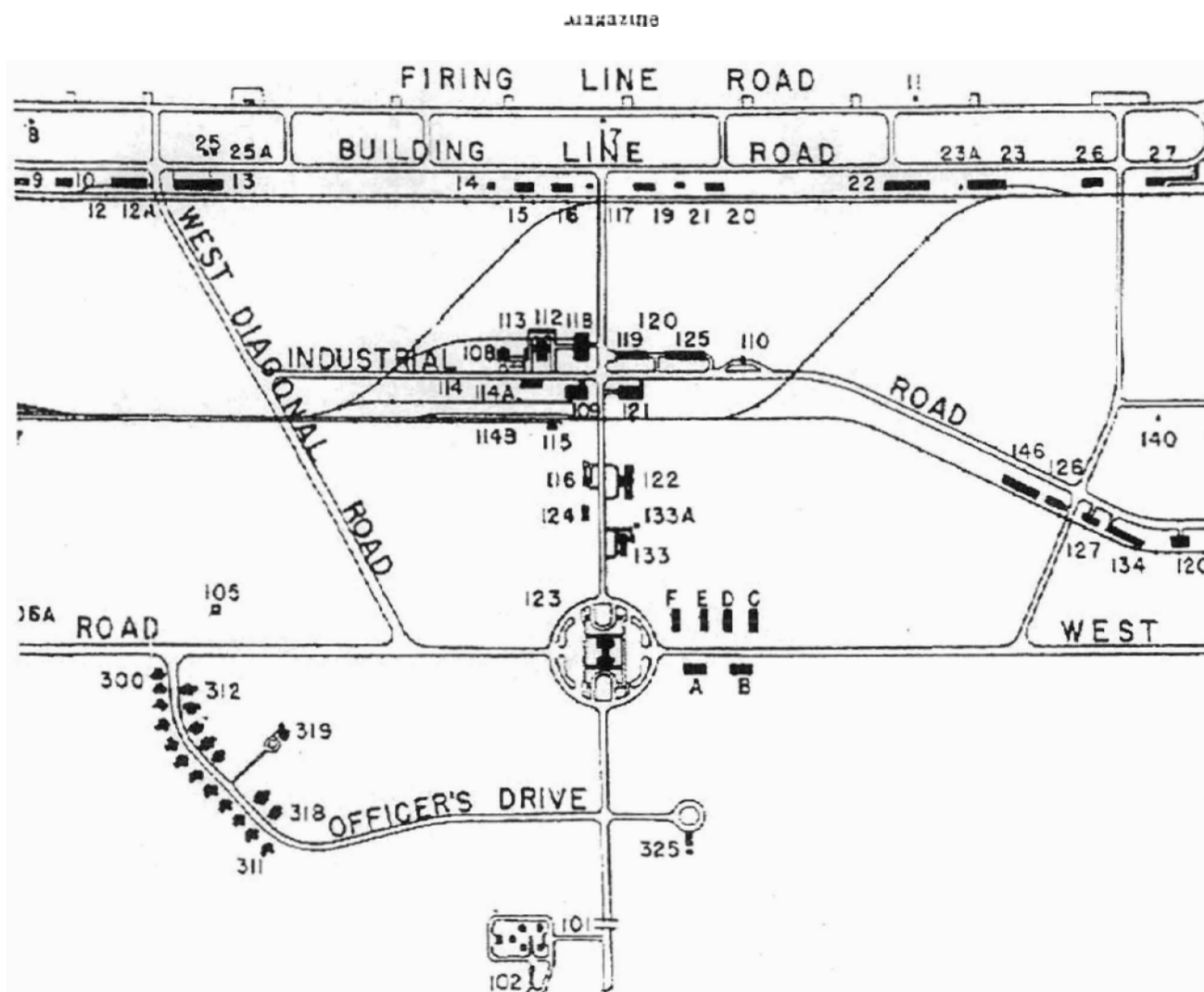
characteristic found in housing developments at many military installations. Although some alterations have occurred, they have been mainly cosmetic in nature, and have not detracted extensively from the district's original character and design.



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Historic site plan of the central portion of the Southwestern Proving Ground showing the Oakhaven Historic District in the lower left quadrant along Officer's Drive.

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### SUMMARY

The Southwestern Proving Ground Officers Quarters Historic District, which consists of twenty homes built in 1941 and used as officers' quarters at the Southwestern Proving Ground, is important for its association with World War II-era military activity in southwestern Arkansas. The Southwestern Proving Ground was an important World War II military facility used as an airfield for bombers and a testing ground for artillery shells and air bombs. (The Southwestern Proving Ground Airport Historic District was NR-listed on June 10, 1999.) The Oakhaven Historic District represents the last remaining residential neighborhood from the Southwestern Proving Ground and is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion A** for its associations with World War II-era military activity in Hempstead County.

### ELABORATION

European settlement in what became Hempstead County began in the early 1810s with the arrival of John Campbell from Tennessee, Benjamin Clark from Kentucky, and William Yates and his son, George, from Missouri, in 1812. The number of settlers in the area continued to grow during the 1810s and Hempstead County was officially organized in 1819 under the provisions of an act of the Missouri Territory legislature approved on December 15, 1818. The county was named after Edward Hempstead, the first Congressional delegate from the Missouri Territory. Originally, it encompassed the land southwest of the Little Missouri River extending south to the Louisiana state line and west to the line of the Indian Territory.<sup>1</sup>

Initially, Hempstead County's county seat was located in Washington, but once the Cairo & Fulton Railroad's line was constructed through the county, the center of the county's commerce and business moved to the rail corridor. The community grew out of a workmen's camp for the railroad and was named Hope after the daughter of James Loughborough, the railroad's land commissioner. The first passenger train came to the community on February 1, 1872, and the railroad drew the town's plat and began selling lots on August 28, 1873. Hope was officially incorporated on April 8, 1875, and by 1880 Hope's population was 1,233. Throughout the first part of the twentieth century, the community kept growing, reaching a population of 6,008 by 1930. Eventually, after several controversial elections, in 1939 the Arkansas Supreme Court declared Hope Hempstead County's new county seat.<sup>2</sup>

The onset of World War II brought big changes to the Hope area, especially when the June 7, 1941, edition of the *Hope Star* announced on the front page that "Hope Obtains Big War Plant." The magnitude of what it

<sup>1</sup> *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1890, p. 379

<sup>2</sup> Turner, Mary Nell. Information on Hope, Arkansas, found at: <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=895>.

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meant for Hope was apparent in the telegram that Senator George Lloyd Spencer sent the *Star* from St. Louis on June 5, 1941, which said:

I have communicated with the War Department several times yesterday and today. They now authorize me to announce that a site north of Hope has definitely been selected for the proving ground.

The area will be five miles wide and 15 miles long and will cover approximately 37,000 acres.

The contract will be let as quickly as possible with the hope that work may be started by July 15.

The project will represent an expenditure of approximately 15 million dollars and construction will employ 4,000 or 5,000 persons. It will permanently employ 500 or more.

I am gratified that Arkansas has received this additional plant and am particularly pleased that my home county was selected. Governor [Homer] Adkins should be given full credit for his help in this matter.<sup>3</sup>

The Southwestern Proving Ground (and its sister facility the Jefferson Proving Ground in Indiana) were important components of America's World War II efforts on the homefront. As tensions escalated in Europe in the late 1930s, it became more and more of a reality that the United States would likely enter the conflict. During the escalation of tensions, even though the United States was not actually at war, it was still involved in the war effort by providing war materials to its Allies. In preparation for such an event the U.S. Government instituted the National Defense Program, which provided factories for the manufacture of munitions, airplanes and tanks. The National Defense Program is what directly led to the construction of the Southwestern Proving Ground in Hope as it was used to test those products for the war effort.<sup>4</sup>

After the news of the construction of the proving ground was released in June 1941, a map of the proposed facility was published showing that it would cover 37,650 acres of land encompassing private landholdings of 244 individuals and firms and 937 acres of state-held property. The reservation was bounded on the south by a line four and a half miles north of Hope, which ran about three and a half miles east and west. The area

<sup>3</sup> Turner, Mary Nell. "Southwestern Proving Ground 1941-1945. *Journal of the Hempstead County Historical Society*. Volume X, Spring 1986, p. 3. The Southwestern Proving Ground supplemented the Jefferson Proving Ground located about 5 miles north of Madison, Indiana.

<sup>4</sup> Hope, Holly. "Southwestern Proving Ground Airport Historic District, Hope, Hempstead County, Arkansas." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1998, pp. 8-9.

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widened at its northern extension by about 15 miles, brushing the towns of Washington and Ozan. The northern boundary line from east to west was about five and a half miles wide, leaving Belton a half mile north of the northern boundary line, McCaskill one and a half miles east from the line and DeAnn two and a half miles east of the line. (After the initial evacuation order the War Department decided that there was not a proper site for an airport so they surveyed 4,000 more acres southwest of the reservation. After the addition of the airport complex several more acres were seized bringing the total to 50,780.27 acres.)<sup>5</sup>

The land needed for the development of the Southwestern Proving Ground would be acquired by the Real Estate Department of the War Department through condemnation proceedings for those sections that were needed to do immediate work. Each person's land was appraised and then negotiations were undertaken with the land owner to determine the amount of compensation that they would receive for the land, any improvements, and for the crops that were growing. Evacuation of the residents began in July 1941, and a total of 404 families were eventually relocated by the July 24<sup>th</sup> deadline.<sup>6</sup>

The tight time schedule did cause a few problems. The National Guard had to provide 45 tents and running water on 20 acres of land in Washington for some families who could not find other places to live, and that there was not enough time to build temporary housing for. In August 1941 there were half a dozen families living in the 1874 courthouse in Washington.<sup>7</sup>

However, relocating the families was not the only problem that the government had to deal with. There were seven cemeteries in the area that the government had to relocate. Licensed undertakers bid on the job of removing and reintering the bodies at new cemetery sites approved by the Constructing Quartermaster and the State Board of Health. The original tombstones were required to be reinstalled in concrete as they were on the old grave on a site that was to be equal or better than the former, and graves would be placed in their original alignment. All of the relocations had to be completed by June 1, 1942, since firing in the area was supposed to begin then.<sup>8</sup>

The development of the Southwestern Proving Ground was initially greeted with tremendous enthusiasm by the local community due to the economic impact that it would bring to the area. However, criticism did arise from the area's residents, especially during the confusion associated with the relocations. In addition, it was also rumored that Senator Spencer had encouraged the placement of the facility to encompass his farm in the area. The editor of the *Hope Star* at the time, Alex Washburn, understood the need for the facility in terms of United States defense, but also understood the plight of the people who were displaced by the construction.

<sup>5</sup> Hope, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

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He wrote that, "... anybody can see things about the Proving Ground to break your heart - but it is admittedly the biggest thing in South Arkansas since the El Dorado oil boom in 1921 ..."<sup>9</sup>

The construction of the Proving Ground was awarded to the W. E. Callahan Construction Company, which began hiring 4,000 construction workers on July 15, 1941. The architects and engineers for the project were Howard, Needles, Tammen & Bergendorff of Indianapolis, and among their employees were Herb Blemker, chief engineer in building the Jefferson Proving Ground, and one of his assistants, Harry Fritchie. The project director was W. K. Mellyor, and he worked out an agreement with Senator Spencer to guarantee preferential treatment of local citizens in consideration for jobs.<sup>10</sup>

The number and variety of buildings necessary to operate the facility was mind-boggling. Hundreds of buildings ranging from powder magazines and turret houses to shop buildings and a hospital were constructed to carry out the various missions and operations at the installation. In addition, residential buildings were needed, which included at least one barracks building (Building #208) and officer's quarters (Buildings #300-319), which comprise the Southwestern Proving Ground Officers Quarters Historic District.<sup>11</sup>

Due to the December 7, 1941, bombing of Pearl Harbor, the opening festivities at the Proving Ground were delayed, and it was not until April 5, 1942, that Hempstead County residents were able to pass through the gates. In a two-hour period, 1,250 cars carrying 6,250 people passed through the gates, although nobody was allowed to leave their cars. Washburn wrote in the Hope Star wrote that "Sunday's visitors who, celebrating Army Day, were permitted to go through the completed SPG saw there a graphic example of American efficiency and speed - for what was rolling prairie and timberland only last August is today a functioning war plant. ...But the record will show that the SPG location here was announced May 1941; executive officers began arriving in July; workers were hired in August and the first gun fired January 1, 1942. ...Like our Anglo brothers over in England, we Americans languish slow in the arms of peace - rise slowly to the act of war. But brother when we get going!"<sup>12</sup>

Among the buildings built during 1941 when the Southwestern Proving Ground was being developed were the twenty homes (Buildings #300-319) that were designated the officer's quarters. The buildings were located on Officer's Drive, a curvilinear street that wound through a wooded area to the southwest of the

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Hope, p. 10, and Turner, Mary Nell. "Southwestern Proving Ground 1941-1945. *Journal of the Hempstead County Historical Society*. Volume X, Spring 1986, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Turner, Mary Nell. "Southwestern Proving Ground 1941-1945. *Journal of the Hempstead County Historical Society*. Volume X, Spring 1986, pp. 16-17.

<sup>12</sup> Turner, Mary Nell. "Southwestern Proving Ground 1941-1945. *Journal of the Hempstead County Historical Society*. Volume X, Spring 1986, p. 14.

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Administration Building and the industrial heart of the complex. Jack Lowe, a former Oakhaven resident, stated in a May 1991 interview:

There were twenty new houses built...five on the north side of the street are larger than those on the other side. One was the Colonel's house (the largest) and four were for staff officers. All twenty houses had the same number of rooms and baths and a fireplace. There was one single floor plan except the rooms were reversed for every other house (mirror image). The houses were built with the finest materials – all wood interiors and exteriors, floors were top-quality hardwood; the walls and ceilings were covered with canvas and paper. All trim (faucets, light fixtures, door knobs, etc.) were brass or double-coated nickel. Each home had use of a garage, but it was shared with the neighboring home.<sup>13</sup>

Although it is not known exactly when the homes were completed, it is likely that they were completed towards the middle of the year since the executive officers began arriving in July.

The houses were used by the highest ranking officials of the facility, and the variety of officers housed in Oakhaven can be seen in the list of the original occupants.

| <b><i>Building Number:</i></b> | <b><i>Officer:</i></b>             | <b><i>Position:</i></b>  |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 300 (now 383 Oakhaven)         | Major Paul Klipsch <sup>14</sup>   | Technical Division       |
| 301 (now 381 Oakhaven)         | 1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. H. S. Atwood   | Complete Rounds Officer  |
| 302 (now 379 Oakhaven)         | Capt. R. M. McCreary               | Adjutant                 |
| 303 (now 377 Oakhaven)         | Capt. C. L. Dufresne               | Air Corps Engineering    |
| 304 (now 375 Oakhaven)         | 1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. A. F. Ziemer   | Property Officer         |
| 305 (now 373 Oakhaven)         | 1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. F. E. Driggers | Bomb Group               |
| "                              | 1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. W. P. Keith    | Bomb Group               |
| 306 (now 369 Oakhaven)         | 1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. J. R. Sheffey  | Officer of Shell Section |
| 307 (now 367 Oakhaven)         | Capt. D. R. Pickard                | Administration           |
| 308 (now 365 Oakhaven)         | Major H. S. Stein                  | Post Surgeon             |
| 309 (now 363 Oakhaven)         | Major H. B. Bishop                 | Executive Officer        |
| 310 (now 361 Oakhaven)         | 1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. H. H. Earhart  | Light Cannon Officer     |

<sup>13</sup> Information on Oakhaven provided by the Honorable Summer Bright, Mayor of Oakhaven. In the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

<sup>14</sup> Besides his work at Southwestern Proving Ground, Klipsch was also well known for his work in audio design. Holding patents in acoustics, ballistics, and geophysics, Klipsch founded Klipsch Audio Technologies in 1946. Today, it is one of the leading loudspeaker companies in the United States.

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|                        |                                   |                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 311 (now 359 Oakhaven) | 1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. F. S. Johnson | Executive Officer, AAF      |
| 312 (now 382 Oakhaven) | Capt. A. A. Gruber                | Powder Group Officer        |
| 313 (now 380 Oakhaven) | Capt. C. H. Pinney                | Officer of Field Artillery  |
| 314 (now 378 Oakhaven) | 1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. J. R. Garber  | Executive Assistant to CPO  |
| 315 (now 376 Oakhaven) | Major L. D. Bradt                 | Chief Proof Officer         |
| 316 (now 374 Oakhaven) | Lt. Col. M. L. D. Begeman         | Utilities Officer           |
| 317 (now 366 Oakhaven) | 1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. C. P. Witsil  | Salvage Officer             |
| 318 (now 364 Oakhaven) | Lt. Col. Paul D. Lucas            | AAF Detach Commander        |
| 319 (now 372 Oakhaven) | Lt. Col. Keith Adamson (1942-45)  | Ordnance Commanding Officer |
| "                      | Lt. Col. John C. Brier (1944-45)  | Ordnance Commanding Officer |
| "                      | Major D. R. Rickard (after war)   |                             |

The idea and concept of providing to military officers was nothing new by the time the houses at the Southwestern Proving Ground were built. The concept of military housing developed in the 1790s in order to ensure that there was adequate military personnel at the defensive fortifications, naval shipyards, armament factories, and frontier outposts where the first military housing was constructed. In the last half of the nineteenth century, as more military posts were built, especially to keep peace in the West, the Army's Quartermaster Corps developed standardized plans for military housing. The standardized plans allowed for higher housing standards and buildings that could be built more quickly and economically. The plans were also developed so that they could be adapted to a region's particular building materials and practices.<sup>15</sup>

By the early twentieth century, military housing started to emerge and embrace the Colonial Revival style as national interest in America's past increased. Initially, military housing retained the nineteenth-century forms, but applied Colonial Revival elements to them, such as cornices and columns. The housing at Fort Logan H. Roots in North Little Rock (NR-listed September 4, 1974) exhibits the Colonial Revival elements applied to nineteenth-century forms, and it was also built from standard plans. (The housing at Fort Roots matches some of the housing at Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indianapolis, Indiana, for example.)<sup>16</sup>

Although World War I stopped the construction of military housing for a period, the military embarked on a large-scale building campaign from 1926 through 1939. The Colonial Revival style was still the style that the military relied on, especially at its airfields, and the housing that was developed was compact and efficient in its layout. In addition, housing tended to be clustered in residential loops with picturesque,

<sup>15</sup> "History of Military Housing Construction" found at: <https://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/ES-Programs/Conservation/Quarters/three.html>.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

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curvilinear streets, which was directly influenced by the "Garden City" concepts of suburban planning. The housing in Oakhaven is a great illustration of these post-World-War-I design concepts.<sup>17</sup>

On May 7, 1945, Germany surrendered and on August 14, Japan surrendered, bringing an end to World War II and also bringing an end to operations at the Southwestern Proving Ground. By August 20 the proving ground was ordered closed within 30 days and by September the only staff present would be a skeleton crew to write up final reports. The Army declared the proving ground surplus but in December 1945 the sale was stopped as the city of Hope was told it would receive the SPG airport. The remaining acreage would fall under the policies of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the Surplus Property Corporation.<sup>18</sup>

After the Southwestern Proving Ground was closed and declared to be surplus property, the officers' houses eventually were put on the market for sale. The state, county, and city, in that order, were eligible to purchase the property from the government, and the City of Hope, along with the American Legion and VFW, negotiated with the War Assets Administration to purchase the houses. Although the government had asked for \$110,000 initially for the property, the city's offer of \$85,000 was accepted.<sup>19</sup>

Mayor Graves announced that the houses had been purchased for veterans of Hope and Hempstead County. The veterans were able to purchase the homes on a priority system based on points. Points were awarded depending on the veteran's marital status and number of children, among other items. The purchases by the veterans were completed about March 1947, with the original purchasers being as follows:

| <b><u>Building Number:</u></b> | <b><u>Purchaser:</u></b> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 300 (now 383 Oakhaven)         | Leonard Edward Aslin     |
| 301 (now 381 Oakhaven)         | O. F. Lloyd              |
| 302 (now 379 Oakhaven)         | Jim McKenzie             |
| 303 (now 377 Oakhaven)         | Ernest E. Turner         |
| 304 (now 375 Oakhaven)         | Roy L. Sutton            |
| 305 (now 373 Oakhaven)         | Raymond E. Huett         |
| 306 (now 369 Oakhaven)         | William W. Andrews       |
| 307 (now 367 Oakhaven)         | Joe C. Atchley           |
| 308 (now 365 Oakhaven)         | James D. Smith           |
| 309 (now 363 Oakhaven)         | John B. Lowe             |
| 310 (now 361 Oakhaven)         | Jack Hervey              |

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Hope, p. 10.

<sup>19</sup> Turner, Mary Nell. "Southwestern Proving Ground 1941-1945. *Journal of the Hempstead County Historical Society*. Volume X, Spring 1986, p. 36.



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|                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 311 (now 359 Oakhaven) | John Fletcher Reed |
| 312 (now 382 Oakhaven) | J. W. Ames         |
| 313 (now 380 Oakhaven) | Fred Robertson     |
| 314 (now 378 Oakhaven) | Otis B. Burns      |
| 315 (now 376 Oakhaven) | B. E. McMahan      |
| 316 (now 374 Oakhaven) | Earl L. Archer     |
| 317 (now 366 Oakhaven) | Otis Gray          |
| 318 (now 364 Oakhaven) | Andrew J. Caldwell |
| 319 (now 372 Oakhaven) | Vincent Foster     |

Each house came with a lot of approximately one acre and each owner purchased the electric, water, and gas lines on the property. Although the exemptions for the utilities were originally supposed to be retained by the government, they ended up in the deeds.<sup>20</sup>

Shortly after the houses were sold to the veterans, the community was incorporated and named Oakhaven, and its first mayor was Jess Davis.<sup>21</sup> Today, the population of the community is 54, and the current mayor is Summer Bright. Oakhaven is a bedroom community for Hope today.

The Southwestern Proving Ground Officers Quarters Historic District is one of the most intact portions of the Southwest Proving Ground. As such, it remains as an important reminder of the work done in Arkansas to support America's effort during World War II. The Southwestern Proving Ground Officers Quarters Historic District illustrates the variety of support buildings that were needed in addition to the factory buildings at Southwestern Proving Ground, and is a good example of a military residential development.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Southwestern Proving Ground Officers Quarters Historic District, which consists of twenty homes built in 1941 and used as officers' quarters at the Southwestern Proving Ground, is important for its association with World War II-era military activity in southwestern Arkansas. The Southwestern Proving Ground was an important World War II military facility used as an airfield for bombers and a testing ground for artillery shells and air bombs. (The Southwestern Proving Ground Airport Historic District was NR-listed on June 10, 1999.) The Southwestern Proving Ground Officers Quarters Historic District represents the last remaining residential neighborhood from the Southwestern Proving Ground and is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion A** for its associations with World War II-era military activity in Hempstead County.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

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Turner, Mary Nell. Information on Hope, Arkansas, found at:  
<http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=895>.

Turner, Mary Nell. "Southwestern Proving Ground 1941-1945. *Journal of the Hempstead County Historical Society*. Volume X, Spring 1986.

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Oakhaven Officers Quarters Lots 301-319.

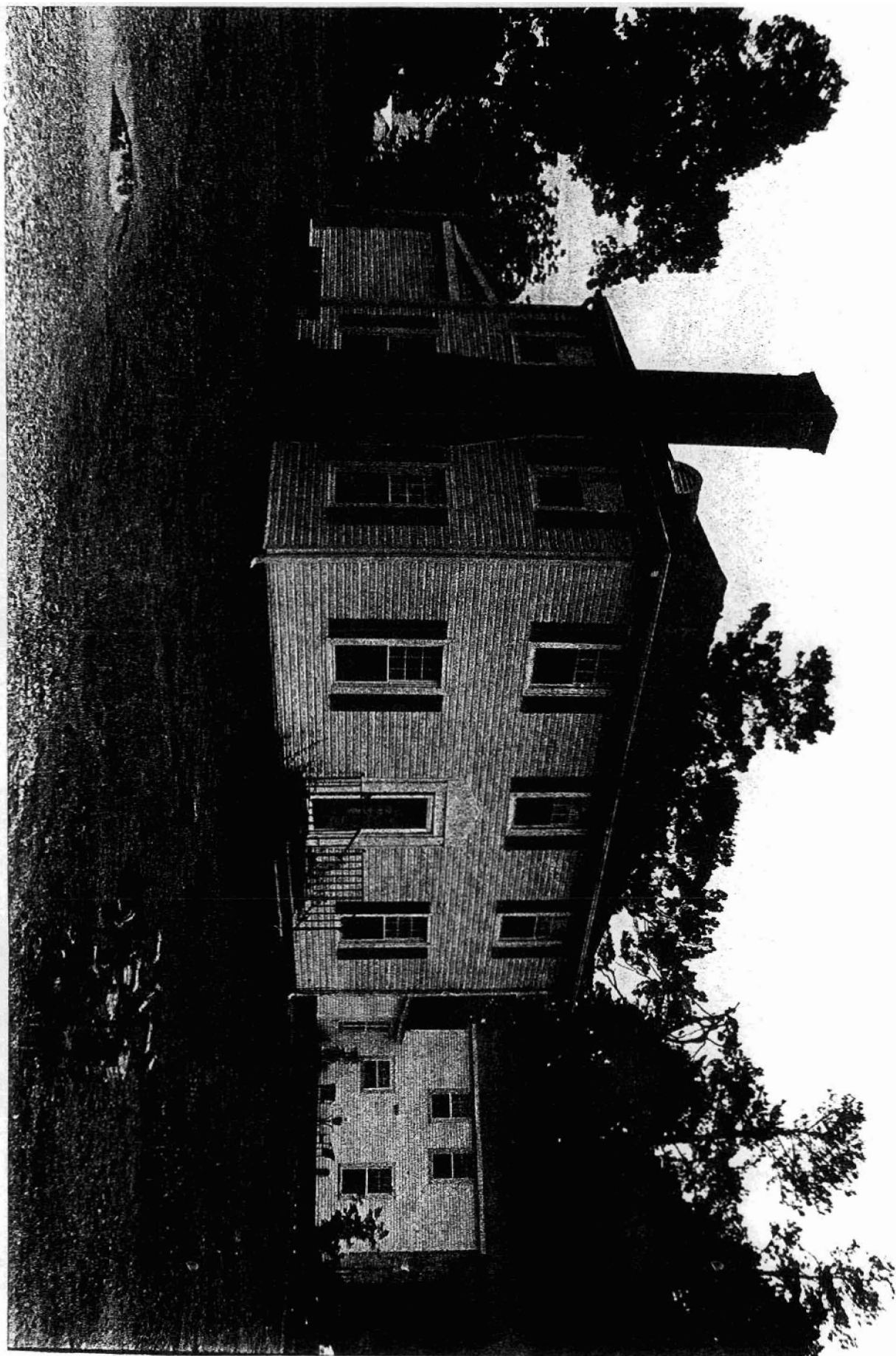
From the southeast corner of the Arkansas Highway 32 and Oakhaven Road intersection, proceed northeasterly along the south side of Arkansas Highway 32 for 330 feet to the tree line, thence proceed southeasterly along the tree line perpendicular to Arkansas Highway 32 for 330 feet to the fence line, thence proceed northeasterly along the fence line for 415 feet, thence proceed southeasterly perpendicular to the fence line for 330 feet to the second fence line, thence proceed southwesterly along the second fence line for 415 feet to the tree line, thence proceed southeasterly along the tree line for 165 feet, thence proceed southwesterly perpendicular to the tree line and Oakhaven Road for 370 feet to the north side of Oakhaven Road, thence proceed easterly along the north side of Oakhaven Road for 225 feet, thence proceed southerly perpendicular to Oakhaven Road for 330 feet, thence proceed westerly and northwesterly parallel to the curvature of Oakhaven Road for 1,730 feet to the south side of Arkansas Highway 32, thence proceed northeasterly along the south side of Arkansas Highway 32 for 370 feet to the point of beginning.

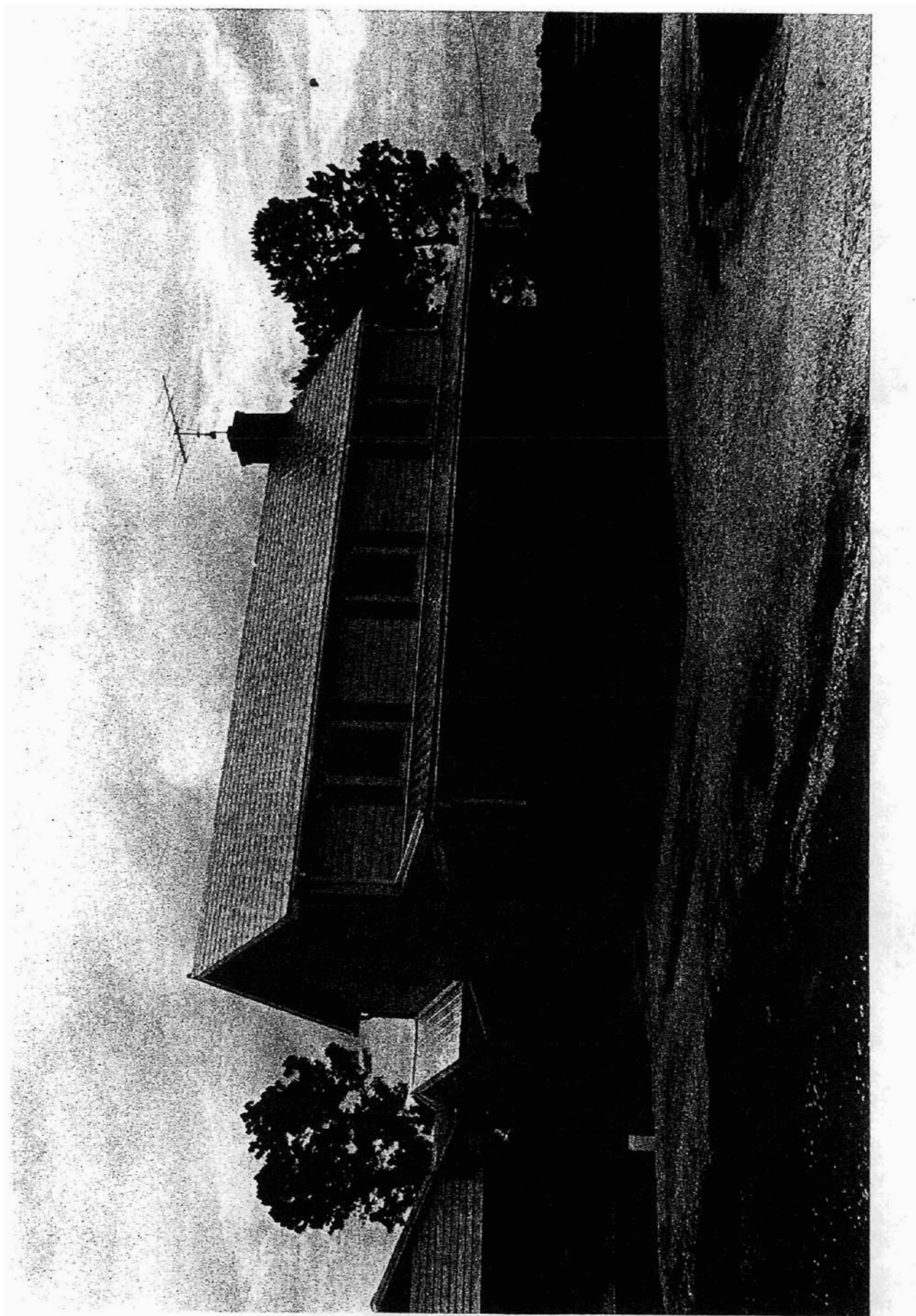
### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary includes all of the original homes built for the Southwestern Proving Grounds Officers Quarters and their associated land.



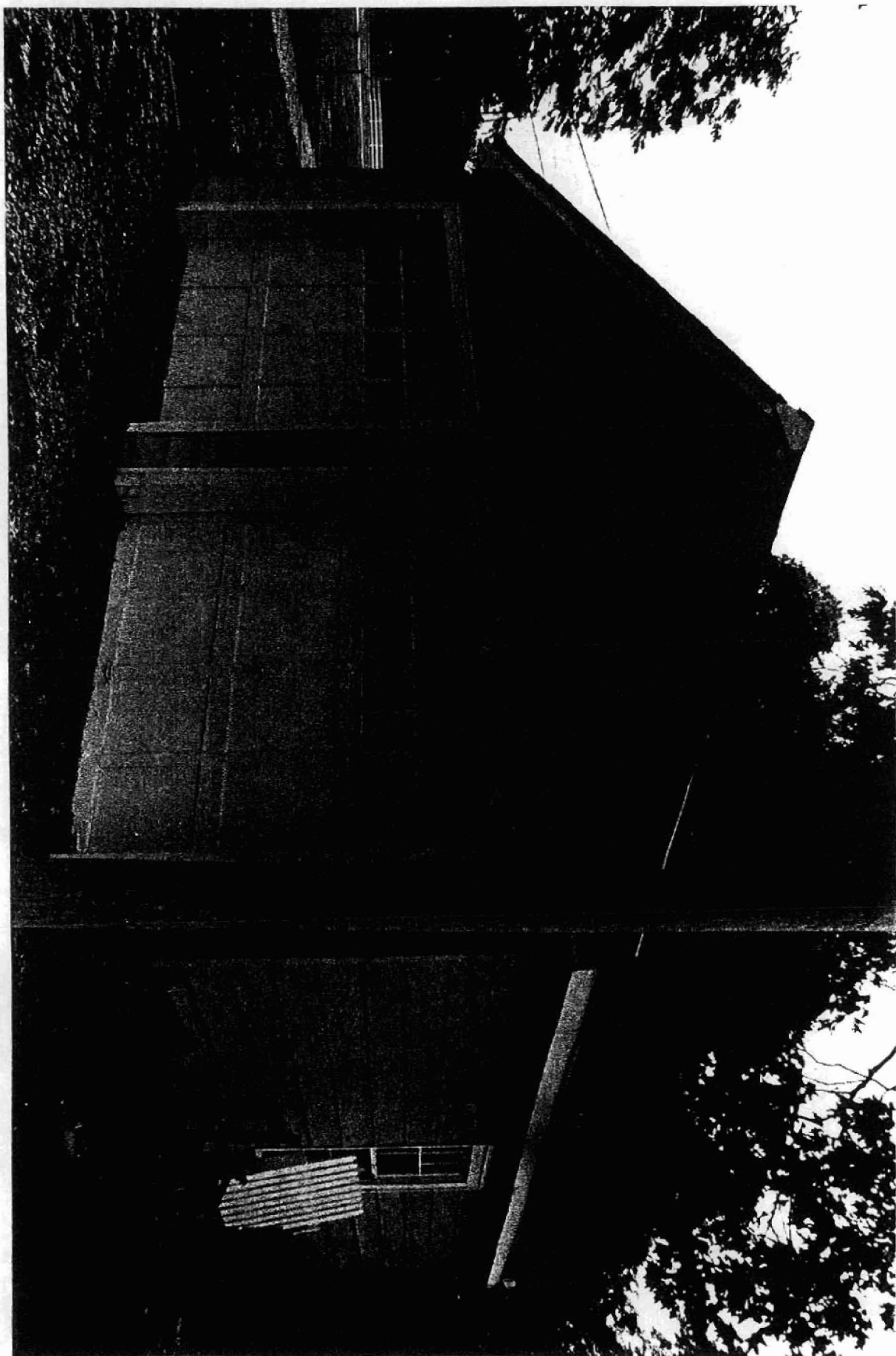
*Southwestern Proving Ground Officers Quarters Historic  
District  
Oakhaven, Hempstead County, Arkansas*



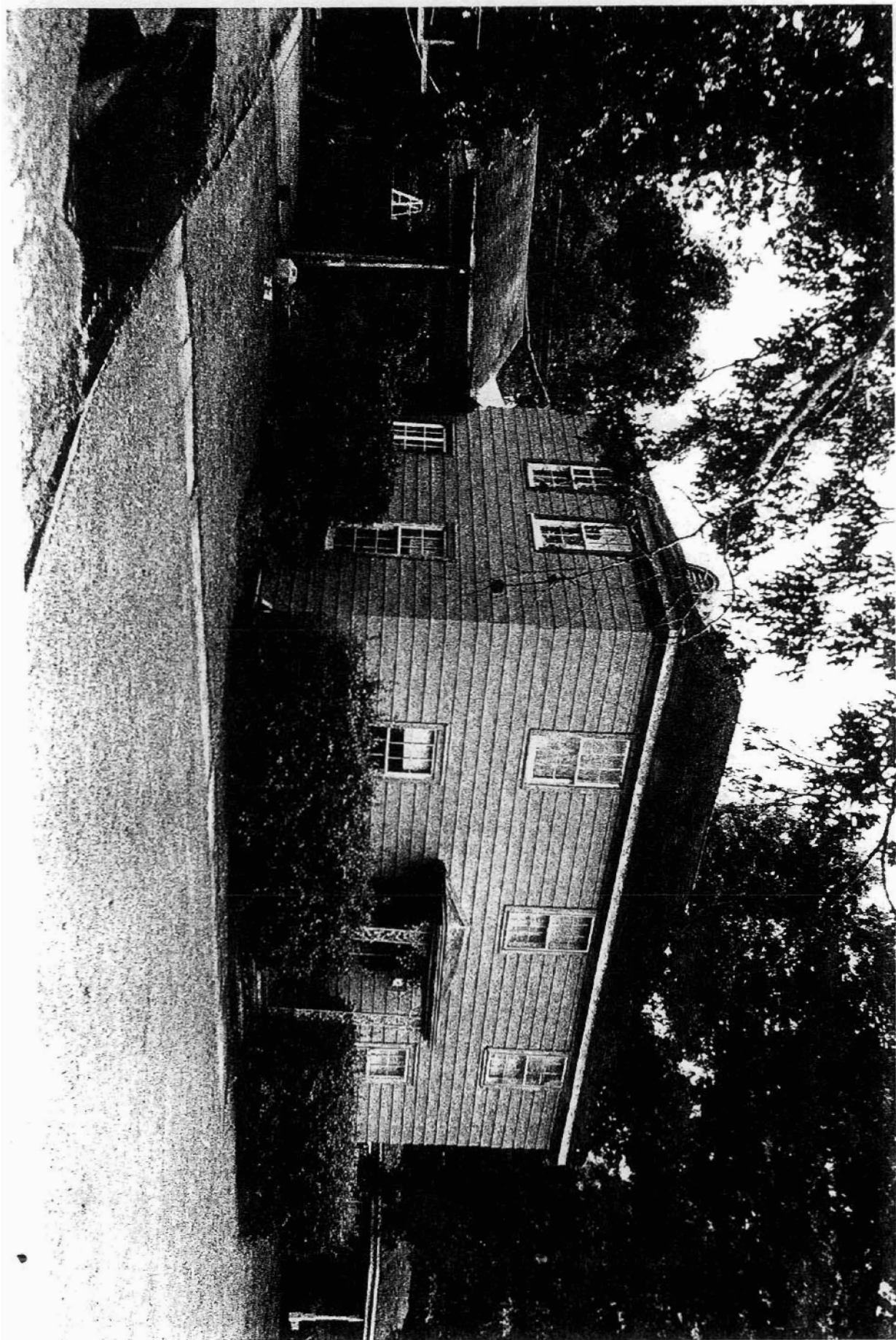


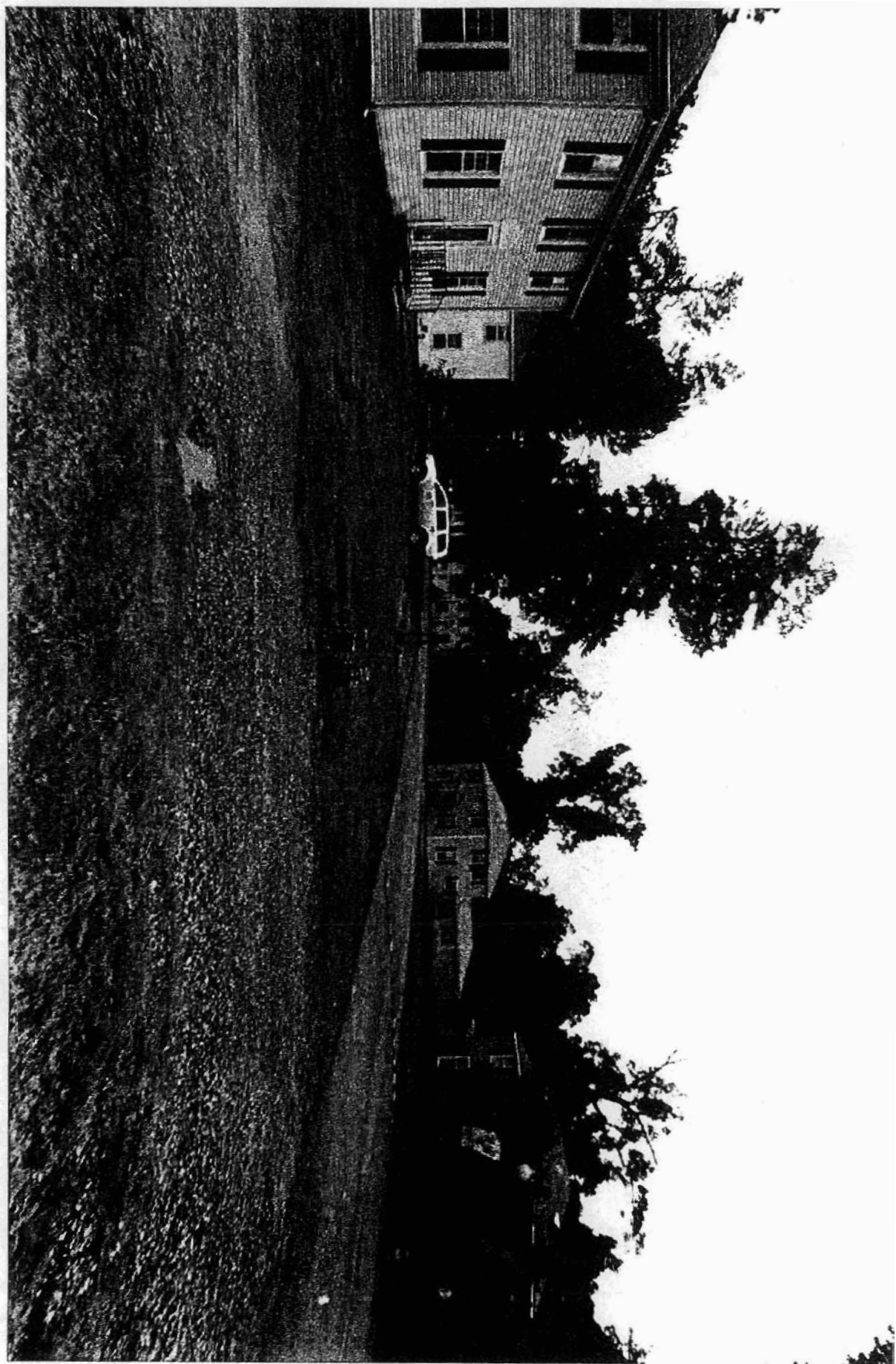


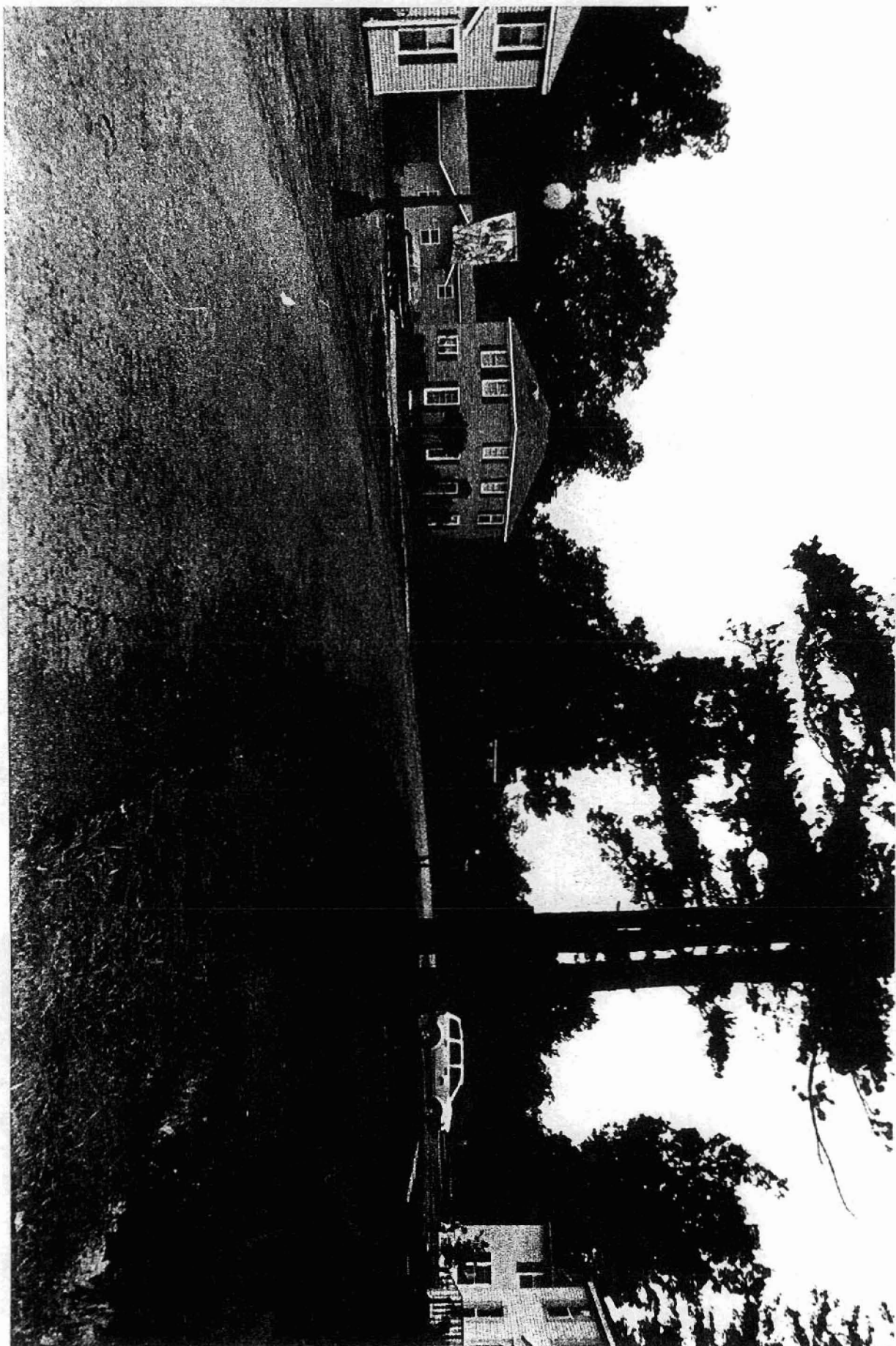




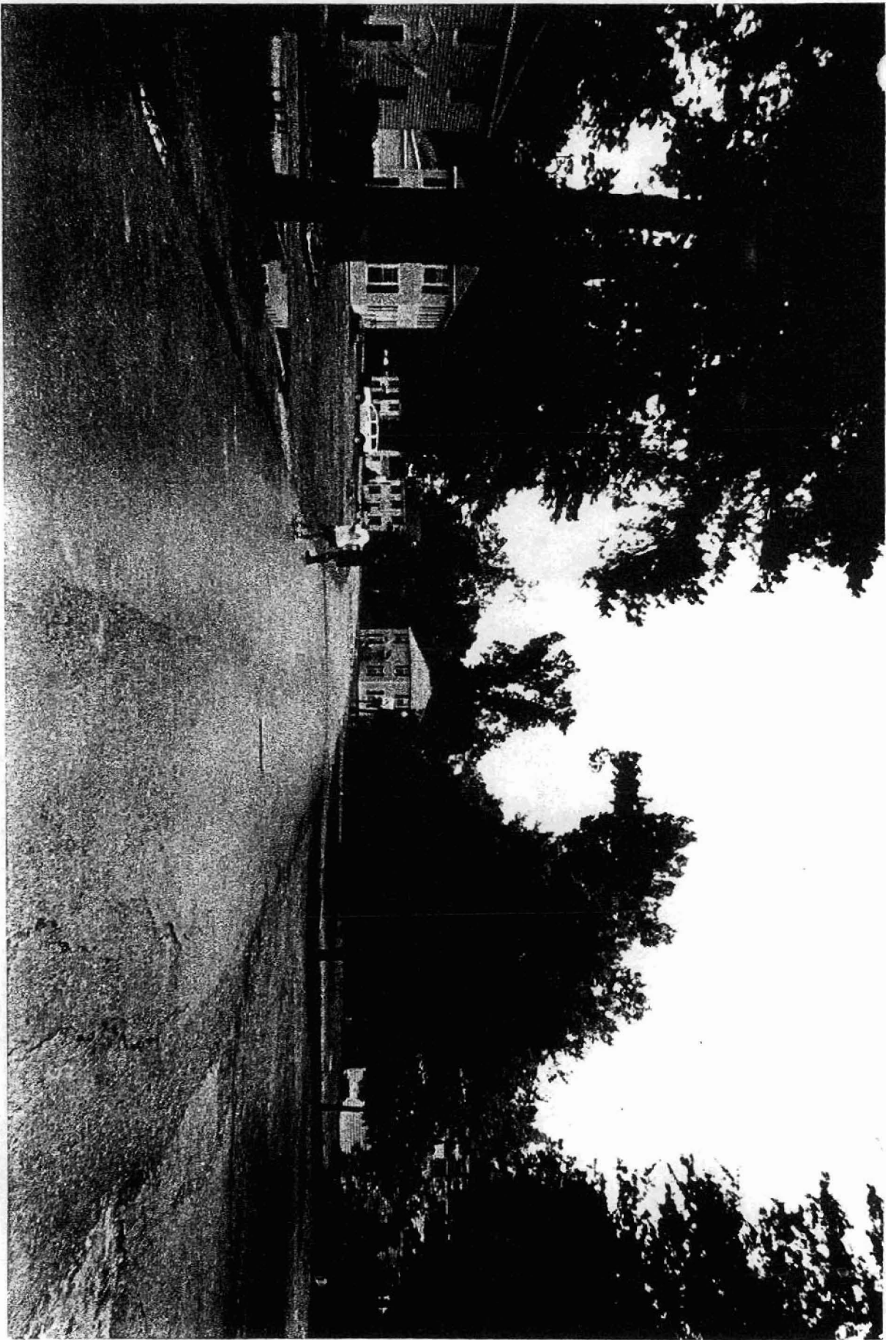


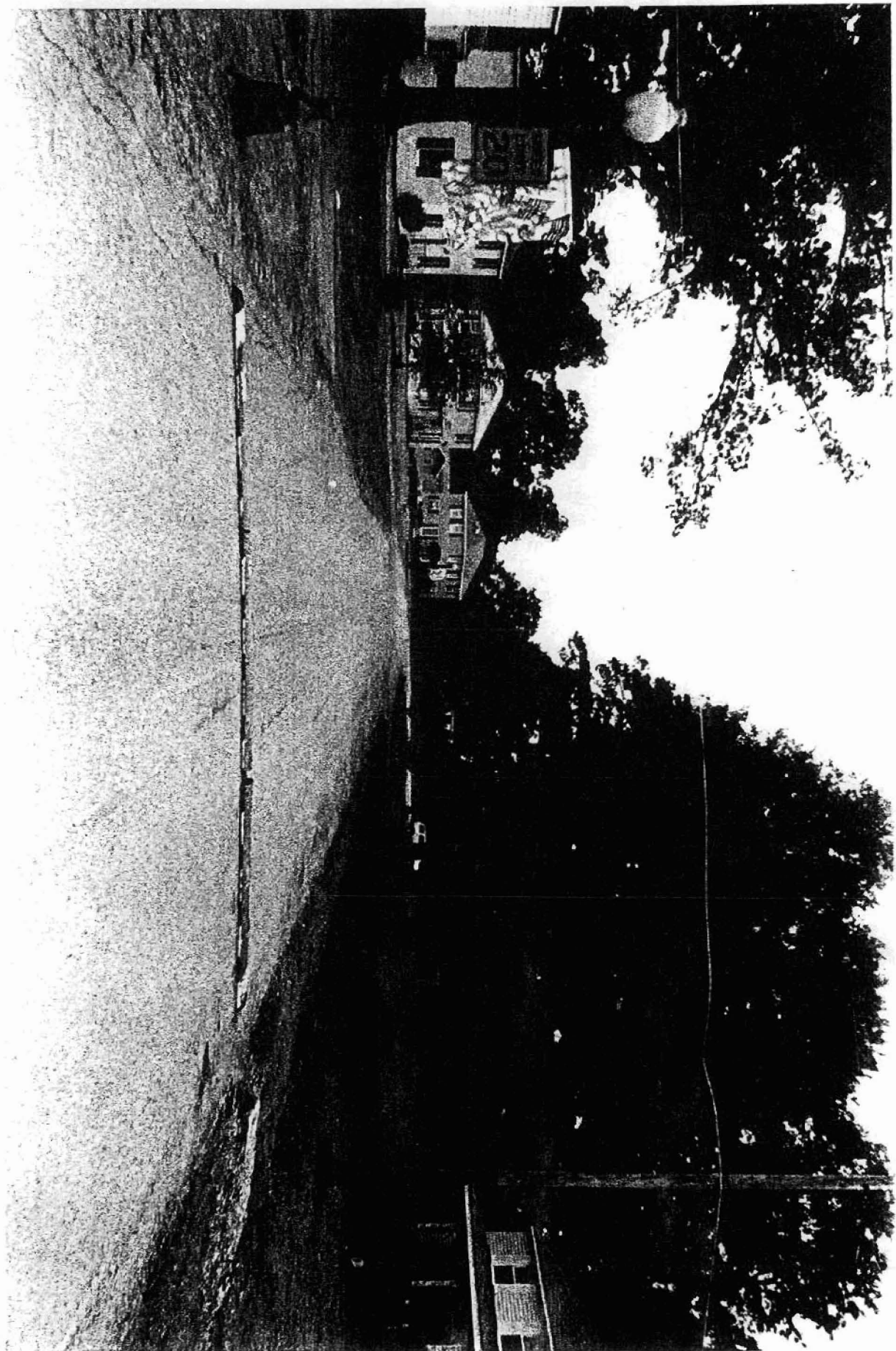


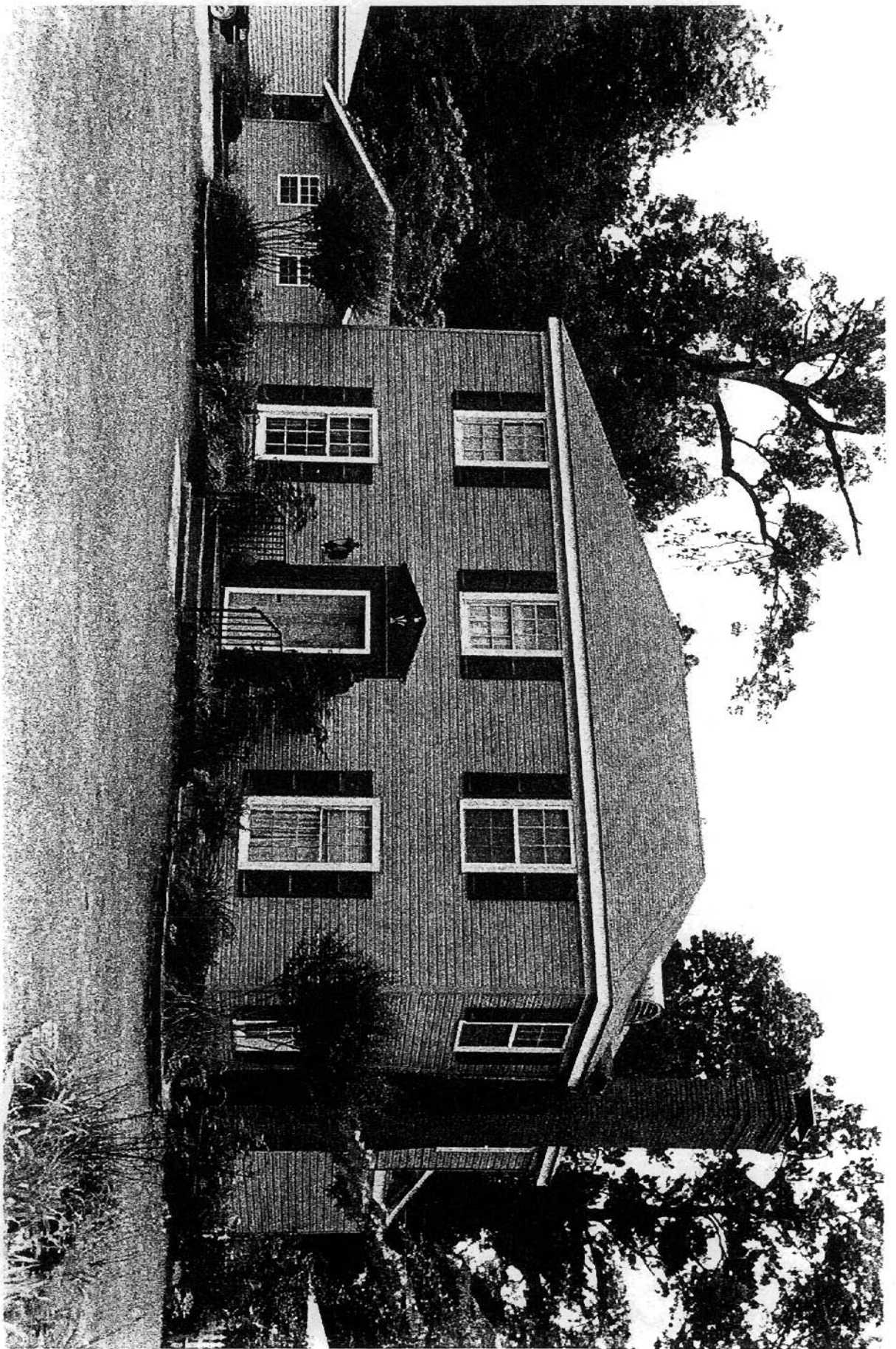




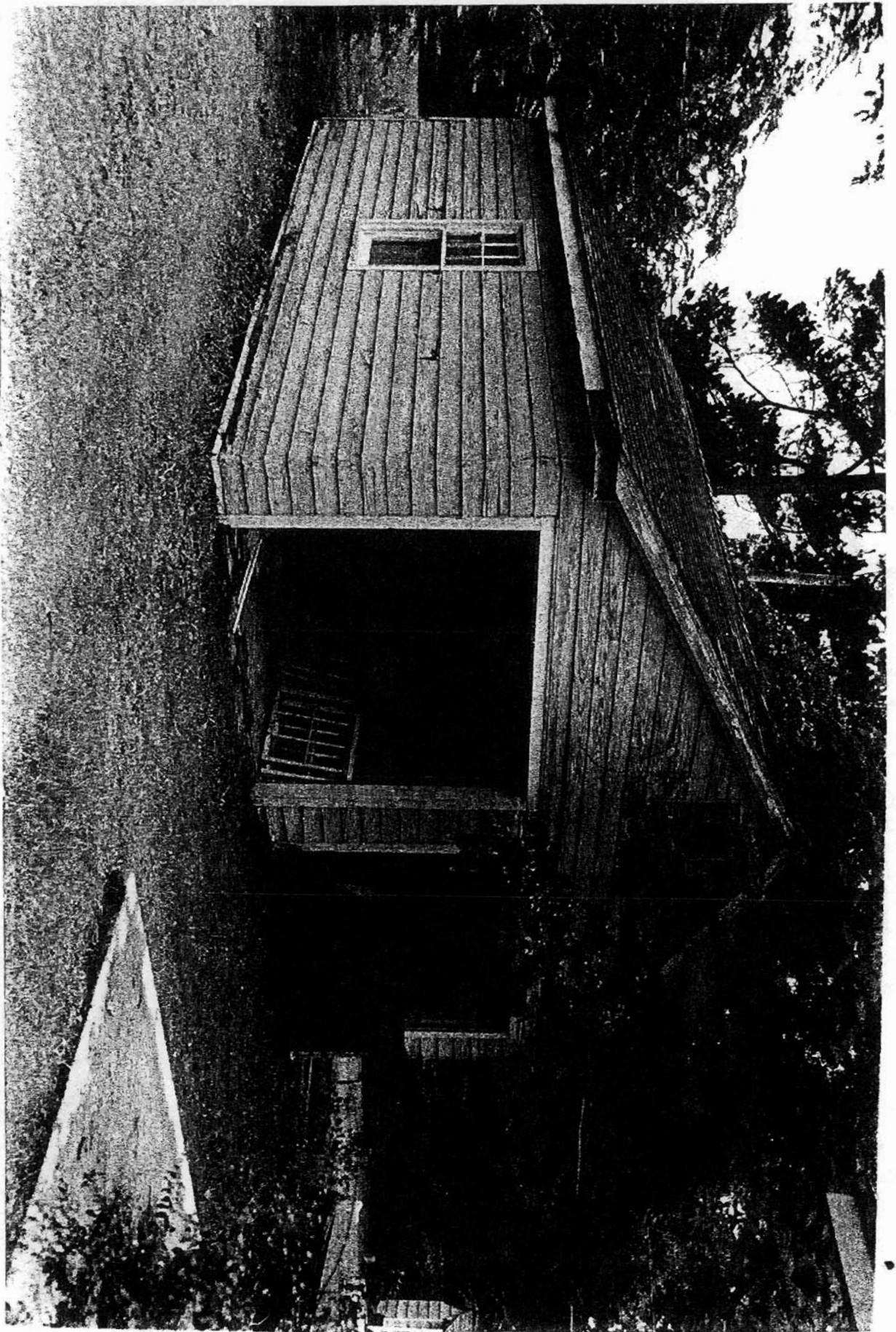












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