

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 John Brown Watson Memorial Library Building

other names/site number Student Services Center, R.C. Childress Hall/JE0202

2. Location

street & number 1200 North University Drive

not for publication

city or town Pine Bluff

vicinity

state Arkansas

code

AR

county Jefferson

code

069

zip code

71601

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.)

Cecile Thacker

11/28/05

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

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

Name of Property

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.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/art deco

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK, STONE/Limestone

roof OTHER

other SYNTHETICS/Plaster, METAL/Aluminum, STONE/Marble

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property 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)

State

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Ethnic Heritage/Black

Period of Significance

1939-1955

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

McAninch and Anderson, Architect

Rock City 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:

The Nelson Architectural Group

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property Less than one.**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>590213</u>	<u>3789559</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

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 Byname/title Elizabeth A. James/ National Register Historianorganization Arkansas Historic Preservation Programdate November 28, 2005street & number 323 Center Street, 1500 Tower Buildingtelephone (501) 324-9789city or town Little Rockstate Arkansaszip code 72205**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 University of Arkansas at Pine Bluffstreet & number 1200 North University Drivetelephone city or town Little Rockstate ARzip code 71601

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 John Brown Watson Memorial Library Building is located on the northeast side of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff campus in Pine Bluff, Jefferson County, Arkansas. In 1939 it was known simply as the "Library Building" and was named after John Brown Watson in 1958. The John Brown Watson Memorial Library is a two-story art deco style cream brick and concrete structure designed by McAninch and Anderson, built in 1939 by Rock City Construction Company.

ELABORATION

The Watson Memorial Library is unique on the University of Arkansas Pine Bluff campus because it is the only building on campus clad in cream brick. The base of the building is defined by several courses of red brick with red mortar wrapping around the entire building. The building is also accented by two bands of alternating courses of cream and red brick sandwiched between limestone courses. These bands define the profile, massing, and floor levels as well as add style to the building façade. The Art Deco style is also carried out in sculptural relief panels, lintels, and frieze work found around the building. The building has replacement windows and doors which are reflective of the original configurations and have thus not gravely affected the historic appearance of the library. Presently, the building houses the University Museum, Title III Program, and University Relations office with a lounge, conference room, and break rooms.

South Elevation - Front

The south façade is the main façade of the building. A set of bronze lions set atop red brick columns with concrete caps followed by a small seating area (not attached to the building) lead to the front door. This façade is faced with matte-face cream brick. The two story building has several decorative masonry features. The base of the building is defined by trim of red brick and red tinted concrete. The façade is organized into three separate masses. Each sits on a different plane. The block to the far left sits forward the most. This block stands two stories high and has two decorative bands of brick defining the floor levels. The brick bands are composed of a pattern of horizontal limestone rows sandwiching seven alternating courses of red and cream brick. The first floor hosts a large window opening with six modern fixed-pane windows in a two-by-three configuration filling the space. An identical window fills the wall space on the second floor. Each window has a limestone sill and they are separated by a band of the patterned brick. The second patterned band is above the second story window and extends to the top of the building, much like a frieze.

The next section of the south façade is setback from the first, and is the main entrance to the building. It is nearly a half story higher than the previous section, helping to make it the focal point of the front façade. The patterned band of brick visually separating the first and second floors carries over to this block of the building. However, the band remains on a continuous plane so it acts as a cover for the front door entrance. The band extends the length of this block of the building and terminates in a moderne curve at the far right corner. The front door is centered on this plane of the wall. The door is not original to the building, yet it

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does reflect the original configuration of double doors, sidelights and transom. It consists of two tinted glass panel doors flanked by a grid of twelve glass panes and aluminum and a six pane glass transom above. The second story wall has a large window opening with limestone sill and eight modern fixed pane windows in a two-by-four configuration. A carved limestone band runs across the façade marking the height of the façade section to the left. A matching band runs across the top of the building on this section. There are four square art deco inspired limestone panels laid in the brick between the bands. The panels are centered above each of the four fixed window panes in the opening below.

The final section of the south façade is to the right of the main entrance and is only one and a half stories high. However, this section is longer than the combined length of the first two. Six large windows along this wall indicate that it was the intended reading room for the building when it served as a library. The windows presently consist of two fixed-pane modern windows with one sitting atop the other. The window openings are nearly a full story high and have limestone sills and lintels. The lintel on each window has a round sculptural element stylistically similar to the panels found in various locations on the façade. There are decorative limestone panels centered above the windows along this wall. The roofline also has limestone trim matching that on the previous section. There is a small section of wall on the far left side of this façade that is taller than the rest. It is approximately an extra half story in height. This is the only visual evidence of since reversed alterations to the roofline done in the 1970s. The present addition remains as it accommodates stairs and an elevator inside the building.

West Elevation – Left Side

The west façade serves as the secondary entrance to the building, mainly serving those coming from the adjacent parking lot. This façade of the building has three visually distinct sections. The section to the far left is the shortest of the three. It is just one story high and is capped with a band of alternating courses of red and cream brick sandwiched between two rows of limestone. Centered on the wall are two window openings with four modern fixed-pane windows in a two by two configuration. Each has a limestone sill.

The section to the immediate right is the focal point of this façade. It extends forward from the remainder of the façade and stands a full two stories high. A door is centered on this section of wall on the first floor. The door is aluminum with a small tinted glass panel on the top right side and a maroon awning above. Centered between the first and second floor above the door is a window opening (the odd location of the window suggests that the door below leads into a stairwell). The opening contains two modern square fixed-pane windows. A small rectangular sculptured panel is laid in the brick above the window. This section is capped with a band of cream and red brick.

The section of the façade to the far right is also a full two stories high. However, this section is set back from the middle section and is on the same plane as the far left end. There are eight window openings along this section of the wall. There are four on the first floor and four on the second, all vertically aligned. The four

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openings to the far left each contain two square modern fixed-pane windows stacked one atop the other. The remaining four windows are clustered on the right end of the façade and contain four square modern windows in a two by four configuration. All windows have limestone sills. This section is also defined by the bands of red and cream brick which wrap around from the front of the building. There is a band between the first and second floors which wraps around from the front and terminates at the middle section of this façade. Another band is at the top of the second floor continuing from the front side and onto the middle section. Historically, a larger limestone frieze was located on this façade, but it was later moved to the east façade after the renovation project around 1970.

North Elevation - Back

The north façade is the rear of the building. Like the other facades, it is a composition of various planes and wall heights. It has four defined sections. The section to the far left is set back the most and is plain. It is one and a half stories tall and has a single metal door to the right side. This section is a later addition and uses a stairwell. However, it is a seamless addition and nearly exactly matches the rest of the building. To the right of this section is another section that is one and a half stories high. This section has four window openings evenly spaced along the wall. Each has two modern square fixed-pane windows stacked on top of each other filling the window openings. They also each have concrete sills and lintels as well as rectangular sculptural panels centered in the wall space above. The wall is capped with a limestone frieze.

The next section of wall is slightly shorter than the previous two; however, it still accommodates one and a half stories. Centered on this section of wall are eight sets of narrow windows consisting of rectangular tinted glass panes above and below a rectangular concrete panel. There is a limestone frieze topping this section of wall as well.

The final section of this wall is to the far right and is the shortest of the four sections on this side of the building. The band of cream and red brick continues from the west façade to this section and terminates at its left end. Beneath the band is a window opening centered in the wall space. This opening has six modern fixed pane windows in a two by four configuration. The window has a limestone sill.

East Elevation - Right Side

The east elevation is the most austere side of the building. Like the other elevations, it is characterized by several different planes. However, on the east side this is primarily the case due to the aforementioned stairwell addition, rather than intentional design. The addition is centered on the middle of the original east wall. The east face of the addition has a limestone sculptured panel that was on the original east wall, but removed when the addition was built and reaffixed to the new wall. There are no doors or windows

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along this wall. The other notable feature of the east elevation is the decorative limestone frieze. It was moved from the west wall of the building, and it is more ornate than the frieze on the remaining sides of the building. It has a sun and sunray relief pattern. There is another east facing wall to the far right of the wall described above. This section of wall is one and a half stories tall. It has a large square vent opening on the far left side, with a metal louvered screen in the opening. There are four window openings on the right side of the wall. They are configured in identical sets of two. Each set has a lower and upper window opening. All have two modern fixed-pane windows set one atop the other within the opening. Each opening has a limestone sill.

Interior

In the early 1970s the library was renovated as part of a campus wide project to update facilities. These alterations were later reversed. According to the Nelson Architectural Group, the architectural firm that did the most recent renovation, a portion of the second floor that was added in the 1970s renovation was removed; a new HVAC system was installed along with new lighting, plumbing fixtures, piping, ceilings and floor coverings. The Italian marble in the reception hall, molded plaster trim and ceilings, and the plaster rosettes in the lobby have also been restored. A wireless system, new signage and a new elevator has been installed along with handicap access on the south and west façades. The old reading room has been transformed into a reception hall and lounge. The other spaces have been transformed into office spaces, a conference room, gallery, and museum. The original aluminum handrail that is attached to the stairs (considered modern for the era) is still there.

INTEGRITY

The building has maintained much of its integrity through the years, but not without going through a great deal of change. The aforementioned renovation from the 1970s added a pitched metal roof that significantly changed the character of the building. The metal roof added weight that eventually caused structural damage. A transitional roof structure was added to facilitate access to the added second floor of the original second floor. A stairway was also added on the east end at that time. Windows and doors throughout the building were replaced, the Art Deco band articulating the roofline was disrupted, and the overall proportions of the structure were impacted by the addition of the pitched metal roof. However, much of the 1970s renovation has been reversed due to preservation efforts by the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. The restoration was completed in 2003. It included a return to the original roofline through removal and replacement of the pitched metal roof with a membrane roof. Windows and doors could not be identically replaced; however modern materials were used and installed in the original configuration. Additional work included restoration of masonry and stone and repair of structural damage caused by the metal roof. The entire current renovation was done by the Nelson Architectural Group and was contracted by Carson and Associates.

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SUMMARY

In 2000 the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) began the process to nominate the John Brown Watson Library to the National Register of Historic Places. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program determined that the building was not eligible for the National Register due to extensive alterations resultant from the 1970s building renovation. In response to this decision UAPB began a project to restore the building. The restoration was completed in 2003 and has made the building eligible for National Register listing. The John Brown Watson Memorial Library Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion A** because it is the first free standing library to be built on the Arkansas Mechanical and Normal College (now the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff) campus and is associated with education in Pine Bluff. The John Brown Watson Memorial Library is being nominated with **statewide significance** because of its association with the University of Pine Bluff which is widely considered the premier African American higher educational institution in the state of Arkansas. It is best example of a historic educational library with African American heritage in Arkansas.

ELABORATION

The first established settlement in Pine Bluff is recorded around 1819 when Joseph Bonne built a cabin on the south side of the Arkansas River on a bluff covered in pine trees. James Scull established himself on the north side of the river a few years later, and was appointed postmaster of Pine Bluff in 1828. The following year, Jefferson County was established from parts of Pulaski and Arkansas Counties, and Pine Bluff was the natural choice for county seat.

The city of Pine Bluff was incorporated on December 12, 1848, after which the city began more rapid development. Between 1850 and 1870, Pine Bluff grew immensely and industry became an important part of the local economy. In 1873 the Little Rock, Pine Bluff and New Orleans Railroad connected Pine Bluff to the Mississippi River, greatly improving their possibility of exporting manufactured goods.

The success and growth of Pine Bluff made it a logical place for a higher education facility. In 1873 the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff was established by an act of the Legislature as a branch of the Arkansas Industrial University (now the University of Arkansas). It opened with seven students as Branch Normal College on September 27, 1875. In 1882 the state designated funds contributed to the construction of the school's first building on a fifty-acre plot just outside the city. The two-story brick structure operated as the whole of Branch Normal College until 1927 when the school began an expansion project.

The governor appointed an independent board of trustees for the school. The state appropriated \$275,000 for construction of a new physical plant just outside of town. The remaining funds came from the General

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Education Board and the Rosenwald Fund, giving \$183,000 and \$33,000 respectively. By 1929 the school became a standard four-year degree granting institution and was certified as a standard four-year college in 1933. In 1935 a new building program allowed for construction of new residences for instructors and a gymnasium. The John Brown Watson Memorial Library was built in 1938-1939 as part of the next building phase which included its construction along with two new dormitories. During the late 1940s a building project began which eventually doubled the size of the campus, and established it as an important educational facility in the state. The school was then called the Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical and Normal College. In 1972 it merged with the University of Arkansas and became the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

The John Brown Watson Memorial Library Building was part of a PWA construction project. A grant of \$89,960 was allotted for its construction, while the estimated cost was set at \$200,522. A contract of \$185,768 was awarded on August 29, 1938 and construction began September 2, 1938. The Art Deco style two-story structure of matte-face cream color brick was originally built as the library on campus. The library stacks, reading room, periodical room and offices were located on the first floor. The second floor housed the art department along with classrooms and offices. The rear wing contained the workroom with book stacks on the second level. The building was simply known as the Library Building until 1958 when it was renamed in honor of the late university president John Brown Watson.

The library effectively served the campus for nearly thirty years when talk of expansion began. After lengthy consultations, the estimated costs of an annex to the library sufficient to handle projections through 1980 were deemed impractical. It was then decided most feasible to construct a new building. After the library moved to its new facilities in 1968, the former library space (first floor) was used to house the Financial Aid offices and later other services including Student Affairs, University College, Counseling, Testing and Assessment. The building underwent a major renovation during the 1970s when the school began a renovation on all existing buildings on campus.

The building continued to serve the needs of students until the fall of 2003 when it was again renovated to house the University Museum, a conference room and a reception hall. The building also houses the Office of University Relations and Development and the Title III program. The facilities for each of these programs include a suite of offices, a workroom and break room. The museum also has a large exhibition room, archival document room and office spaces. The building received a new name as part of the 2003 renovation. It was rededicated as R.C. Childress hall after Dr. Rufus C. Childress, a prominent leader in education development and reform in Arkansas. The more recent 1968 library building now bears the name John Brown Watson Memorial Library. However, many people on campus still refer to the building as the Watson Library Building and took little notice of the name change.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 2000 the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) began the process to nominate the John Brown Watson Library to the National Register of Historic Places. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program determined that the building was not eligible for the National Register due to extensive alterations resultant from the 1970s building renovation. In response to this decision UAPB began a project to restore the building. The restoration was completed in 2003 and has made the building eligible for National Register listing. The John Brown Watson Memorial Library Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion A** because it is the first free standing library to be built on the Arkansas Mechanical and Normal College (now the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff) campus and is associated with education in Pine Bluff. The John Brown Watson Memorial Library is being nominated with **statewide significance** because of its association with the University of Pine Bluff which is widely considered the premier African American higher educational institution in the state of Arkansas. It is the best example of a historic educational library with African American heritage in Arkansas.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Archives of Mr. Henri Linton, UAPB Art Department, 1939.

Correspondence from Mr. Edward Fontenette, UAPB Library, 1939.

University Archives, University Museum and Cultural Center.

Correspondence from The Nelson Architectural Group.

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LEGAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

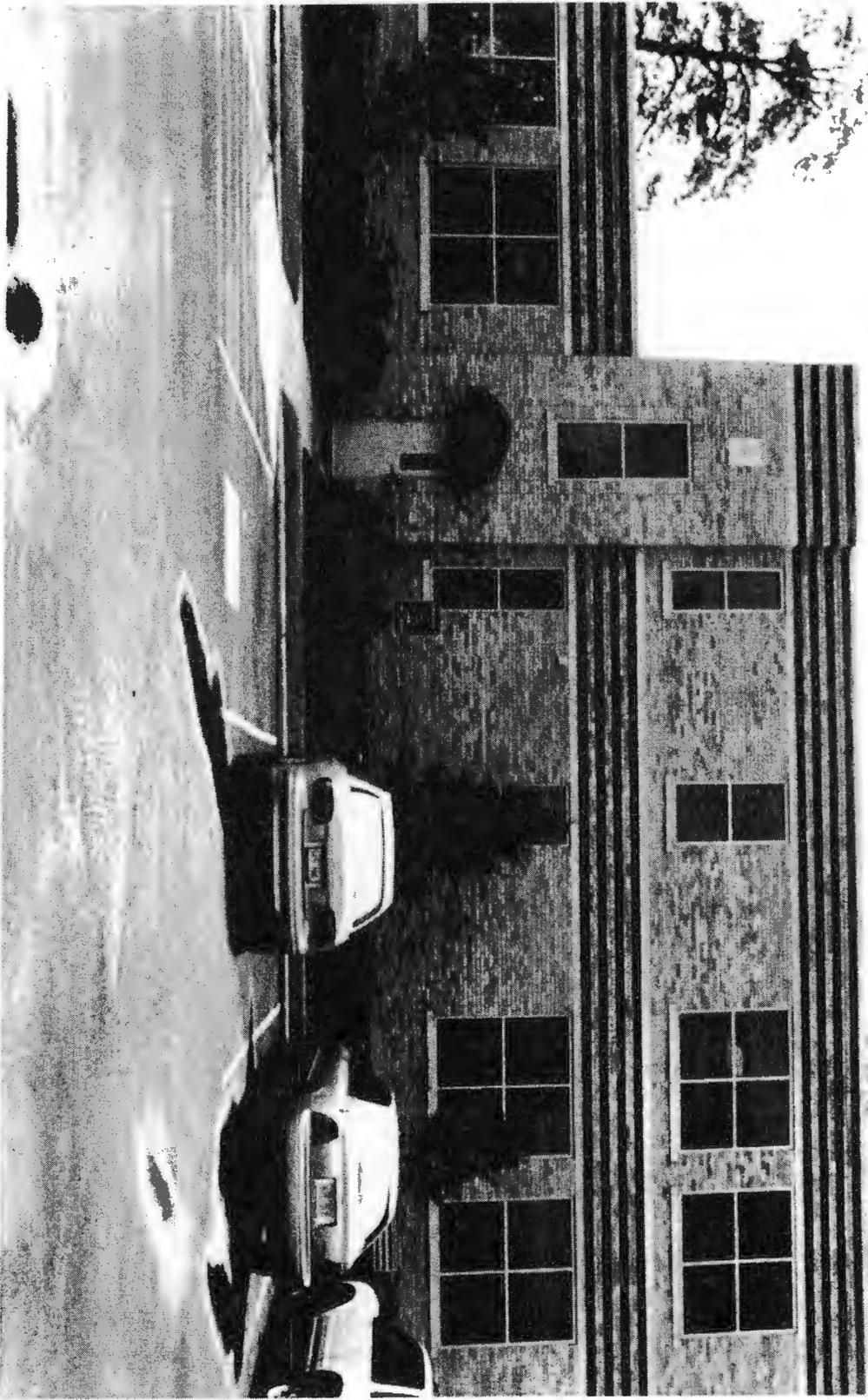
From a point at the intersection of University Drive and John Kennedy Drive proceed westerly 165 feet along John Kennedy Drive to the point of beginning. From the point of beginning proceed southerly 103.1 feet, thence proceed westerly 123.7 feet, thence proceed northerly 103.1 feet, thence proceed easterly 123.7 feet to the point of beginning.

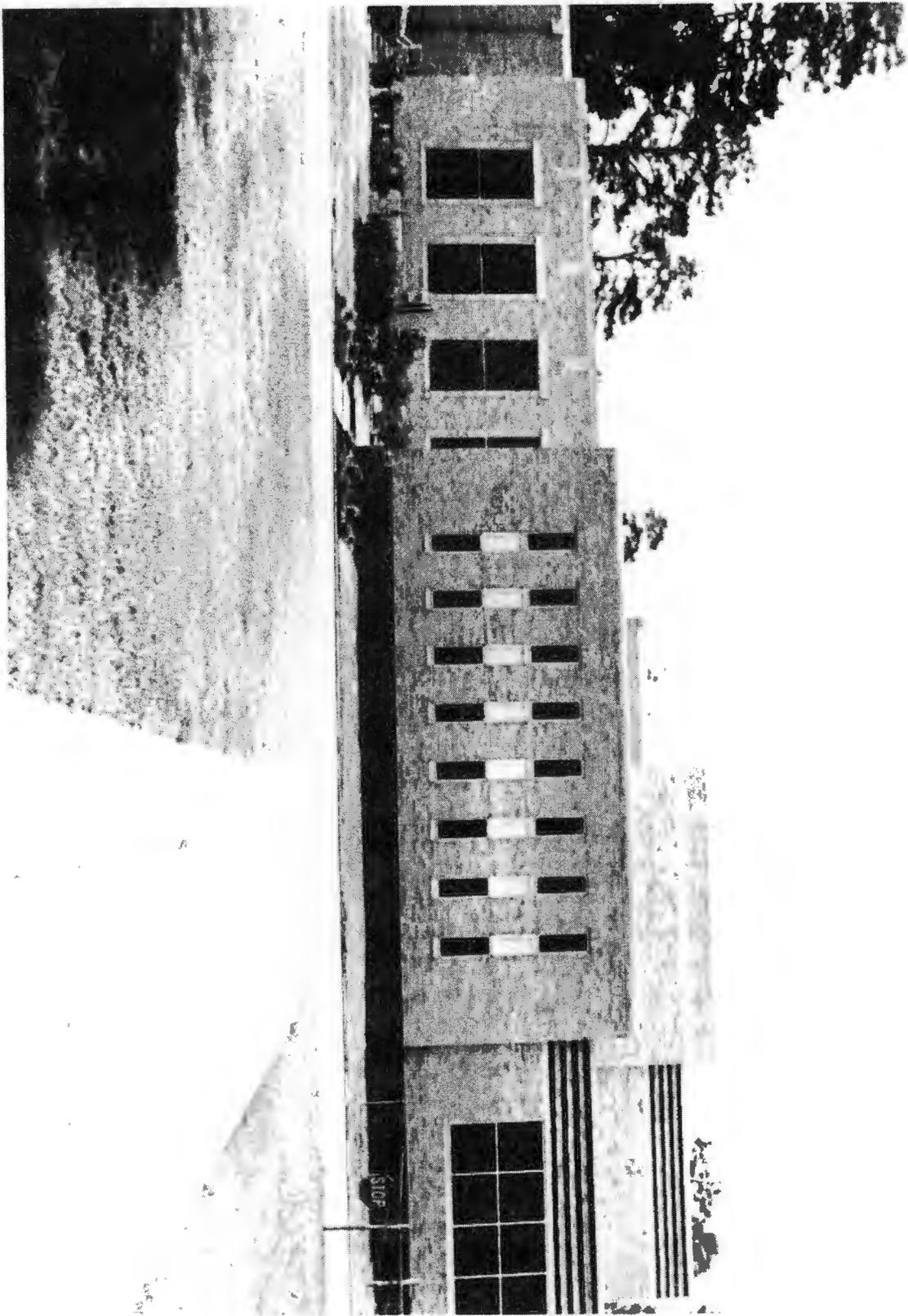
BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

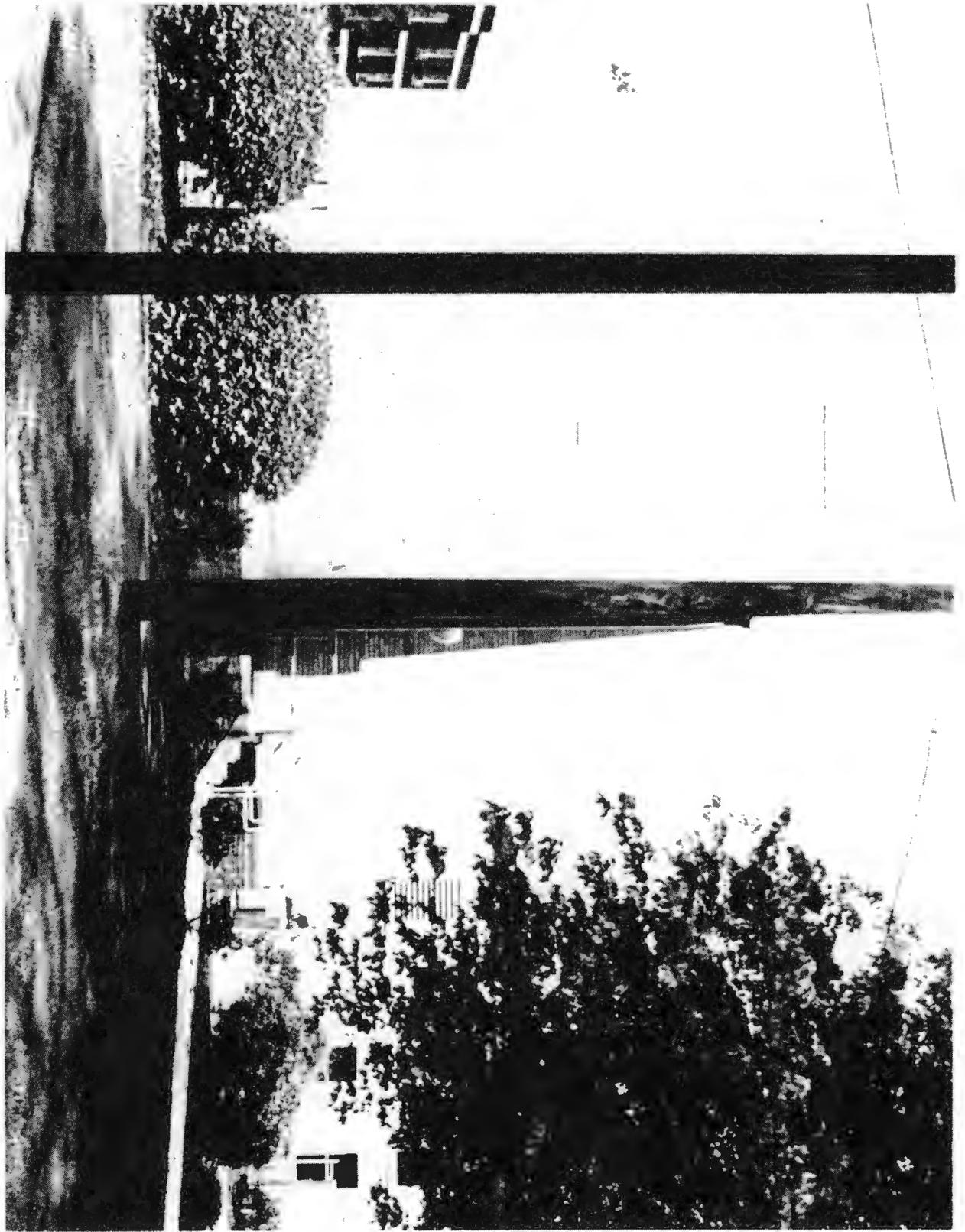
This boundary includes the John Brown Watson Memorial Library and its immediate setting.

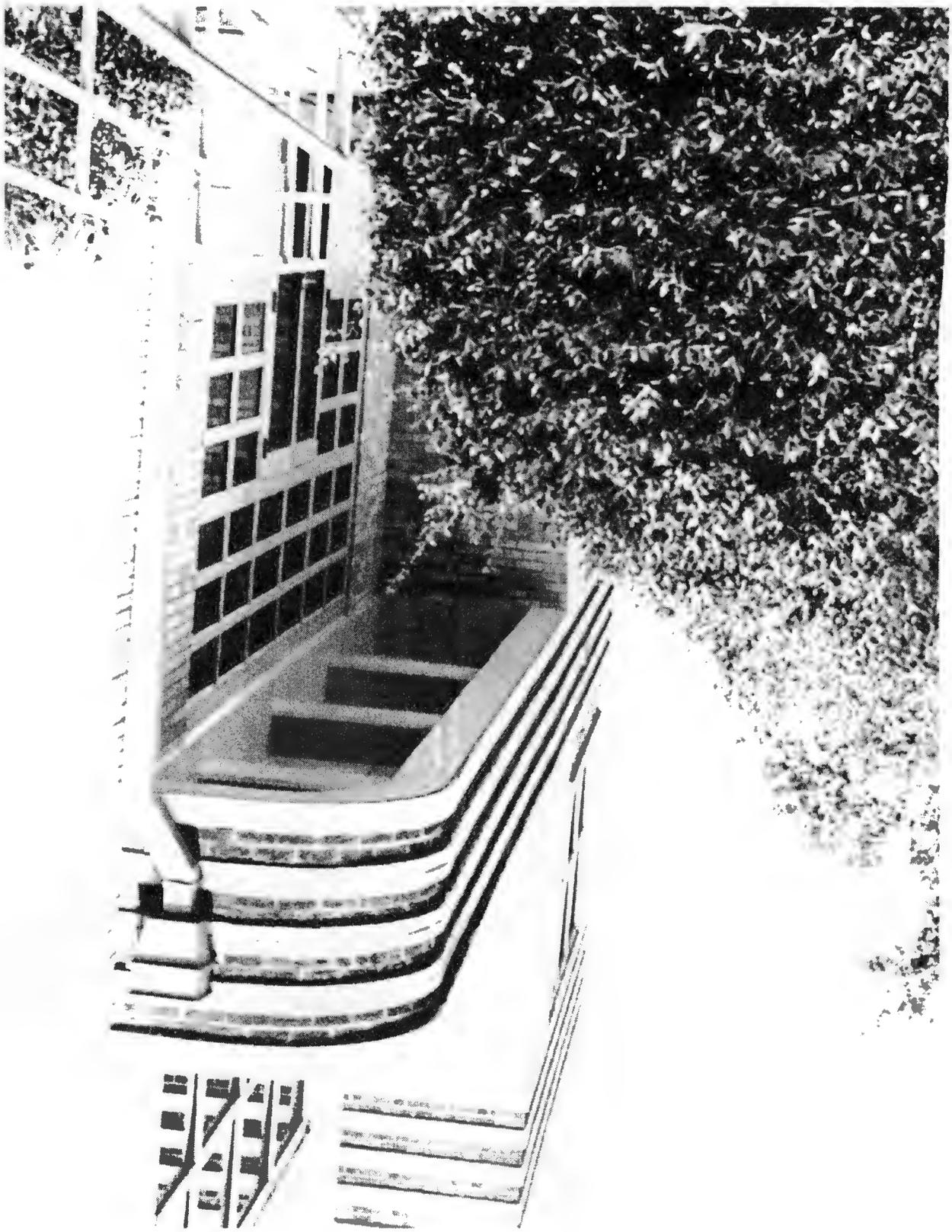








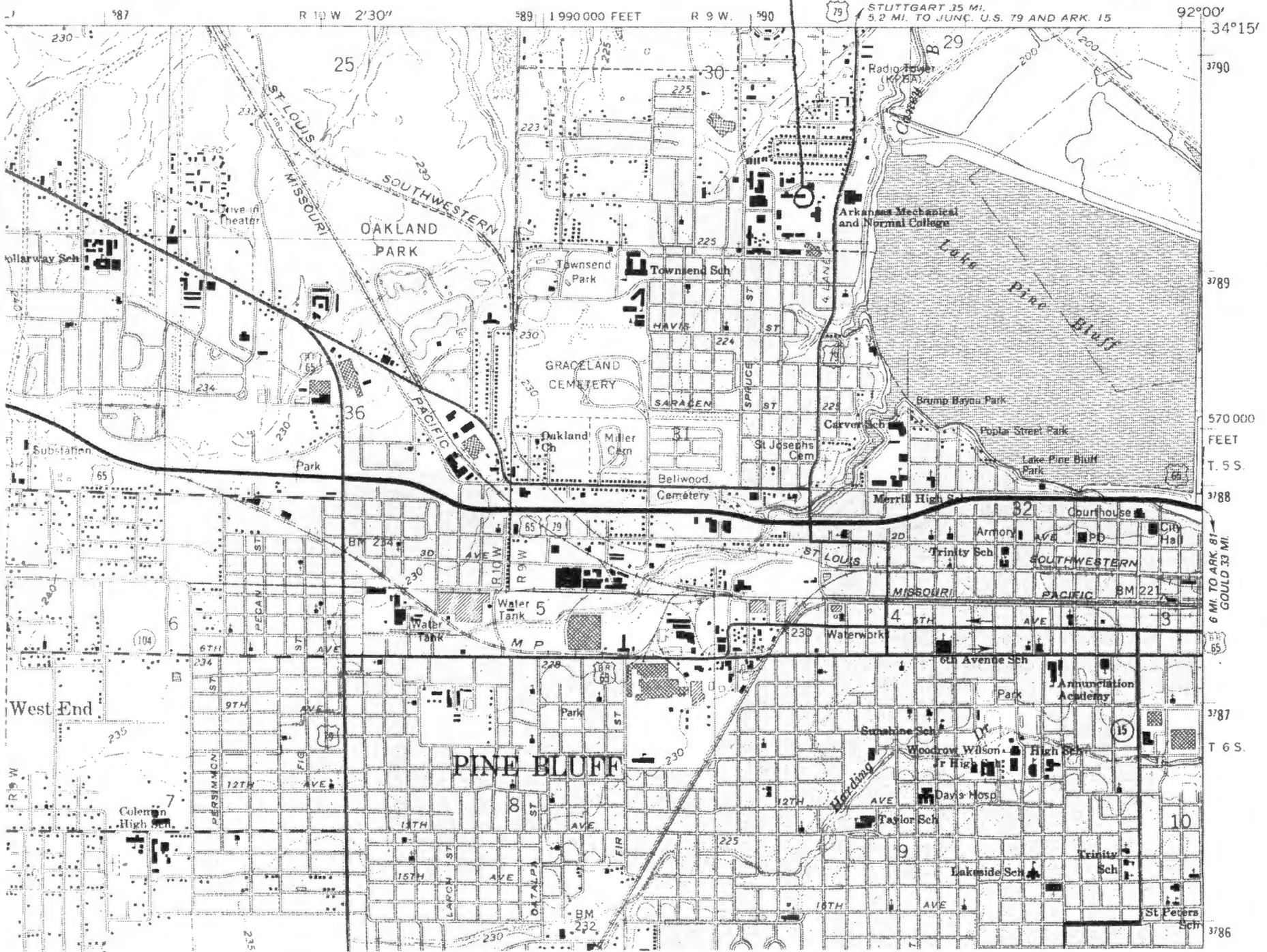




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PINE BLUFF QUADRANGLE
ARKANSAS—JEFFERSON CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

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(ROB ROY)



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