

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NR 10-5-2009

# 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 Carver Gymnasium

other names/site number Site #LN0196, Carver Tiger's Multicultural Center

### 2. Location

street & number 400 Ferguson Street

not for publication

city or town Lonoke

vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Lonoke code 085 zip code 72086

### 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 Mathas  
Signature of certifying official/Title

7/13/09  
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:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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:)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Carver Gymnasium

Name of Property

Lonoke County, Arkansas

County and State

**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**

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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 CONCRETE BLOCK  
roof METAL  
other  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

Carver Gymnasium  
Name of Property

Lonoke County, Arkansas  
County and State

### 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)

ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black

#### Period of Significance

1957-1959

#### Significant Dates

1957

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

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

#### Architect/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: \_\_\_\_\_

Carver Gymnasium  
Name of Property

Lonoke County, Arkansas  
County and State

### Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one.

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>601006</u> Easting	<u>3849269</u> Northing	3	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	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 April 28, 2009  
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 Carver High Alumni Association, Inc.  
street & number PO Box 403 telephone             
city or town Lonoke state AR zip code 72086

**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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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

### SUMMARY

The Carver Gymnasium is a concrete block building located at 400 Ferguson Street on the east side of Lonoke, Lonoke County, Arkansas. The building was built in 1957 and rests on a continuous concrete foundation. Metal-framed awning windows fenestrate the building and a gabled metal roof caps the main portion of the building. A rear wing, which houses the locker rooms and showers, is topped by a shed roof.

### ELABORATION

The Carver Gymnasium, which is the last remaining building from the African-American Carver School campus, is located at 400 Ferguson Street in Lonoke, Lonoke County, Arkansas. The building was built in 1957 on the extreme eastern edge of Lonoke, which is the county seat of Lonoke County. The building is a utilitarian, plain-traditional building, without any form of stylistic ornamentation.

The Carver Gymnasium rests on a continuous concrete foundation and has concrete block walls. The gable roof is metal and metal siding is also present in the building's gable peaks. A shed-roofed wing is located on the rear of the building and houses the showers and locker rooms. The main entrance of the building is on the east side and is sheltered by a shed-roofed porch. Metal-framed awning windows fenestrate the building.

### Front/West Façade

The front façade of the building faces Ferguson Street and is oriented around the building's main entrance. The main entrance originally had four doors, although only the northern two remain today, and a concrete sidewalk leads up to it. The southern two have been replaced by a sheet of wood. The main entrance is sheltered by a shed-roofed porch supported by two round metal poles, one at each corner. The porch's roof is covered by corrugated metal sheeting.

The entrance is flanked on each side by two, eight-paned, metal windows. The middle four panes of each window form an awning window that can be opened for ventilation. The awning section of the window to the immediate left of the entrance has been removed and an air-conditioning unit has been installed in its place.

The gable peak of the west façade is covered in vertically-oriented corrugated metal siding.

### Side/South Façade

On the south façade of the main section of the building, near the west end, are two windows set about halfway up the wall. The western window is like the windows on the front façade, an eight-paned, metal window with a center awning section. The window to the right is a four-pane metal window.

To the east of the two windows are five, evenly-spaced, windows set just below the roof, which fenestrate the main gymnasium space. The windows are all eight-paned, metal windows with center awning sections.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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To the east of the main section of the building is the rear section with the showers and locker rooms. A recessed entrance with a solid metal door is located at the extreme western end of this section. There is no fenestration on the south side of the locker room/shower area.

### Rear/East Façade

The east façade of the locker room/shower area of the building is fenestrated by four, evenly-spaced, two-paned, metal-framed windows.

The east façade of the main gymnasium section, on the other hand, is fenestrated by four, evenly-spaced, eight-paned, metal windows with center awning sections.

As on the west façade, the gable peak of the east façade is covered in vertically-oriented corrugated metal siding. The east façade also has two square, metal, louvered vents in the gable peak.

### Side/North Façade

On the north façade of the main section of the building, near the west end, are two windows set about halfway up the wall. The western window is like the windows on the front façade, an eight-paned, metal window with a center awning section. The window to the left is a four-pane metal window.

To the east of the two windows are five, evenly-spaced, windows set just below the roof, which fenestrate the main gymnasium space. The windows are all eight-paned, metal windows with center awning sections.

To the east of the main section of the building is the rear section with the showers and locker rooms. A recessed entrance with a solid metal door is located at the extreme western end of this section. There is no fenestration on the south side of the locker room/shower area.

### Integrity

The Carver Gymnasium retains excellent integrity. The only change to the building since it was built is the modification of the front entrance. The Carver Gymnasium retains its original windows, siding in the gable peaks, and roof material. The setting around the building has changed somewhat as buildings from the Carver School campus have been demolished. However, the Lonoke Middle School is located just to the southwest of the building on the east side of Carver Street, giving the area some resemblance of a school campus. In addition, Lonoke has remained a small town, just as it was in 1957, so that the setting around the Carver Gymnasium still reflects the small-town setting of the 1950s.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

### SUMMARY

The Carver Gymnasium is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **local significance** for its associations with African-American education in Lonoke and Lonoke County. The Carver Gymnasium, which was built in 1957, is the last remaining building from the Carver School campus, which was Lonoke's African-American school. As the site of sporting events and other community gatherings, the Carver Gymnasium has been an important community center and gathering place for Lonoke's African-American community over the past fifty plus years.

### ELABORATION

Lonoke County, which is located in Central Arkansas, was created on April 16, 1873, with land taken from Pulaski and Prairie counties. It was named for the "lone oak" tree that stood at the site of the Town of Lonoke, the county seat.<sup>1</sup> The earliest settlement in the area that is now Lonoke County occurred beginning in the 1820s. Early settlements in Lonoke County included the Eagle settlement and Old Austin, both located in the northwestern part of the county near the Moss Prairie.<sup>2</sup>

The city of Lonoke was surveyed and laid out in August 1869 near the county's geographical center. By the 1880s, the area south of the railroad line was known as Hick's & Reynold's Survey and the area north of the railroad line was known as Wright's Survey, and they were both named after the town's original proprietors. Within ten years, Lonoke had a population of 659, and had become a commercial center for the area. By 1889, Lonoke had "one bank, ten general stores, six grocery stores, three drug stores, one hardware store, a harness and saddle store, two meat markets, three livery stables, two hotels, two boarding houses, a furniture store, four blacksmith and wood shops...a boot and shoe shop, two millinery stores, a lumber yard, a weekly newspaper – the *Lonoke Weekly Democrat* – restaurants, feed stores, brick kilns, and other miscellaneous enterprises."<sup>3</sup>

As the county seat of Lonoke County, Lonoke was also an important educational center for the county. By 1889, the town had "a two-story frame, eight-room school building, in which is taught a graded school; also a school house for the colored people." In all of Lonoke County, by the end of June 1888, the student population of the county was "white, males, 2,331, females, 1,745, total, 4,076; colored males, 813, females, 827, total, 1,640; total white and colored, 5, 716." Even though that was the total student population of the county, not all students received a public-school education. The number of students taught in the public

<sup>1</sup> Information on Lonoke County found at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~arlonoke/>.

<sup>2</sup> *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland, and Hot Spring Counties, Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p. 577.

<sup>3</sup> *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland, and Hot Spring Counties, Arkansas*. p. 584.

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schools was as follows: "White, males, 1,235, females, 1,057, total, 2,292; colored, males 416, females, 411, total, 827; aggregate, 3,119."<sup>4</sup>

The original colored school in Lonoke, which was a two-story building, was located on Ferguson Street where the gym is located today. Professor William Henry Pettus began teaching there in September 1889, and the school went up through the eighth grade. However, before graduation, students were required to complete two years in the eighth grade. As with many schools in areas that depended a lot on farming, students' attendance depended on the agricultural calendar and the requirement of children to help in harvesting crops.<sup>5</sup>

At some point in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, the school building became unsafe due to severe leaks and structural damage, and Professor Pettus moved the school to the Masonic Lodge at 600 Ferguson Street. However, in the 1910s and 1920s, efforts were undertaken to improve the African-American schools in Lonoke County, specifically through the efforts of the Rosenwald Fund. Between 1917 and 1925, the Rosenwald Fund gave grants totaling \$2,700 to build five schools in Lonoke County, the Lawson, Oak Grove, Wheat, Irwin, and Mt. Moriah schools. The school in Lonoke also received assistance for a new building in 1935 when a new two-room school was built by the Works Progress Administration.<sup>6</sup>

In August 1945, Professor F. T. Bunton was hired as the first principal of the Lonoke Colored School. His motto was "Education is the road to success" and he had ideas to allow the African-American students in Lonoke to better able to succeed. First, he held meetings and urged the African-American community to get involved and take a more active role in making education better for their children. Second, he also wanted to expand the educational opportunities in Lonoke by offering grades 9 through 12 for the students. It was not long afterwards that he was able to do that, and the first class, which contained seven students, graduated in 1950. It was also shortly after Professor Bunton's arrival that the school was named for George Washington Carver in 1946. Naming the school after Carver, an important scholar and scientist, illustrated Bunton's motto that education was the road to success.<sup>7</sup>

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, all of the African-American schools in Lonoke County consolidated and all of the students came to Carver High School in Lonoke. Although consolidating the schools brought all of the students together in one location, it created some problems as well. The schools were consolidated without any provision for transportation so the families had to work together and find ways to get their

<sup>4</sup> *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland, and Hot Spring Counties, Arkansas.* pp. 574 and 584.

<sup>5</sup> Information on the Carver School provided by the Carver High Alumni Association, Inc. In the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

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

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

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students to Lonoke, often from the rural areas of the county. In addition, there was a lack of basic supplies and textbooks were used, having been handed down from the white school. There was also an issue with overcrowding, since the existing space was not designed to handle the number of students that the consolidated school had. The split school sessions, which had eight-week recesses in the spring and fall for planting and harvesting, made education difficult as well.<sup>8</sup>

Changes to the Carver school campus began to happen in the early 1950s, although some of them were initially unplanned. In 1952, fire destroyed the school building. It took two years to build a new brick structure, and in the meantime classes were held in the basement of St. Paul Baptist Church. Additional changes came about in 1957 when the current gymnasium was constructed.<sup>9</sup>

The Carver Gymnasium was a center of the campus for the last nine years of Professor Bunton's tenure at the school. In 1966, M. O. Livingston became the new principal of Carver. Although the white and colored schools in Lonoke were integrated in 1970, the Carver campus continued to be used as the Lonoke Junior High School, and the Carver Gymnasium continued to be one of the centers of educational activities in Lonoke. The school district stopped using the campus, however, in 2005, and the Carver Gymnasium became vacant.<sup>10</sup>

However, the future for the Carver Gymnasium looks bright. On May 1, 1950, the George Washington Carver High School Alumni Association was organized and included graduates from past colored schools and Carver High, and it focused on "1) assisting the principal and faculty in putting on programs for the betterment of the school, and 2) to give an award annually to the highest honored scholar called the William Henry Pettus Award." The organization met every three years and approximately 250 to 300 alumni, retired teachers and friends attended the meetings. Through the years, they have maintained their identity and on July 8, 2004, the Carver High Alumni Association was incorporated and became a 501(c)(3) organization.<sup>11</sup>

After all activities stopped at the Carver Gymnasium, the Alumni Association asked that the Lonoke School District donate the building and playground to them. On March 30, 2008, the Lonoke School Board deeded the building and five lots to the Alumni Association for use as a multi-cultural center. Goals of the Alumni Association include providing a variety of recreational activities for youth, making available knowledge pertaining to the history of Carver and minorities in Lonoke County, offering tutoring and mentoring program and alternative programs for children suspended or expelled from school. The Alumni Association

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

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

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

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also hopes to offer health-related programs related to teen pregnancy, obesity, parenting skills, and drug and alcohol support groups.<sup>12</sup>

Today, the Carver Gymnasium is an important surviving building related to African-American education in Lonoke and Lonoke County. As an integral part of the Carver School campus since 1957, the Carver Gymnasium was an important meeting place for students and members of Lonoke's African-American community. Hopefully, through the efforts of the George Washington Carver High School Alumni Association, the Carver Gymnasium will remain an important part of Lonoke and an important resource for its residents.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Carver Gymnasium is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **local significance** for its associations with African-American education in Lonoke and Lonoke County. The Carver Gymnasium, which was built in 1957, is the last remaining building from the Carver School campus, which was Lonoke's African-American school. As the site of sporting events and other community gatherings, the Carver Gymnasium has been an important community center and gathering place for Lonoke's African-American community over the past fifty plus years.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

Carver Gymnasium

Name of Property

Lonoke County, Arkansas

County and State

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National Park Service

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland, and Hot Spring Counties, Arkansas.* Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889.

Information on Lonoke County found at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~arlonoke/>.

Information on the Carver School provided by the Carver High Alumni Association, Inc. In the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

Carver Gymnasium

Name of Property

Lonoke County, Arkansas

County and State

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the southeast corner of the East Academy Street and Ferguson Street intersection, proceed easterly for 225 feet along the south edge of East Academy Street to Carver Street. Thence proceed southerly along the west edge of Carver Street for 200 feet. Thence proceed westerly perpendicular to Carver Street for 225 feet to the east edge of Ferguson Street. Thence proceed northerly for 200 feet along the east edge of Ferguson Street to the point of beginning.

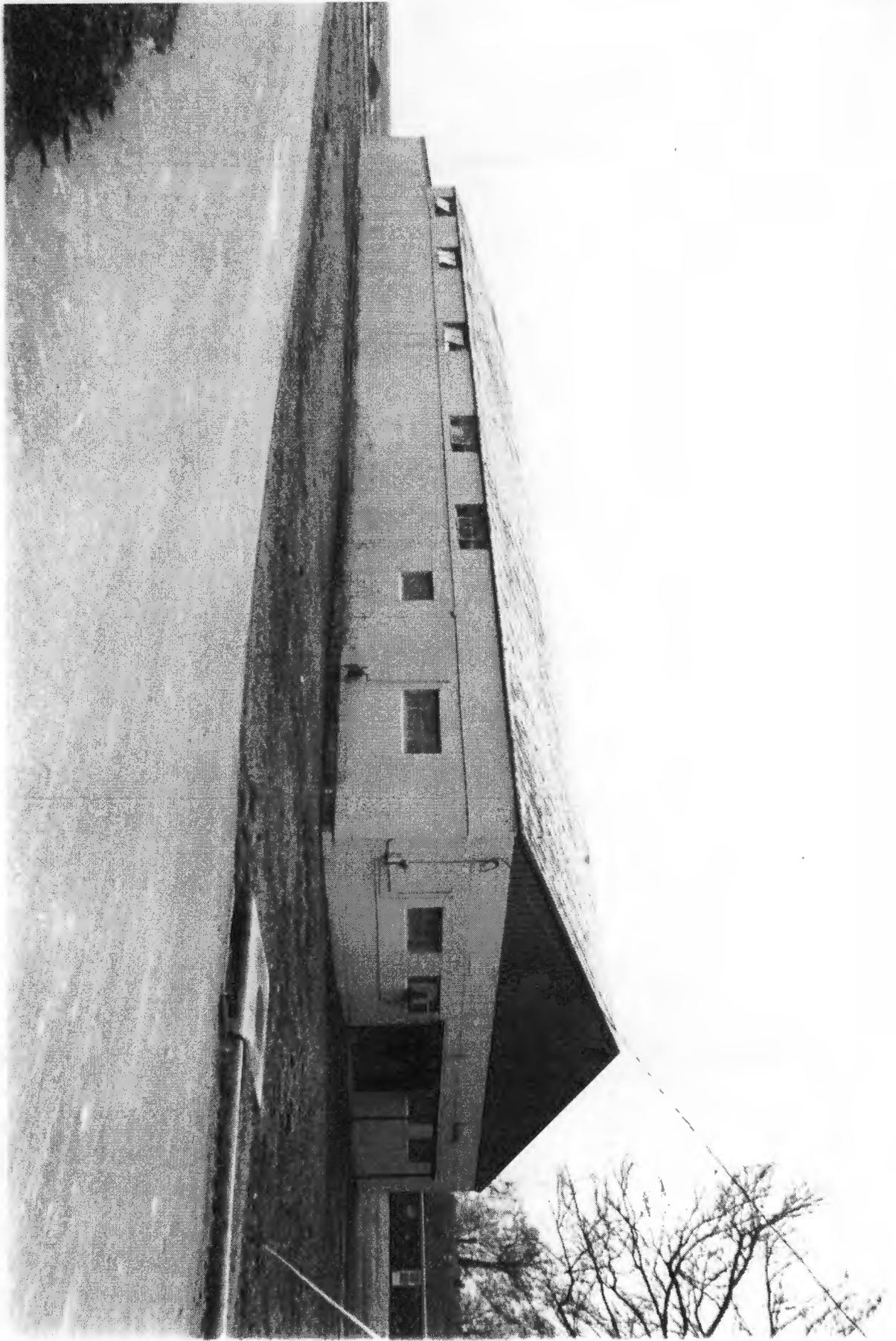
### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary contains all of the land historically associated with the Carver Gymnasium.



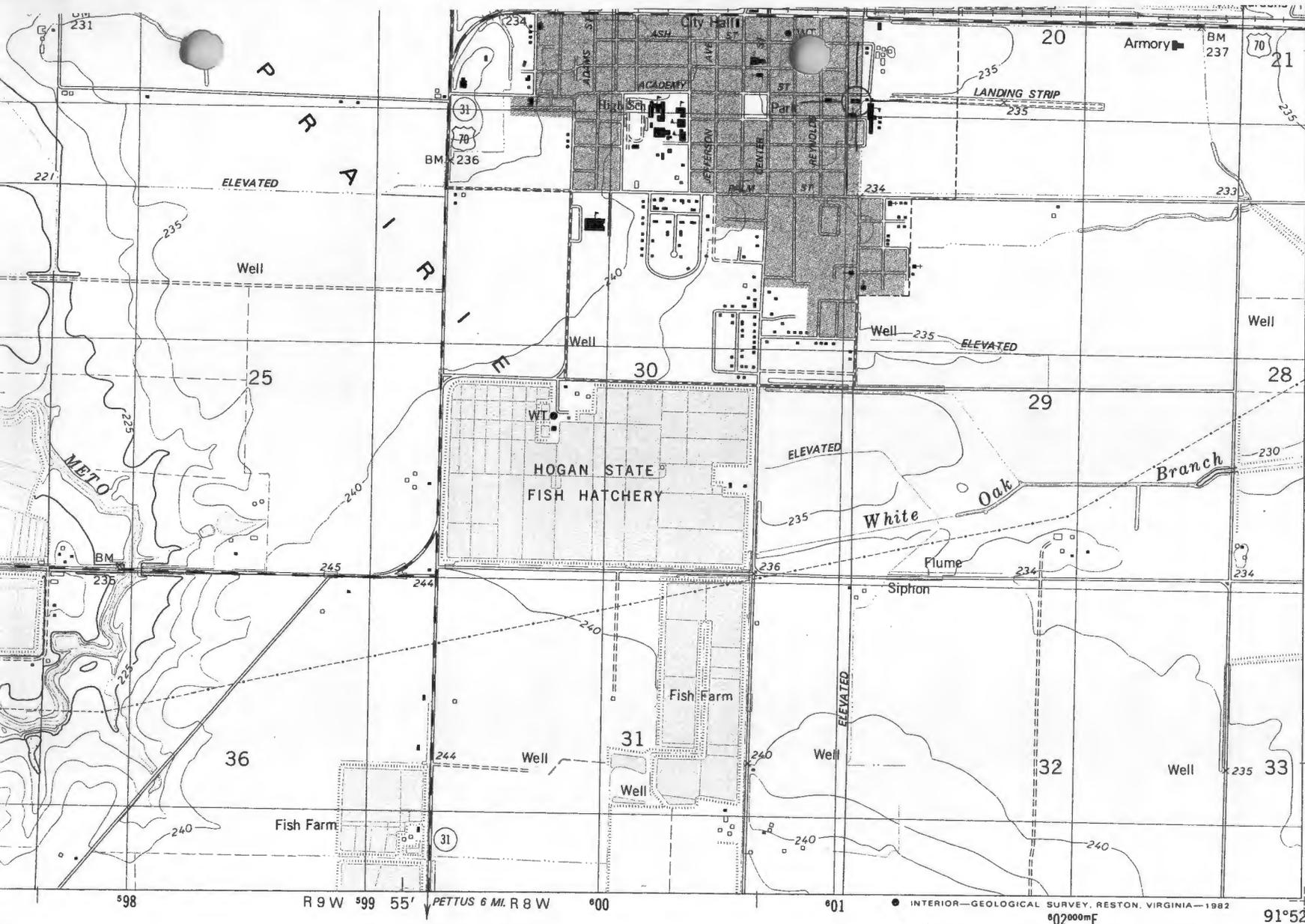




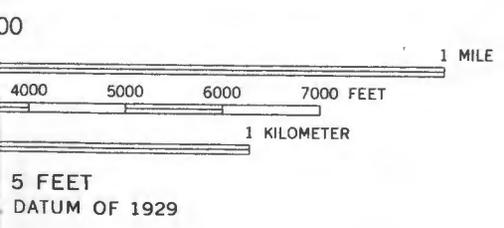








CARVER ANASIM  
 LONOKE COUNTY,  
 ARKANSAS  
 DT 1  
 15' 30" 1006/3849269



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface..... Light-duty road, hard or improved surface.....

Secondary highway, hard surface..... Unimproved road.....

○ Interstate Route    ◻ U. S. Route    ○ State Route

LONOKE, ARK.  
 SW/4 LONOKE 15' QUADRANGLE  
 N3445-W9152.5/7.5

AP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
 RADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
 LITTLE ROCK ARKANSAS 72204