

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Baxter County Courthouse

other name/site number: N/A

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2. Location

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street & number: Courthouse Square

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Mountain Home

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Baxter code: AR005 zip code: 72653

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: public-local

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See continuation sheet

Cathryn A. Slater
Signature of certifying official

4-17-95
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.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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5. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

_____ entered in the National Register
_____ See continuation sheet.
_____ determined eligible for the
National Register
_____ See continuation sheet.
_____ determined not eligible for the
National Register
_____ removed from the National Register
_____ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date
of Action

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6. Function or Use

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Historic: GOVERNMENT Sub: courthouse

Current : GOVERNMENT Sub: courthouse

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

20th CENTURY

OTHER: Plain/Traditional

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation STONE

roof ASPHALT

walls BRICK

other MARBLE

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period(s) of Significance: 1941-1943

Significant Dates: 1941-1943

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Shelton, T. Ewing
Works Progress Administration (WPA)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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X See continuation sheet.

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 -- Specify Repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: Less than one acre.

→ UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>555220</u>	<u>4021100</u>	B	<u>15</u>	_____	_____
C	<u>15</u>	_____	_____	D	<u>15</u>	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ____ See continuation sheet.

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the western edge of Baxter street with the northern edge of 7th street, proceed west along 7th street to the east curblin of Main street. Then proceed north along Main Street to the southern curblin of 6th Street. Then proceed east along 6th Street to the western edge of Baxter street. Then proceed south along Baxter Street to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification: ____ See continuation sheet.

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

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11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Robin L. Baldwin, Survey Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: March 10, 1995

Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg, 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201

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Summary

Located in the center of the courthouse square in Mountain Home, the Baxter County Courthouse is a three-story, public building constructed by the WPA (Works Progress Administration) between 1941 and 1943. The minimalist style of the building reflects a functional emphasis common to depression-era public works projects.

Elaboration

The Baxter County Courthouse is located on the courthouse square in Mountain Home which is created by Main, Baxter, 6th and 7th streets. It is a three-story, public building designed by Fayetteville architect T. Ewing Shelton in the Plain/Traditional style with minimal Art Deco influences, and constructed by the WPA. It is of cut stone construction with buff brick veneered walls. This rectangular plan structure has a full basement and rests on a rough faced cut stone foundation that was laid on solid rock. It is capped by a flat built-up tar roof. One interior brick chimney rises from the center of the northern edge of the roof. All of the windows in the building are aluminum frame with a large upper stationary pane over a smaller rectangular hopper.

The building is decorated with marble panels in a variety of patterns. The first decorative marble is found in a string course created by one layer of rectangular blocks between the foundation and the first storey. A second course divides the first and second storeys, and is created by two layers of rectangular blocks, the lower layer containing the same size blocks as in the first string course and the upper formed by thinner blocks of the same length laid with their centers over the joints between the lower blocks. On the second and third levels marble squares are found in vertical rows between the recessed window panels, marble quoins accent the corners of a main projection, and six rows of various sizes of marble panels form a plain yet complex cornice along the roofline of the projection. The walls of the roofline not included in the facade projection are decorated with a simpler cornice similar in design to the string course running between the first and second storeys.

Concrete steps with one set of cut stone piers and one set of brick piers lead to the main entrance of the symmetrically-massed front or southern elevation, which is dominated by a central projection. A slightly recessed entrance is formed by centrally located double-leaf glass doors in metal casings with sidelights and a light transom. A simple concrete frame around this entrance is decorated by a scalloped pattern above the light transom. To the east of the doors

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are two windows; the wall then recedes to the north approximately one foot, and one window completes the eastern half of the front elevation. This pattern is repeated on the western half of the front elevation with a pair of windows to the west of the entrance doors, followed by a one foot recession to the north, and one more window. The recessions create the appearance of a large central projection. The tops of the second story windows and the bottoms of the third floor windows on the projection are joined. These seven sets of windows are slightly recessed from the main wall.

The eastern elevation begins with a row of four windows, followed by a single-leaf glass entrance. Five concrete steps with stone piers and brick piers lead to this door which is in appearance half of the front entrance, with a single sidelight on the southern side of the main glass panel, a light transom above, and a simple decorative concrete frame. North of the entrance the wall recedes to the west approximately six inches where one more window is found. The western elevation is identical to the eastern elevation with the exception of the presence of two windows on the northern side of the door after the six inch recession of the wall.

The rear or northern elevation begins on western end with two pairs of windows followed by a single window which is set at a slightly higher position on the wall. The rear entrance is a single-leaf glass door similar to those on the side elevations, with its side lights being on the eastern side. A concrete ramp provides access to this entrance. Continuing to the east are three windows, followed by a basement level single-leaf entrance.

Interior features of the Baxter County Courthouse include courtroom walls which are two-stories high with four-foot hickory wainscoting. The third floor contains a law library which overlooks the courtroom, and the jury room which is accessed by a narrow flight of stairs behind the jury bench at the front of the courtroom. The lobby of this building is dominated by two large (12' by 5') oil paintings of the dams on Bull Shoals Lake and Norfolk Lake, constructed in the same period as the courthouse. Also found in the lobby are a bronze tablet cast from metal of the USS Maine commemorating its sinking in 1898, and a marker commemorating the Trail of Tears. A memorial to Baxter County veterans of World War One and World War Two is located on the grounds of the courthouse near the southwest corner of the building.

The doors and the windows in this building have been recently replaced. Otherwise the structure is in good condition and maintains its historic integrity.

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Summary

Criterion A, local significance

The Baxter County Courthouse in Mountain Home was constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) between 1941 and 1943. It was designed by T. Ewing Shelton of Fayetteville, and constructed by the WPA. Its minimalist design and use of local materials in its construction are features common to many Depression-era public works projects.

Elaboration

Baxter County was the sixty-eighth county created in Arkansas. It was created from parts of Fulton, Izard, Marion, and Searcy counties on March 24, 1873, and was named for the Governor of Arkansas at that time, Elisha (Elizah) Baxter. The county seat was established at Mountain Home when the county was created. The community of Mountain Home, situated on a high plateau between the North Fork and White Rivers, developed around the Male and Female Academy founded by Professor J. S. Howard in the 1850's.

In the spring of 1939 County Judge R. M. Ruthaven determined the original Baxter County Courthouse building to be inadequate for the needs of the county and structurally unsafe as well. The architectural firm of T. Ewing Shelton of Fayetteville was employed to draft plans for a new courthouse, and a special county election was held on October 28, 1939 to allow the citizens to vote on the construction of a new courthouse. The courthouse was approved by the voters, and despite a suit filed by the residents of Gassville and Cotter contesting the election, plans for construction continued. In November of 1940, the new courthouse was approved by state officials as a WPA project. In January of 1941 County Judge Jim Martin determined that the new courthouse would be built on the site of the original courthouse. The old building was razed in August, 1941, and construction on the new structure began that fall. The week of August 13, 1943, the new courthouse was unveiled.

During this period there were many federal government programs at work in Baxter County, including construction of the dams at Norfolk and Bull Shoals. The Baxter County courthouse was a WPA project until that program was discontinued in the spring of 1943, due to the United States' involvement in World War II. It was one of many buildings built by the WPA in Arkansas.

The WPA was involved in public construction projects throughout Arkansas during the 1930's and early 1940's. This national organization that hired unemployed men and women to work

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on a variety of public projects throughout the nation was one of many federal programs established by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his administration in response to the dire economic circumstances brought upon the American people by the Great Depression. The WPA as instituted by the Roosevelt Administration was managed by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). Other federal programs administered by FERA were the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Public Works and Civilian Works Administrations, and regional projects such as the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Rural Colonization Projects in Dyess, Clover Bend, and Plum Bayou, Arkansas were also under the direction of FERA. The WPA constructed or repaired a number of courthouses in Arkansas, and the courthouse at Mountain Home was erected as part of this statewide effort.

The Baxter County courthouse in Mountain Home is being nominated under criterion A with local significance because of its role as a seat of government in Baxter County and for its association with the WPA. Through its many projects in the area, the WPA had a major impact on the growth and development of Baxter County. The minimalist design of the Baxter County courthouse and the use of local materials in its construction are features common to many depression-era public works projects. Therefore this courthouse reflects the history of the WPA in Arkansas and Baxter County.

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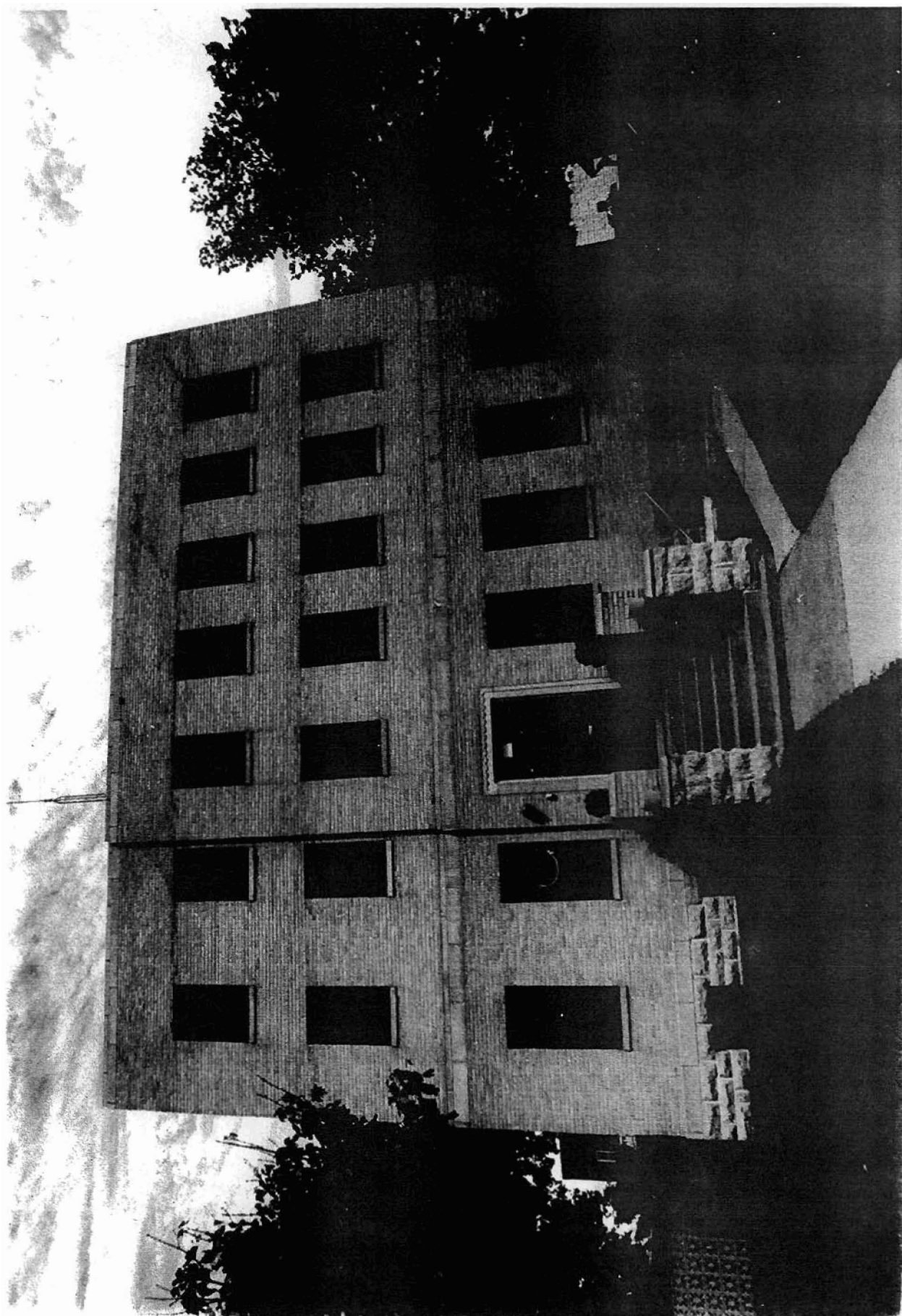
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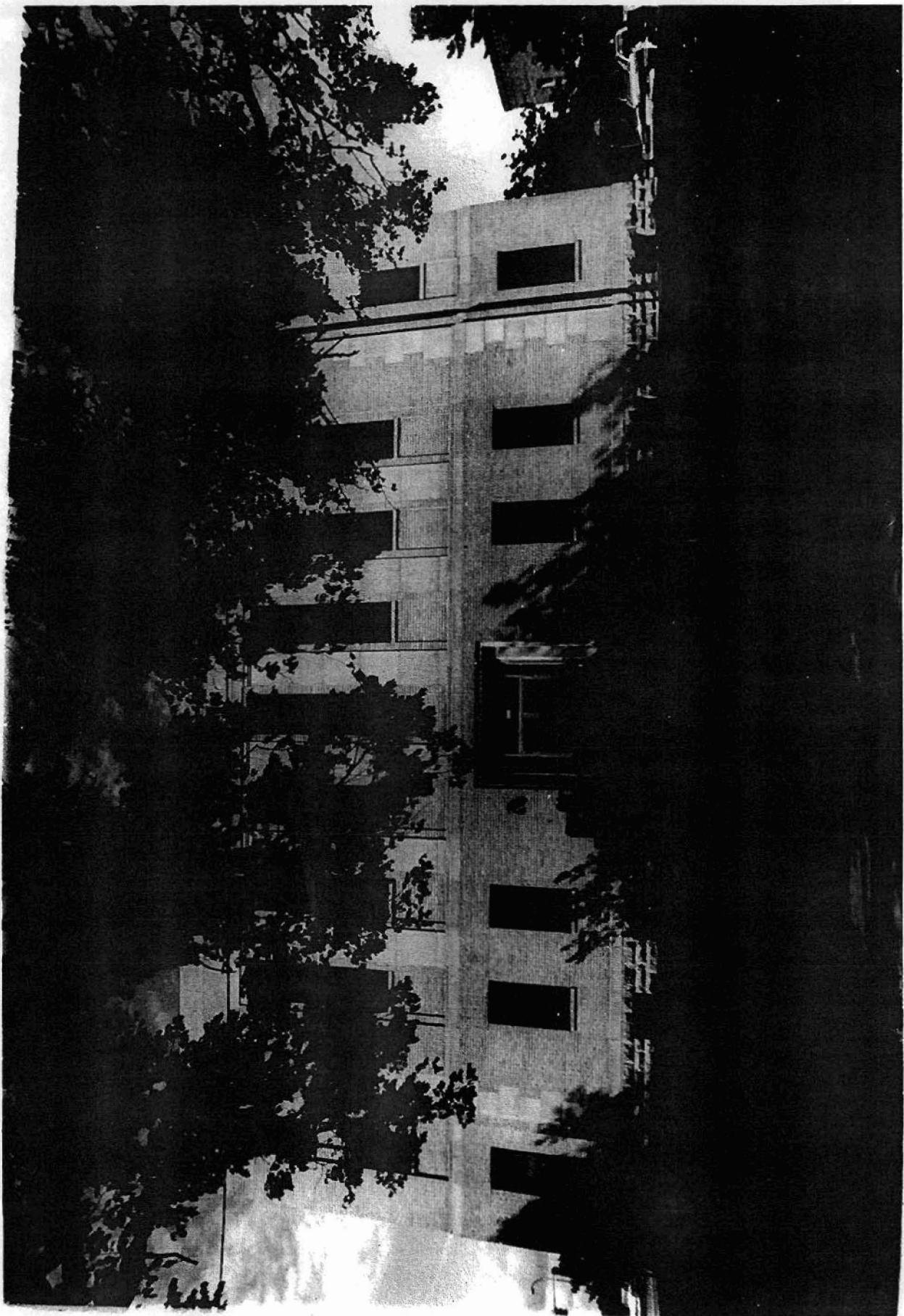
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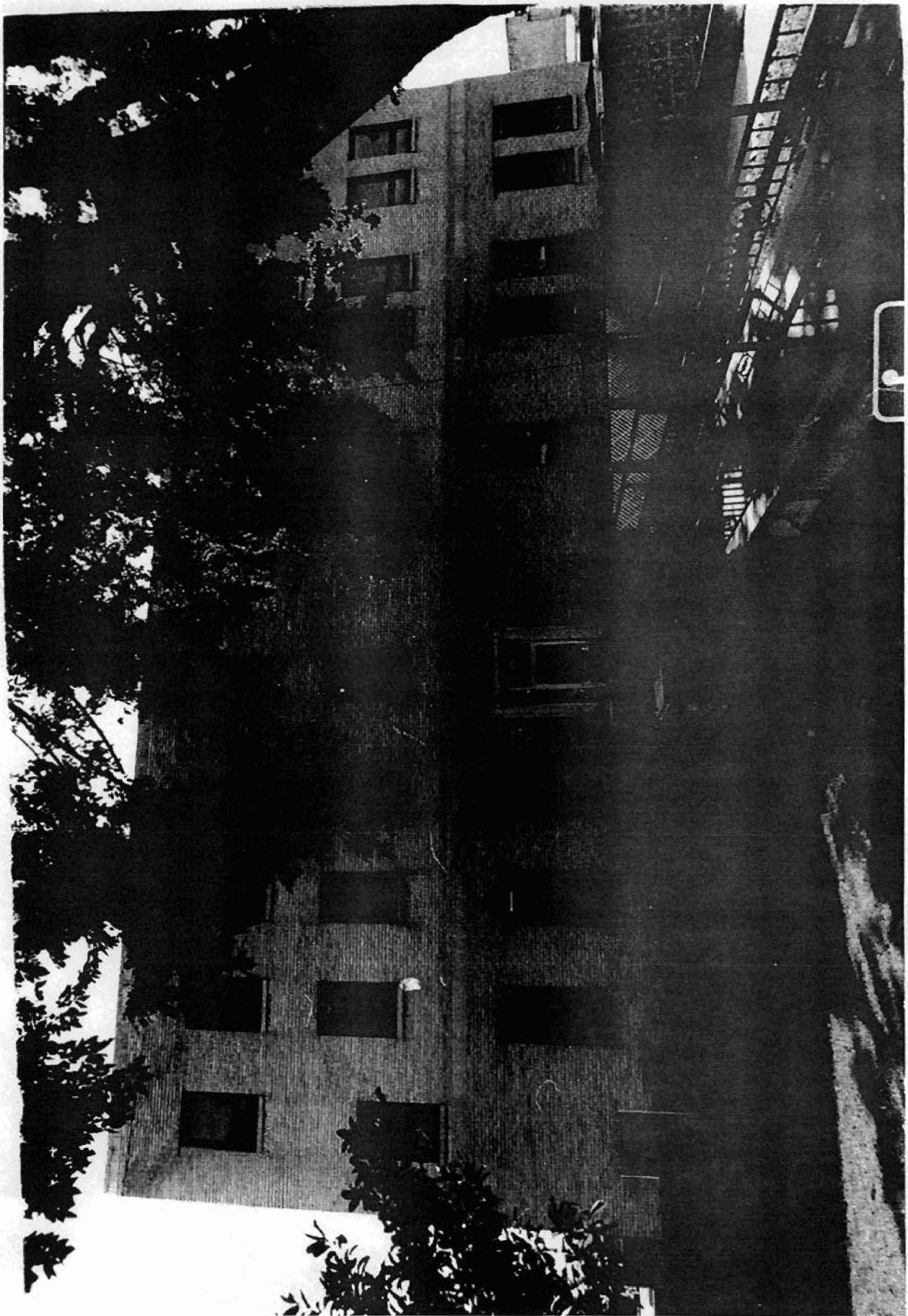
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(CLARK RIDGE)

ARKANSAS

ARKANSAS

2.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

