

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NR 2/1/06

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 Chicot County Courthouse

other names/site number CH 0013

2. Location

street & number 108 Main St.

☐ not for publication

city or town Lake Village

☐ vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Chicot code 017 zip code 71653

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.)

Barbara Thacker
Signature of certifying official/Title

11/17/05
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

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

1

objects

1

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**

0

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: courthouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: courthouse

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other

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)

LOCAL

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1956

Significant Dates

1956

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: _____

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

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>659901</u>	<u>3689363</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

☐ 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>Clint Pumphrey, Intern</u>		
organization	<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>	date	<u>July 19, 2005</u>
street & number	<u>1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street</u>	telephone	<u>(501) 324-9880</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>Chicot County Judge</u>		
street & number	<u>108 Main St.</u>	telephone	<u>870-265-8015</u>
city or town	<u>Lake Village</u>	state	<u>AR</u>
		zip code	<u>71653</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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Summary

A generally rectangular, monolithic structure, the Chicot County courthouse was built in 1956. Its three stories and basement include several features of the Art Deco architectural style. Towering window casings, scroll relief detailing, and Art Deco-inspired ironwork give the courthouse a look unique to the area. The building stands largely unaltered, with the exception of a utility shed and radio tower on the north wall. The grounds—which also include a centennial marker and numerous live oaks and magnolias—are within sight of Lake Chicot.

Elaboration

Though the structure is generally rectangular, there are small wings projecting symmetrically from the ends of the southern elevation. The building's three stories sit on a continuous brick foundation that allows for a basement. Bricks were also used for the construction of the walls, which reach to a flat, built-up tar roof. Small, one-story concrete porches with flat roofs are centered on the east, south, and west walls. These are topped with varying centrally-placed casement and transom windows. In general, all first-floor windows are four-paned awning, second-floor windows are casement, and third floor windows are casement or casement topped with transom. The chimney is centered on the exterior of the north elevation, flanked by the utility building. The radio tower is attached to the chimney.

Noticeable are the Art Deco-inspired decorations that adorn the courthouse. The vertical emphasis that is characteristic of the style is reflected by the continuous concrete casing that spans the second and third-story windows. Scroll relief detailing can be found above the front door, on the side entryways, and under two side windows. Also characteristic of the style is the ironwork placed in front of the transom window that tops the front door. Like most Art Deco buildings, the roof has no cornice.

Shielded by live oaks and magnolias, the southern elevation serves as the front of the courthouse. The main entrance consists of double glass doors topped by a transom window that is ornamented with Art Deco ironwork. Encasing the door and window is a large concrete entryway that rises two stories in height. Centered on the top of the entryway is a scroll relief of the Roman symbol *faces*, which is said to represent authority. Flanking the entry on each side of the first floor are three awning windows, and on the second floor are three sets of two casement windows. The third floor features nine sets of casement windows topped with two-paned transom windows. Above that, letters proclaim "Chicot County Court House." The two small wings projecting symmetrically from the ends of the this elevation each have two casement windows on the first floor, and two sets of casement windows on the second and third floors. Concrete casing surrounding each set of second and third-floor windows provides the vertical feel of the Art Deco style.

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The east elevation commands the best view of Lake Chicot. Stairs lead to double glass doors encased by a smaller, single-story concrete entryway. Each side of the entryway is decorated with Art Deco scroll relief. Above the centered entryway is more scroll relief and a set of casement windows topped by a two-paned transom window. On each side of the entryway is one awning window, and on the second and third floors are two sets of casement windows.

The north elevation of the building is the most modified. The central and tallest section of this side is divided by a central chimney and its attached radio tower. Flanking its base on the left is a double glass door and two awning windows, and on the right is a utility shed. Closest to the chimney on the second floor are casement windows, two sets on each side. Separated from those a short distance by brick is another set of casement windows. The third floor windows are arranged identically but have two-paned transom windows above the casements. The window arrangement on the outside sections of the north elevation is nearly identical that of the south elevation wing projections. The only difference is the inclusion of three awning windows on the first floor of the north elevation instead of the two found on the south.

Similar to the east elevation is the west elevation. Stairs lead to double glass doors encased by a smaller, single-story concrete entryway. Each side of the entryway is decorated with Art Deco scroll relief. Above the centered entryway is more scroll relief and a set of casement windows topped by a two-paned transom window. On each side of the entryway are two awning windows, and on the second and third floors are two sets of casement windows.

The courthouse continues to maintain much of its historic integrity. Most changes made to the exterior have been minor, and have not significantly affected the structure. A utility shed to house the heating and air conditioning units, handrails for the stairs, a radio tower, security cameras, and wiring were all added to the outside of the building in order to meet modern demands.

The centennial marker is listed as a non-contributing resource because it does not add to the architectural or governmental significance for which the courthouse is being nominated. Neither Art Deco styling nor government administration is reflected by this site feature.

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Summary

The Chicot County Courthouse is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance under Criterion A** for its role in the governmental administration of Chicot County. It is also being nominated with **local significance under Criterion C** as a good example of the Art Deco architectural style in Lake Village and Chicot County.

Historical Background

The current Chicot County Courthouse, constructed in Lake Village in 1956, is the successor of several courthouses in several locations. The county was officially formed on October 25, 1823, from a part of Arkansas County, one of the state's original five administrative subdivisions. Residents chose the French and Spanish settlement of Villemont as their first seat of government, but that decision was reconsidered as the Mississippi River began to tear away at the community's riverfront. Around 1838, the seat was moved to the old town of Columbia, and the first county courthouse and jail were built. Tragically, in 1855, Columbia met the same watery fate as Villemont, and the citizens were forced to move their government once again. This time they chose Masona at the head of Bayou Macon, a location that could be described as temporary at best. No permanent governmental buildings were constructed in the community, and the county seat moved just two years later, to its current location. Lake Village welcomed the county government in 1857, and plantation owner John Sumner donated land for the construction of permanent administrative buildings. A brick courthouse and jail were erected that same year on the banks of Lake Chicot. In 1907 the fifty-year-old courthouse was demolished to make way for a new buff-brick structure with a Classic portico and four pillars of pieced stone. This beautiful neoclassical building burned and was replaced in 1956 by the existing courthouse.

The county hired architect Herbert Voelker to design their courthouse, his first and only in Arkansas. A graduate of Texas A&M, Voelker got his start in 1916 designing homes, commercial buildings, and public structures in Wichita Falls, Texas. In July 1918 he formed a partnership with J.L. Dixon, and together they earned notoriety for their Art Deco and Moderne designs for public buildings in Texas. Having already drafted 11 courthouses in Texas from 1928-1955, Voelker brought extensive experience to the Chicot County job.

When the courthouse was built in 1956, Lake Village was experiencing a period of sharp economic decline. The use of more efficient mechanized farming equipment displaced many former farmers and laborers. Those without jobs either moved to the cities to look for work or stayed in the area and lived an impoverished life on the welfare rolls. Businesses closed and industry lost interest in the region. The Chicot Water Carnival, which had been a part of the county tradition for many years, was cancelled in 1957 because the lake had become too polluted. That same year Jack Rhodes was elected mayor of Lake Village, and

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initiated a series of improvements in the area. He oversaw the construction of new buildings, the improvement of roads, and the extension of sewer lines. One of the greatest accomplishments of the era was the cleanup of Lake Chicot. The long process began when, on November 24, 1964, the Army Corps of Engineers held a meeting at the courthouse "to initiate a new study on the feasibility of some project to clear up the lake." With the assistance of Arkansas Senator John McClellan and Representative David Pryor, a plan was formulated, funded, and finally completed in 1985. Engineers built several dams and a pumping plant, and the lake was restocked with fish. Because of the Chicot County Courthouse's role in the governmental administration of the county during this period, it is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance under Criterion A**.

Architectural Significance

Many Art Deco public and commercial buildings were constructed during the 1920s and 1930s. By the 1956 construction of the Chicot County courthouse, though, the popularity of the style had waned. Interestingly, the designers still included many Art Deco features. The vertical emphasis that is characteristic of the style is reflected by the continuous concrete casing that spans the second and third-story windows. Also indicative of the style, scroll relief detailing can be found above the front door, on the side entryways, and under two side windows. Like most Art Deco buildings, the roof has no cornice. Because of such characteristics, the building is being nominated with **local significance under Criterion C** as a good example of the Art Deco architectural style in the area.

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Bibliography

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Brannon, Shelia Farrell, *Tribute to Chicot County, Arkansas*. Dermott, AR : Shelia Farrell Brannon, 2000.

Brasher, Leona, *An Historical Manuscript of Chicot County*. n.p., 1915.

Gill, John Purifoy and Marjem Jackson Gill. *On the Courthouse Square in Arkansas*. n.p., 1980.

Greg Smith, "RE: Cottle County Courthouse Historic District...", 27 July 2005, office communication (1 August 2005).

James M. McPherson. *Encyclopedia of Texas*. vol. 2, *Men of Texas*. n.p., 1921.

Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration. *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1987.

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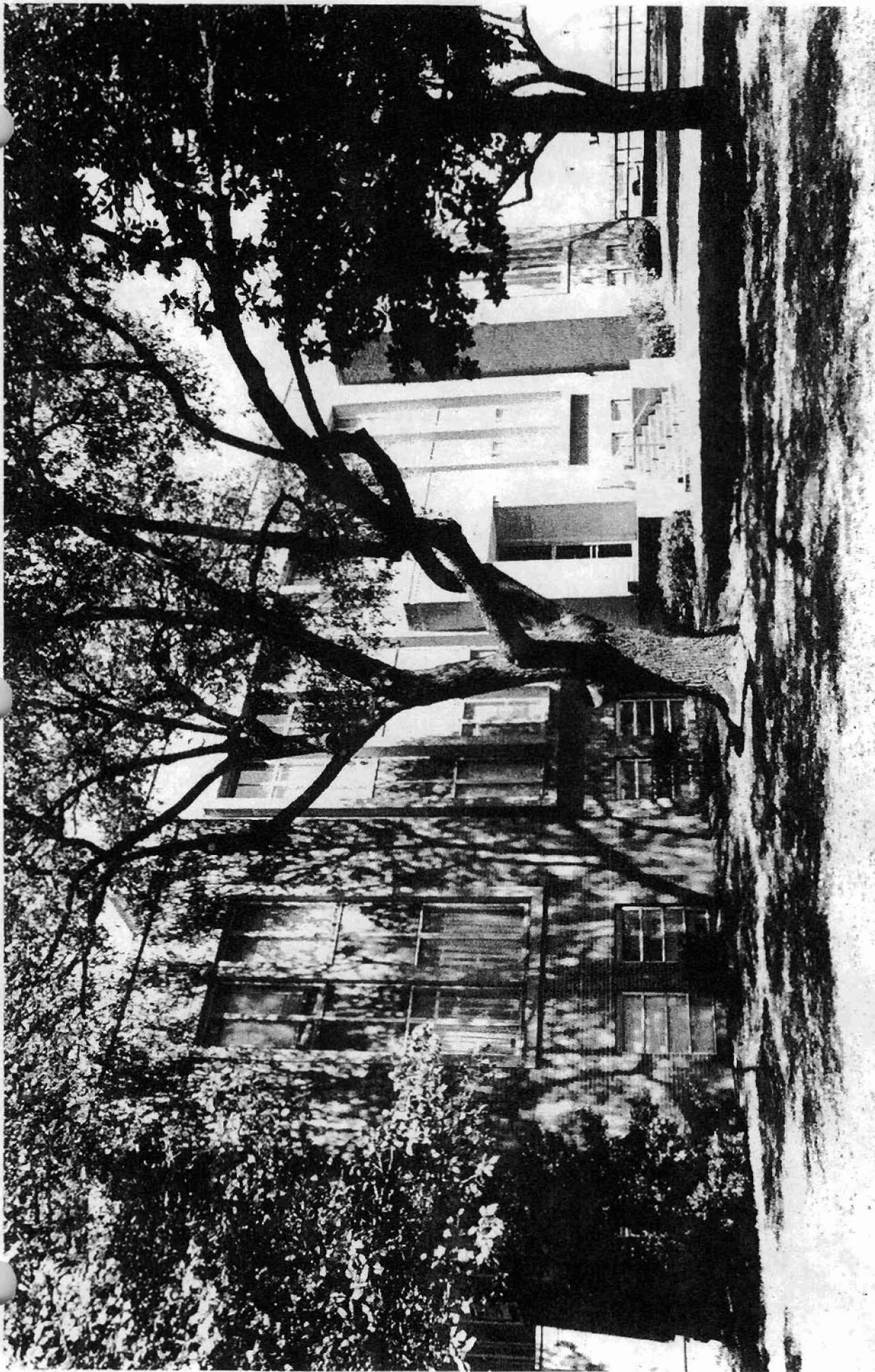
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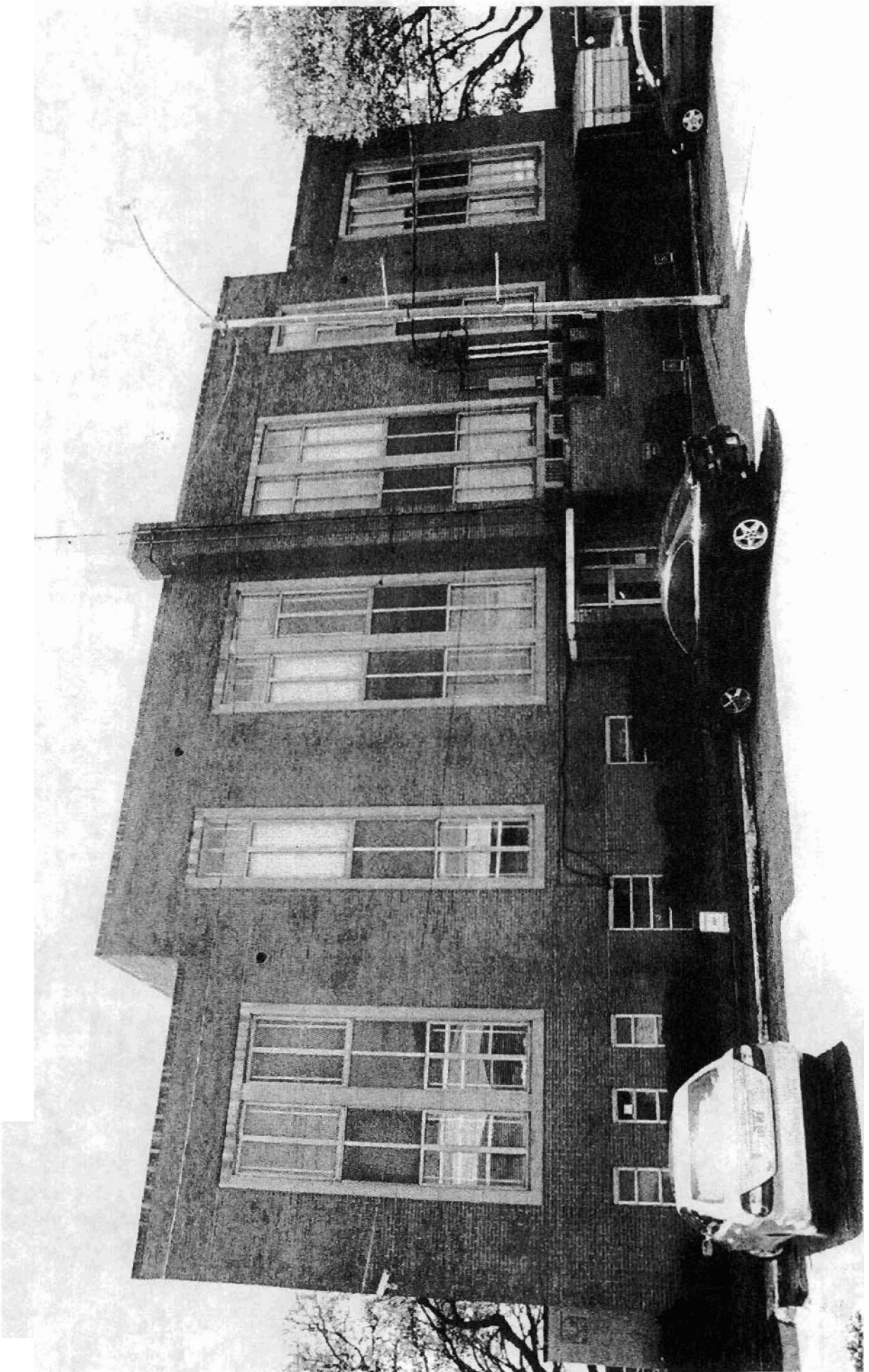
Verbal Boundary Description

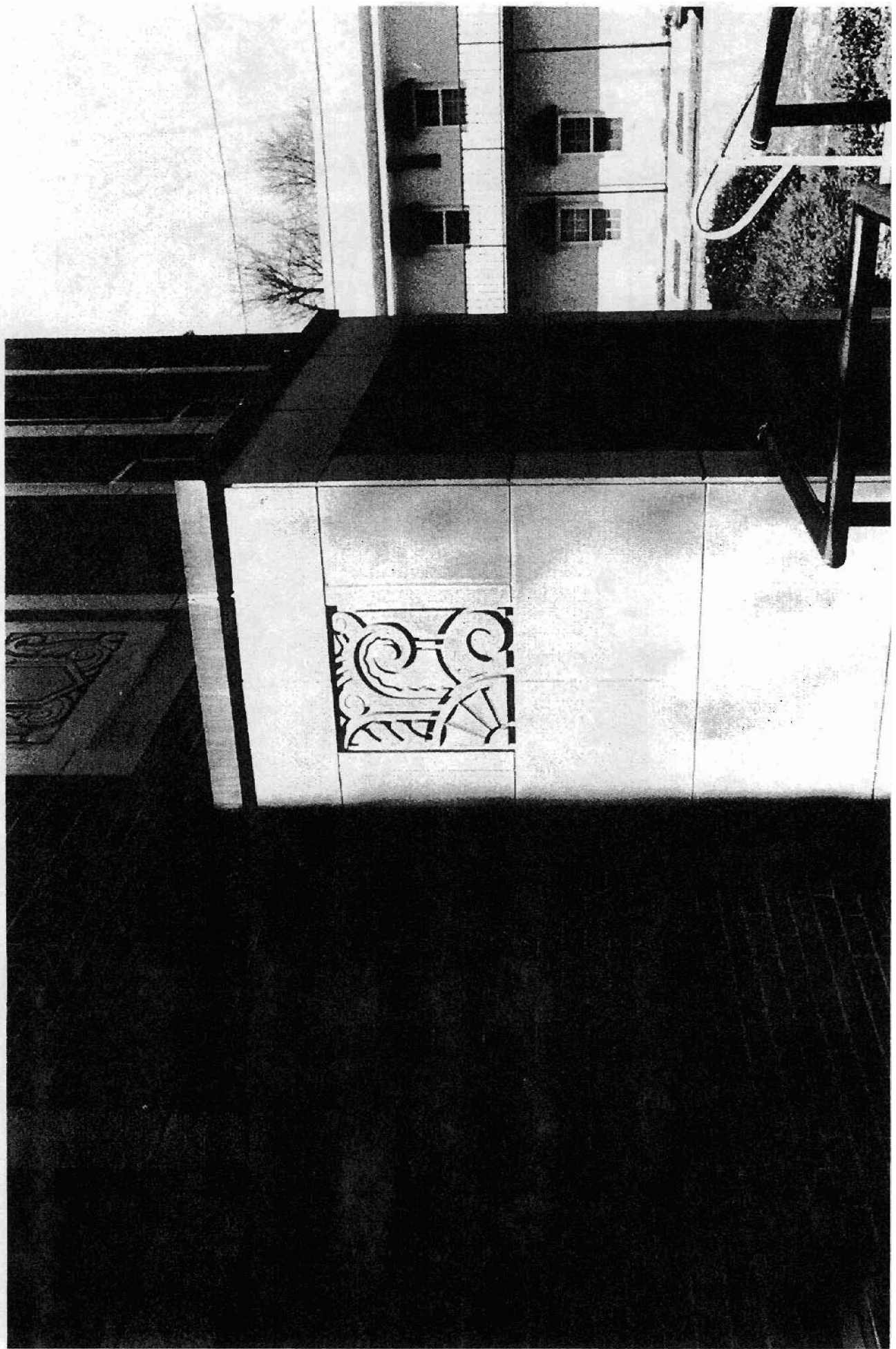
Beginning at the southwest corner of Jackson Street and Lake Shore Drive, proceed southerly along the western edge of Lake Shore Drive to the northeast corner of the parking lot south of the Courthouse, thence proceed westerly along the north side of the parking lot to the east side of Court Street, thence proceed northerly along the east side of court street to the intersection of Jackson Street and Court Street, thence proceed along the south side of Jackson Street to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

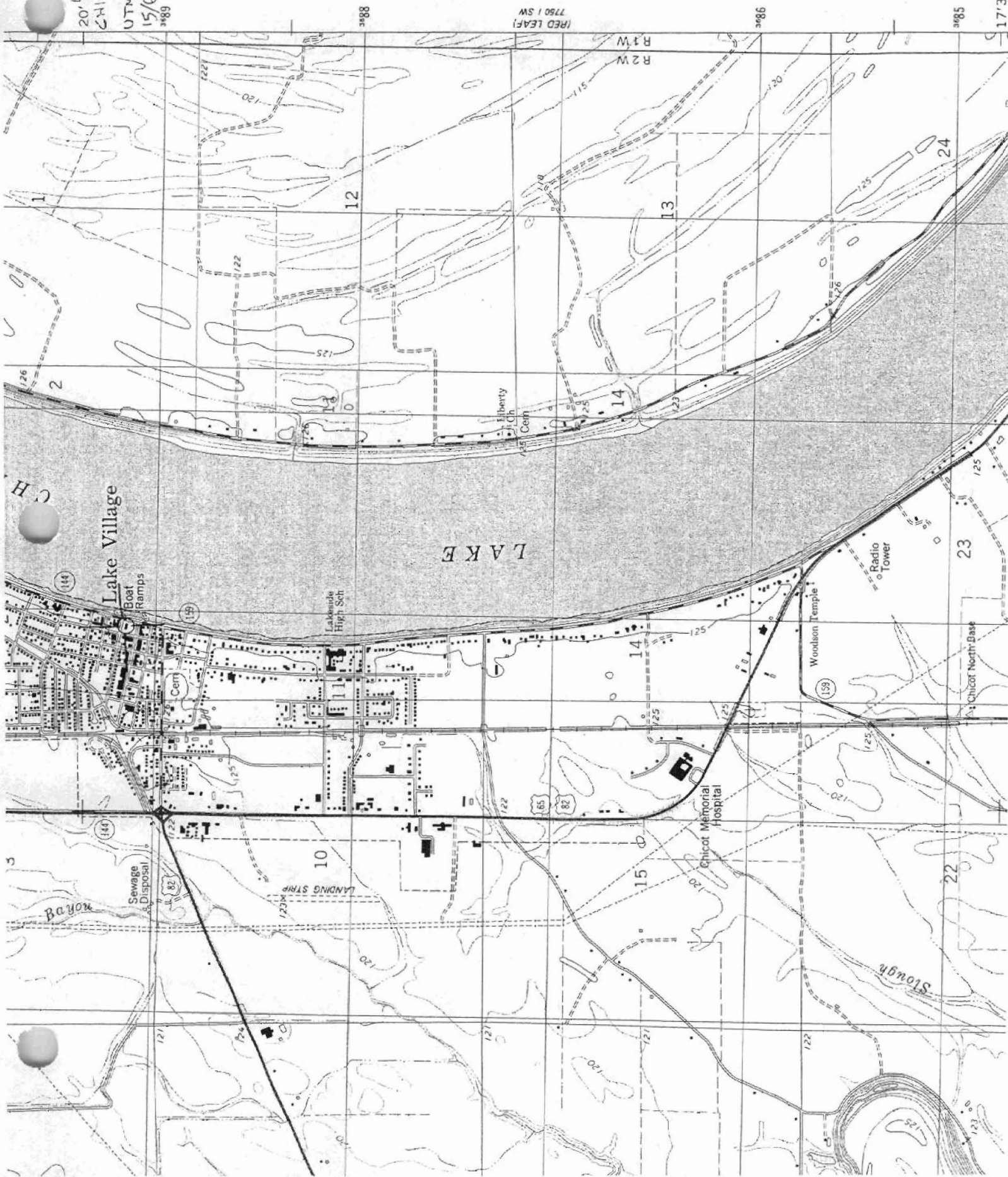
The boundary contains the land that is historically associated with the Chicot County Courthouse.







ST COUNTY COURT
HOUSE
20' LAKE VILLAGE,
CHICOT COUNTY, AR
UTM:
15/659901/3637363
89



17'30"