

17-32-V005-53

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Van Buren Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
(See Verbal Boundary Description)

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Van Buren

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Third

STATE
Arkansas

CODE
05

COUNTY
Crawford

CODE
033

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Multiple Ownership - Public and Private

STREET & NUMBER
City of Van Buren

CITY, TOWN
Van Buren

VICINITY OF

STATE
Arkansas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Circuit Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER
Crawford County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN
Van Buren

STATE
Arkansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

That portion of downtown Van Buren hereby proposed as the Van Buren Historic District includes of some twenty commercial structures along six blocks of the city's Main Street. The area includes the railroad depot at the north end of the district and extends southwest to the Arkansas River. The majority of the structures in this district were constructed in the 1880-1900 period, when Van Buren prospered with the coming of the railroads. The architectural styles are varied and unusual, but predominantly Victorian. There have been several intrusions in the district. The facades have not been permanently altered. Aluminum has been placed over many of the facades for a more modern appearance; the aluminum could be stripped off quite easily.

There are five structures within the district which are especially interesting. The Van Buren railroad depot at Main and Fayetteville Streets was constructed c. 1900. The brick structure is topped with a high hipped roof of clay tile. Hip-roofed dormers project from each elevation. Twin chimneys extend above the one-and-one-half storey building. The depot features wide supportive brackets, typical of many Arkansas railroad depots.

The most architecturally unusual building in the district is the Crawford County Bank at Seventh and Main Streets. The three-storey building was constructed in 1889. The brick bank features a decorative corner turret capped with a conical roof and topped with a finial. The third storey has scalloped shingles and rounded ornamental pilasters on its exterior walls. The pilasters are capped with conical roofs. Other features of the building include semi-elliptical window heads and keystones, dentiled cornices and decorative brackets.

Next door to the Crawford County Bank is another bank building also built in 1889. This three-storey brick structure was the second building built by the Citizens Bank. It features a center-pediment with a finial extending above the roofline. Corbelling at the roofline gives a ribbon-like effect.

The building which first housed the Citizens Bank was built in 1887 at 524 Main Street. This building features a corner entry and is interesting in the round arched window heads which feature alternating segments of cut and cast stone.

The Anheuser-Busch building at Fifth and Main Streets was constructed c. 1890. This two-storey rectangular building features a terra-cotta Anheuser-Busch crest in the front parapet. It is one of the few remaining beer depots in Arkansas.

The site of the Crawford County Courthouse at Third and Main Streets has been the center of Crawford County government since 1842. The original courthouse was built 1840-41 and housed the District Court for western Arkansas (1851-71). The courthouse burned in 1876 but the walls were so built that they were not damaged and were retained for the new building which erected c. 1890. The main building is flanked by two wings. A

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three-storey clock tower with a bellcast roof rises from the center of the two-storey building. Paired brackets are featured along the paneled frieze. A classic portico supported by Doric capital columns marks the facade.

The Van Buren Historic District includes approximately twenty acres of the historically significant commercial area of the city. The area effectively represents the commercial importance Van Buren once had in western Arkansas.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Van Buren Historic District is the surviving representation of the prosperity which the railroad brought to western Arkansas in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. As the nineteenth century commercial and governmental center of Crawford County, the five-block long Van Buren Historic District is a historically significant area. Van Buren first developed as the center of a large Indian trade and then grew into an agricultural center. With the coming of the railroads through Van Buren in the 1870's and 1880's, the city flourished. The Van Buren Historic District retains much of the ambience of this period despite several intrusions and alterations within the area.

Crawford County was the fifth county to be formed in Arkansas. The original county was organized in 1820, one year after Arkansas became a territory. Most of the land which is now included in Crawford County was in Indian territory until 1828, when by treaty it was added to the original county.

The Van Buren Historic District was the first area of the city to develop due to its closeness to the Arkansas River. The Main Street area has been the center of history in the town long before the railroad brought prosperity to western Arkansas.

The first recorded event in the future town's history was in 1818 when David Boyd, a log-raiser, visited the future town-site of Van Buren. The first white settler, Thomas Martin, arrived soon afterward and, with the help of Boyd, built the first log house. Martin claimed squatter's rights to the land. A few people established themselves around Martin, and the settlement became a landing for boats on the Arkansas River. Within a short time the area had become a trading center.

Revolutionary War veteran, James Phillips, and his sons, Daniel and Thomas, arrived at the Martin settlement in the late 1820's. The Phillipses established a wood yard on the river bank to supply fuel to the flat-bottomed steamboats. In 1830 Thomas Phillips bought the squatter's claim of Thomas Martin and became owner of the town-site. The community came to be called "Phillips Landing" and soon contained several stores.

When the post office was established in Phillips Landing, March 30, 1831, Thomas Phillips was appointed postmaster and served until sometime during the latter part of 1836. The post office was named for Martin Van Buren, then Secretary

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of State under President Andrew Jackson. The settlement became known as Van Buren.

Thomas Phillips, advertising lots for sale in Van Buren in the Arkansas Gazette, April, 1836, stated:

"The town of Van Buren, Arkansas, is situated in Crawford County on the left bank of the Arkansas River, about five hundred fifty miles from the Mississippi River, by the course of the river and a few miles from the Indian boundary line. The immediate situation is picturesque and pleasing to the eye, easily approachable by the roads, usually elevated for a distance on the margin of the river, indeed a portion of the townsite is high and commanding eminence, with an abundant and never failing supply of the most palatable and purest water."

Earlier, a rival community, known as Columbus, had appeared about one mile below Van Buren, where a store and ferry had been established. In November of 1836 the owners of the store decided that Van Buren was the best natural location for a town due to the higher elevation. They bought from Phillips his rights to the town-site at a price of \$11,000. In 1837 Van Buren was surveyed and laid out according to the direction of the river, rather than by the cardinal points of the compass.

The seat of government in Crawford County was established in 1838 at Van Buren. In 1842 Van Buren was first incorporated as a city. On January 4, 1845, the city was reincorporated.

Van Buren grew and prospered until the period of the Civil War. From 1862 until the end of the war, Van Buren was occupied by Federal troops. Like many other southern towns, Van Buren was economically drained by the Civil War. The war ended the first period of Van Buren's growth and development.

It was in the mid-1870's that Van Buren began to prosper again. Following construction of the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad in 1876 and construction of the "Frisco" Railroad from St. Louis to the Arkansas River in 1883, western Arkansas developed rapidly. The growth of Van Buren in this period prompted a lengthy article in the Arkansas Gazette in 1890. According to the article, the commercial, industrial and financial transactions in Van Buren amounted to \$13,064,319 in 1889. The majority of the buildings in the Van Buren Historic District date from this time of prosperity, from the 1880's until the World War I period.

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In the 1930's national attention was drawn to Van Buren and Crawford County by Bob Burns, who popularized his hometown through fictional tales of Ozark kinfolk on the Kraft Music Hall radio program. Another man of national fame from Van Buren was Cyrus Adler (1863-1940), the Jewish historian and scholar. The Bob Burns Opera House and the site of Adler's birth, both located within the Van Buren Historic District, are landmarks in the city.

The City Council in Van Buren has had for a number of years, a strong desire to preserve the historic structures in the city. This interest inspired the formation of a City Register of Historical Places. The Van Buren Historic District stands as representative of the commercial importance it commanded in western Arkansas in the period between the 1880's and World War I.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Arkansas Gazette. February 11, 1890.

Eno, Clara B. History of Crawford County, Arkansas. Van Buren, Arkansas: Press-Argus.

Frisco Railroad, Headlight Flashes, Chicago, 1898.

Dr. Lewis Paer. Personal interview, Van Buren, Arkansas, July 22, 1975.

Bob Rayburn, Personal interview, Van Buren, Arkansas, July 22, 1975.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 20 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	37,73,1,0	3,92,22,0,0	B	1,5	37,74,1,5	3,92,21,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,5	37,70,0,0	3,92,17,5,0	D	1,5	37,68,6,0	3,92,19,1,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The area comprised of one-half block on either side of Main Street stretching from Cane Hill Street southwestward to the end of Main and on either side of any imaginary projection of Main Street to the water's edge of the Arkansas River, the eastern boundary of the area extruding to include the whole block on which the County Courthouse sits.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE

Sandra Taylor, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

DATE

September 9, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

300 West Markham

TELEPHONE

501-371-1639

CITY OR TOWN

Little Rock

STATE

Arkansas

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE *Gene Richardson*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE September 9, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Fort Smith, Proud Heritage -
Promising Future - Van Buren.

Van Buren, Arkansas
Main Street Historic District

Legend

-  Buildings for which there is an approved rehabilitation/restoration proposal and are thus eligible for HCRS grant-in-aid funding.
- * Those storefront facades planned to receive HCRS funding during the initial work period (1979-1982).
- Main Street Historic District Boundaries

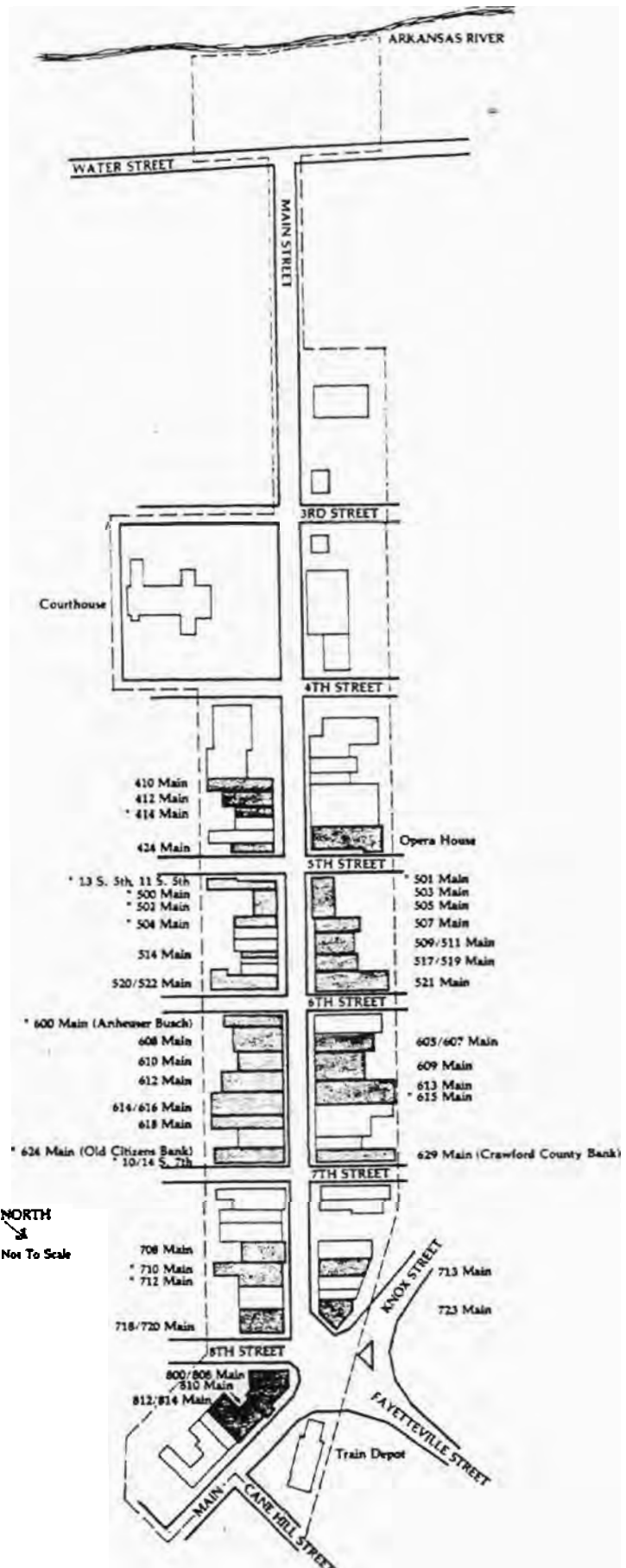
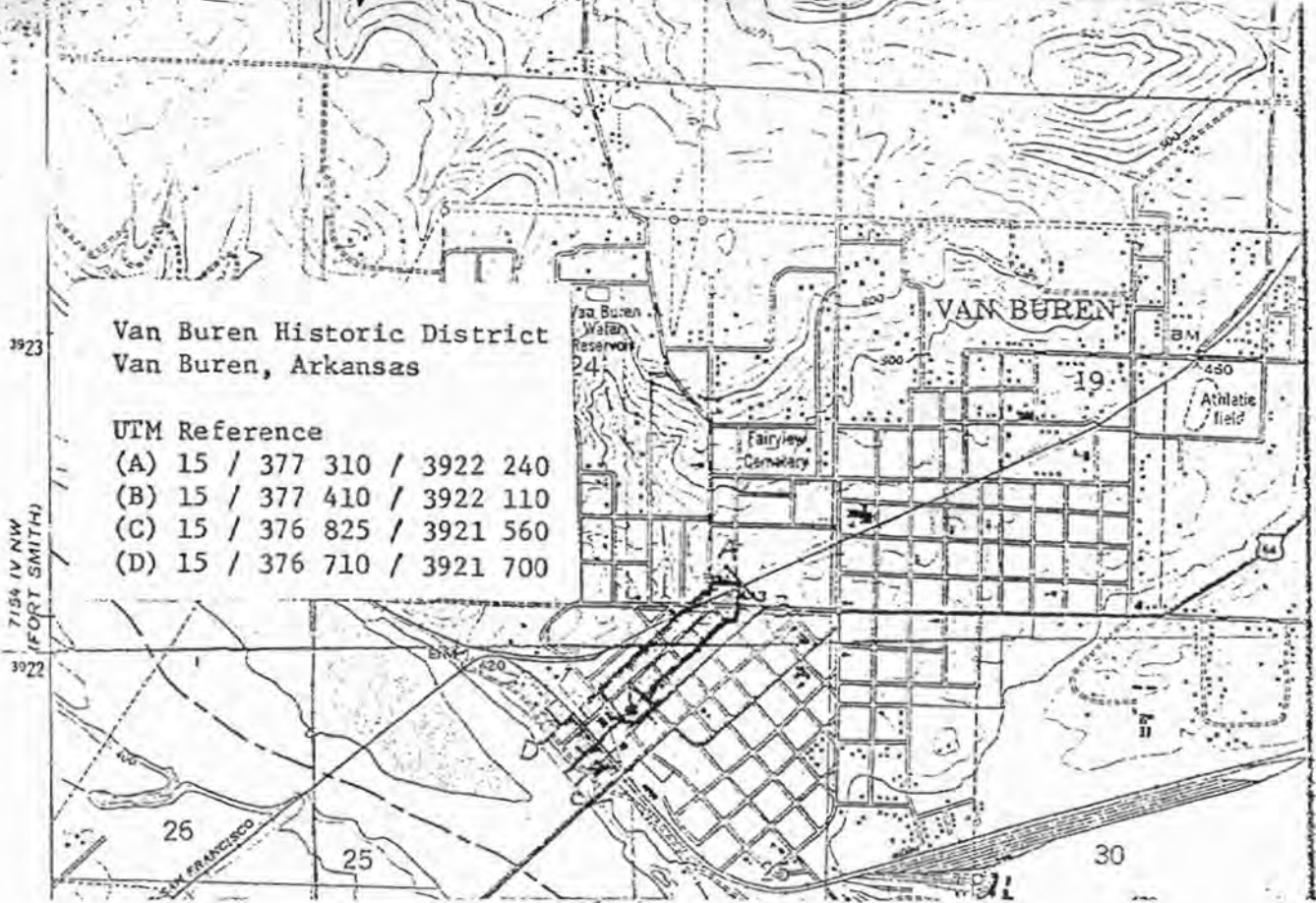


Figure 9. Plan of Main Street Historic District, Van Buren, Arkansas, showing HCRS grant assisted buildings and other significant sites.



Van Buren Historic District
 Van Buren, Arkansas

UTM Reference
 (A) 15 / 377 310 / 3922 240
 (B) 15 / 377 410 / 3922 110
 (C) 15 / 376 825 / 3921 560
 (D) 15 / 376 710 / 3921 700

Form No. 10-301
 (P. 10-74)

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
 PROPERTY MAP FORM**

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 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

NAME

HISTORIC Van Buren Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

CITY/TOWN Van Buren VICINITY OF COUNTY Crawford STATE Arkansas

MAP REFERENCE

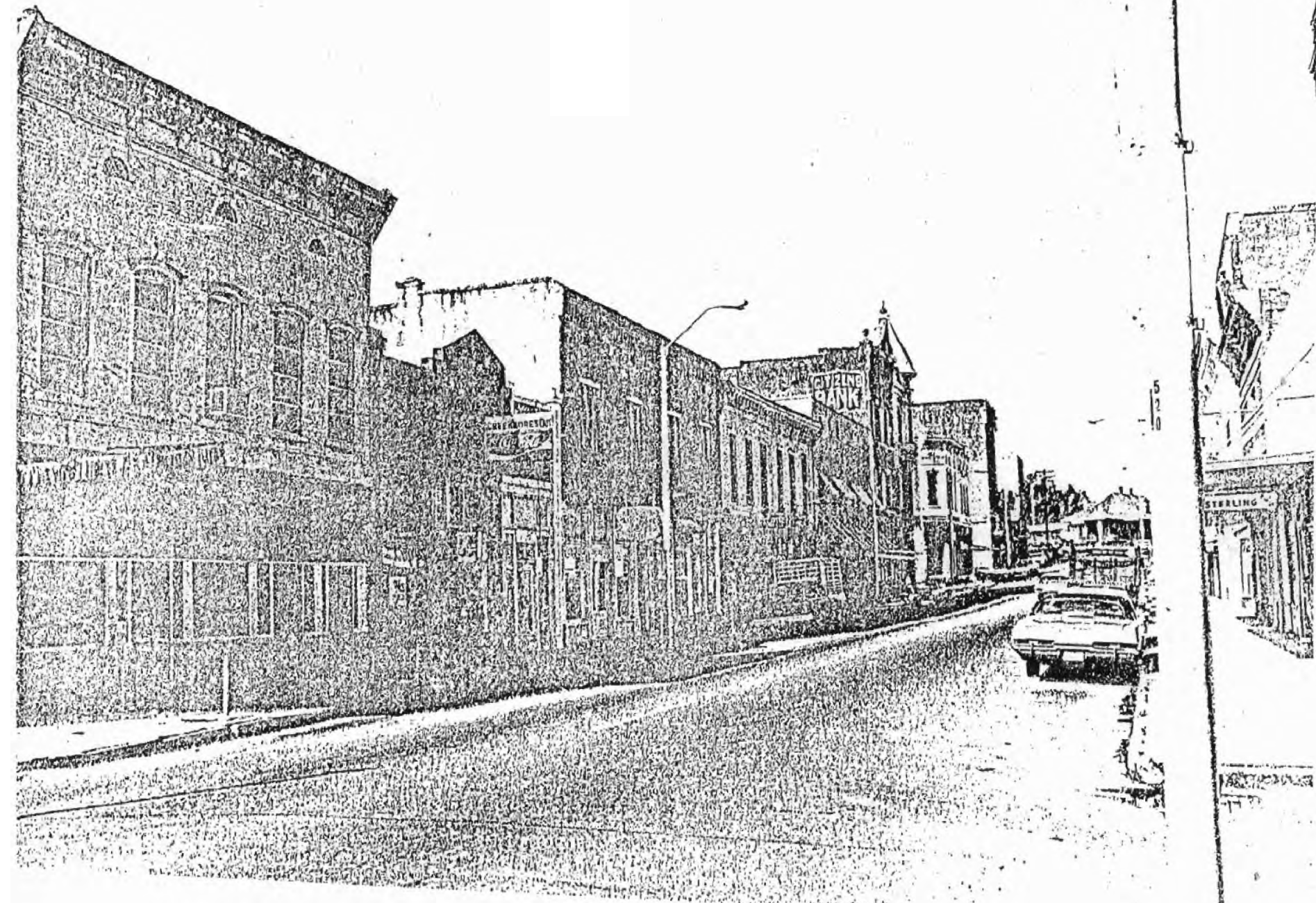
SOURCE United States Geological Survey

SCALE 1:2400

DATE 1971 (photo revised 1970)

REQUIREMENTS

- TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
 2. NORTH ARROW
 3. UTM REFERENCES



*Van Buren Historic District
Main Street, viewed from the southwest
Main Street, viewed from the southwest*

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(Rev. 10-74)

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TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC Van Buren Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY/TOWN Van Buren

____VICINITY OF

STATE Arkansas

COUNTY Crawford

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Sandra Taylor

DATE OF PHOTO 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

Main Street, viewed from the southwest

PHOTO NO.

1



*2. At Van Buren Historic District
Crawford County, Arkansas
Railroad Depot, viewed from the east*

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AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Van Buren VICINITY OF STATE Arkansas COUNTY Crawford

PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Sandra Taylor DATE OF PHOTO 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET
Railroad Depot, viewed from the east

PHOTO NO.
2



17, HIGHWAY 55
Crawford County
BANK, NEAR E
4th St

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NAME

HISTORIC Van Buren Historic District

AND/OR COMMON



LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Van Buren _____ VICINITY OF STATE Arkansas COUNTY Crawford



PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Sandra Taylor DATE OF PHOTO 1975

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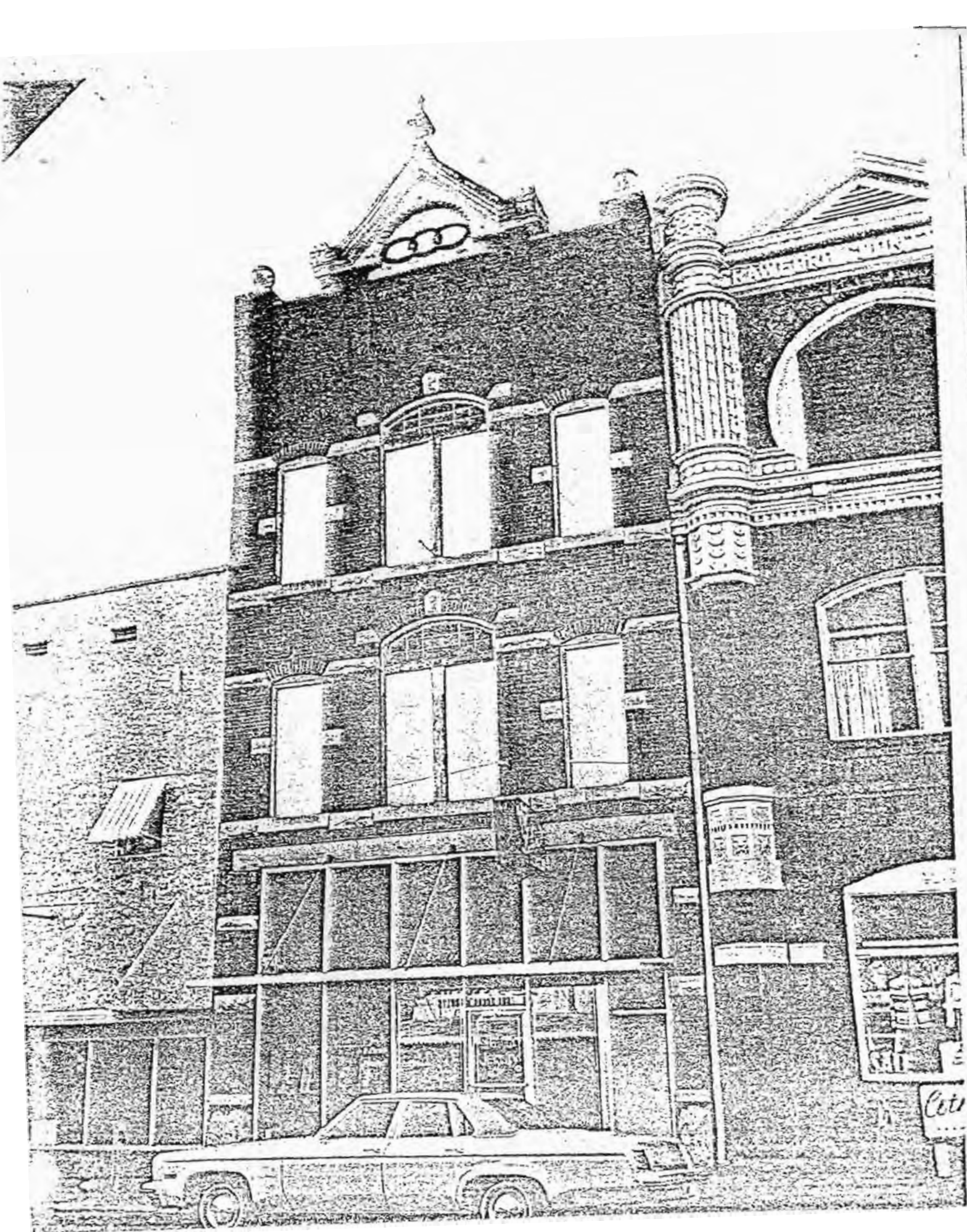
IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

Crawford County Bank, viewed from the northeast

PHOTO NO.

3




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 LOCATION

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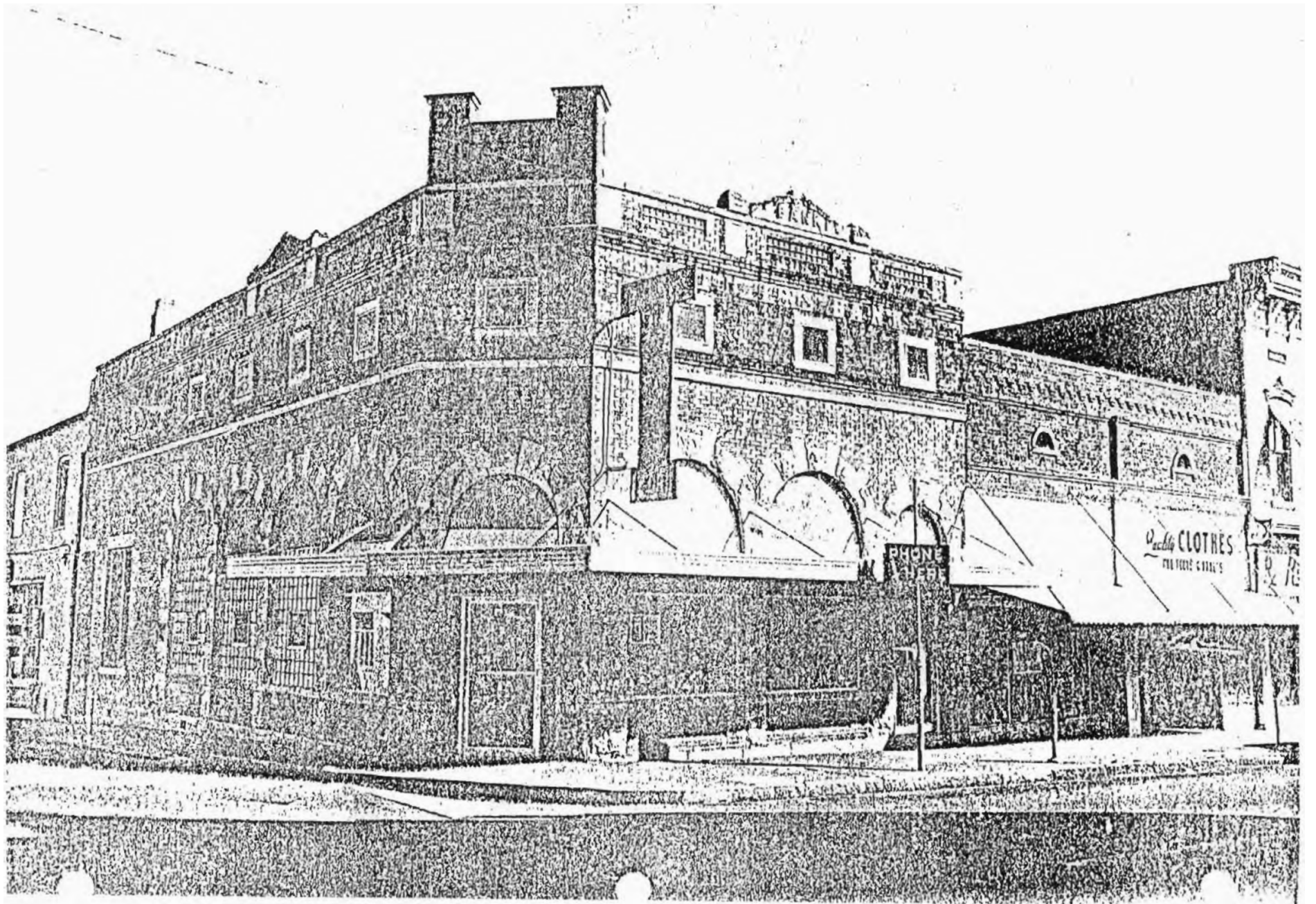
 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

Second Citizens Bank, viewed from the northeast

PHOTO NO.

4



*Van Buren Historic District
Crawford County, Arkansas
First Citizens Bank, viewed from the northwest*

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VICINITY OF

STATE Arkansas

COUNTY Crawford

PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Sandra Taylor

DATE OF PHOTO 1975

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First Citizens Bank, viewed from the northwest

PHOTO NO.

5



*South of Bush Historic District
Crawford County, Arkansas
Anheuser-Bush Building, viewed from the northeast*

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PHOTO CREDIT Sandra Taylor

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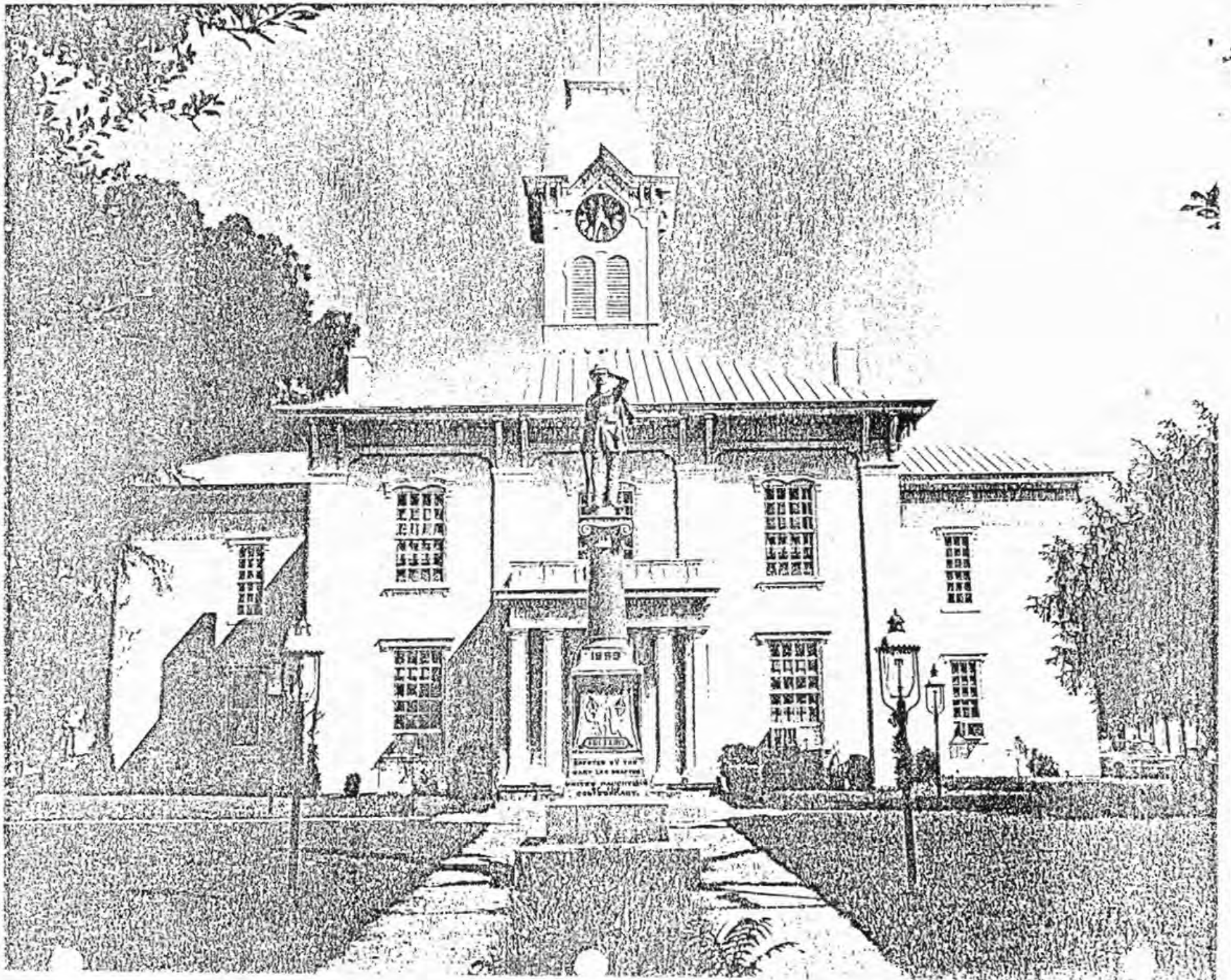
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IDENTIFICATION

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Anheuser-Bush Building, viewed from the northeast

PHOTO NO
6



Van Buren Historic District
Crawford County, Arkansas
1000 Courthouse, View of Courthouse Northwest

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Crawford County Courthouse, viewed from the northwest

PHOTO NO.

7