

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NR 5-29-09

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 Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment

other names/site number Ozark Trail Road, Old U.S 63, Site #PO0076

2. Location

street & number Old U.S. 63 between Memphis Avenue and the Tyronza River ☐ not for publication

city or town Tyronza ☐ vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Poinsett code 111 zip code 72365

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

I, 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.)

Cathie Matthews
Signature of certifying official/Title

3/17/09
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:

☐ 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

Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment

Name of Property

Poinsett County, Arkansas

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

	buildings
	sites
1	structures
	objects
1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)/highway

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)/highway

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other CONCRETE

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)

Engineering

Transportation

Period of Significance

c.1922-1959

Significant Dates

c.1922

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:

Name of Property

County and State

Acreage of Property Approximately 2.5 acres

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>739370</u>	<u>3930965</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	15	737726	3932197

3 Zone Easting Northing

4

☐ See continuation sheet

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

name/title Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator

organization	<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>	date	<u>January 8, 2009</u>
street & number	<u>1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street</u>	telephone	<u>(501) 324-9787</u>
city or town	Little Rock	state	AR
		zip code	72201

Write the following items with the completed form:

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.

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property: Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment

County and State: Poinsett County, Arkansas

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable): Arkansas
Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

The bypassed c.1922 alignment of Highway A-7 in Tyronza is a two-lane concrete highway. It follows an alignment to the northeast of the current U.S. 63, paralleling the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad line. The current U.S. 63 alignment, constructed in 1967, follows a straight route to the southwest of the old highway. The nominated highway retains its original c.1922 concrete pavement throughout. The highway retains its original roadway width.

ELABORATION

This bypassed section of c.1922 alignment of Highway A-7 is approximately 1.25 miles long and begins at the intersection of the current Old U.S. 63 and Memphis Avenue in Tyronza and proceeds in a northwesterly direction to the bank of the Tyronza River. The segment is flat and straight, something that is common for the roads in the Delta region of Arkansas.

The c.1922 alignment of Highway A-7 has a width of 17 feet for two lanes of travel. The section has no paved shoulders. (For comparison, the current American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Green Book indicates that a lane width of 11 feet 9 inches is desirable.) Unlike many historic concrete highway segments, the segment of Highway A-7 is comprised of one full-width concrete pour without seams. (Many of the concrete highway segments that have been previously listed have been comprised of concrete segments that are 9 feet wide and 50 feet long.)

INTEGRITY

Overall, the bypassed c.1922 alignment of Highway A-7 in Tyronza has remarkable integrity. The original c.1922 pavement remains throughout the segment, and it retains its original dimensions. The pavement is still drivable, and the entire c.1922 alignment possesses a strong sense of continuity. Additionally, the area around the highway segment retains its rural and small town settings, and the surroundings still reflect the period of significance from c.1922-1959.

 National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property: Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment

County and State: Poinsett County, Arkansas

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable): Arkansas
Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965

Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** for its engineering. Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment, is the longest and most intact portion of the c.1922 alignment of Highway A-7 in Poinsett County. The Tyronza segment of Highway A-7, which is approximately 1.25 miles long, still retains its original c.1922 concrete pavement. The highway section was the main automobile route in that part of Poinsett County from the time of its construction in c.1922 until the current U.S. 63 was built to the southwest of it in 1967. As a result, it is therefore eligible for nomination under **Criterion A** for its association with the development of Arkansas highway culture. Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment, is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple-property listing "Arkansas Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965" in conjunction with the historic context "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965."

ELABORATION

Poinsett County was created on February 28, 1838, in accordance with an act of the General Assembly, and was formed from land taken from Greene County.¹ Although settlement of the county began in the 1820s, it was slow through much of the nineteenth century, since many of the settlers came from the hilly parts of the eastern U.S. and wanted to settle in similar areas. As a result of the lack of settlement, many of the early settlers in Poinsett County endured an isolated existence.²

Surprisingly, agriculture played a lesser role to the timber industry in the early economy of Poinsett County. Goodspeed's *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas* stated that, "At present, and for many years, the lumbering industry of Poinsett County is and will be a great source of income, especially to those engaged in the business, and to those owning the timber. There are a number of saw-mills here engaged in cutting the timber into lumber, for which the shipping facilities are excellent."³ On the other hand, in 1880 there were only 297 farms in Poinsett County with 7,979 acres of improved land that produced only 1,514 bales of cotton. (By contrast, there were 87,133 bushels of corn produced in Poinsett County the same year.)⁴

The area in the Tyronza vicinity remained sparsely populated until the arrival of the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis Railroad in the area in the early 1880s. One settlement, Lewis, was in the area in 1872, but it had

¹ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*. Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p. 570.

² *Ibid*, p. 576.

³ *Ibid*, p. 575.

⁴ *Ibid*.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property: Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment

County and State: Poinsett County, Arkansas

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable): Arkansas
Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965

Section number 8 Page 2

disappeared by 1895.⁵ A post office with the name Perkins was established at the location of Tyronza in 1888, but the name was changed to Tyronza in 1892.⁶ It is unknown, however, where the name Tyronza came from.

The arrival of the railroad brought services to Tyronza fairly quickly. By 1889 Tyronza had a depot, post office, two general stores, and a stave factory.⁷ The presence of a stave factory in Tyronza was not surprising, given the importance of the lumber industry in the early history of Poinsett County – nearby Trumann would be the location of the main woodworking factory for the Singer Sewing Machine Company by the early 1940s.⁸

During the first part of the twentieth century, as automobiles became more prevalent as a means of transportation, it became imperative to improve America's roads to better accommodate them. As a result, several organizations formed in the early 1900s to work towards providing improved and marked highways for drivers to make it easier to get from place to place. Some of these highways, including the Bankhead Highway and the Albert Pike Highway, passed through parts of Arkansas and at least gave Arkansas drivers marked routes in parts of the state. However, one organization, the Ozark Trails Association, had much stronger ties to Arkansas, mainly through its founding and leadership under Arkansan William Hope "Coin" Harvey.⁹

William Hope Harvey was born in West Virginia in 1851 and was a real estate entrepreneur who became involved in mining ventures in Colorado. After he lost his fortune, he became an advisor to William Jennings Bryan during the 1893 Free Silver crisis. He was also involved in publishing the weekly *Coin* in Chicago, which is where he got his nickname, but after Bryan's defeat as a presidential candidate in 1896, Harvey retired to Monte Ne, Arkansas, in 1900. In Monte Ne, Harvey developed a railroad to promote a health resort and executive retreat that he started.¹⁰

Harvey understood that automobile travel was growing in popularity and importance, and after he abandoned his railroad spur in 1910, he began to look at alternative means of transportation to Monte Ne. In fact, in June 1911

⁵ Maps showing Arkansas Central, the Helena & Corinth, and the Pine Bluff & Southwestern Railroads together forming the Texas & Northeastern Railway. Map. New York: G.W. & C. B. Colton & Co., 1872, and Cram's Township and Rail Road Map of Arkansas. Map. Chicago: George Franklin Cram, 1895.

⁶ Baker, Russell Pierce. *From Memdag to Norsk: A Historical Directory of Arkansas Post Offices, 1832-1971*. Hot Springs, AR: Arkansas Genealogical Society, 1988, pp. 174 and 223.

⁷ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*. Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p. 572.

⁸ West, Elliott. *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987 reprint of 1941 publication, p. 293.

⁹ Krim, Arthur. "The Original Mother Road." *SCA Journal*, Spring 1996, pp. 14-15, and 22.

¹⁰ Krim, p. 22.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property: Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment

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Southern Good Roads proposed an auto highway from Muskogee, Oklahoma, to Monte Ne. Other developments during the same period, including the formation of a National Highway Association in Washington, DC, the holding of a National Old Trails Road Convention in Kansas City in April 1912, and the formation of a Western Good Roads group in Joplin, Missouri, in May 1912, further inspired Harvey.¹¹

As a result, Harvey organized his own auto road association, and a map published in the May 9, 1913, *Gravette News Herald* illustrated proposed "Ozark Trails" connecting Monte Ne with St. Louis, Kansas City, Wichita, and Oklahoma City through Tulsa. To further spread his ideas for the "Ozark Trails," Harvey hosted a meeting of the Ozark Trails Association (OTA) on July 10-13, 1913, in Monte Ne. The meeting was a huge success, attracting over 300 delegates, and at the meeting Harvey proposed 1,500 miles of white-signed auto routes through Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma. In addition, M. J. Kelley of Neosho, Missouri, was elected president of the organization.¹²

At an unknown date, although probably in the 1910s, the OTA also developed specifications for their roads, which read:

Our specifications call for a road 32 feet wide; 24 feet crown with curvature half an inch to the foot; culverts concrete 24 feet wide, same as crown of road; good drainage; above high water; curve turns on radius of not less than 150 feet, outside raised two feet; no grades to exceed 5 per cent; and hard surface of either sand and clay properly mixed, gravel or crushed rock with clay binder, concrete or other hard surface. When the road is not thus completed, we rely on the enterprise of the local people and road authorities to complete it in a reasonable time. There is an enterprising and public-spirited people living on our roads. We try to never route a road through a graveyard.¹³

Although Kelley had been elected president at the meeting in Monte Ne, Harvey was elected president at the meeting in Neosho, Missouri, in November 1913, and Harvey would remain president for the next ten years. Even though the original focus of the organization, and of Harvey, was to develop roads radiating from Monte Ne, the organization's focus soon shifted to providing good roads in Oklahoma and Missouri. Conventions of the organization held in Oklahoma and Missouri in the mid 1910s were hugely successful – approximately 3,000 delegates attended the meeting in Springfield, Missouri, in April 1916 and over 7,000 delegates attended

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property: Highway A-7, Tyrnza Segment

County and State: Poinsett County, Arkansas

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Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965

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Oklahoma City meeting in November 1916.¹⁴

After the success of the Oklahoma City meeting of the OTA, the organization was viewed more as a national organization that was trying to boost road development in the western frontier. Harvey also established a national headquarters of the OTA in Oklahoma City in 1916. Although there was a lot of factionalism in Oklahoma over promoting different proposed routes of the road in Oklahoma, Harvey saw it more as a singular road that would eventually go all the way to southern California. In fact, Harvey said in the January 1917 issue of *Better Roads* that "The Ozark Trail will not only be constructed, but it will be the 'mother' of other great roads feeding or intersecting this road that will span the state in continuous mileage in every direction."¹⁵

The OTA remained a vibrant organization throughout the rest of the 1910s – the May 1917 Amarillo convention drew approximately 6,000 delegates and concrete obelisk markers were erected along the route in the late 1910s – but by the 1920s, the organization began to decline. In 1920 at the Pittsburg, Kansas, meeting, J. E. Swepston was elected president, although in reality he had been selected by Harvey and Harvey really continued to run the OTA. The 1922 meeting at Sulphur, Oklahoma, attracted more than 1,000 people, but the next two meetings in Joplin, Missouri, in 1923 and in Duncan, Oklahoma, in 1924 attracted around 100 members. The 1924 meeting also proved to be the last reported meeting of the OTA.¹⁶

Although the OTA disbanded in 1924, it was not before they had done some work in Arkansas. A 1919 route map of the organization showed that roads had been adopted and marked from Monte Ne to Rogers and Bentonville and then on to Vinita, Oklahoma. Another route from Bentonville to Joplin, Missouri, had also been adopted and marked. In addition, in northwest Arkansas, the OTA was promoting roads from Siloam Springs to Rogers and Bentonville, and also to Salina, and Westville, Oklahoma. Additional routes were being promoted from Monte Ne to Springdale and from Rogers to Cassville, Missouri.¹⁷

Even though the OTA was most connected with northwest Arkansas, they also undertook some efforts of road promotion and improvement in northeast Arkansas. In fact, a "mini" convention was held in Jonesboro in early 1917. Although 2,000 people attended the convention, it was considered a disappointment, because attendance was smaller than at past conventions and also because the delegation from Memphis was small. Harvey had stated that the whole purpose of the convention in Jonesboro was to promote the eastern extension of the Trail.¹⁸ However, by 1919, they had adopted a route south from Cabool, Missouri, to Mammoth Spring, Arkansas (although it was not marked), and they were promoting a continuation of the route to Hardy and then on to

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁸ Lawler, Nan Marie. "The Ozark Trails Association." Diss. University of Arkansas, 1991, p. 37.

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Name of Property: Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment

County and State: Poinsett County, Arkansas

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable): Arkansas
Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965

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Memphis. This route eventually became Highway A-7, and later U.S. 63.¹⁹ In March 1919, at a meeting at the office of Ritter and Company, E. Ritter, D. D. White, and J. A. Emrich were named the local Ozark Trail commissioners for the Marked Tree and Tyronza area.²⁰

The 1910s and early 1920s was a good period for road building in Poinsett County. In the mid-1910s approximately 250 miles of road grading had been done and County Judge S. T. Mayo said that "The road and bridge conditions in the county are good. The sentiment for general road improvement in the county is the best you ever saw." In addition, estimates for additional roads had been obtained, including a concrete road from Marked Tree south to the county line, a gravel road from Harrisburg via Greenfield to the Craighead County line, and a macadam road from Harrisburg to Trumann.²¹ The good state of the roads that Judge Mayo was able to report on, in addition to the efforts of the Ozark Trail commissioners, was partially the effort of his predecessor, Judge Benjamin Cole. One of Judge Cole's first actions as Poinsett County Judge was to inspect the roads in the delta. In addition, he also travelled to Mississippi with Ernest Ritter, John Krier, and M. W. Hazel to inspect the roads there.²²

The state of the roads in Poinsett County was due in part to the activeness of the Ozark Trail Association and its supporters and, early on, the efforts of the farmers to try and access the Memphis market. Jeannie Wayne writes in her book, *A New Plantation South*, that:

Two important features of road building in the delta stand out. First, Marked Tree was the center from which all roads ran; second, the manner of road building in the county as a whole heightened the isolation of the delta from the ridge and prairie. This isolation reflected not only geographical peculiarities that made it difficult to maintain a road across the notorious swamp in the western delta but the preference of the delta planters for the Memphis market. Delta men petitioned the county court for the construction of seven roads in 1901 and 1902. Only one led to the ridge. Of the remaining six, three connected Tyronza Township in the southeastern section of the delta with Marked Tree and linked up with a fourth road leading to Crittenden County and eventually Memphis. A fifth road led from Lepanto in the northeastern delta to Marked Tree, and the sixth stretched from Marked Tree north to the Craighead County line.²³

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ Wayne, Jeannie M. *A New Plantation South: Land, Labor, and Federal Favor in Twentieth-Century Arkansas*. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1996, p. 123.

²¹ *Third Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements*. Publisher unknown, c.1918, pp. 71-72.

²² Wayne, p. 130.

²³ Wayne, p. 42.

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Name of Property: Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment

County and State: Poinsett County, Arkansas

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Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965

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Efforts regarding the Ozark Trail had been ongoing since at least 1916 when the *Marked Tree Gazette* reported in an article titled "Let's Join the Ozark Trail" that "The purpose of the meeting is to organize a good first class road from Jonesboro to Marked Tree and Truman [sic.]" Meetings were held around the area in Marked Tree and Jonesboro by early 1917, and a headline in the March 23, 1917, *Marked Tree Tribune* reported that the "Good Road Meeting [was] a Success, No Opposition to Ozark Trail."²⁴

Work on improving the road in the area was underway by 1918. An article, "Road to Tyronza Now Ready for Travel," in the *Marked Tree Tribune* reported that "Thanks to T. J. Bennett, M. W. Hazel and others who donated their time, teams, and labor, the road leading to Tyronza has been put in fairly good condition, so that we can now get out of town through the country. The thanks of the entire community is given these gentlemen."²⁵

By 1920, work was progressing in Poinsett County on the Ozark Trails Road, as it was referred to in the *Fourth Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements*. The *Fourth Biennial Report* listed a 6.20 mile gravel section of the road along with a 9.80 mile-long concrete section. The estimated cost of the concrete road was \$524,950.00 and \$42,000.00 of federal aid had been allotted to the project. (The federal aid section of the road encompassed 4.33 miles.) By November 1, 1920, 65% of the grading for the concrete road project had been completed, although none of the surfacing had been completed.²⁶ It is not exactly known when the paving was done – the 1918 through 1926 issues of the *Marked Tree Tribune* no longer exist – but it is known that the road was paved by 1924.²⁷

The construction of the road through the Tyronza area was thanks in large part to Ernest Ritter and his brother Louis. Ernest Ritter had been involved with the experimental use of Portland cement as a road material. Apparently, Ritter believed that one could form up a section of muddy overflow and pour the cement mix into it and it would set up.

Although at least one Portland cement company had insisted for at least fifteen years that it would not work, the company later had to change its mind after Ritter's successful experiments. Ritter served as one of the directors of the Ozark Trail road section in the Marked Tree area, and Louis served as the contractor, and it is quite possible that the Ritter brothers used Ritter's experimental method to construct the road in Tyronza.²⁸

²⁴ "Let's Join the Ozark Trail." *Marked Tree Gazette*, 15 September 1916, p. 1, column 1, and "Good Roads Meeting a Success, No Opposition to Ozark Trail." *Marked Tree Tribune*, 23 March 1917, p. 1, column 3.

²⁵ "Road to Tyronza Now Ready for Travel." *Marked Tree Tribune*, 28 June 1918, p. 1, column 1.

²⁶ *Fourth Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements*. Publisher unknown, c.1920, p 154.

²⁷ Woolfolk, Margaret Elizabeth. *A History of Crittenden County, Arkansas*. Greenville, SC: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 1993, p. 60.

²⁸ Grisham, Cindy. E-mail to the author. 22 August 2008.

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Name of Property: Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment

County and State: Poinsett County, Arkansas

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Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965

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Jeannie Whayne also notes of the importance of the Ritters in road building in the Marked Tree and Tyronza area by writing that "The fact that Marked Tree was the nexus for all delta roads was not coincidental. Marked Tree was the center of commerce and credit and therefore drew in the people from the surrounding countryside. In addition, those organizing the roads were often either Marked Tree residents or related to them. Ernest Ritter did not petition for the roads himself, but he won the contracts and built them. His brother, Louis Ritter, was one of the petitioners for the Tyronza roads leading to Marked Tree and to the Crittenden County line and Memphis."²⁹

The completion of the road through Marked Tree and Tyronza was an important event in the area, and really helped to transform the area as well. As Jeannie Whayne writes, "[The road] contributed to considerable economic growth in Marked Tree... In March [1919] businessmen in Marked Tree gathered to discuss the town improvements that would be necessary to accommodate the Ozark Trail, including not only paving the streets but also constructing a new hotel at 'a cost of \$60,000 and \$75,000.' ... A few months later [Ernest] Ritter announced that he would erect 'an entire block of new brick buildings' on land that he owned along the new highway. That block of buildings became the main business street in Marked Tree."³⁰

The agricultural nature of Poinsett County that was present in the late nineteenth century was unchanged by the 1920s and 1930s. *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas* described the area around the bridges by saying that "South of Marked Tree US 63 passes through the plantation land of Poinsett and Crittenden Counties, where cottonfields run for miles from each side of the highway. The plantation houses, appearing at long intervals, are large, well built, and usually set on beautifully landscaped grounds."³¹

Although a lot of highway construction and improvement began to occur across Arkansas in the 1910s and 1920s, including this section of highway, the state suffered a major setback in 1927 with the spring floods that affected just about every corner of the state. *The Ninth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission* stated:

The floods occurring in the spring of 1927 were unprecedented in the annals of the state and wrought a vast amount of damage to the Highway System as well as to local and county roads. This damage was not merely confined to the overflow areas contiguous to the Mississippi River and its larger tributaries but encompassed the highland regions as well, the intensity of the rainfall during the prior part of the flood period being such as to overflow practically all water courses in the state. ...

²⁹ Whayne, p. 42.

³⁰ Whayne, p. 123.

³¹ West, Elliott. *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987 reprint of 1941 publication, p. 295.

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Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965

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The money value of the damage to roads and structures was so appreciable in this, as well as in other delta states, that the situation received the cognizance of the National Congress, and as a result provision was made to compensate the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, and Mississippi through Federal funds for losses suffered to roads and bridges on the State Highway Systems.

This provision was included in the Act of Congress approved February 28, 1929, entitled An Act Making Appropriations For the Military and Non-Military Activities of The War Department For The Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1930, And For Other Purposes, (Public No. 843, 70th Congress)...³²

Of the \$3,654,000 that was made available to the states through the act, Arkansas received the lion's share of the amount with an award of \$1,800,000. (The next closest state was Louisiana, which received \$967,582.) However, reimbursement of the state's expenditures could not occur until the money was spent, and was apparently only limited to 50% of what the state spent. The amount that the state was reimbursed was controversial at the time, as indicated in the *Biennial Report*. The report states: "That part of the Act which reads, 'That any sum hereby appropriated for any state shall become available when the state shall have actually expended or shall have made available for expenditure a like sum from state funds for the purposes contained herein,' would seem to indicate that the state would be entitled to reimbursement to the extent of one dollar for each dollar expended. This view, however, has not been accepted by the Federal Government, and reimbursement is limited to 50 per cent of the amount expended by the state."³³

The 1927 flood would have been particularly devastating in Poinsett County because of its close proximity to the Mississippi River and because of the other rivers that traverse the county. (The St. Francis and Little rivers, for example, merge at Marked Tree.) In fact, a graphic in the Highway Department's *Ninth Biennial Report* that shows what parts of the state were inundated illustrates that almost the entire eastern half of the county was underwater. Although the 1927 flood apparently did not cause any damage to this section of highway, the flood's effects on the county's highway infrastructure is perfectly illustrated in this part of the county because of the fact that one bridge to the southeast of Marked Tree was replaced in 1927 and 1928, likely as a result of the original bridge being damaged or destroyed in the flood.³⁴

Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Ninth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Russellville, AR: Russellville Printing Company, 1930, p. 124.

³³ Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Ninth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Russellville, AR: Russellville Printing Company, 1930, p. 126.

³⁴ Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Ninth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Russellville, AR: Russellville Printing Company, 1930, p. 125.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property: Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment

County and State: Poinsett County, Arkansas

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable): Arkansas
Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965

Section number 8 Page 9

The Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment represented an important link in the transportation network of Poinsett County and northeast Arkansas. By 1926, Highway A-7 had been redesignated U.S. 63, and it was an important highway linking northeast Arkansas with Memphis, Tennessee, and ultimately connecting Benoit, Wisconsin, with Ruston, Louisiana. However, the amount of traffic that the road was receiving eventually led to its bypassing in 1967, and today it remains in use only for the few local residents who live on the road between Tyronza and the Tyronza River. The highway segment still remains an excellent and rare example of early concrete road-building technology in the Tyronza area.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** for its engineering. Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment, is the longest and most intact portion of the c.1922 alignment of Highway A-7 in Poinsett County. The Tyronza segment of Highway A-7, which is approximately 1.25 miles long, still retains its original c.1922 concrete pavement. The highway section was the main automobile route in that part of Poinsett County from the time of its construction in c.1922 until the current U.S. 63 was built to the southwest of it in 1967. As a result, it is therefore eligible for nomination under **Criterion A** for its association with the development of Arkansas highway culture. Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment, is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple-property listing "Arkansas Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965" in conjunction with the historic context "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property: Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment

County and State: Poinsett County, Arkansas

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable): Arkansas
Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965

Section number 9 Page 1

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"Good Roads Meeting a Success, No Opposition to Ozark Trail." *Marked Tree Tribune*, 23 March 1917, p. 1, column 3.

Grisham, Cindy. E-mail to the author. 22 August 2008.

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Maps showing Arkansas Central, the Helena & Corinth, and the Pine Bluff & Southwestern Railroads together forming the Texas & Northeastern Railway. Map. New York: G.W. & C. B. Colton & Co., 1872.

"Plan of proposed Bridge over Ditch No. 9, Marked Tree - Tyronza Road." From the files of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1927.

"Road to Tyronza Now Ready for Travel." *Marked Tree Tribune*, 28 June 1918, p. 1, column 1.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

 National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property: Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment

County and State: Poinsett County, Arkansas

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable): Arkansas
Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965

Section number 9 Page 2

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property: Highway A-7, Tyronza Segment

County and State: Poinsett County, Arkansas

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable): Arkansas
Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965

Section number 10 Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

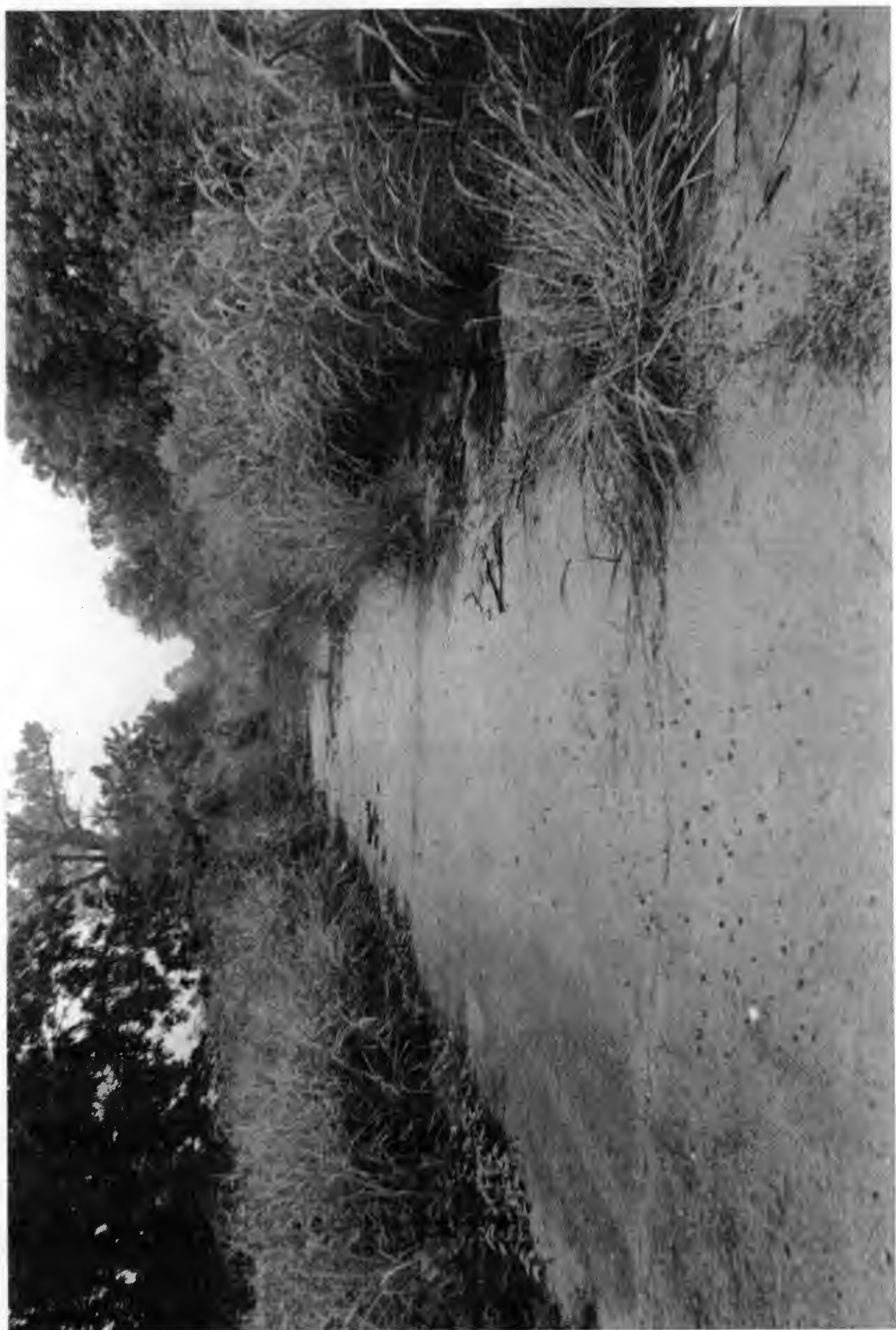
Beginning at the Highway A-7 (Old U.S. 63) and Memphis Avenue intersection, the c.1922 alignment of Highway A-7 follows Old U.S. 63 for approximately 1.25 miles to the bank of the Tyronza River. The width of the boundary includes 10 feet on either side of the c.1922 highway centerline.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

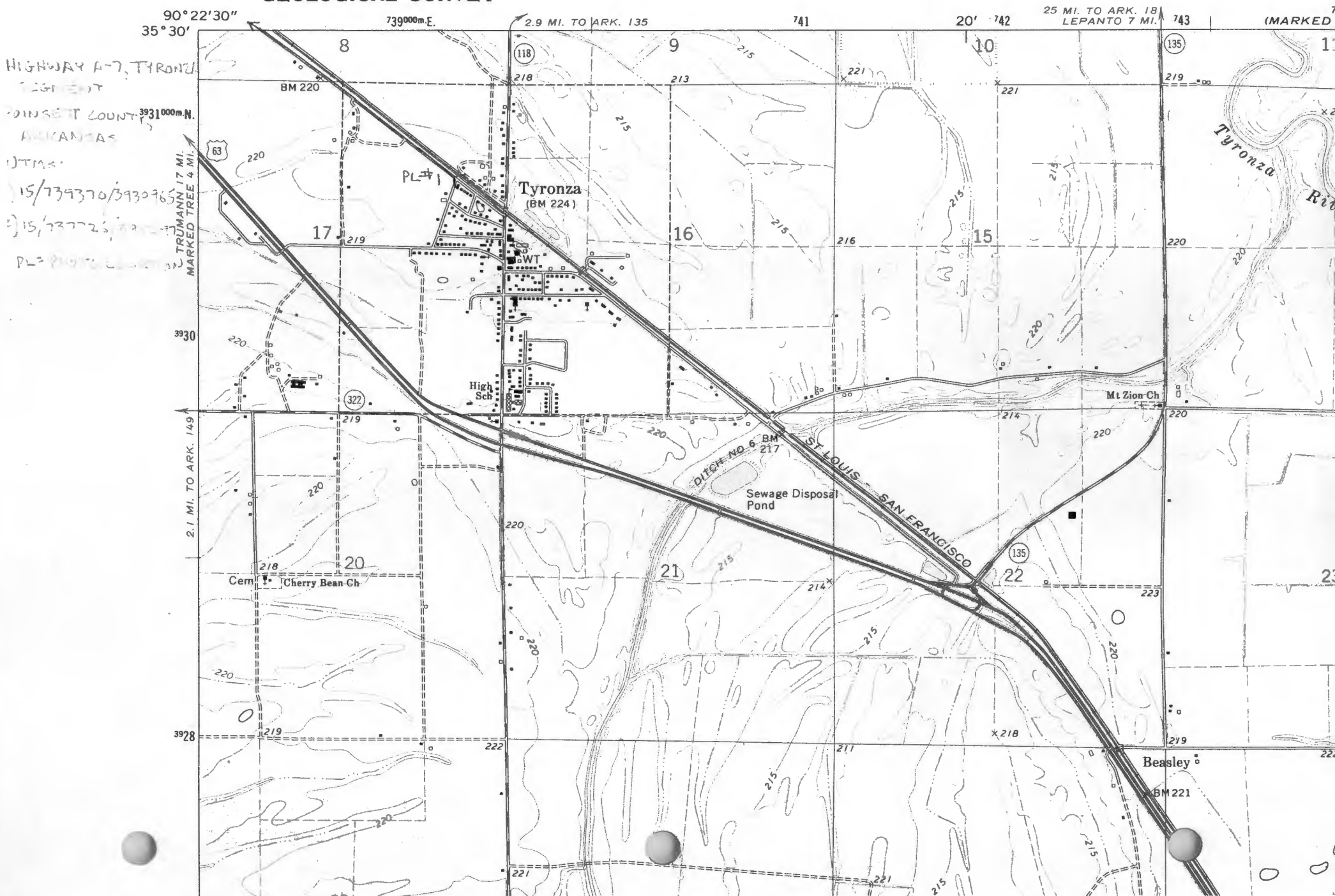
This boundary contains the most intact portion of the c.1922 Highway A-7 highway alignment in the Tyronza vicinity.







7955 III
1:62 500
(MARKED TREE)



HIGHWAY A-7, TYRONZA
SECTION

POINSETT COUNTY, ARKANSAS
35° 30' 00" N
90° 22' 30" W

UTM 3:

1) 15/739370/3930965

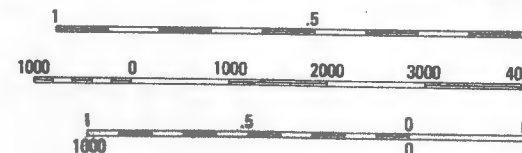
2) 15/737726/3932197

PL = PHOTO LOCATION

PRODUCED BY THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
CONTROL BY USGS AND NOS/NOAA
COMPILED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN 1976
FIELD CHECKED 1979. MAP EDITED 1983
PROJECTION LAMBERT CONFORMAL CONIC
GRID: 1000-METER UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR ZONE 15
10,000-FOOT STATE GRID TICKS ARKANSAS, NORTH ZONE
UTM GRID DECLINATION 1° 34' EAST
1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION 3° 00' EAST
VERTICAL DATUM NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
HORIZONTAL DATUM 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM
To place on the predicted North American Datum of 1983
move the projection lines as shown by dashed corner ticks
(6 meters south and 9 meters east)
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of any
Federal and State reservations shown on this map

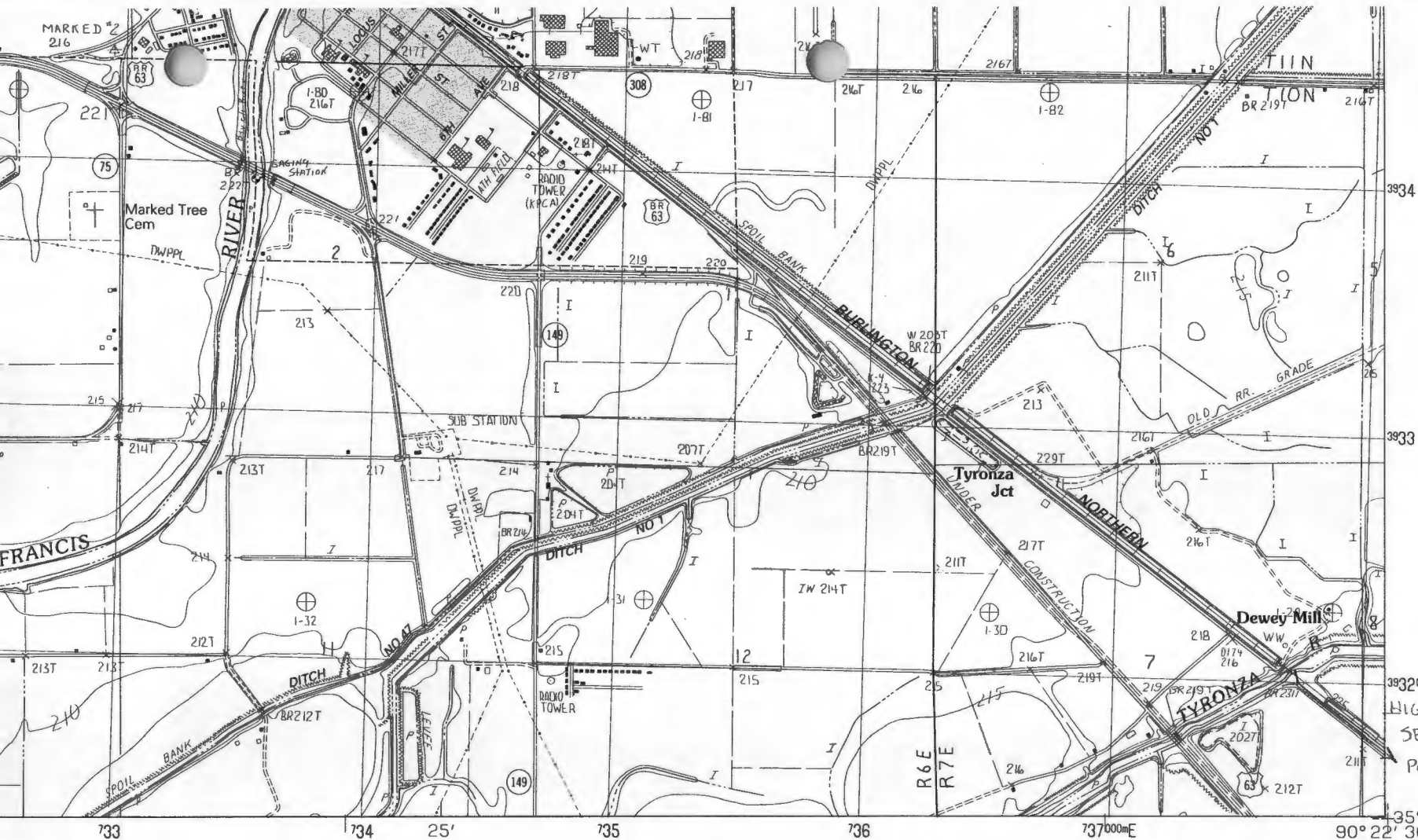
PROVISIONAL MAP
Produced from original
manuscript drawings. Infor-
mation shown as of date of
field check.

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH N
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DE
AND ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL CO

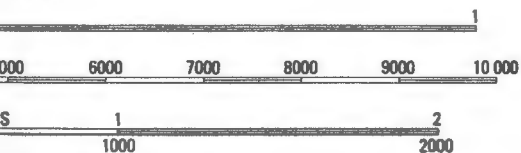


CONTOUR

To convert feet
To convert meters



4 000



AL 5 FEET

multiply by .3048
multiply by 3.2808

MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
ON, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72204



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3	1 Trumann
			2 Hatchie Coon
			3 Rivervale
4		5	4 McCormick
			5 Lepanto
			6 Monterey
6	7	8	7 Joyland
			8 Tyroneza

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1984

ROAD LEGEND

Improved Road
Unimproved Road
Trail

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

MARKED TREE, ARKANSAS

PROVISIONAL EDITION 1983

35090-E4-TF-024

3932000N
HIGHWAY A-7, TYRONZA
SEGMENT
POINSETT COUNTY,
ARKANSAS

35°30'UTMS;

1)15/739370/3930965

2)15/737726/3932197

