

62-1-B097-33

NR 11-22-76

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL 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

Saline County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse Square

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Benton

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

STATE

Arkansas

CODE
05COUNTY
SalineCODE
125

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☒ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Saline County (John E. Parker, County Judge)

STREET & NUMBER

Saline County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Benton

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Circuit Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Saline County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Benton

STATE

Arkansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Saline County Courthouse in Benton, Arkansas, constructed in 1902, is a two-story brick structure resting upon a rusticated-stone foundation. The building has characteristics of Romanesque Revival architecture in its usage of semicircular arches and pyramidal tower roofs. The courthouse was designed by architect Charles L. Thompson of Little Rock and built at a cost of \$31,000 by John Odum.

The Saline County Courthouse features a truncated hipped roof. Gabled as well as hipped roofed dormers extend from the roofline at various locations. A slender brick chimney rises from the south slope of the hipped roof. A cast-stone water table encircles the structure. A string course of cast stone runs around most of the building. The structure features a denticulated cornice. Windows are of two basic shapes, tall and slender and short, double windows with semicircular transoms.

The most distinguishing feature of the Saline County Courthouse is the four-story clock tower. Located at the southeast corner of the building, this square tower is divided into three main sections by molded belt courses. The first floor features paired round-arched windows, while all other windows are tall and slender with cast-stone lintels. A four-faced round clock is situated in the upper sections of the tower above which are four rounded archways on each elevation of the tower. The clock tower is capped by a steep pyramidal roof with finial and weathervane. In each of the other three corners of the courthouse is a two-story tower featuring cast-stone belt courses, denticulated cornice and round-arched second story windows. The towers at the northeast and northwest corners are topped by steep pyramidal roofs with finial, while the tower at the southwest corner features a steep hexagonal roof with finial.

The facade of the Saline County Courthouse is marked in the center by an arched recessed opening. The clock tower graces the south side of the facade. The north elevation is similar to the facade in that it also contains an arched recessed opening.

The interior of the courthouse appears to have been altered for changing office needs. All interior trim and molding retain a simplicity of style.

In 1903 a one-story wing was added to the north side to serve as a jail. The other addition to the building, a one-story wing, was made to the south side during Franklin Roosevelt's administration to accommodate government agencies set up during his administration.

The Saline County Courthouse rests regally on the courthouse square in Benton. In good condition, this structure is architecturally as well as historically significant.

SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1900 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Charles L. Thompson

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The largest number of architecturally significant public buildings in Arkansas are the courthouses scattered over the state's 75 counties. A structural symbol of American government, the county courthouse serves as the center of local political activity. Often the largest and most costly building in the county, the courthouse is almost always a source of pride to the citizens who financed and make use of its facilities.

Saline County is centrally located, encompassing 748 square miles. The northern part of the county is of rough terrain but the central and southern sections are well adapted to agriculture.

Saline County was created by an Act of the Arkansas Legislature on November 2, 1835. The name was derived from numerous salt springs located in the county.

The first seat of county government was located about five miles west of Benton in a Baptist Church building. When it was decided to choose a permanent county seat there was quite a disputation. William Woodruff, editor of the Arkansas Gazette, offered 120 acres of land which included the present town of Benton with the provision that a courthouse square would be set aside; the remaining property divided into town lots and sold at auction; and that the money from the sale of the lots would be used in building a courthouse. This offer was readily accepted and lots were auctioned off on June 15, 1836, netting \$3,381.71. The reversionary clause in the deed states that the courthouse square may never be sold without the approval of the majority of the property owners on Benton. The old "Missouri Trail" ran through Benton and with mountains on the north and swampland on the south, this area was the only feasible route for pioneers from the east to the west, having been well traveled since 1815. Benton seemed an ideal spot on which to establish the county seat.

Contract for a hand-made brick, two-story building, sixty feet square, was let to Jacob Hoover. The courthouse was completed in 1838 at a cost of \$3,574. By 1856 this courthouse had become obsolete and inadequate. A second courthouse was built on the site by Green B. Hughes.

By 1901 the second courthouse had been outgrown. The quorum court on October 8, 1901, set aside \$4,000 towards the construction of a new building. John Odum secured the contract for a new courthouse at a cost of \$31,000. Prominent Little Rock architect Charles L. Thompson

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designed the structure. Court was first held in the new courthouse in September, 1902.

The Saline County Courthouse is a two-story brick building with truncated hipped roof and a four-story tower with clock and belfry. Also there is a tower in each of the other three corners of the main building. The structure features rounded archways, recessed doorways, and denticulated cornices. The Saline County Courthouse is one of the few buildings of Romanesque Revival style in Arkansas.

Architecturally, the Saline County Courthouse is a significant historical structure. Resting on the courthouse square, the building is also significant as the political and governmental center of Saline County.

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Herndon, Dallas. Centennial History of Arkansas. Little Rock: S. T. Clarke
Publishing Company, 1922.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

A Survey of Arkansas Courthouses. Compiled by the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Arkansas. Mrs. W. G. McDonald, Chairperson, Historical Activities Committee. Arkansas Room, Little Rock Public Library.
Works Progress Administration Files. Saline County. On file at the Arkansas History Commission
Hempstead, Fay. Historical Review of Arkansas. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1911.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1	5	5	3	7	8	4	0	3	8	2	4	6	5	0
ZONE			EASTING			NORTHING									
C															

B															
ZONE			EASTING			NORTHING									
D															

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Sandra Taylor, Historian
ORGANIZATION

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

DATE

9-14-76

STREET & NUMBER

300 West Markham

TELEPHONE

501-371-1639

CITY OR TOWN

Little Rock

STATE

Arkansas

12 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 Anne Bartley

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 9-14-76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

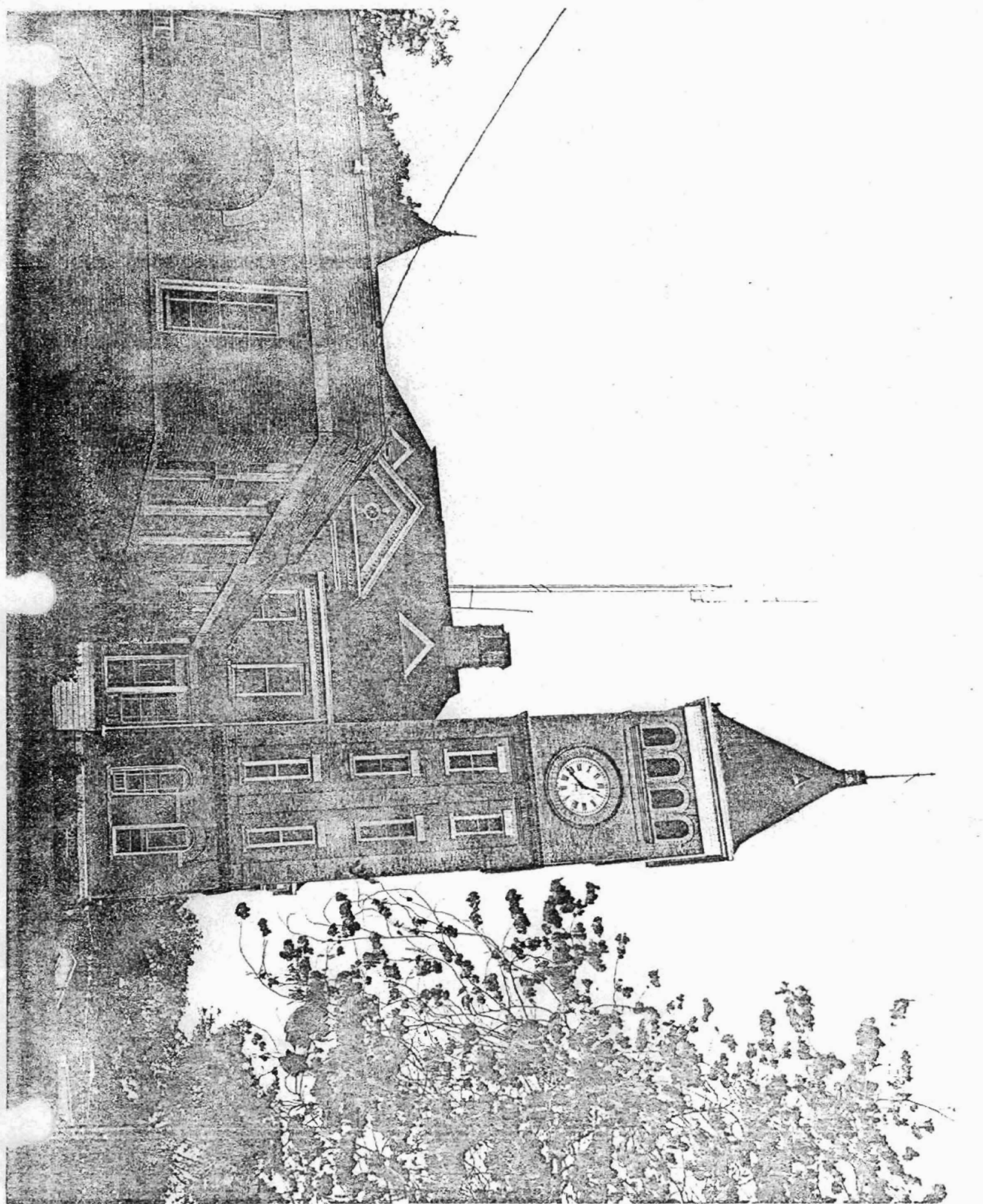
DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*

TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC Saline County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Benton

___ VICINITY OF

COUNTY Saline

STATE Arkansas

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Bob Dunn

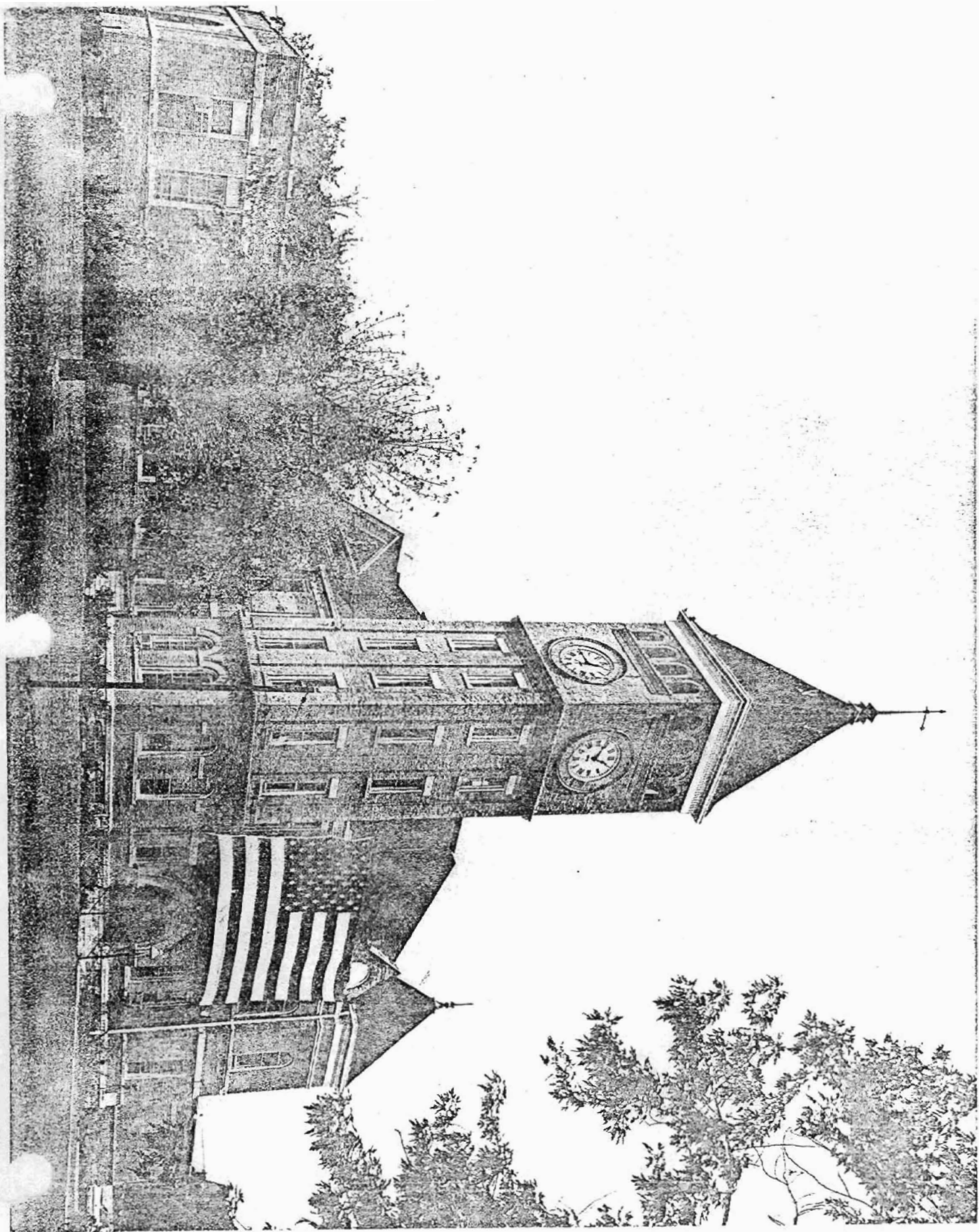
DATE OF PHOTO July, 1976

NEGATIVE FILED AT Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET
south elevation and clock tower, viewed from the south

PHOTO NO.
3



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HISTORIC Saline County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Benton

____ VICINITY OF

COUNTY Saline

STATE Arkansas

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Bob Dunn

DATE OF PHOTO July, 1976

NEGATIVE FILED AT Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET
south and east elevations, viewed from the southwest

PHOTO NO.
1

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PROPERTY MAP FORM

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Saline County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY/TOWN

Benton

___ VICINITY OF

COUNTY Saline

STATE Arkansas

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE U. S. Geological Survey

SCALE 1:24,000

DATE 1944 (photo revised 1970)

4 REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES

Saline County Courthouse
Benton, Arkansas

UTM Reference
15/ 537 840 / 3719 640

BENTON

(BM 417)

Saline Co.
Airport

ROSEMONT
CEM.

MISSOURI

Slicka Heights
Ch.

SOCIAL HILLS
CEM.

Indian Mound

PIPELINE

