

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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FEB 10 1994

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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1. Name of Property

=====

historic name: Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad Depot

other name/site number: Graysonia, Nashville and Ashdown Railroad Depot

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2. Location

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street & number: Northern corner of Whitaker Avenue and Frisco Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Ashdown

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Little River code: AR 081 zip code: 71822

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

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

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

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic Railroad Depots of Arkansas, 1870-1940

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Cathryn A. Slater
Signature of certifying official

1-31-94
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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5. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

Entered in the
National Register

- ☒ 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): _____

Guym Lapsey 3/17/94

for Signature of Keeper

Date
of Action

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic: TRANSPORTATION

Sub: Rail-related

Current: VACANT/NOT IN USE

Sub: N/A

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7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification:

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS
Folk Victorian

Other Description: Plain Traditional

Materials: foundation Wood logs roof ASPHALT
walls STUCCO/Wood other Wood brackets

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

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8. Statement of Significance

=====

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: TRANSPORTATION
ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1908-1940 _____

Significant Dates: 1908 _____

Significant Person(s): N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation: N/A _____

Architect/Builder: Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad

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

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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**NATIONAL
REGISTER**

Section number 7 Page 1

Summary

The Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad Depot, located at the northern corner of Whitaker Avenue and Frisco Street in downtown Ashdown, is a single-story, wood frame railroad depot designed in the Plain Traditional style common for such depot buildings throughout the state, but with more unusual Folk Victorian influences. Such elements as the decorative wood brackets and the stick detail in the gable verges ornament what is otherwise a relatively simple design. Though the interior has been largely refinished, the exterior is intact.

Elaboration

The Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad Depot is a single-story, wood frame railroad depot designed in the Plain Traditional style common for such depot buildings throughout the state, but with more unusual Folk Victorian influences. The fundamentally rectangular plan is augmented only by the shallow telegrapher's bay that projects from the southeastern elevation. The asphalt shingle roof, and the stucco and novelty siding walls are all supported upon short sections of wood logs, placed vertically.

The southeastern or main elevation of the building is anchored by the gabled telegrapher's bay that projects just northeast of the central, single-leaf entrance. The telegrapher's bay is fenestrated with two large six-over-six wood windows on its trackside face and a single narrow four-over-four window on each of its sides. Both the central single leaf entrance and the entrance at the northeastern end of the elevation each retain their original three-pane transoms, though the northeastern entrance door has been replaced with a modern door at some point in the relatively recent past. The windows are all six-over-six wood sash, and sheltered beneath the broad, overhanging cornice that extends the full length of the elevation. The northwestern or opposite elevation is punctuated only by three large six-over-six wood sash windows placed irregularly down the wall.

The northeastern elevation features two of the large six-over-six wood sash windows, placed symmetrically within the wall. The southwestern elevation opposite originally contained a large rolling freight door; however, this door has been filled and a single-leaf entrance placed near the center of the wall.

Significant exterior details include such elements as the decorative wood brackets that support the cornice around all four elevations and the stick detail in the gable verges at the northeastern and southwestern ends of the building. Other details of note are the original window sash and

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the textured stucco upper-wall finish.

The interior -- which has served a variety of purposes in the non-historic period -- appears to retain its basic historic floor plan, though many of the original finishes have been removed. The former white waiting room at the northeastern end remains separated from the original telegrapher's area by a partition and doorway, and the telegrapher's area in turn is separated by a wall from the black waiting room to the southwest. The original freight room was located at the southwestern end of the building and was accessed by a wooden loading dock (now removed); its floor plan also appears to be intact. Other than the removal of some of the original interior finishes and the probable removal of an original chimney, the Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad Depot in Ashdown is intact.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 1**Summary**

Criteria A and C, local significance

The Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad Depot was constructed in 1908 upon the completion of the rail line to Ashdown from Nashville, Arkansas. It is locally significant under Criterion A by virtue of its associations with the commercial railroad enterprise that built it, the Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad line, one of southwest Arkansas's earliest timber railroads. It is also significant under Criterion C by virtue of its status as a remarkably intact example of a railroad depot designed with clear Folk Victorian stylistic influences, the only known example in the entire region.

Elaboration

The Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad was incorporated in 1905 as but one of many such small, ambitious rail lines that sought to access the rich timber land of southwest Arkansas in response to the national and international demand for finished lumber, particularly for home building. As the name indicates, the original goal of this enterprise was to connect these woodlands with Memphis, Tennessee to the east, Paris, Texas to the southwest, and various points beyond in both directions. The fledgling Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad sputtered through a year of grand plans, good intentions, and precious little else until a second group of interested local citizens -- with much more realistic short-term goals -- obtained a new charter in 1906. This group sought only to construct a standard-gauge railroad between the Arkansas towns of Nashville in Howard County and Ashdown in Little River County, a total of twenty-five miles of track that ran through the heart of the timber country and connected it with the Kansas City-Southern Railroad (KCS) that ran through Ashdown on its way from Kansas City, Missouri to Port Arthur, Texas. Not surprisingly, this second incorporation of the railroad coincided with the incorporation of the Nashville Lumber Company in Nashville, and by the same investors, the Brown-Henderson Improvement and Timber Company (W.W. Brown hailed from Camden, Arkansas, while C.C. Henderson was from Arkadelphia). It was financed by a capital stock issue of \$375,000.

Formal construction on the line began on June 20, 1906, when equipment began to arrive at Nashville. Survey work proceeded for the next few weeks, with the final route determined by early July. Bids were then taken for the grading work along the line, and the clearing and roadway preparation began immediately thereafter, with the work beginning at Nashville and proceeding through the forest toward Ashdown to the southwest. The process of purchasing the right-of-way through the forest paralleled that of the construction, proceeding from Nashville and heading toward the envisioned intersection with the KCS in Ashdown.

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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
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By early September, 1906, C. C. Henderson, president of the MP & G, visited Ashdown and promised the local residents that he would run his line directly into the heart of Ashdown and even establish his car and engine shops there if they would agree to put up a cash bonus and donate land for both the necessary depot and the right-of-way through town. The townspeople readily agreed, anticipating the boost to the local economy such a railroad connection would bring, and actually exceeded Henderson's requested land and right-of-way donation.

By October of 1906 nine miles of roadbed had been graded, awaiting only ties and rails. As these supplies arrived toward the end of the year, along with a new locomotive, the Brown-Henderson company continued to purchase valuable timber land adjacent to the railroad, thereby expanding their potential profits. A second locomotive arrived in early January of 1907, and the Brown-Henderson mill would be operational by April. Passenger equipment arrived by December and U. S. Mail service was inaugurated on April 13, 1908.

The MP & G would undergo an assortment of successes, failures and trials over the next few years, including the financial problems of the cement plant at White Cliffs (the western terminus for the line and the principal reason for extending the line at considerable expense across the Little River), the construction of a branch to Murfreesboro (Pike County) to take advantage of the expected development of the diamond field that was discovered there in 1906 (followed by another branch extending from Murfreesboro to Hot Springs via passage over the intersecting rails of the Gurdon & Ft. Smith Railroad), the absorption into the system of several other smaller independent local rail lines, and even the changing of the name to the Memphis, Dallas and Gulf Railroad (MD & G) in 1910 when it became clear that the earlier plans to extend the line to Texas would not materialize. Aggressive expansion characterized the railroad's policies in the second decade of the twentieth century, as its directors envisioned the their line playing an important role in the region as the main local connection between the rapidly consolidating trunk lines that ran along the borders of the state's southwest quadrant. The onset of World War I generally, the disastrous effects it had on the national economy, and the nervousness in caused certain principal investors in the MD & G ultimately spelled its doom. By 1922 it had gone into receivership and was sold at auction that same year.

Though purchased by its former stockholders, the railroad operation was reorganized as the Graysonia, Nashville and Ashdown Railroad (GN & A), and it operated as such until 1927, though it experienced constant problems during its first five years of operation, primarily due to growing competition from the overland trucking industry. It received new life in 1927, however, when it was purchased again by the Ideal Cement Company, which had opened a new plant in Okay, Arkansas, in southern Howard County. Ideal saw the wisdom of owning their own railroad line, thereby insuring control of both the cost and reliability of transporting their

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet**

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product to market. Ideal transformed the GN & A into a freight operation by and large, though the company continued to offer passenger service until 1947. The GN & A continued to operate as an independent freight operation until early 1993, when it was purchased by the KCS.

The Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad Depot in Ashdown is clearly significant through its direct associations with the lumber rail line that connected the town of Ashdown with the outside world both commercially and socially; however, it is also significant as one of the last known examples of a design influenced by the Folk Victorian style in the state of Arkansas. The adaptability of the Folk Victorian style (generally speaking, a smaller scale and relatively vernacular interpretation of the Queen Anne Revival) to the medium of wood construction had been understood and exploited in Arkansas since the 1880s, when the style came to the state in earnest; however, it generally disappeared as a popular style by the turn of the century. Though nothing is known about the designer of this building, it seems likely that an older carpenter that was familiar with this style was involved in the design and construction of this building. Whatever the reason, this is probably the latest architectural expression of this style in Arkansas.

This passenger and freight railroad depot is associated with the Railroad Growth and Development in Arkansas, 1870-1940 historic context as a structure financed and erected under the auspices of one of the smaller, local early twentieth-century railroads in the state. As such, it is eligible under Criterion A by virtue of those associations; however, it is also eligible under Criterion C as the finest extant example of the Folk Victorian style of architecture in Ashdown.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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See *Historic Railroad Depots of Arkansas, 1870-1940* Multiple Property Documentation Form, Section H.

X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

X State historic preservation office

☐ Other state agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other -- Specify Repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>395410</u>	<u>3726380</u>	B	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
C	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	D	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

 See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the northern edge of Whitaker Avenue with the western edge of Frisco Street, proceed northerly along the latter line for a distance of approximately 100 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel with the depot's northern elevation; thence proceed westerly along said line for a distance of approximately 100 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel with the depot's western elevation; thence proceed southerly along said line for a distance of approximately 100 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running along the northern edge of Whitaker Avenue; thence proceed easterly along said line for a distance of approximately 100 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes all the property historically-associated with this property that retains its integrity.

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

Hull, Clifton E., *Shortline Railroads of Arkansas*, (Norman, Oklahoma: 1969).

Stanton, Mike T., *Okay, Arkansas, A History of the Town, Its People, and the Ideal Cement Company*, typewritten manuscript, 13pp., on file at the Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives, Washington, Arkansas.

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Kenneth Story, Architectural Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: January 28, 1994

Street & Number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500 Telephone: (501) 324-9880

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

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad Depot

MULTIPLE NAME: Historic Railroad Depots of Arkansas MPS

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Little River

DATE RECEIVED: 2/10/94

DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/01/94

DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/17/94

DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/27/94

DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 94000192

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 3/17/94 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

CLASSIFICATION

 count resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

 historic current

DESCRIPTION

 architectural classification
 materials
 descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

 summary paragraph
 completeness
 clarity
 applicable criteria
 justification of areas checked
 relating significance to the resource
 context
 relationship of integrity to significance
 justification of exception
 other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

 acreage verbal boundary description
 UTM's boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

 sketch maps USGS maps photographs presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Phone

Signed

Date



MEMPHIS, PARIS & GULF RAILROAD DEPOT
ASHDOWN, LITTLE RIVER Co., ARKANSAS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLLNER
NOVEMBER, 1993

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP
VIEW FROM SOUTH



MEMPHIS, PARIS & GULF RAILROAD DEPOT
ASHDOWN, LITTLE RIVER Co., ARKANSAS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLLNER

NOVEMBER, 1993

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP

VIEW FROM NORTH



MEMPHIS, PARIS + GULF RAILROAD DEPOT
ASHDOWN, LITTLE RIVER Co., ARKANSAS
PHOTOGRAPH BY P. ZOLLNER

NOVEMBER, 1993

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP

DOOR & WINDOW DETAIL



MEMPHIS, PARIS & GULF RAILROAD DEPOT
ASHDOWN, LITTLE RIVER Co., ARKANSAS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLLNER
NOVEMBER, 1993
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP
CORNICER BRACKET DETAIL



MEMPHIS, PARIS + GULF RR DEPOT
APHDOWN, LITTLE RIVER Co., ARKANSAS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLLNER
NOVEMBER, 1993
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP
VIEW FROM EAST



MEMPHIS, PARIS & GULF RAILROAD DEPOT

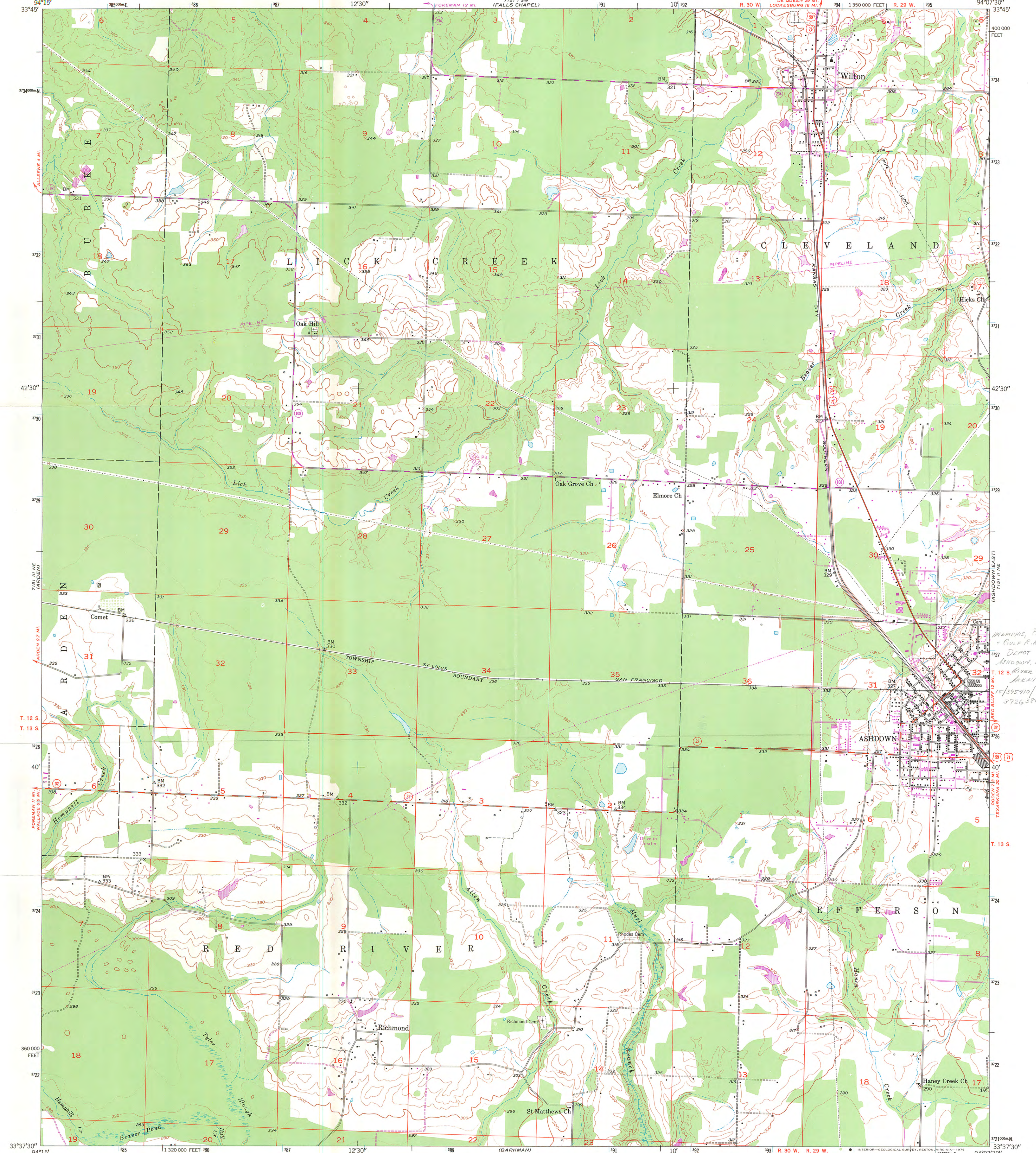
ASHDOWN, LITTLE RIVER Co., ARKANSAS

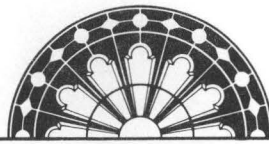
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLLNER

NOVEMBER, 1993

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP

VIEW FROM WEST





ARKANSAS
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
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January 31, 1994

Carol D. Shull
Chief of Registration
United States Department of the Interior
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
800 North Capitol Street, Suite 250
Washington, DC 20002

RE: Memphis, Paris and Gulf Railroad Depot
Ashdown, Little River County

Dear Carol:

We are enclosing for your review the nomination of the above referenced property. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Cathy Buford Slater
State Historic Preservation Officer

CBS:kg

Enclosures

