

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Keiser Water Tower

other names/site number MS0310

2. Location

street & number Northeast of the Water and E. Main Streets Intersection

☐ not for publication

city or town Keiser

☐ vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Mississippi code 093 zip code 72351

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cathie Matthews
Signature of certifying official/Title

12/11/06
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:) _____

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

1-24-07
Date of Action

Keiser Water Tower
Name of Property

Mississippi 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.)

"An Ambition to Be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts
and Architecture in Arkansas 1933-1943"

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/
waterworks/water tower

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/waterworks/
water tower

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls METAL
roof METAL
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Keiser Water Tower is located northeast of the Water and East Main Streets intersection in Keiser, Arkansas. Keiser is a small community which is located south of Osceola in Mississippi County. Situated nearby farms and other resources of the agricultural community in Keiser, the Keiser Water Tower was built in 1936 with financial assistance from the Public Works Administration (PWA).

ELABORATION

The Keiser Water Tower stands several feet high, rising above the small community of Keiser, Arkansas. Built with funds from the PWA in 1936, the water tower is one of the few surviving structures from the Depression in Keiser. Its metal framed construction is an excellent example of building techniques and materials associated with the PWA construction the 1930s.

The Keiser Water Tower rests on four metal legs that are supported by concrete piers. There is a metal pipe at the center of the water tower, which runs to the base of the water tank, carrying water to and from the ground. Metal crosspieces are inserted between the legs in order to provide extra support. There is a utility ladder which extends up one of the legs to the water tank.

The base of the water tank is shaped like a bowl which is pierced in the center by the metal pipe. There is a walkway which encircles the tank a few feet above its base. The walls of the tank are constructed in sheet metal. The roof of the water tank is conical and extends in width a few feet past the walls of the tank.

INTEGRITY

The Keiser Water Tower retains its original fabric, and it is still in use today. It appears in the same setting as it would have when it was built in the 1930s.

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

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1936-1957

Significant Dates

1936-1957

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: _____

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Keiser Water Tower in Keiser, Arkansas is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its association with the Public Work Administration (PWA) activities in Keiser during the 1930s. The Keiser Water Tower is also being nominated to the National Register of Historic places under **Criterion C** for its importance as it is one of the few surviving examples of the 1930s water tower construction. It is being nominated under the multiple property documentation form "An Ambition to Be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas 1933-1943."

ELABORATION

The land, which would later become the grounds for Mississippi County and the small town of Keiser, was inhabited by Native American Tribes into the nineteenth century. Although there are accounts of friendly introductions between the early explorers and Native Americans, there were several reports around the time of the Louisiana Purchase when the Chickasaws, Delawares, Shawnees, and Cherokees attacked the boats coming off the river.¹

Presenting more difficulty to these early settlers, the land was inhospitable. Sunken in the St. Francis River Valley Basin, the area was cut off from neighboring counties and often flooded.² The county's location near the Mississippi River and its tributaries made the ground constantly saturated and difficult for farming; however, it had not always been as wet. Early accounts of De Soto's men praying for rain, lead historians to believe that the climate, soil, vegetation and topography of the land changed dramatically, after the New Madrid earthquake in 1812.³

Nevertheless, it wasn't until the mid-half of the nineteenth century that white settlers took interest in the land. In 1833, Mississippi County formed out of a part of Crittenden County by an act of territorial legislation.⁴ The advent of the steamboat attracted more settlers to the county as the steamboat depended heavily on cordwood that the county supplied.⁵ Although the swampy land deterred earlier settlers, its uncut timber was desired by many. The bottom lands of the Mississippi River had a diverse character of hardwoods such as Elm, Gum, Ash, Hickory, Walnut, Cypress, and Cottonwood that were high in demand.⁶ The Chicago Mill Lumber Company operated the area, moving lumber up the Mississippi River to Cairo, St. Louis, Louisville, and Cincinnati.⁷

By the late nineteenth century, the initiative to reclaim the swamp land of Mississippi County took full force. The inhospitality of the land, which was inundated annually, and its separation from other counties made it a

¹ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas* (Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Co. 1889), 450.

² *Ibid.*, 447

³ *Ibid.*, 448

⁴ *The Garden Spot of the Mississippi Valley* ed. by J. A Fox, 1902. Rpt. In *Mississippi County Arkansas Through the Years* (Osceola, AR: South Mississippi County Arkansas Historical Heritage Documentation, 1936), 5.

⁵ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, 457.

⁶ *The Garden Spot of the Mississippi Valley*, 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*

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Section number 8 Page 2

perfect hiding place for outlaws and wildlife.⁸ Although settlers had made earlier efforts to reclaim the land for hunting and fishing, the most effective efforts were made by the government. In 1879, Congress created the Mississippi River Commission to control flooding in the area.⁹ Levee work began in 1882 to prevent complete saturation of the land.¹⁰ This was the first step towards reconstruction of this land, and it resulted in the clearance of outlaws and other unwanted wildlife from the swamps.

In 1880, just a few years before the levee work began, a pioneer, Fred Keiser, had purchased a lumber mill in Osceola. While he was exploring, he came upon a wooded area south of Osceola. He established and operated a tram to bring wood from this area to his mill in Osceola. This began the formation of a small village in the woods named after its founder, Keiser.¹¹

In 1890, the government plans for the first drainage district, the St. River Valley Basin began, and they were carried out in 1902.¹² Even though there was a lot of opposition from the citizens concerning the government's intervention of property, in 1905, an ordinance was created to establish drainage districts throughout the entire county. The law was enacted 1907-1908. Despite the government's efforts to control flooding, forty thousand dollars of property damage due to flooding occurred in the years between 1902 and 1912.¹³ It would be another five years before Congress passed the First Flood Control Act, which authorized expenditure for the Mississippi River Commission, and it would be another twenty years before the overall income increased. Nevertheless, the flood prevention in the early twentieth century aided the county as it enabled agricultural production.

Shortly after the drainage districts were established, the construction of a railroad line from the logging town of Wilson to the existing east-west line of the Jonesboro and Lake City Eastern Railroad, north of Keiser, yielded more growth in the community.¹⁴ By this time, the economic focus of the community was changing from timber to cotton. Having the largest rain grown cotton production of any county, Mississippi County rapidly developed into a successful region, formed by strong agricultural communities, similar to Keiser. In addition to the cotton, corn and alfalfa were also important crops cultivated on this newly reconstructed land.¹⁵

Despite the county's high levels of water, a national concern on the conservation of water initiated the construction of waterworks statewide. In 1935, at the State Planning Board Meeting, the responsibility of planning and conserving the state's water resources was delegated to the Public Works Administration (PWA). The PWA, a federal agency established as part of President Roosevelt's New Deal to provide jobs

⁸ Ibid., 10.

⁹ Mabel F. Edrington, *History of Mississippi County, Arkansas* (Ocala, FL: Ocala Star Banner, 1962), 63.

¹⁰ Ibid., 64.

¹¹ Ibid., 118.

¹² Ibid., 64.

¹³ Ibid., 75.

¹⁴ Information found on Railroads near Keiser in the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program files.

¹⁵ Edrington, *History of Mississippi County, Arkansas*, 91.

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and increase the public welfare of the state, completed an intensive survey and listed an inventory of necessary water projects for Arkansas.¹⁶

In 1936, one year after the State Planning Board meeting, construction of the Keiser Water Tower began and was finished in that same year. The PWA aided in funding for the project authorizing a \$13,000 loan and granting \$10,636 to Keiser.¹⁷

In 1945, Mississippi County received a notable reputation for having 48,000 acres of crop land, which was more than any other county in the country in that year.¹⁸ By that time the planning of drainage soil improvement, fertility programs, development and use of electricity, water facilities, and expanded roads in Mississippi County was a vast improvement.

A reminder of this improvement, the Keiser Water Tower remains in use today. It is significant to the town for its role in the development of the infrastructure and public service of the community.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Keiser Water Tower is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its association with the Public Work Administration (PWA) activities in the 1930s. It is also being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** as it is one of the few surviving examples of 1930s water tower construction. It is being nominated under the multiple property documentation "An Ambition to Be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas 1933-1943."

¹⁶State of Arkansas Planning Board 1935 Report in the files of the Richard C Butler Center for Arkansas Studies.

¹⁷Information on PWA funding found in the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

¹⁸Edrington, *History of Mississippi County, Arkansas*, 92.

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Section number 9 Page 1

Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeastern Arkansas. Chicago:
Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889.

Edrington, Mabel F. History of Mississippi County, Arkansas. Ocala, FL: Ocala Star
Banner, 1962.

Information on PWA found in the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program files.

State of Arkansas Planning Board 1935 Report in the files of the Richard C. Butler Center
for Arkansas Studies.

The Garden Spot of the Mississippi Valley. Ed by J.A. Fox. Rpt. In *Mississippi County
Through the Years*. Osceola, AR: Southern Mississippi County Arkansas Historical Heritage
Documentation, 1936.

Keiser Water Tower
Name of Property

Mississippi County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 762732 3951882
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joanna Hall, National Register Historian
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 09-11-06
street & number 1500 Tower Building 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9789
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name City of Keiser
street & number PO Box 145 telephone _____
city or town Keiser state AR zip code 72351

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Verbal Boundary Description

From the northeast corner of the Water and East Main Street intersection, proceed one hundred meters easterly, parallel to East Main Street, and fifty meters northerly to the initial point; thence proceed north twenty-five meters; thence proceed south twenty-five meters; and thence proceed east twenty-five meters returning to the initial point.

Boundary Justification

This boundary includes all of the land historically associated with the Keiser Water Tower.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Keiser Water Tower
NAME:

MULTIPLE New Deal Recovery Efforts in Arkansas MPS
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Mississippi

DATE RECEIVED: 12/14/06 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/05/07
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/20/07 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/27/07
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 06001283

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 1.24.07 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



KEISER WATER TOWER

Keiser, Mississippi County, Arkansas

Photo By: Ralph Wilcox

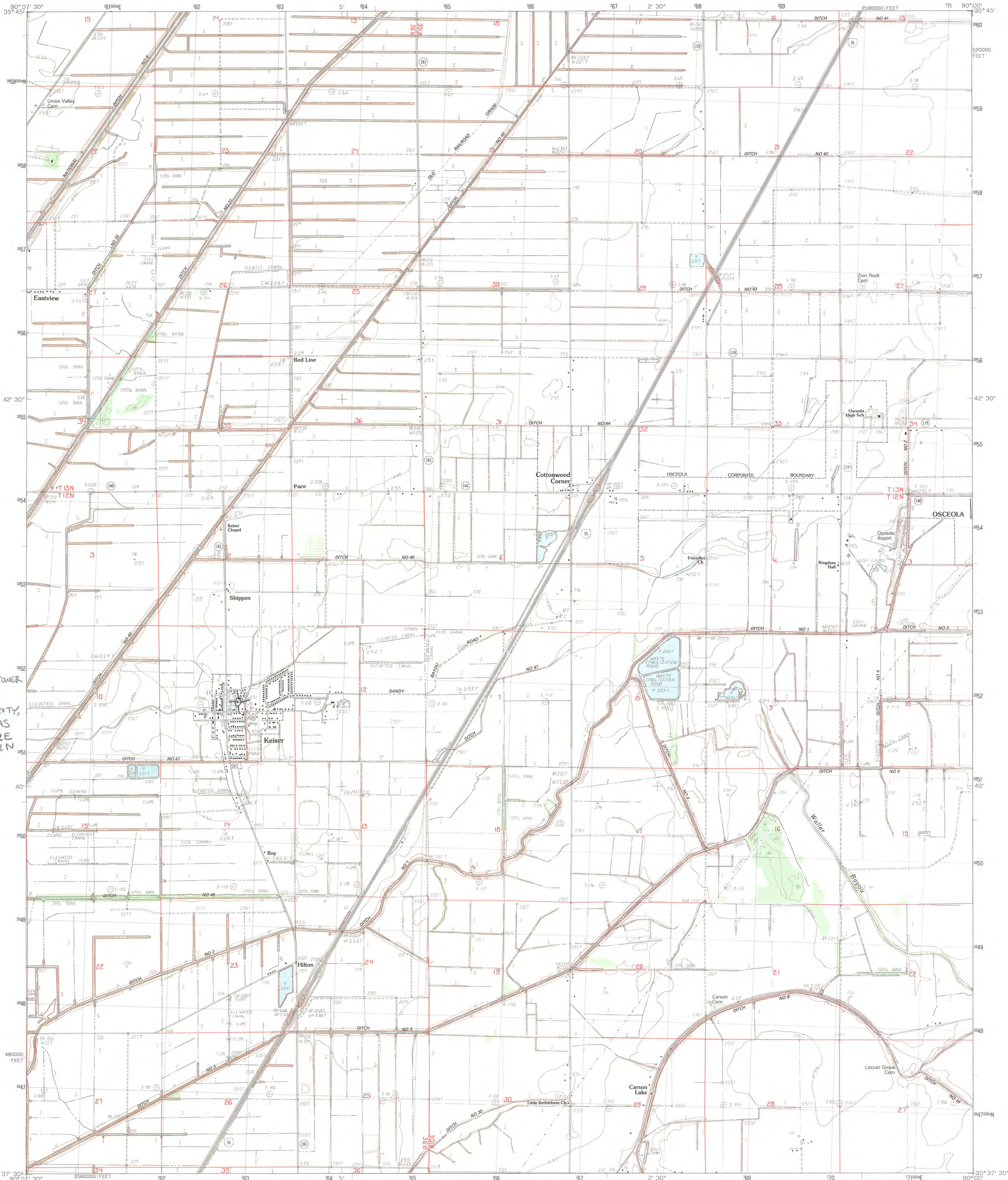
05/30/06

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Archives

Northeast View

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

KEISER QUADRANGLE
ARKANSAS—MISSISSIPPI CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



KEISER WATER TOWER
KEISER,
MISSISSIPPI COUNTY,
ARKANSAS
IS 762732E
3951882N

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
UTM GRID DECLINATION ARKANSAS, NORTH ZONE
1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION 143° 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 8 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 NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72204



1	2	3	1
2	3	4	2
3	4	5	3
4	5	6	4
5	6	7	5
6	7	8	6
7	8		7
8			8

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

ROAD LEGEND
Improved Road
Unimproved Road
Trail
Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

KEISER, ARKANSAS
PROVISIONAL EDITION 1983
35090-F1-TF-024



The Department of Arkansas Heritage

Mike Huckabee, Governor
Cathie Matthews, Director

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural Heritage
Commission

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars
Cultural Center

Old State House Museum



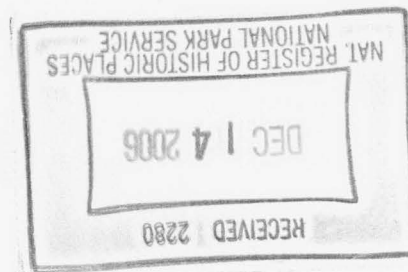
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

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323 Center Street
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fax: (501) 324-9184
tdd: (501) 324-9811

e-mail: info@arkansaspreservation.org Enclosure

website:

www.arkansaspreservation.org



December 6, 2006

Dr. Janet Matthews
Chief of Registration
United States Department of the Interior
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
8th Floor
1201 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

RE: Keiser Water Tower – Keiser, Mississippi County,
Arkansas

Dear Dr. Matthews:

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

If you need further information, please call Joanna Hall of my staff at (501) 324-9789. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Cathie Matthews
State Historic Preservation Officer

CM:rsw

