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NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

historical name: Prairie County Courthouse

other name/site number: N/A

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2. Location

street & number: Magnolia and Prairie Streets

not for publication: N/A

city/town: DeValls Bluff

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Prairie

code: AR117

zip code: 72041

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3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public - County

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

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

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification:

20th Century
Other: Plain/Traditional

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation Concrete roof Asphalt
walls Brick other N/A

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

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Social History
Government

Period(s) of Significance: 1939

Significant Dates: 1939

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Works Progress Administration (WPA)

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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9. Major Bibliographical References

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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:

- 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>640710</u>	<u>3849880</u>	B	<u>15</u>	_____	_____
C	<u>15</u>	_____	_____	D	<u>15</u>	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ____ See continuation sheet.

Beginning at a point on the western edge of Magnolia Avenue formed by the intersection of that edge with a perpendicular line that runs parallel to the southern elevation of the Prairie County Courthouse and is located twenty feet to the south, proceed west to the intersection with a perpendicular line that runs parallel to the western end of the Courthouse and is located twenty feet to the west. Then proceed north to the intersection with a perpendicular line that runs parallel to the northern elevation of the Courthouse and is located twenty feet to the north. Then proceed east to the intersection with the western edge of Magnolia Avenue. Then proceed south to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification: ____ See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with this resource.

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

Name/Title: Robin L. Baldwin, Survey Historian
Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 02/22/95
Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg, 323 Center St. 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
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

Summary

Located on Magnolia and Pine streets in DeValls Bluff, the Prairie County Courthouse is a two-storey, brick masonry public building built by the WPA in a plain functional style using materials salvaged from an earlier courthouse built in 1910.

Elaboration

The Prairie County Courthouse in DeValls Bluff is a two-storey, brick masonry public building designed in the Plain/Traditional style common for WPA projects throughout the state. This rectangular building rests on a continuous cast concrete foundation and is capped by a low hipped metal roof. The building is simply decorated by a concrete string course that separates the first and second stories. The second story windows have wooden lintels and sills, while the first floor windows have wood sills with the tops being formed by the string course. On the second level the four corners are accentuated by brick pilasters. On the lower level the brick masonry walls were constructed in an unusual receding pattern that creates four layers with the highest layer extended slightly over the third layer, the third slightly over the second, and so on.

The western or front elevation is composed of a central double-leaf entrance with wide sidelights and light transom. It is flanked on the sides by two symmetrically placed nine-over-one pane double-hung windows. The southern elevation is composed of three nine-over-one double-hung windows on the western side, a pair of stationary four pane windows divided by a wide wood mullion in the middle, and three more double-hung windows on the eastern end. The cornerstones of the 1910 courthouse are located on the eastern corner of the southern elevation and the southern corner of the eastern elevation. The eastern elevation is identical to the western elevation. A bronze WPA plaque from 1939 is located on the northern side of the eastern double-leaf entrance. Three nine-over-one double-hung windows are found on the eastern end of the northern elevation, and three are located on the western end. A projection extends from the center of this elevation. Boarded window openings are found on the eastern and western sides of the projection.

The interior contains a long central hallway that runs the full length of the lower floor which is occupied by offices. A staircase in the center on the northern side of the hallway leads to the second floor where the courtroom is located.

Wood frame double-leaf doors with decorative multi-pane light transoms and sidelights originally

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

found on the eastern and western elevations have been replaced by aluminum frame double doors. Otherwise, this structure is unaltered and in good condition.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

Summary

Criterion A, local significance

The Prairie County Courthouse in DeValls Bluff was designed and constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1939. It is the only known WPA structure in the community and its design represents the functional emphasis of such depression-era public works projects.

Elaboration

Prairie County was formed in 1846 from land originally in Pulaski County. Its name was derived from the common name for the land it encompassed between the lower White and Arkansas Rivers, the Grand Prairie. Originally an area dominated by cotton cultivation, it has become a major center for the production of rice. The county seat was originally established at DeValls Bluff in 1873, but was moved two years later to Des Arc. Eventually, both locations became recognized seats of government.

DeValls Bluff is a small town situated on the western bank of the White River. It was named for C. C. DeVall, the first known settler in the area. The bluffs on which it is located contributed to the area being settled as a primary riverport. It was a busy shipping point for agricultural products such as cotton, hay, and rice. In 1862 the portion of the Memphis to Little Rock railroad line was completed from Little Rock to DeValls Bluff. In 1871, under the leadership of Harry E. Bovay, the White River was bridged and the railroad line was completed all the way through. This was the first interstate railroad in Arkansas.

The first county courthouse located in DeValls Bluff was built in 1910. The design of this structure has not survived. Building materials salvaged from the first structure were used by the WPA for the construction of the current courthouse in 1939. The Prairie County courthouse was one of many buildings built by the WPA in Arkansas. The WPA was involved in many public construction projects throughout Arkansas during the 1930s. This national organization that hired unemployed men and women to work on a variety of public projects throughout the nation was one of many federal programs established by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his administration in response to the dire economic circumstances brought upon the American people by the Great Depression. The WPA as instituted by the Roosevelt Administration was managed by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). Other federal programs administered by FERA were the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Public Works and Civilian Works Administrations, and regional projects such as the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Rural Colonization Projects in Dyess, Clover Bend, and Plum Bayou, Arkansas were also under the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

direction of FERA. The WPA constructed or repaired a number of courthouses in Arkansas, and the courthouse at DeValls Bluff was erected as part of this statewide effort.

The Prairie County courthouse in DeValls Bluff is being nominated under Criterion A with local significance as the only known WPA constructed building in DeValls Bluff.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

Deane, Ernie, *Arkansas Place Names*, Branson, Missouri: 1986.

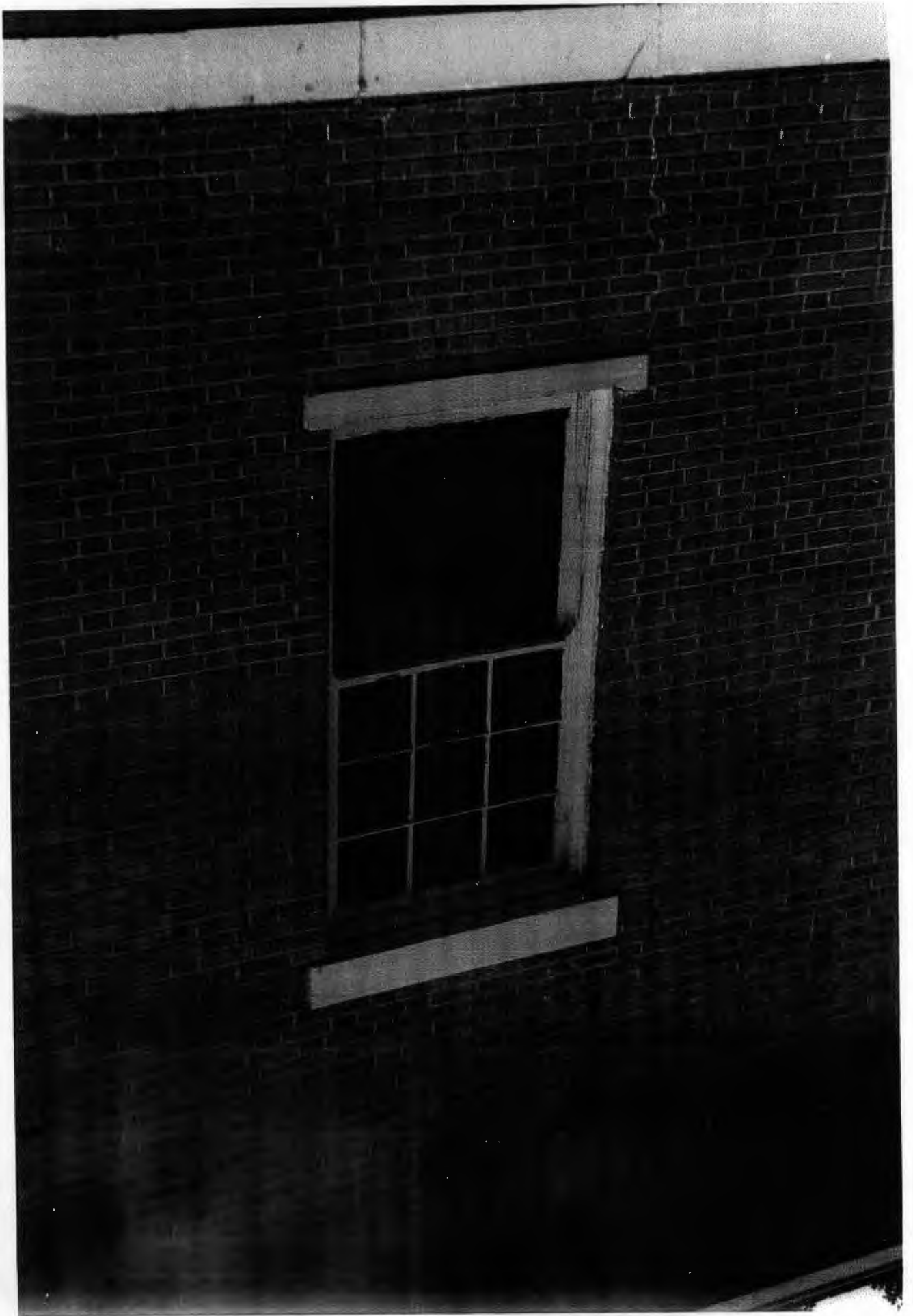
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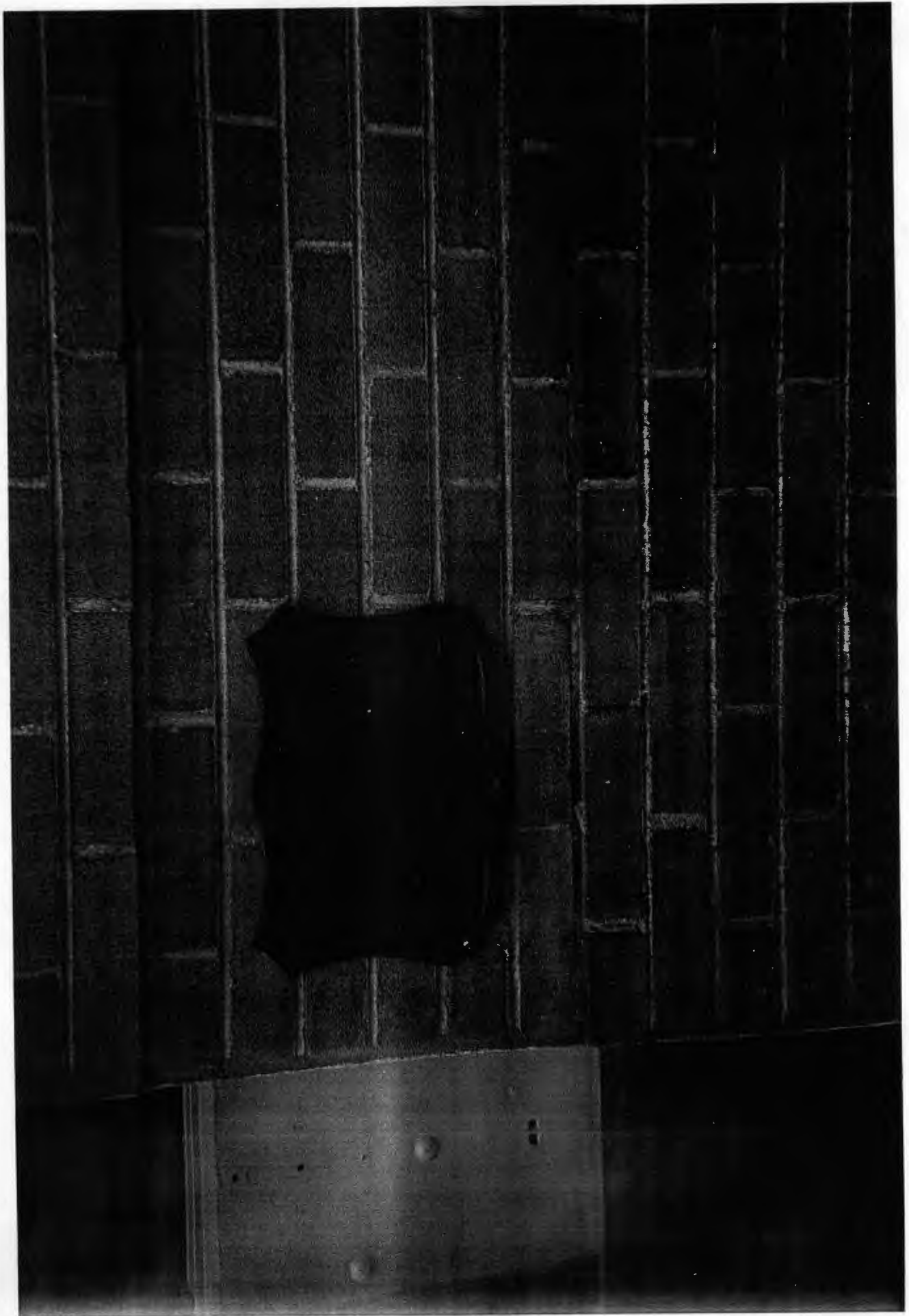
Workers of the Writers' Program, *The WPA Guide to 1930's Arkansas*, with a new introduction by Elliot West, Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1987 (original copyright 1941).

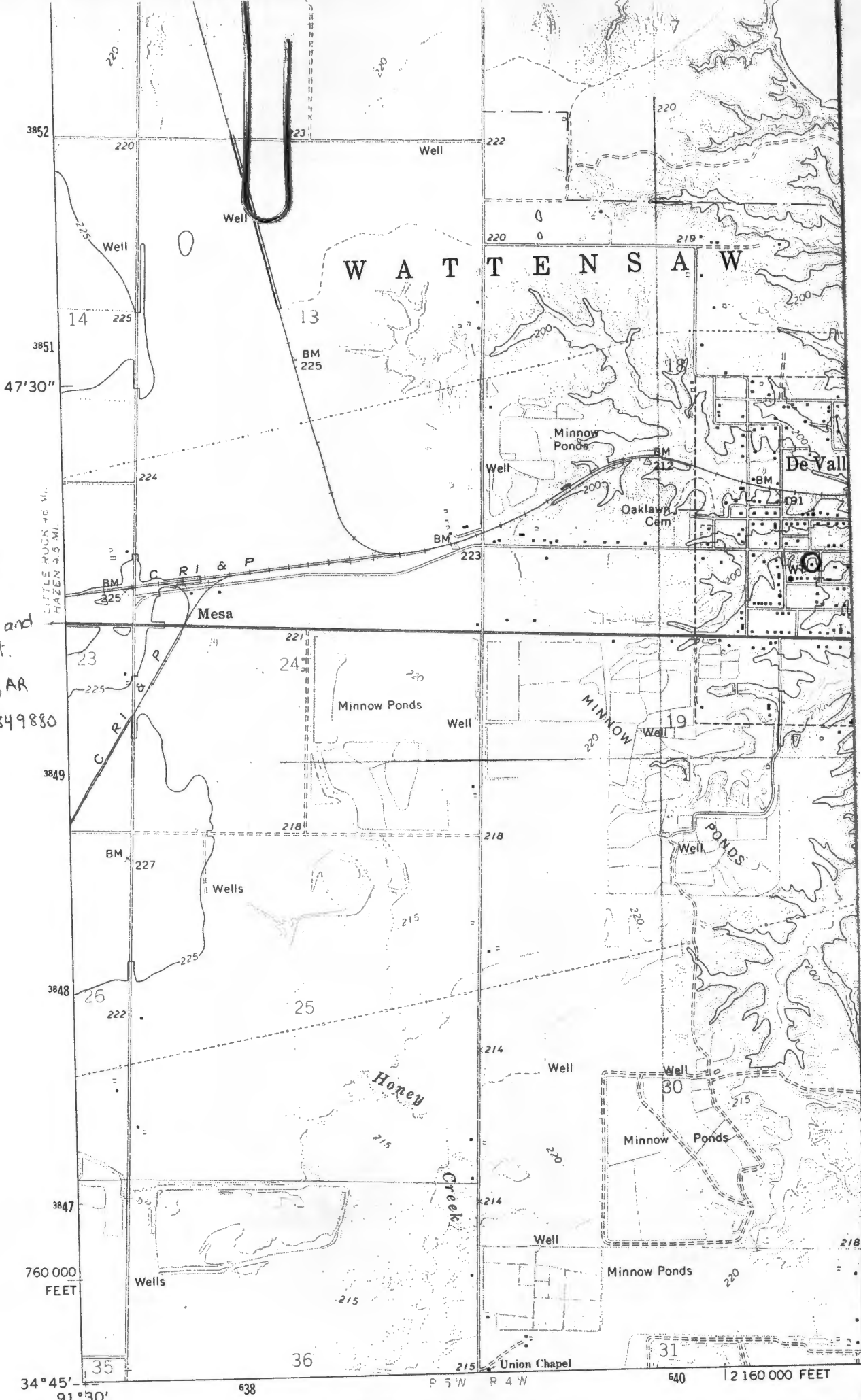












1. Prairie County Courthouse
2. Corner of Prairie Avenue and Magnolia Street. DeValls Bluff, AR
3. 15/640710/3849880