

NR 1-21-04

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 Old Arkansas 51, Curtis to Gum Springs

other names/site number Site #CL0749; Old US 67, Curtis to Gum Springs

2. Location

street & number Immediately west of current US 67 beginning approximately one-half mile south of the US 67 and Curtis Cemetery Road intersection and ending at the AR 26 and US 67 intersection not for publication

City or town Curtis vicinity

state Arkansas code AR County Clark code 019 71728

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.)

Cathy Matthews 11/20/03
Signature of certifying official>Title 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

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)/highway

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Highway

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other CONCRETE

OTHER – Bituminous Surfacing

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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation
Engineering

Period of Significance

1931-1954

Significant Dates

1931

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

D. H. Dalton Co. (Arkadelphia, Arkansas), 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):

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, designated landmark, recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey, recorded by Historic American Engineering Record.

Primary location of additional data:

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State Agency, Federal Agency, Local Government, University, Other.

Name of repository: Arkansas Highway and Transportation Dept.

Old Arkansas 51, Curtis to Gurn Springs

Name of Property

Clark County, Arkansas

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approx. 9.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	15	489543	3762405	3	15	490966	3768552
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	15	490407	3765840	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 Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
 organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date September 10, 2003
 street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9787
 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 _____
 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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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SUMMARY

The abandoned 1931 alignment of Arkansas 51 between Curtis and Gum Springs is a two-lane concrete highway. It follows a straight alignment to the west of the current U.S. 67. The highway retains its original 1931 concrete pavement throughout, although small portions have had an asphalt layer placed over them, and other portions have been patched. The highway retains its original roadway width.

ELABORATION

This abandoned section of 1931 alignment of Arkansas 51 is approximately four miles long and begins approximately one-half mile south of the U.S. 67 and Curtis Cemetery Road intersection and proceeds northeast before ending at Arkansas 26 in Gum Springs. It is located just to the west of the current alignment of U.S. 67.

The 1931 alignment of Arkansas 51 has a width of 18 feet for two lanes of travel and 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.) Each section of pavement is 9 feet wide and 50 feet long, and is composed of a tan stone aggregate mixed in the concrete.

INTEGRITY

Overall, the abandoned 1931 alignment of Arkansas 51 between Curtis and Gum Springs has good integrity. The original 1931 pavement remains throughout the segment, and it retains its original dimensions. Additionally, the part of Clark County where the highway is located retains its rural setting, and the surroundings still reflect the period of significance from 1931 until 1954.

The pavement of the highway towards the northeastern end is in rough shape and somewhat overgrown. Even so, it is still drivable, and the entire 1931 alignment possesses a strong sense of continuity.

Although some small portions of the highway have had an asphalt layer placed over them at a later date and other portions have been patched, the vast majority of this work was completed prior to the opening of the current alignment of U.S. 67. As a result, many of the modifications are over fifty years old and add to the historic character of the highway.

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SUMMARY

Old Arkansas 51, Curtis to Gum Springs, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** for its engineering. Old Arkansas 51, Curtis to Gum Springs, is the longest and most intact portion of the 1931 alignment of Arkansas 51 in Clark County. The Curtis to Gum Springs section of Arkansas 51, which is approximately four miles long, still retains its original 1931 concrete pavement. The highway section was the main automobile route in that part of Clark County from the time of its paving in 1931 until the current U.S. 67 was built adjacent to it in 1965. As a result, it is therefore eligible for nomination under **Criterion A** for its association with the development of Arkansas highway culture. Old Arkansas 51, Curtis to Gum Springs, 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

The route of Arkansas 51 in Clark County, which is now a part of U.S. 67, was a natural corridor through Arkansas due to the state's geography, and its history goes back many centuries. Current U.S. 67 roughly divides Arkansas into two triangles with the Ozarks to the northwest and the Delta with its associated swampland to the southeast. The ease of travel in this corridor was first taken advantage of by the Native Americans, who picked out a route that avoided the hills and swamps, and crossed the many rivers at their easiest fording locations.¹

At the time of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the Southwest Trail was developed along the route. It predated the Memphis to Little Rock Road of 1826, and was the earliest land route into Arkansas. The route entered into Arkansas at Hix's Ferry, a community northeast of Pocahontas in Randolph County, proceeded through Little Rock and ended at the Red River in Fulton in Arkansas's southwest corner.²

The development of the Southwest Trail through Arkansas opened up settlement in the areas along its route. Pioneers came into the state from the northeast bringing their cattle, wagon trains, and, occasionally, slaves with them. All along the route, the settlers selected tracts of bottomland, and made clearings in the wilderness. The importance of the Southwest Trail was also recognized by Andrew Jackson who signed an appropriations bill in 1831, which earmarked \$15,000 for the improvement of the Trail, and also designated

¹ Elliott West. *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987 reprint of 1941 publication p. 203.

² Noel E. Oman. "Progress in Slow Lane on Upgrade of U.S. 67." *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 23 August 1999: A1.

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it a "National Road."³ The importance of this military road was proven during the War with Mexico in the 1840s.⁴

As the construction of railroad lines began in earnest in Arkansas after the Civil War, the railroad line also utilized the same approximate corridor that the military road had used in Clark County. Historic railroad maps of the area show that a railroad line was in the planning stages in 1864 and 1872.⁵ The railroad line, which would become the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern in 1874, was completed by 1873.⁶ The arrival of the railroad further increased settlement in that part of Clark County, and the towns of Curtis and Gum Springs all came into existence by 1895.⁷

When the Arkansas State Highway System was formed in 1923, U.S. 67, of which this section of Arkansas 51 would become a part, was one of the original highways included. It was also one of the first nine Arkansas highways to become part of the U.S. highway system two years later in 1925.⁸ The creation of the State Highway System was the most important aspect of the Harrelson Road Law of 1923, and it brought all construction and maintenance activities under the jurisdiction of the Highway Commission.⁹

However, the section of Arkansas 51 between Curtis and Gum Springs did not become a part of U.S. 67 until the paving was finished in 1931. Prior to 1931, the route of U.S. 67 went northwest through the town of Burtzell before turning northeast at Okolona proceeding on to Arkadelphia.¹⁰ (The old route of U.S. 67 through Okolona is now designated Arkansas 51.)

Rerouting U.S. 67 to proceed northeast through Curtis and Gum Springs once the paving of Arkansas 51 was completed made sense since the route was more direct and shorter in distance. The work done on the Curtis to Gum Springs section of highway, (referred to as Section 1 of Arkansas 51 by the State Highway

³ Ray Hanley. *A Journey Through Arkansas: Historic U.S. Highway 67*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1999, p. 7.

⁴ West, 203.

⁵ *Railway and county map of the Southern States*. Map. Cincinnati, E. Mendenhall, 1864, and *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.

⁶ W. E. McLeod. "Old Roads in North Arkansas." *Lawrence County Historical Society Quarterly*, Spring 1978.

⁷ *Cram's Township and Rail Road Map of Arkansas*. Map. Chicago, George Franklin Cram, 1895.

⁸ Oman, A1.

⁹ Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. *Historical Review: Arkansas State Highway Commission and Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1913-1992*. Little Rock: Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1992, p. 34.

¹⁰ Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Ninth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Department*. Russellville, AR: Russellville Printing Company, 1930, p. 26.

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Commission) was not only a state project. It was also two Federal Aid Projects (FAP). The initial grading and drainage structures on the road was FAP #41-B, and the paving of the highway was FAP #265-B.¹¹

The first contracts awarded for improvements of the highway went to the J. C. Neal & Company of Hermitage, Arkansas, and O. M. New of Conway, Arkansas, for grading and drainage structures. Their proposals for the project were received July 18, 1929. For 6.035 miles of work (State Job #366, FAP #41-B Re.) J. C. Neal & Company submitted a bid of \$37,488.27, and estimated that it would take 180 calendar days to finish the project. The final payment, however, is unknown. For 8.667 miles of work (State Job #398, FAP #41-B) O. M. New submitted a bid of \$49,198.22, and again estimated that it would take 180 calendar days to finish the project. However, the final cost overran the proposal, and the final payment was \$58,036.29.¹² Unfortunately, it is unclear which contract covers the section of AR 51 between Curtis to Gum Springs.

Once the proper infrastructure was in place, paving of the highway began in 1931 (FAP #265-B). The contract for the paving was awarded to the D. H. Dalton Company of Arkadelphia, and given State Job #3117. Their proposal, which was received on January 21, 1931, proposed a cost of \$93,533.93, for the 8.803 mile section of highway, and an estimated completion time of 150 days. In addition, the State proposed to provide an estimated \$69,439.96 worth of material for a total estimated cost of \$162,973.89. The paving was finished late in 1931, and again, the actual cost exceeded the initial estimates. The final payment to the D. H. Dalton Company was \$94,318.31, although the State only furnished \$63,940.90 worth of materials for a final actual cost of \$158,259.21.¹³

By December 31, 1932, the section of Arkansas 51 between Gurdon and Arkadelphia, which includes the section of highway being nominated between Curtis and Gum Springs, had been redesignated U.S. 67. In addition, the original route of U.S. 67, which went through Okolona, was redesignated Arkansas 51, and remains so today.¹⁴

Once this section of Arkansas 51 was paved, it quickly became the main highway in that part of Clark County. The fact that this portion of Arkansas 51 was the main route between Little Rock and Texarkana meant that it was also a highly traveled road for both automobile and truck traffic. The amount of traffic using U.S. 67 ultimately led to the construction of the current U.S. 67 immediately to the east of the 1931 alignment in 1965.

¹¹ Arkansas State Highway Commission, pp. 188-189 and Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Tenth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Department*. Russellville, AR: Russellville Printing Company, 1932, p. 78-79.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Arkansas State Highway Commission (1932), pp. 78-79.

¹⁴ Arkansas State Highway Commission (1932), p. 7.

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Today the majority of the 1931 alignment is abandoned and unused, but clearly visible immediately to the west of the current U.S. 67. It is also still possible to drive almost the entire length of this segment of the 1931 alignment. Remarkably, all of the alignment retains the original 1931 concrete pavement, although some sections have had an asphalt layer placed over them at a later date, and other portions have been patched. However, it occurred prior to the alignment's abandonment, and retained the width of the original concrete pavement.

U.S. 67 is currently one of the main highways between Little Rock and Texarkana, and has been for many years. Due to the amount of traffic that uses the highway, much of the road has been upgraded to current highway standards. Early sections of the highway are rare, especially ones that are still drivable. As a result, the 1931 alignment of the highway from Curtis to Gum Springs remains an extremely intact example of early highway design and construction, and a tangible reminder of early highway travel in Clark County.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Old Arkansas 51, Curtis to Gum Springs, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** for its engineering. Old Arkansas 51, Curtis to Gum Springs, is the longest and most intact portion of the 1931 alignment of Arkansas 51 in Clark County. The Curtis to Gum Springs section of Arkansas 51, which is approximately four miles long, still retains its original 1931 concrete pavement. The highway section was the main automobile route in that part of Clark County from the time of its paving in 1931 until the current U.S. 67 was built adjacent to it in 1965. As a result, it is therefore eligible for nomination under **Criterion A** for its association with the development of Arkansas highway culture. Old Arkansas 51, Curtis to Gum Springs, 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."

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Hanley, Ray. *A Journey Through Arkansas: Historic U.S. Highway 67*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1999.

McLeod, W. E. "Old Roads in North Arkansas." Lawrence County Historical Society Quarterly, Spring 1978.

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.

Oman, Noel E. "Progress in Slow Lane on Upgrade of U.S. 67." Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 23 August 1999: A1.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point approximately one-half mile south of the U.S. 67 and Curtis Cemetery Road intersection, the alignment is located immediately to the west of the current U.S. 67, and follows the current highway northeast for approximately four miles to the Arkansas 26 and U.S. 67 intersection in Gum Springs. The width of the boundary includes 10 feet on either side of the 1931 highway centerline.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

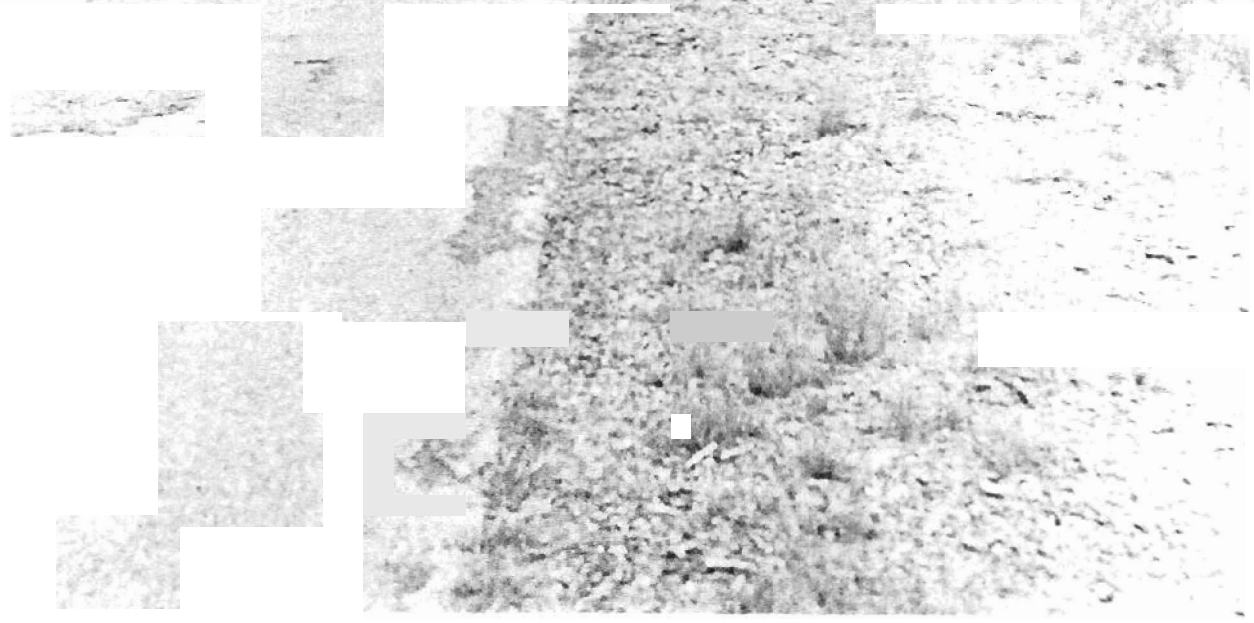
This boundary contains the most intact portion of the 1931 alignment of Arkansas 51 highway alignment in Clark County.

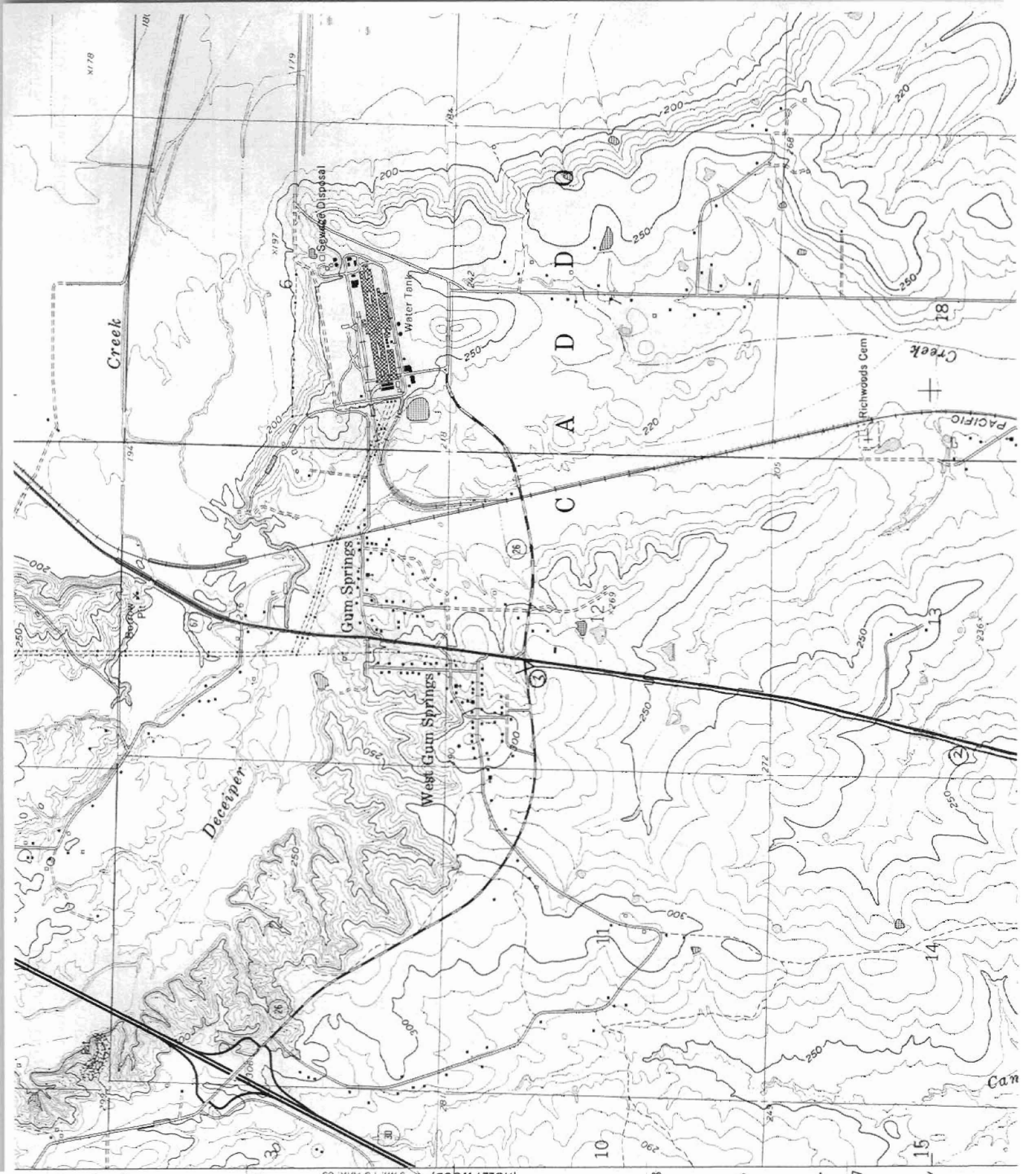












3711
T. 7 S.
T. 8 S.

3710
7352 II SW (HOLLYWOOD)
5 MI. TO ARK 53
TEXARKANA 66 MI

10
3168
3167
21'30"

OLD ARKANSAS 51,
CURTIS TO GUM
SPRINGS
CURTIS VIC., CLARK
COUNTY, AR
UTM #1
15/48593/3762405
UTM #2
15/490407/3765840
UTM #3
15/490966/3768552

3167
21'30"