

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USD/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

BATES, DAISY, HOUSE

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **BATES, DAISY, HOUSE**

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: **1207 West 28th Street**

Not for publication:

City/Town: **Little Rock**

Vicinity:

State: **AR** County: **Pulaski** Code: **119**

Zip Code: **72202**

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local:

Public-State:

Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District:

Site:

Structure:

Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

 1

 1

Noncontributing

 buildings

 sites

 structures

 objects

 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register:

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

Racial Desegregation in Public Education in the United States Theme Study

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ Entered in the National Register
☐ Determined eligible for the National Register
☐ Determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ Removed from the National Register
☐ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper_____
Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic

Sub: single dwelling

Current: Domestic

Sub: single dwelling

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Other: ranch style

Materials:

Foundation:

Cast concrete

Walls:

Brick veneer

Roof:

Asphalt strip shingles

Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Bates house is sited in a residential neighborhood featuring a mixture of twentieth century housing styles. The house is a classic 1950s, single story ranch house, measuring thirty-nine by fifty-one feet in plan, and is sited on a large, nearly one acre lot. The front of the house faces north on W. 28th Street. A house of similar style and vintage is located immediately to the east, and an older bungalow is located over 100 feet to the west. There is a scruffy tree line with no development beyond, past the rear of the property. The lot rises slightly from the street level to the house, declines several feet to the south elevation, and then runs level to the back of the lot. This change in grade reveals a basement that is partially finished along the south elevation. There is no vegetation other than mown grass.

The two-story frame house is sheathed in textured blonde brick veneer, and capped by a hipped roof with broad eaves; the roof is covered with white, strip asphalt shingles. A metal furnace flue and a number of plumbing vents penetrate the roof. The roof integrally shelters a two-bay carport that is open at the north and west elevations. Decorative, light steel posts support the roof at the carport, with supplemental wood posts since tornado damage in early 1999. The concrete slab floor of the carport is covered with green astroturf carpet, and is accessed by a twenty-foot wide concrete driveway. Painted steel casement and picture windows of varying sizes grace each of the elevations. The house is founded on cast concrete walls.

The front (north) elevation is comprised of two picture windows with sidelights. The east elevation has one rectangular ten-light window and two smaller six-light windows. The west elevation has only one six-light casement window at the basement level. The rear (south) elevation has a centered picture window with sidelights flanked by two casement windows. On the basement level a door is centered below the picture window with two windows to the east, two windows to the west, and another door on the east end of the elevation.

Primary access into the living room is sheltered beneath the carport, although there is another entrance into the kitchen at the back of the carport. The first floor features a kitchen, dining room, living room, two bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a hall that generally divides the public spaces from the bedrooms. The kitchen and dining room are visually separated by a short, and wide planter and counter top extending from the north and south walls. A double-leaf pocket door separates the living and dining rooms. The lower level, accessed by an interior winder stair, houses recreation and utility rooms, and a half bath at the southwest corner of the recreation room. A room, presumably a large closet, at the west end of the recreation room, could not be accessed due to shelving stored against the door. A tall unfinished crawlspace is separated from the lower level rooms by a wood frame partition, but accessible from the utility room and a scuttle at the east elevation of the house. This area houses the mechanical system, storage, and workbench. The finished attic is accessed from a folding, pull-down stair at the carport.

Noteworthy interior features include a faux brick fireplace and flush hollow core pocket doors in the living room, varnished wood veneer batten walls and built-in sideboard in the dining room, period varnished wood veneer kitchen cabinets with built-in harvest gold oven and countertop stove, original period-color porcelain bathroom fixtures and heavy-set tile throughout the first floor bathrooms, an attic fan in the hall, and a wood veneer bar and wet bar in the vertical wood

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paneled recreation room. Other than those mentioned above, all first floor walls and ceilings are finished in gypsum wallboard, and trimmed with painted, narrow "California" molding. Flooring on the first level consists of varnished hardwood strip flooring throughout, except for the heavy-set tile in the bathrooms and an exposed rough subfloor in the kitchen. At the lower level the recreation room is covered with dark red asbestos tiles, the utility room has been scraped of tile to the concrete slab, and the crawlspace floor is uneven dirt.

A fair amount of repair and reconstruction is proceeding in the West 28th Street neighborhood due to a January 1999 tornado that caused substantial damage to several properties. The Bates house suffered some damage to its roof and the carport supports. These repairs have not impacted the historical integrity of the property.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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

Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National

Register Criteria: A X B X C D

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions): A B C D E F G X

NHL Criteria:

1 and 2
Exception 8

NHL Theme(s):

III. Expressing Cultural Values
1. Educational and intellectual currents
IV. Shaping the Political Landscape
2. Parties, protests, and movements

Areas of Significance:

Law, Politics/Government, and Social History

Period(s) of Significance:

1957-1958

Significant Dates:

Significant Person(s):

Bates, Daisy Lee Gatson

Cultural Affiliation:

Architect/Builder:

Historic Contexts:

XXXI. Social and Humanitarian Movements
M. Civil Rights Movements
XXVII. Education
B. Elementary, Intermediate, and Secondary Education

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The Daisy Bates House is nationally significant for its role as the *de facto* command post for the Central High School desegregation crisis in Little Rock, Arkansas. This event meets National Historic Landmark Criterion 1 in that it was the first time a President used federal powers to uphold and implement a federal court decision regarding school desegregation. The property meets National Historic Landmark Criterion 2 for its association with Mrs. Daisy Lee Gaston Bates, who, with her husband Lucius Christopher (L.C.) Bates, resided at this address during the Central High School desegregation crisis in 1957-1958. The house served as a haven for the nine African American students who desegregated the school and a place to plan the best way to achieve their goals. Although this event is less than 50 years old, it marks a significant threshold in the modern Civil Rights Movement, and thus is being submitted under Criteria Consideration G.

As the president of the Arkansas state chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Daisy Bates symbolized the legal fight to desegregate the public schools after the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* that found segregated schools unconstitutional. Mrs. Bates combined her public roles as the state NAACP president and co-publisher (with her husband) of the *Arkansas State Press* to become a mentor to the nine teenagers (now known as the Little Rock Nine) who ultimately desegregated Central High School. During the desegregation crisis, the Bates' home became the official pick-up and drop-off site for the Little Rock Nine's trips to and from Central High School each school day and consequently, a gathering spot for the Nine and members of the press. As such, the house became a frequent target of violence and damage at the hands of segregation's supporters. The perseverance of Mrs. Bates and the Little Rock Nine during these turbulent years sent a strong message throughout the South that desegregation worked and the tradition of racial segregation under "Jim Crow" would no longer be tolerated in the United States of America.

Daisy Bates was born in the small town of Huttig in Southern Arkansas in 1915. After her mother was raped and murdered by three white men, Bates' father was forced to leave Arkansas to avoid threats of violence if he sought prosecution against the perpetrators. Adopted and raised by friends of her parents, Orlee and Susie Smith, Daisy married L.C. Bates, a journalism-trained insurance salesman in 1941. That year, the couple moved to Little Rock and, shortly after their arrival in the city, both joined the Little Rock chapter of the NAACP and began to participate in the organization on the state level. After successfully chairing the State Conference's Committee for Fair Employment Practices, Mrs. Bates was elected president of the Arkansas State Conference of NAACP branches in 1952. In Little Rock, the Bates also established a weekly newspaper, the *Arkansas State Press*, "on the conviction that a newspaper was needed to carry on the fight for Negro rights as nothing else can."¹ In 1955, the Bates purchased and moved into a newly built ranch home at 1207 W. 28th Street.²

¹ Daisy Bates, *The Long Shadow of Little Rock*, rpt. (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1986): 47 and 34.

² *Ibid.*, 2, 172.

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The mid-1950s were an exciting time for the NAACP's efforts to overturn segregated schools in the South. In *Sweatt v. Painter* (1946-1950), the NAACP successfully argued that the establishment of a token law school in Texas, with substandard facilities and part time faculty, could not meet the separate but equal threshold set by *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). In *Sweatt*, the Supreme Court also argued that equal access meant not only tangible facilities (classrooms and libraries) but also intangible issues such as a school's prestige and academic reputation. Handed down on the same day (June 5, 1950) as the *Sweatt* decision, the Supreme Court's ruling in *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* elaborated on the NAACP gains. In this case, George McLaurin, a doctoral student at the University of Oklahoma, was provided segregated access to the school's graduate program in education. Here, the court unanimously stated that segregated access to the same facilities at an institution could not provide equal access because of the intangibles of graduate education. After attacking segregation at the graduate and professional school level, the NAACP turned its attention to elementary and high school desegregation.

In 1954, the organization's Legal Defense Fund (LDF), headed by Thurgood Marshall, brought a successful desegregation case at the elementary- and secondary-educational levels to the Supreme Court. The LDF's arguments in *Brown v. Board of Education* convinced the justices to overturn the 1896 ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that separate accommodations for the races were legal as long as they were equal. A year later in *Brown II*, the Court outlined how *Brown I* should be implemented, stating at the time that desegregation in public education must progress "with all deliberate speed". Across the United States the African American community cheered at the prospect of receiving an equal education, while segregationists despaired over the thought of a society with commingling of the races. This case would have lasting ramifications on the local, state and federal levels of government. Politicians throughout the South employed the philosophy of states' rights to massively resist the federal government's interference in state and local matters.

School Desegregation in Arkansas

In 1955, the same year she and L.C. moved into their new home, Mrs. Bates caught a glimpse of what would transpire in the future when segregationists in Hoxie, Arkansas tried to prevent integration of the local public schools by threatening the black families in the area. The school board filed suit in federal court, which issued an injunction requiring the segregationists to cease interference with integration of the elementary schools in Hoxie.³ The injunction laid down an important precedent in the larger battles to come. Although not directly involved with what occurred at Hoxie, the *State Press* covered the incident and Mrs. Bates was marginally identified with it by virtue of the state NAACP's stance on integration.

Superintendent of Little Rock Public Schools, Virgil Blossom, revealed the "Blossom Plan" mandating gradual desegregation for Little Rock schools in May 1955, a week before *Brown II* was decided. The plan called for the schools to be integrated from the top down, that is from the high school, to the junior high, to the elementary grades over a period of years. Although the school board said integration would proceed sometime in 1957, the lack of a specific timeframe and details led the NAACP and African American parents to bring suit against the school board

³ *Ibid.*, 51; Jerry J. Vervack, "The Hoxie Imbroglio," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, 48 (Spring 1989): 18-33.

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- to integrate more quickly in 1956. Under the district's plan "all deliberate speed" could mean that complete desegregation would possibly take up to eleven years. An unidentified NAACP spokesman stated, "[segregation] is no longer the law of the land and we are... adamant in observing the LAW now as we were before, so our next step... will not be in any appeal to Blossom, but the federal courts."⁴

As state president of the NAACP and a resident of Little Rock, Mrs. Bates became the official leader of the school desegregation battle, which she chronicled in the *State Press*. The organizational power of the state NAACP and the Legal Defense Committee (chaired by attorneys Wiley Branton and U. Simpson Tate) combined with the power of the press, transformed Mrs. Bates into a threat to the white, male political establishment. In 1956, LDF lawyers filed suit in *Aaron v. Cooper* on behalf of thirty-three black children who attempted to register in white Little Rock schools but were denied admittance. Federal Judge John E. Miller ruled that the school board had acted in good faith by scheduling its integration plan to start the following year. NAACP attorneys appealed the decision to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals that upheld the ruling of the lower court and ordered the school board to begin integration in September 1957. The Appeals Court handed down a further ruling that the District Federal Court retain jurisdiction of the case.⁵

Consequently, in the spring of 1957 the Arkansas State Legislature passed four so-called "segregation bills" which created the State Sovereignty Commission, declared attendance in integrated schools not mandatory, and allowed school boards to use school funds to hire lawyers to fight integration suits. The fourth law required persons and organizations engaged in "certain activities" to register with the state and report all income and expenses on a regular basis. Although aimed at the NAACP, this bill also had the intent of discouraging any groups that wanted to fight desegregation from organizing formally.⁶

As the summer of 1957 progressed, NAACP attorneys pursued desegregation through the courts, while white opposition to desegregation escalated. Segregationists argued that the Supreme Court lacked the authority to compel local school districts to integrate because, in their opinion, the court decision affected only the involved litigants. Not until Congress passed a law to the same effect would the decision be applicable nationwide. They maintained that Arkansas Governor, Orval Faubus, could "interpose" the state's sovereign power between the federal government and its citizens to prevent implementation of the *Brown* decision. Although the interposition doctrine lacked authority under constitutional law, it seemed to many to be a way to negate or delay the Supreme Court's ruling.⁷

⁴Arkansas State Press, January 27, 1956.

⁵Bates, 52-53.

⁶Bates, 53-56.

⁷Tony Allen Freyer, "Politics and the Law in the Little Rock Crisis, 1954-1957," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, 40:3 (Autumn): 31, 205. The doctrine of interposition had held no legal basis in constitutional law since the end of the Civil War. The idea, however, appealed to white southerners seeking to delay integration.

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Central High School Crisis

Mrs. Bates became nationally recognized for her role in desegregating Central High School beginning in the late summer of 1957. Nine black students—Minnijean Brown, Elizabeth Eckford, Ernest Green, Thelma Mothershed, Melba Patillo, Gloria Ray, Terrance Roberts, Jefferson Thomas, and Carla Walls--had exercised their right under the Blossom Plan to attend the previously all-white Central High School. Approximately 190 other black teenagers who lived in the Central High area would remain at the all-black Horace Mann High School.

On August 20 1957, some women at Broadmoor Baptist Church in Little Rock organized the Mother's League of Central High School that announced its intention to prevent integration at Central. Closely aligned with the Capitol Citizen's Council (itself a branch of the White Citizens Councils that formed in reaction to the *Brown* decision to resist school desegregation), the Mothers League served as a vehicle through which segregationists could align their cause with the respectability of "motherhood."⁸ Two days later, a rock crashed through the Bates' living room window with a note attached that read "STONE THIS TIME. DYNAMITE NEXT."⁹

On August 27, 1957, the Mother's League's recording secretary, Mary Thomason, filed a petition seeking a temporary injunction against school desegregation. At the hearing two days later, Mrs. Thomason testified that mothers were terrified to send their children to Central because of rumors that both black and white students were forming armed gangs. Governor Faubus appeared as a surprise witness. He testified that he personally knew that revolvers had been taken from Negro and white pupils. Pulaski County Chancellor Murray Reed initially granted the injunction. That night, a group of segregationists drove by the Bates' home yelling, "Daisy! Daisy! Did you hear the news? The coons won't be going to Central!"¹⁰ For the next two years the house would become "the" gathering spot for the Little Rock Nine as well as reporters and supporters and as a result, a target for racial violence.

On August 30, Federal District Judge Ronald Davies set aside Reed's injunction and ruled that nobody could use the order to hinder directly or indirectly the implementation of the desegregation plan.¹¹ The legal conflict became a crisis on September 2, when Governor Faubus, citing the potential for violence, called on the Arkansas National Guard to prevent the nine black students from entering the school on September 3. Foreshadowing later events, Faubus noted, "(t)here is the possibility that this action could develop into a test of authority on any unwilling people."¹²

⁸ Pete Daniel, *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000): 257.

⁹ Daniel, 258; Bates, 2-3.

¹⁰ Bates, 57.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Arkansas Democrat*, September 3, 1957; Roy Reed, *Faubus: The Life and Times of an American Prodigal*, (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997): 207-8. Later in his life, Faubus acknowledged that the initial report of increased weapon sales was false, but insisted that sales did increase several weeks later after the crisis developed.

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Mrs. Bates, as president of the state conference of the NAACP, became the liaison between the Little Rock Nine and the Little Rock School Board. Following Faubus' order, school officials asked the students not to attend school the following day. On September 3, 1957, when Wiley Branton and Thurgood Marshall asked Judge Davies to clarify the situation, he responded that "he was accepting the governor's statement at face value—that his purpose in calling out the Guard was to protect 'life and property' against mob violence." Davies then directed the school board to put its plan for integration into operation immediately.¹³

That afternoon, Superintendent Virgil Blossom held a meeting for the parents of the Nine and other leaders about getting the Nine into school the following day. Although not invited to the meeting, Mrs. Bates attended at the request of the parents of the Nine. Increasingly uneasy with Blossom's request for adults not to accompany the children to Central the next morning, Mrs. Bates developed a plan for the Nine to meet with and be escorted to the school by a group of black and white ministers. Late on the night of the 3rd, she notified the Little Rock Nine by phone to meet at 12th Street and Park Avenue at 8:30 the following morning and approach the school together.¹⁴

The morning of September 4, 1957, Mr. and Mrs. Bates had left home to monitor the Nine's progress entering Central, when they heard on their car radio that one of the students was being mobbed. Instantly, Mrs. Bates remembered that she had not been able to contact Elizabeth Eckford the night before because her family did not have a phone. Mr. Bates jumped out of the car and ran to the site in time to sit with Elizabeth on a bus bench.¹⁵ Realizing that he may be as much a target as protection for Elizabeth, Mr. Bates left when Grace Lorch, a white woman came to assist Elizabeth. Not only did the National Guard cast Elizabeth into a crowd alone, they also prohibited the other eight students from entering school property.¹⁶

The photograph of Elizabeth Eckford surrounded by a hostile crowd, in particular, being yelled at by a white student, appeared on the front pages of newspapers around the world, turning the situation in Little Rock into an international crisis. Mrs. Bates' home became the meeting place for reporters covering the "black" perspective and wishing to interview any of the students. So many reporters (both black and white) wanted to talk to Elizabeth Eckford after September 4 that a hastily organized press conference was held at the Bates home three days later. During that time Elizabeth also stayed with Mrs. Bates to take advantage of the 24-hour security arranged by Mr. Bates, neighbors and clergy.¹⁷

¹³ Bates, 63.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 63-66.

Central High School Yearbook photographs (unpublished), Central High Museum Historical Collections, Special Collections and Archives, Ottenheimer Library, University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

¹⁶ Bates, 66.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 69-76.

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On September 5, Governor Faubus sent a telegram to President Eisenhower explaining his position and asking for the President's cooperation. He stated, "The situation in Little Rock... grows more explosive by the hour. This is caused... by a federal judge who decreed 'immediate' integration... without hearing any evidence whatsoever as to the conditions now existing in this community."¹⁸

The Little Rock Nine would not return to Central High School until the National Guard left and the continuing legal challenges to Federal Judge Davies' order to integrate the school from Governor Faubus and the Little Rock school board were settled. In the interim, Mrs. Bates helped arrange tutoring for the Nine so they would not fall behind in any of the academic subjects they would take at Central, avoiding the appearance that they could not handle the same schoolwork as the white students.¹⁹ Finally, on Friday, September 20, NAACP lawyers Branton and Marshall once again appeared in front of Judge Davies to ask for an injunction against interference with the integration of Central High School by the Governor, the Adjutant General of Arkansas, and the Unit Commander of the National Guard. Mrs. Bates and the Nine sat in the first row of the courtroom. After being overruled numerous times by Judge Davies, Faubus's attorneys left the courtroom. The judge continued the hearing and granted the injunction, ruling that Governor Faubus had not used the National Guard to preserve law and order and that the troops must be removed.²⁰ Thus, the stage was set for the Little Rock Police Department to enforce the law on Monday, September 23, when the Little Rock Nine would enter Central High School.²¹

On Sunday evening, September 22, Superintendent Blossom called Mrs. Bates and asked her to notify the Nine to meet at her house the next morning and go to Central together. On the morning of the 23rd the Nine, along with their parents, arrived at the Bates house and chatted with each other and reporters until it was time to leave. Reporters alternated between warning Mrs. Bates about the vicious crowd outside the school and asking if the Nine would really try to attend school that day.²²

Mrs. Bates traveled with the Nine to the school and arrived to find an angry crowd of at least 1,000 people cursing, yelling and fighting as the students entered the building. Almost immediately, the crowd erupted. A number of white students jumped out of windows to avoid contact with the black students when they entered the building. The police could not control the crowd, and as they removed the students from the school through the basement door, the mob

¹⁸ Telegram from Governor Orval E. Faubus to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, September 5, 1957, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

¹⁹ Melba Pattillo Beals, *Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High*, (New York: Washington Square, 1994): 75, 86.

²⁰ Bates, 83.

²¹ Beals, 92-101.

²² Bates, 88-89; Beals 106-107.

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began to harass and then attack three black journalists covering the story.²³ Police used the diversion to leave Central with the Nine and deliver them to their homes.²⁴ When questioned by reporters whether the Nine would return to Horace Mann High School, Mrs. Bates replied, "No, they were going to remain out of the school until the President of the United States guaranteed them protection within Central High School."²⁵

That night, the Nine and Mr. and Mrs. Bates received police protection from unruly mobs said to be wandering the city. In addition, L.C. Bates continued the informal security detail he'd organized with neighbors and ministers. Alex Wilson, one of the black reporters beaten by the crowd that day, joined them. The police reported that they stopped a motorcade of approximately one hundred cars about two blocks from the Bates house filled with angry people armed with dynamite, guns, pistols, clubs and other weapons, but they could not stop the threatening phone calls which continued through the night.²⁶

President Eisenhower then issued a warning statement to Governor Faubus:

I want to make several things very clear in connection with the disgraceful occurrences today at Central High School in the city of Little Rock. I will use the full power of the United States, including whatever force may be necessary, to prevent any obstruction of the law and to carry out the orders of the Federal court.²⁷

The next day, the Nine remained in their homes while reporters gathered at the Bates' home and waited to see if President Dwight D. Eisenhower would take action to uphold the Constitution if all persons engaged in the obstruction of justice did not "cease and desist."²⁸ An angry crowd of about five hundred individuals surrounded Central High School keeping reporters at bay and ignoring the police. Finally, in mid-afternoon the news broke that President Eisenhower had federalized the Arkansas National Guard. In addition, Eisenhower authorized the Secretary of Defense, Charles E. Wilson, to send in such regular Army troops as he deemed necessary "...to enforce any order of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas for the removal of obstruction of Justice in the State of Arkansas with respect to matters relating to enrollment and attendance at public schools in the Little Rock School District."²⁹

By early evening 1,000 paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, had arrived in Little Rock and began to enter the heart of the city to surround Central High

²³ Bates, 89-93; Beals, 108-115.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 116-119.

²⁵ Bates, 93-98.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 94-97.

²⁷ President Eisenhower quoted in Beals, 124.

²⁸ Beals, 124.

²⁹ Bates, 99-100.

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School. Mrs. Bates waited until 10:00 pm to hear from an official whether to send the Nine to Central the next day. When no notification came she called the parents and told them to keep the children home for safety's sake. At midnight, Superintendent Blossom called Mrs. Bates and instructed her to have the children at her house by 8:30 am for a troop escort to Central. When Mrs. Bates refused his request because it was too late to call the parents, Mr. Blossom sent the principals of all-black Dunbar Junior High and Horace Mann High School to the Bates' home to accompany Mrs. Bates to the homes of the Nine.³⁰

On the morning of September 25, 1957, the Little Rock Nine, their parents and some friends assembled at Mrs. Bates' home and chatted with reporters about the history-making day. At 9 am, the 101st Airborne arrived to escort the children up the front steps and into Central High School. When the school day ended, the Army returned the children to the Bates' home, where they had a conference about their day with Mrs. Bates.³¹

Throughout the entire 1957-1958 school year, the Little Rock Nine faced enormous amounts of stress and fear for their personal safety. Their fears were well founded as they were physically attacked, yelled at and the repeated targets of hate literature. The most valuable contribution to the future of racial integration that Mrs. Bates and the parents of the Nine made that school year was to listen and counsel the Nine about their experiences in the school. Speaking out about the hatred they faced was not an option; segregationists could easily use such statements as propaganda against the African Americans, i.e., that they did not have the temperament or intelligence to go to school with whites.³² Instead, after experiencing various atrocities (such as when Jefferson Thomas was knocked unconscious), the individual members of the Nine would make their way to Mrs. Bates' basement to get "debriefed" by Mrs. Bates, and consoled by their family members and former teachers from Dunbar and Horace Mann High Schools.³³

Segregationists struck back at Mrs. Bates and the Little Rock chapter of the NAACP when the city requested the group's membership list and other information as required by the "Bennett Ordinance," one of the four segregation bills passed earlier in the spring. On October 26, 1957, the NAACP filed suit in federal court challenging the validity of the Bennett Ordinance and the State Sovereignty Commission. Five days later, the city ordered the arrest of Mrs. Bates and Rev. J.C. Crenshaw (President of the Little Rock chapter of the NAACP) for refusing to hand over their records and for violating the law. Mrs. Bates and Rev. Crenshaw voluntarily surrendered to the police on November 1, 1957. At their trial in municipal court a month later Mrs. Bates was found guilty and fined \$100.³⁴

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 101-102.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 105-106.

³² Daniel, 271.

³³ Bates, 59, 69, 86, 106, 119, 126; Beals, 169. According to Pete Daniel, Melba Pattillo and Minnijean Brown asked Mrs. Bates to demand protection for them after the federalized National Guard had taken over for the soldiers of the 101st Airborne. Daniel, 273.

³⁴ Bates, 107-110.

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Over the course of the 1957-58 school year Mr. and Mrs. Bates' home "became a fortress" with a volunteer guard committee, flood lights and frequent calls to the police. Even so, two crosses were burned in their front yard (on different occasions), and shots were fired into the house from a passing car.³⁵ The situation did not improve over the summer. In February, the Little Rock School Board filed a request with the Federal District court for permission to delay further integration until the concept of "all deliberate speed" was defined. On June 21, 1958, Judge Harry Lemley granted the delay until January 1961, stating that the black students have a constitutional right to attend white schools, but the "time has not come for them to enjoy that right." When the NAACP intervened and asked the U.S. Supreme Court to take the case away from the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, the Supreme Court denied their request. Days later, on July 10, 1958, segregationists in Ouachita County hanged Mrs. Bates in effigy.³⁶

On August 18, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed Judge Lemley's delay order. In the majority decision Judge Martin C. Matthes stated, "We say that the time has not yet come in the United States when an order of a Federal Court must be whittled away, watered down, or shamefully withdrawn in the face of violent and unlawful acts of individual citizens in opposition thereto..." Three days later, at the request of the Little Rock School Board, the Appeals Court stayed the order overturning Judge Lemley's decision for thirty days, enough time to allow the school board to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.³⁷ The Court came into special session on September 11, 1958 to hear arguments on whether the eight black students (Ernest Green had graduated in May, 1958) should be permitted to return to Central High School. NAACP LDF attorney Thurgood Marshall pled with the Court to decide the case "in such a fashion as to make it clear to the politicians in Arkansas that the Constitution means what it says."³⁸ The next day the Court agreed unanimously that integration must proceed at Central High School. Governor Faubus then signed a school closing bill drawn up by the state legislature in late August, ordering all four Little Rock public high schools closed as of 8 am on September 15.³⁹ He reasoned that military forces may be used to keep students out of a school, or they can be used to get a select group of students into a school, as the previous school year demonstrated. However, they cannot easily be used to open schools and force the entire student population to attend.

Clearly, the resolution of the situation depended upon Governor Faubus, who preferred to blame the closed schools on Mrs. Bates. "If Daisy Bates would find an honest job and go to work, and if the U.S. Supreme Court would keep its cotton-picking hands off the Little Rock School Board's affairs, we could open the Little Rock schools."⁴⁰ Such words only served as encouragement to segregationists and angry students who harassed Mrs. Bates by following her

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 110-112, 158, 162.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 151.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 151-52.

Ibid., 154.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 155.

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car and ramming into her vehicle on numerous occasions. Five days after the school closure bill went into effect, an incendiary bomb was thrown at the Bates' home.⁴¹ The public high schools remained closed for the entire 1958-59 academic year.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled in favor of desegregating the schools, there was not much Mrs. Bates and the NAACP could do. The white people of Little Rock slowly came to the realization that they needed to have the schools open, even if that meant desegregation. The first group to work toward opening the schools was the Women's Emergency Committee to Open Our Schools (WEC), led by Little Rock philanthropist (and friend to Mrs. Bates), Adolphine Fletcher Terry. Early on, the WEC officers made the difficult decision to remain an all-white organization in order to remain a politically viable force for change rather than being branded integrationist. It was only Mrs. Terry's friendship with Mrs. Bates and the promise to keep Mrs. Bates informed of the organization's actions that kept the NAACP and the *State Press* from publicly protesting against the WEC.⁴²

Over the summer Martin Luther King wrote to Daisy Bates asking if she would be a guest speaker at Dexter Baptist Church on October 12th to celebrate its Women's Day. King related that they were trying "to bring some of the most outstanding women of the nation to our city." He also asked her to stay over as a guest speaker for the mass meeting of the Montgomery Improvement Association.

We don't have to tell you, Daisy, how much it would mean to the women of this area to have you come. We have had many men and they have been warmly received. But at this time, if we could have a woman who everyone KNOWS has been, and still is in the thick of the battle from the very beginning, never faltering, never tiring...it would be the greatest impetus, the greatest inspiration, the greatest challenge to the women to carry on, even as you are doing so courageously.⁴³

The Little Rock high schools re-opened in the fall of 1959 with the majority of African-Americans students remaining at the all-black Horace Mann High School and a handful of students attending Central and Hall High Schools. Once again, Mrs. Bates and her home became the target of violence at the hands of segregationists angry that they had not won the battle for segregated schools. When the police could not provide adequate protection for Mrs. Bates she appealed for assistance by telegram to the U.S. Attorney General. When the police began to arrest and jail Mrs. Bates' sympathizers and protectors (including Jefferson Thomas' father, Isiah) she telegraphed President Eisenhower. White House staffers decided the situation fell within the jurisdiction of local authorities and forwarded the telegram to the Department of Justice that never responded.⁴⁴

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 158-59.

⁴² Sara Murphy, *Breaking the Silence: Little Rock's Women's Emergency Committee to Open Our Schools, 1958-1963* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997), 72-73.

⁴³ Martin Luther King, Jr. to Mrs. Daisy Bates dated July 1, 1958, www.stanford.edu/group/King.

⁴⁴ Bates, 161-169.

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Later Career

Unfortunately, the fight to desegregate the schools took a financial toll on Mr. and Mrs. Bates' newspaper, the *State Press*. Over the course of the past two years, advertisers in retaliation against the Bates pulled their ads, and the revenue they provided, from the newspaper. As a result, on October 29, 1959, the Bates closed the *State Press*. Mrs. Bates ended her tenure as president of the state chapters of the NAACP in 1961.⁴⁵

Although their actual presence there was rather intermittent due to travel schedules and fieldwork for various civil rights organizations, the Bates continued to call their house on 28th Street home. Mrs. Bates was appointed to the Democratic National Committee working on their voter registration campaigns and Mr. Bates worked for the NAACP. In 1963, Mrs. Bates was the only woman to speak at the Great March on Washington.⁴⁶ She was the recipient of over 200 citations and awards including honorary doctoral degrees in humane letters, the Harriet Tubman Award, and the NAACP Springarn Medal.⁴⁷ According to historian Pete Daniel, "Daisy Bates's life had prepared her for her role in the Little Rock crisis... She had been an activist for years and faced the school crisis with determination. She followed a number of talented Arkansas black leaders who had struggled for years for equal rights."⁴⁸

Mrs. Bates moved to Mitchellville, a small Delta town in Desha County, Arkansas in the 1960s and worked with the black residents to improve economic and community conditions of the area. Before she moved back to Little Rock, Mrs. Bates helped the town get incorporated and elect its city council and first black mayor.

Mrs. Bates suffered a major stroke in 1965 from which she never fully recovered. Despite complications from the stroke, she continued to work for the social betterment of the United States and to speak at public engagements. In 1980, she revived the *Arkansas State Press* as a tribute to L.C. after his death, which she sold four years later. Daisy Bates died in Little Rock on November 4, 1999. A week later President Clinton presented the Little Rock Nine with the Congressional Gold Medal.

Recognition of Daisy Bates

As president of the state chapter of the NAACP, and editor of a black newspaper, Daisy Bates was in the forefront of black community efforts to force integration at Little Rock Central High School in 1957. The school was the site of the first important test for implementation of the U.S.

⁴⁵ Bates, 170-178.

⁴⁶ *New Journal and Guide*, November 15, 1999. (Obituary by Leonard E. Colvin.) Journalist Taylor Branch states that there were no male speakers at the March on Washington and that Mrs. Bates was recognized with some other women in a "Tribute to Women." Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: American During the King Years, 1954-1963* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988): 880-881.

⁴⁷ Historical Profiles, Daisy L. Bates on home.swbell.net/chmusuem/profiles/dbpro.html.

⁴⁸ Pete Daniel, *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000): 258.

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Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 that declared segregated schools unconstitutional under the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. This event became an early victory in the civil rights movement and the first test of national resolve in civil rights. During this event the Bates house provided protective custody for the students chosen to integrate the school and from which Daisy Bates served as a liaison with parents and local and federal officials in planning how integration would proceed. Central High School was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1982, as the symbol of the end of racially segregated public schools in the United States. The Bates house stands as a symbol of the role of civil rights advocates who fought against legal and social obstacles to educational opportunity for African-American youth during a period of southern massive resistance to desegregation.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Beals, Melba Patillo. *Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High*. New York: Pocket Books, 1994.

Blossom, Virgil. *It Has Happened Here*. New York: Harper, 1959.

Daniel, Pete. *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

Huckaby, Elizabeth. *Crisis at Central High*. Baton Rouge: LSU, 1980.

Reed, Roy. *Faubus: An American Prodigal*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997.

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

Acreage of Property: 1

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing

15 1556521 3848210

Verbal Boundary Description:

That part of Lots "A", "B" and "C", of Block 13, Crawford's Addition to the City of Little Rock, more particularly described as Beginning on the North Line of said Block 13 of Crawford's Addition at a point 145 feet West of the Northeast corner thereof; thence run West along said north Line 125 feet, more or less to a rock and cement wall which marks the East line of Swaggerty Branch, a distance of 230 feet, more or less, to a wire fence having concrete posts; which marks the South line of Block 13; thence East along the South line of block 13 a distance of 115 feet; more or less to a point directly South of the point of beginning.

AND

Part of Lot A, Block 15, Crawford's Addition to the City of Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas, more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the NW corner of Lot A, Block 13, Crawford's Addition, run S00 degrees 47'46" W 142.605 feet to a point on the south line of Lot A; thence run N 87 degrees 00'10" W 5.85 feet to the SW corner of said Lot A; thence run N 03 degrees 08'50" E, 142.50 feet along the West line of Lot A to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The property comprises the home of Daisy and L.C. Bates during 1957-1958.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS SURVEY
September 8, 2000

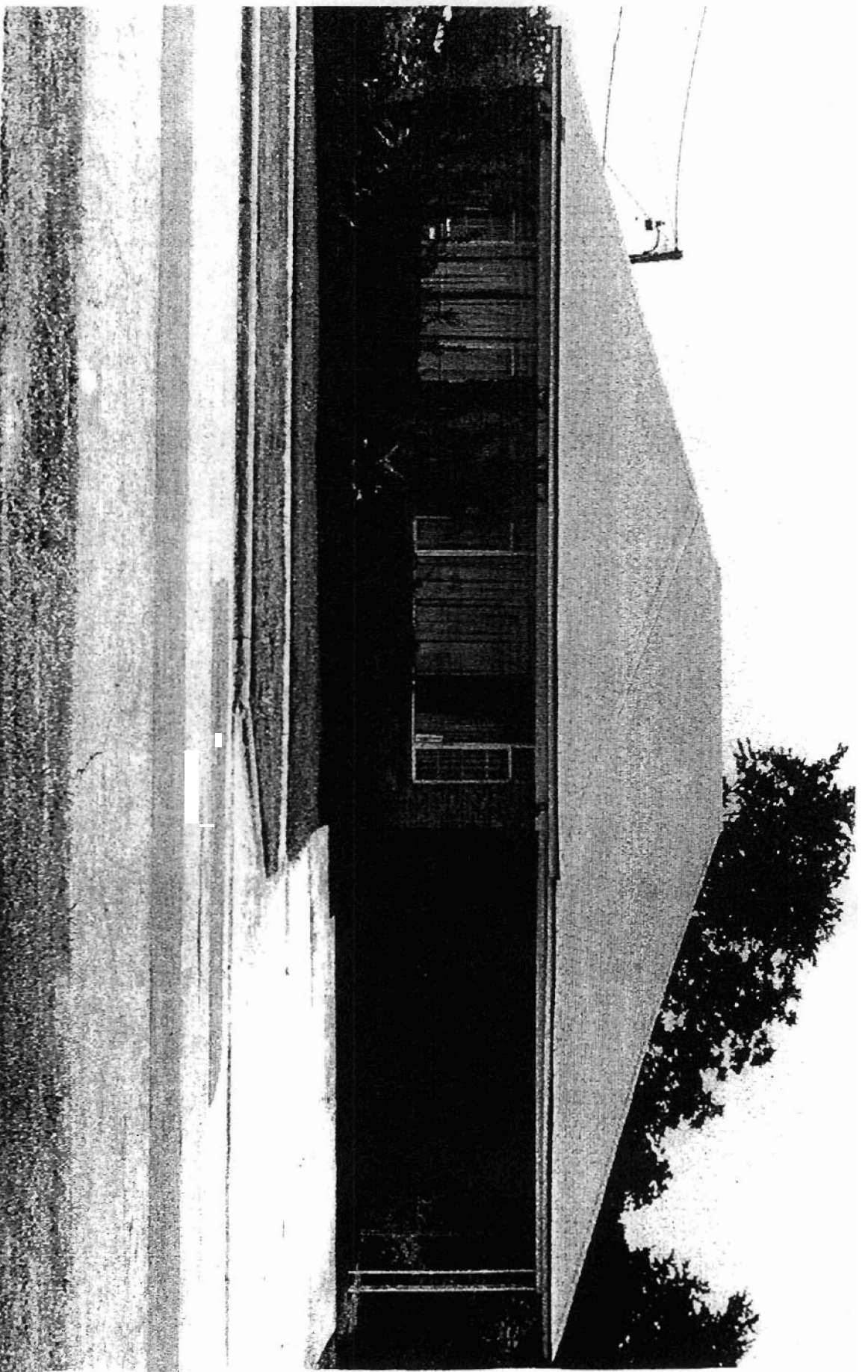


Figure 2
Daisy Bates House
Little Rock, Arkansas
Front View

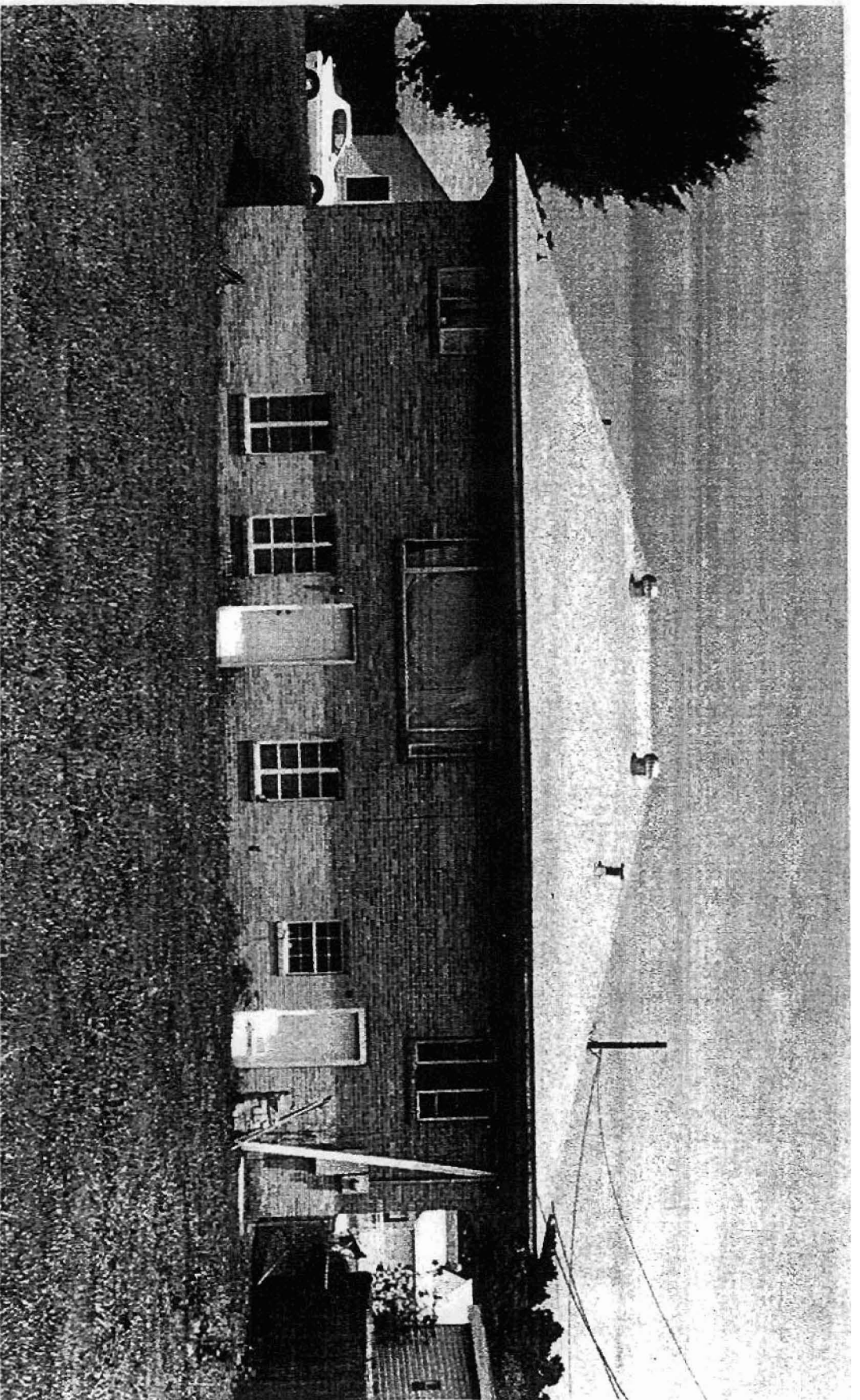


Figure 3
Daisy Bates House
Little Rock, Arkansas
Rear View

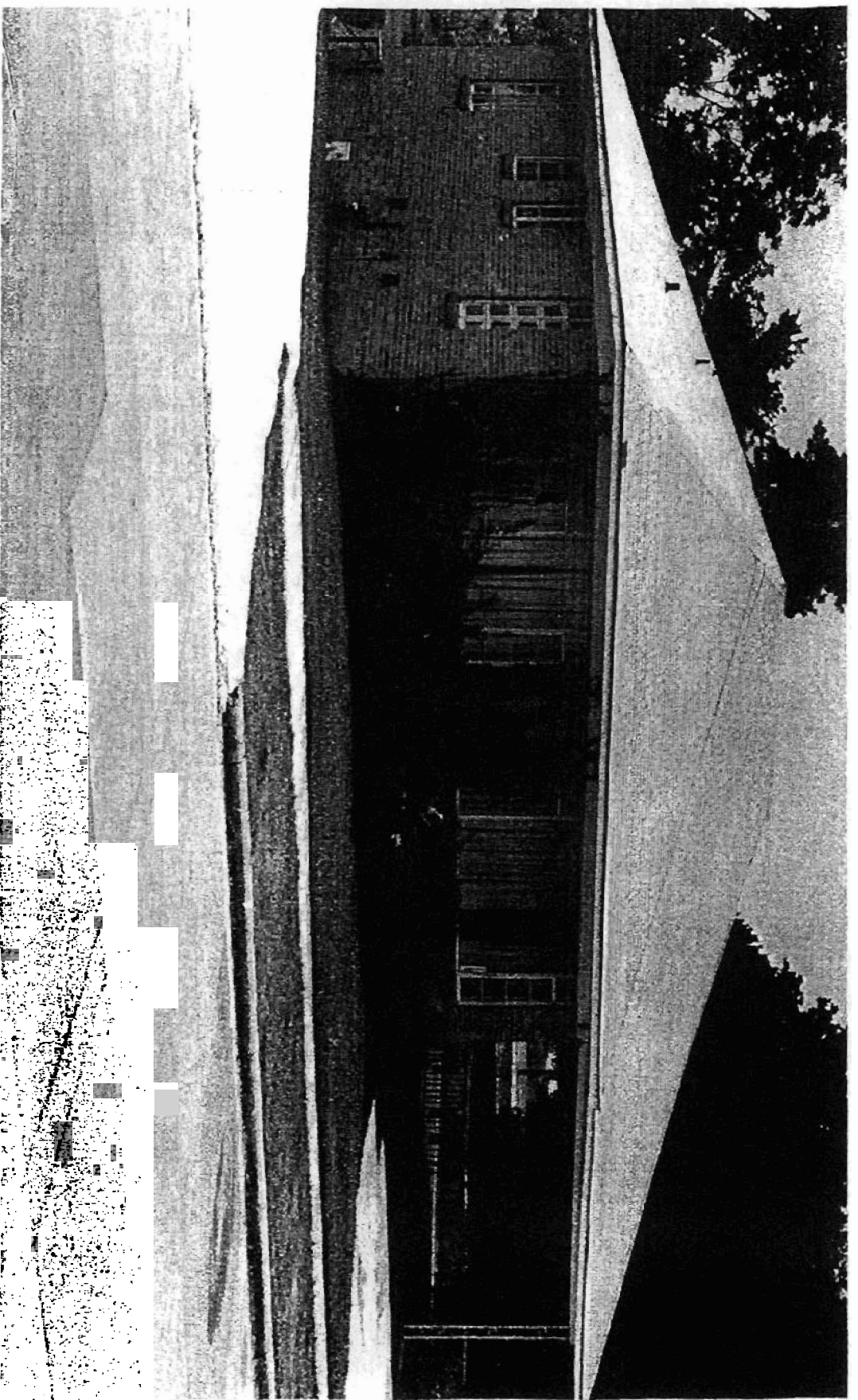


Figure 4

Daisy Bates House
Little Rock, Arkansas
Front 3/4 View

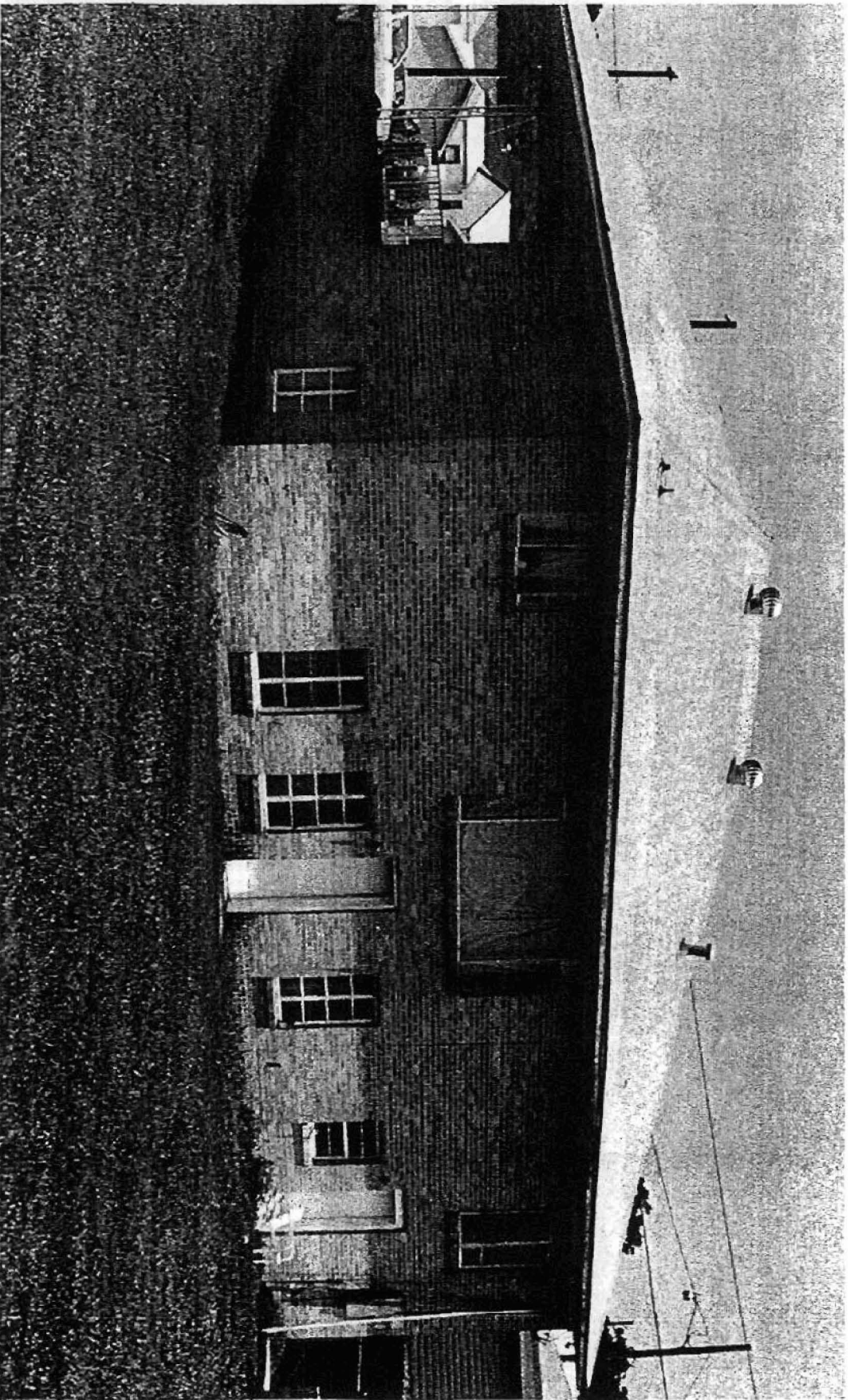


Figure 5

Daisy Bates House
Little Rock, Arkansas

Donor: 2/4/17/2000



Figure 6
Daisy Bates House
Little Rock, Arkansas
Thanksgiving Dinner, 1957
(courtesy Will Counts)