HICKS HOTEL AND STORE
Buffalo National River
Rush Historic District
Rush Road
Yellville
Marion County
Arkansas

HALS AR-6
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
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HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

HICKS HOTEL AND STORE

HALS NO. AR-6

Location: Rush Historic District, Rush Road, Yellville, Marion County, Arkansas

36.128179, -92.563761 (Hicks Store Steps, Google Earth, WGS84)

Significance: The Hicks Hotel and Store site is a ten-acre property within the Rush Historic District, a former zinc mining community that is now part of the Buffalo National River in north-central Arkansas. From the early 1900s through the late 1920s the Hicks family operated a prominent hotel, livery service, and general store in boom/bust town. Unlike the many fair-weather residents of Rush, the Hicks were determined to make the narrow Ozark mountain valley their home, riding out lean times, family tragedy, and a rapidly declining population until the last remaining family members finally left for California in the 1940s. Their desire for permanence is still evident today in the long-abandoned landscape. Although no buildings remain on the former Hicks property, mortared stone retaining walls, flower beds, and foundations emerge from the tangle of undergrowth in a reclaimed forest, providing a glimpse of the former refinement of the only known designed landscape in Rush, and of the prominent family that created it. The gardens and former buildings were indicative of the period, but they were also an anomaly in Rush, as hastily built wood structures and even tents were the rule in a landscape transformed by and devoted to industry.

Description: The Hicks site is a ten-acre tract located within the 1,316 acre Rush Historic District in Rush Valley, Arkansas. The valley stretches west to east and slightly south for one-and-a-half miles to the Buffalo River in the Ozark Plateau of southwestern Marion County (Figure 1). Within this greater geological context, the valley retains indicative geographical characteristics of the Ozarks, including steep hillsides, high bluff borders, rugged topography, and a distinct mountainous ridge, Rush Mountain. The mountain embodies much of the described rugged terrain and ridges of the region, at its highest rising 500’ above the narrow valley floors. It also separates the two main streams, Rush Creek to the south and Clabber Creek to the north. These two tributaries run parallel to each other, flowing west to east until emptying into the Buffalo River a quarter mile apart from each other. Due to the highly soluble nature of the limestone bedrock there are many bluffs, cold springs, caves, and waterfalls throughout the valley, and pockets of zinc and lead ore lie within the sedimentary rock.

The Hicks site at the approximate center of the historic settled boundaries of the valley, bounded by Rush Landing on the Buffalo River one mile to the east (the historic location of “New Town”), and the former school house site upstream one mile to the west. Vehicular access in the valley is provided by the winding,

gravel Rush Road that follows Rush Creek past four vacant wood-frame houses and an abandoned store in the former Morning Star Mining District (Figure 2). These vernacular buildings vary in design but feature stone pier foundations, vertical board construction, front porches, and simple massing and roof forms. They also provide important visual cues and are among the most visible remaining elements that inform visitors of the valley's history and activities of the former mining community. A trail and interpretive signage in the Morning Star Mining District help convey these messages to the many visitors who frequent the valley to gain access to the Buffalo River at Rush Landing. Many other clues of the cultural landscape are scattered throughout the valley, but most are not as accessible or marked for interpretation, and are therefore either not recognized or not understood.

After 60 years of being heavily inhabited, logged, mined, and farmed, followed by another 60 years of much more limited human activity, Rush Valley is being reclaimed by forest. Red Cedar dominates the south-facing slopes of Rush Mountain that were highly disturbed by settlement and industry, but a mixed hardwood forest typical of the Ozarks is also beginning to develop. Deciduous trees in the upper canopy include Southern Red Oak, Silver Maple, Black Locust, and Hickory, among others, while the lower canopy consists of Sumac, Paw Paw, Sassafras, Hop Hornbeam, Mulberry, and the like. The understory features many dense vining plants, including Virginia Creeper, Poison Ivy, Wild Grape, and Green Brier, as well as ornamental plants from the settlement period that have naturalized.

The Hicks Site: The Hicks site comes into view one half mile after passing the vacant Taylor/Medley Store in the Morning Star Mining District. Although no buildings remain on the site, it is second only to the buildings in the Morning Star District in terms of visual impact in Rush because of the prominent stone retaining wall that fronts the road on a large bend. The wall stretches from west to south and east in a rough semi-circle, demarcating the edge of the Hicks Site for about 325'. The wall ranges between 3' and 5' high depending on grade, erosion, and degradation of materials (Figure 3). The first 207'-6" is constructed out of mortared, uncut fieldstone in stable condition. This section of the wall is penetrated by two flights of concrete steps, one on the west side of the curve and the other on the south, each flanked by mortared fieldstone piers (Figure 4-5). These rather grand entrances into the tangle of vegetation above the wall heighten the mystery of the site, which does not feature interpretive signage. After the fieldstone section, the wall material transitions abruptly to mortared ashlar masonry (Figure 6), continuing past a concrete porch (of the former Hicks Store) to a flight of stone steps at the porch's southeast corner. After a break of 25' the ashlar masonry wall begins again and continues another 91'.

The wall, steps, porch, and partial wall of the former store are all that most visitors see of the Hicks site, as dense vegetation greatly restricts visibility and

access. The Rush Creek valley was predominantly hardwood forest prior to the mining boom, at which time most of the land was cleared. Select trees on house lots and along the creek were left uncut, including several at the Hicks site, while new trees were also planted during the period of significance. Most of the vegetation at the Hicks site has grown in over the past 30 years, since the site was last occupied. Mature trees on the Hicks site include Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), and various Oaks (*Quercus*), all of which are at least 14 inch DBH or larger. Exotics (many of which were likely planted by the Hicks and subsequent owners) and pioneer native herbaceous and woody plants, including Eastern Red Cedar, Greenbrier (*Smilax*), Sumac (Rhus Glabra), Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) Daffodil (*Narcissus*), Rose (*Rosa multiflora*), Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), and Mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*), have overtaken the site. The current vegetative condition creates a crowded, nearly claustrophobic effect which intensifies during spring and summer, and lessens slightly during the fall and winter (Figure 7). This manifests in blocked or filtered views and strenuous circulation with very few exceptions (such as the powerline corridor). Not only is access made difficult, but identification and interpretation of the site is extremely hindered because of the vegetative state. The result is a weak connection between the road and the site, as well as a between the site and its surrounding context.

The Hicks site sits on the southern toe of Rush Mountain at a prominent bend in Rush Creek (and the adjacent Rush Road). Unlike much of the narrow and steep valley floor, the Hicks Site slopes uphill to the northeast at a relatively gentle average grade of 10 percent for about 350', making it one of the larger buildable areas in the valley. It is not a smooth, unbroken pitch, however, as there are periodic outcroppings of bedrock, swales, and a shallow ravine. The Hicks site can be roughly divided into four distinct zones, each with its own character: the Hicks Hotel, the Hicks Store, the powerline corridor, and the Hall house (Figure 8). The Hicks Hotel zone is located in the southwestern quadrant of the site and is bordered on the west and south by the retaining wall and Rush Road. The Hicks Store zone lies to the east and is also bordered by the retaining wall and road on the south. Its eastern boundary is blurred by forest and is not well-defined. The powerline corridor zone stretches from west to east across the entire site, dividing the more gently sloping Hicks Hotel and Store zones from the Hall house zone, which lies uphill to the north. In addition to the four landscape zones that comprise the Hicks site, the land to the southwest of Rush Creek is also significant to this cultural landscape's story. A narrow, steep, forested slope between the creek and the bluff, about 50' wide, was the site of at least two rental houses owned by the Hicks family (Figure 9). A narrow box canyon containing a small tributary of Rush Creek is nestled into the bluff southwest of the Hicks site, terminated by the bluff's walls and a waterfall approximately 25' high (Figure 10). The canyon is heavily shaded by topography and a deciduous forest canopy, and the stream channel is strewn with moss-covered boulders

(Figure 11). A sawn-off metal pipe that once carried water to the Hicks Hotel 550' to the northeast protrudes from a small pool at the base of the waterfall.

Hicks Hotel Zone: The Hicks Hotel zone is the flattest portion of the Hicks site, due in part to grade manipulation affected by the retaining wall. This zone is accessed by the two sets of concrete steps mentioned previously. The western stair leads to a fine gravel or chat (waste rock by product of mining) path that extends several feet towards the hotel site before it is buried in leaf litter, soil, and vegetation. The southern stair terminates at a brick path that once led directly to the front entrance of the hotel (Figure 12). The path is partially covered by soil and leaf litter, and the brick shows partial surface deterioration. It is flanked on either side by ankle-height, mortared pebble troughs roughly 18' in length and 2' across that terminate at a concrete pad, marking the approximate edge of the former hotel porch. On either side of the path are two mortared pebble circular flower beds that are about 5' in diameter and 6" high (Figure 13). A much smaller, 1'-4" diameter circular bed lies north of the eastern bed. Three additional flower beds of similar size to the two larger beds, one circular and two diamond shaped, lie to the northwest near the wall (Figure 14). Remnants of historic plantings, including daffodils and roses, are located within and beside the beds and along the path. A concrete cistern/water reservoir also lies near the beds between the west and south steps (Figure 15). The concrete structure measures approximately stands approximately 4'-6" x 3'-3" x 7" tall and is engraved with the date "May 30 1910."

Several pier stones and concrete footings help demarcate the hotel's approximate footprint on the northern and eastern edge of the building's southern half (Figure 16). A low berm defines the supposed southern and western limits of the hotel. Near the center of these boundaries is a concrete stair with three steps (Figure 17). A depression exists in the center of the former hotel's northern half. An additional small structure, approximately 3'-6" x 2'6" x 1'-6" tall, is located on the north side of the hotel footprint. It appears to be made of the same stone as the Hicks Store. Its function is unknown, but speculations include a barbeque or chimney base (Stratton, III-271).

Hicks Store Zone: The Hicks Store zone slopes gently to the south, showcasing the other prominent features of site; the partial limestone walls and concrete porch of the former Hicks Store (Figure 18). The 30' x 60' store shell has 11' high walls on the east and west, a 1'-6" high wall on the south with a 4' wide opening, and a 4' high wall on the north (Figure 19). It is accessed by set of mortared stone steps on the east end of the porch that sits adjacent to the former store's south façade (Figure 20). The porch is approximately 32' x 10' wide and deep, and its height ranges from 3' at the stair to less than 1' on the west and south, where it was backfilled when the retaining wall was extended. The triangular area of backfill is crowded with volunteer vegetation, creating filtered views from the porch south to the road and creek and partially screening the

store walls from the road.

A low berm runs along the west side of the former store, separating it from the hotel site. The grade on both sides of the store slopes upward, so that the grade on the north (rear) side of the store is approximately even with the 4' high remnant wall. A concrete path extends from the northern wall 8' to the north. Near the northeast corner of the former store is a concrete pad and foundation of a small pump/well house dating to the late 1950s or 1960s. A road trace from the same period lies east of the former store, beyond which is a wire-fenced pen that may have once enclosed a vegetable garden, again likely dating to the 1960s or even 1970s.

As with the Hicks Hotel zone, the Hicks Store zone is enveloped by woodland and a dense understory, especially to the north and east of the former store. Views and circulation are greatly restricted by vegetation throughout most of the zone.

Powerline Corridor Zone: The powerline corridor is swath cut through the woods running east to west, separating the Hicks Hotel and Store zones from the Hall house zone. Near Rush Road on the west the powerline angles to the northwest, then runs adjacent to the road. The periodic clearing of this zone creates a distinct contrast in character to the dense vegetative growth present on the rest of the Hicks site (Figure 21).

The terrain of this zone is more rugged and steep than the hotel and store zones, particularly at the western edge, which contains ledges of bedrock. Another prominent landform in this zone is a shallow ravine that angles from the southwest to the northeast, terminating at a ledge of bedrock at the edge of the Hall house zone. It is possible this ravine also serve as a driveway. Near the far northwestern end of the zone, below a ledge and running parallel to Rush Road, is a concrete trough approximately 35' long and 3' wide that was historically used as a cattle dip to eradicate ticks (Figure 22). Today it is filled with soil and vegetation. Near the east end of the cattle dip is 15' x 9' foundation. Another foundation, 11' x 8', lies 80' to the southeast, immediately north of the hotel site. A third visible foundation is found directly east along the powerline, north of the store site. This long, narrow concrete foundation dates to the late 1950s or 1960s and measures 32' x 8' (Figure 23). A small wire-fenced pen lies east of this foundation. Historic aerial photographs indicate there were at least six other outbuildings in this zone throughout the past 80 years, but there are no visible traces of these structures today.

Hall House Zone: The Hall house zone is located in the northernmost quadrant of the site and is the most isolated, bordering only the powerline corridor zone. This zone once contained the Hall house, but aside from a stone that appears to have one supported a porch column there are no visible remnants of this building

(Figure 24). An east/west road trace serves as the northern boundary of the zone, and it may have also served as the primary access to house during the Hicks period.

Most of this zone is densely wooded, with scattered large trees and a significant understory. The Hall house zone is the highest point on the former Hicks property, and from the house there would have been commanding views over the rest of the property during the Hicks period, when much of the land south of the house had been cleared for pasture. Today vegetation obscures these views.

One notable area relatively free of dense undergrowth is a wire-fenced paddock lying on the eastern side of the zone. A portion of this paddock overlaps the possible footprint of the Hall house. The fence may date back to the 1960s, but at least in the 1970s and early 1980s it served as a horse paddock. A small wooden feedbox, surrounded by daffodils, lies near the southeast corner of the paddock.

History:

Introduction: Miride "Lee" Hicks was born in Marion County, Arkansas on March 27, 1868, son of Americus Vespucius Hicks (b. 1818 in Tennessee) and Sarah A. Bearden (b. 1842 or 1844 in Tennessee). On October 5, 1890, Lee married Alice Jane Gaines (b. July 18, 1872) of White River, Marion County, Arkansas. (United States Census 1870, Arkansas County Marriages 1837-1957). The couple first lived in Bearden Township, then moved to Flippin, also in Marion County, after the birth of their first child in 1892. A year later a 6-ton nugget of zinc ore from the Morning Star Mine, located in the Rush Creek valley of Marion County, attracted international attention at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. High-grade zinc had been found in the narrow Ozark mountain valley in the 1880s, and the display of the mammoth nugget fueled rampant growth in the Rush mining district on the Buffalo River. Industry peaked during World War I with the increased demand brought by ammunition manufacturing and the loss of German supply. Estimates vary, but some sources claim as many 5,000 people crowded into the valley during the war. The rugged terrain of Rush always proved a challenge, however, and when prices fell in the 1920s the appeal of Rush was lost; demand was met by more accessible mines in other locations throughout the country. By the 1950s Rush was regarded as a ghost town. Although Lee and Alice Hicks were not miners, their family soon became closely linked to the Rush community, their successes and struggles echoing the booms and busts of zinc mining in Arkansas. Elements of the Hicks family story are still legible in the landscape of the Rush Historic District, now listed on the National Register of Historic Places and managed by the National Park Service as part of the Buffalo National River.

Historical Context: The Ozarks Mountains, extending from present-day southern Missouri into northern Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma and Kansas, are rich with natural and cultural resources. The Ozark range is the remnant of an ancient plateau that, during the Paleozoic Era, was covered by a sea that

enveloped much of the present-day continent of North America. Millions of years of sediment accumulation were followed by tectonic uplift and subsequent erosion that dissected the Ozark Plateau and revealed limestone and sandstone foundations, creating the mountainous forms seen today. Before early humans settled the valleys and bluffs of the Ozarks, this landscape was draped with coniferous forests, effectuated by cooler climates of the last Ice Age. As the climate warmed 12,000 years ago, deciduous trees began to flourish as well. It was at this time that early humans began settling the Ozarks, including the Buffalo River region. The Buffalo River, one of many rivers and tributaries that dissect the Ozark Plateau, flows predominantly east in present-day north-central Arkansas for 150 miles before joining the White River. Evidence has been found of early sedentary communities practicing subsistence farming and hunting while living in bluff shelters and on banks of the Buffalo River and its tributaries (Catton 2008). Occupation and/or seasonal use of the region by Native Americans continued on a periodic basis, most recently by the Quapaw and the Osage in the 15th and 16th centuries. The Rush Creek watershed, a tributary of the Buffalo River, was not used primarily as settlement at this time, but rather as hunting grounds for the native tribes living in southern Missouri and north Arkansas. These tribes practiced annual burnings, which rejuvenated the land, forest, and game in the area, and molded the landscape character.

The French fur trade was the primary draw in the 1700s when European colonial powers began exploring the region. Many of the trading posts established to facilitate the fur trade became the first permanent European settlements in Arkansas, which in turn lured exploration of the area. After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, westward expansion became even more favorable for the newly formed United States of America. Economic, cultural, and political pressures forced the displacement of tribes native to the southeast, including the Cherokee and Shawnee, to the Ozark region, occasionally sparking hostile relations with the resident Osage. By the 1820s, however, American settlers began moving into the region, eventually resulting in the westward exodus of all Indian tribes to Indian Territory (what would later become Oklahoma) and statehood in 1836. Homesteading and subsistence farming was the predominant way of life for the settlers of the Buffalo River Valley in the years before the Civil War, although there were limited instances of cash crops such as cotton and tobacco. The rugged terrain and karst topography of the Ozark landscape was not suitable for the large-scale agriculture common in the eastern parts of the state. Slavery was present here, although only in very small numbers due to limited agriculture. Residents of the Ozarks were generally more isolated than other communities in the state, again due to the ruggedness of the terrain. Settlers lived simple and modest lives, erecting log cabins and farms in the steep topography while clearing flatter areas to plant crops.

When the Civil War started in 1862, the people of the Buffalo River Valley either did not want any part of it or were torn as to which side to fight for.

Eventually, however, large scale guerrilla warfare ensued, resulting in entire families vanishing and hundreds of homes and farms burned and pillaged. Some of the first mining attempts in the region occurred during the war, looking for lead and zinc for munitions. By the end of the war, roads were in disrepair, livestock was scarce, and many homesteads were destroyed or abandoned. Communities struggled, but they eventually rebuilt and the homesteaders returned to farming, eking out a living on the land. Immigrants from other areas of the marred South filtered in and helped repopulate the region. In the 1870s a large boom in the national railroad industry created an increased demand for lumber, spurring the creation of many logging mills throughout the Ozarks, including the Buffalo River Valley region, and helping to rebuild devastated communities.

Around 1880, zinc was discovered by a farmer in the Rush Creek valley. Settlement in the valley had been quite sparse due to its isolation and rugged terrain, but the discovery of zinc brought about dramatic change. The farmer, James H. McCabe, partnered with two other men from the area to form the Morning Star mine. High quality ore and favorable market conditions attracted outside interest and investment, and by 1890 three more mining companies had begun operations, despite the seclusion of the valley and difficulties of transporting the ore though rugged terrain. Employment in the mining industry lured miners but also men and their families from around the region with the promise of an income that was greater than what could be obtained through subsistence farming. The price of zinc continued to rise and by 1899 the first mining boom at Rush was at its peak with eight mining companies in operation. The zinc at Rush was plentiful and of high quality, but its market price did not always support the high cost of exporting the material. Despite this potentially sobering reality, mining continued into the early 20th century and peaked again during World War I, when zinc prices soared due to the demands of the war effort and loss of Germany's zinc production to America's European allies. This resulted in upgrades to existing mining operations and the opening of even more mines in the valley. People from Arkansas and surrounding states migrated to the valley, which created a hastily built and working-class urban environment in the remote and otherwise sparsely populated Ozarks. While the original mining community had sprung up around the Moring Star mine, each new mine established its own clustered community. Even these clusters blurred together, however, during the peak of the boom. Few permanent dwellings were established, but hundreds of tents and shacks were built throughout the overcrowded valley, which had been largely cleared of its existing vegetation to support the mines and the communities. A "New Town," also called Rush, was erected near the mouth of Rush Creek at the Buffalo River to accommodate the population influx. This town became the new population center of the valley with approximately 2,000 to 3,000 residents and many stores, hotels, and other amenities typical of a town of its size.

When World War I came to a close in 1918, the demand for zinc dropped along with its prices. Many of the mines in Rush valley shut down resulting in mass depopulation of the valley but a few, including Morning Star, remained in operation until 1920. Some mines began operating again in the mid-1920s, but by the 1930s all large scale mining had ceased. Some prospectors remained, however, mining what they could by hand, but many residents either left or began farming or logging. New Town, victim of both closing mines and flooding on the Buffalo River, was abandoned by the early 1930s, and only a few scattered buildings remained by 1935. Although there was a short boom period for zinc in the United States in the 1940's during World War II, mining operations in Rush remained minimal. Various structures of the former mining communities were lost to fire, flood, and the decline in the decades that followed, but many of the mills, hotels, and stores remained in an abandoned and decrepit state. The remaining "ghost town" began drawing tourists in the mid-20th century, aided by the increase in recreation on the Buffalo. This was aided by the formation of the Buffalo River State Park (now known as Buffalo Point) seven miles upstream in 1938 and the creation of a canoes landing and private campground by Fred Dirst in the 1950s (where New Town once stood near the convergence of Rush Creek and the Buffalo). A final attempt to rejuvenate mining at Rush was made in the late 1950's but once again the effort failed and mining ceased for good in the valley in the early 1960s. Four families were still living in Rush valley in 1972 when the Buffalo National River was established by the National Park Service.

The designation of the Buffalo as the country's first National River marked the victory of a decades-long struggle between conservationists and the US Army Corps of Engineers, who intended to dam the river. Many valued the river and its neighboring natural and cultural resources as an important place to be preserved. In 1983, the National Park Service purchased 332 acres of Rush Creek valley, including the former Morning Star Mine, from Donald Willsey, owner of the tract since 1971. This purchase completed the 20th-century transformation of the Rush River valley from a landscape of industry and community to one of natural reclamation, cultural interpretation, and recreation. Beginning immediately after the land was purchased, a series of projects were (and continue to be) undertaken by the National Park Service to document, preserve, and interpret the cultural landscape of the valley and its remaining structures and ruins. In 1987 the Rush Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Buffalo Landing, located at the mouth of Rush Creek remains a popular destination for canoeist and kayakers, and the former privately-owned campground is now operated by the National Park Service. An interpretive trail loop has been installed at the former Morning Star Mine community, with connecting trail that takes visitors past some of the entrances down to Rush Landing.

Establishment (1903-1915): In 1903 Lee and Alice Hicks moved with their three young children, Maudie (b. 1892), Roscoe (b. 1897) and Obeta (b. 1901),

to the industrious mining town of Rush. Their ten-acre property was strategically located at "…the center of Rush, one mile from [the] Buffalo River and one mile from the one-room school house," where they established a hotel, livery service, and store (Hall 1977). Together, along with two more children born in Rush, Juanita (b. 1905) and Johnnie (b. 1915), the Hicks became a prominent family that was integral to the mining community (Figures 25-27).

Based on a brief account written by Obeta in 1977 about her experiences in Rush, the building that would become the Hicks Hotel already existed on the property when it was purchased by the Hicks (Hall 1977). According to the 1910 census, Lee ran the hotel while Alice and their eldest daughter Maudie assisted as cooks (United States Census 1910). However, a newspaper article from the *Mountain Echo*, the weekly paper from the nearby town of Yellville, reveals that by 1916 Alice managed the hotel: "The Hicks Hotel, which is conducted by Mrs. Lee Hicks, is very popular with the many mine operators in this section of the town, and the traveling public, as her tables are always supplied with the best the market affords" ("Town of Rush Is Rapidly Becoming a Nice Little City" 2/11/1916). Additional proof of the popularity and success of the hotel is demonstrated by some of the prominent individuals who stayed there, including French engineer and Superintendent of the Red Cloud mine, Captain Charles LaVasseur, and Superintendent J. C. Shepherd, who formerly had worked in gold mines in Mexico (Hall 1977).

The hotel was a two-story wood structure split into a northern and southern section by a narrower middle section that linked the two together (Figures 28-29). Based on historic photographs, newspaper articles, and oral accounts, a model was created to interpret what the hotel was like during the Hicks Period (Figure 30). The northern wing was approximately 24' x 28', with a "salt box" addition at its northern most face. The middle section of the hotel was approximately 12'x 30' and was the narrowest part of the structure. The southern section, facing Rush Road, was 35' x 32', the largest part of the hotel. The building was elevated on stone piers and clad in white-painted wood siding, with a large front porch and a gabled tin roof (Ott 2006). The southern building's facade was the most grand, with specific design elements including the porch railing and the porch lattice. The northern wing is more modest, and possibly was where the kitchen was located for the hotel. Given the nature of the northern wing and saltbox, it is possible these were additions made by the Hicks after 1903, but documentation has not been found to support this assumption. Regardless, the hotel garnered a reputation among townsfolk as a "beautiful home" and "one of the better homes on Rush" (Goodall 1985, Ott 2006). A regional newspaper article announcing the operations of two mines at Rush in 1915, the beginning of the largest mining boom, touted the Hicks Hotel specifically:

> *While the hotel accommodations at Rush are limited, no one need stay*

> *away from the camp for fear of not been [sic] taken care of. The one hotel run by Lee Hicks, is a home-like place, where you are offered plenty of substantial, appetizing food, and where crystal water, piped from a spring on the mountain side, trickles perpetually into a crude reservoir in the yard, making a music that not only invites but impels sleep.* (Two Going Mines in Camp of Rush Springs 5/8/1915)

As with most buildings of its time and locale, the Hicks Hotel had no indoor plumbing. It did, however, have an ingenious solution for supplying fresh water. The source was a pool at the base of a waterfall on a small, unnamed tributary of Rush Creek 600 feet southwest of the hotel. The waterfall was located in a narrow box canyon formed by high limestone bluffs. Despite its function as the Hicks' water supply, the waterfall was popular with miners as a natural "shower" to relax and clean after a long day in the mines (Lack 1984, Goodall 1985). Water from the pool was piped down the shady, moss-covered, boulder-strewn canyon floor, over Rush Creek, and under the road. From there, it led to a collection point at the southwest corner of the hotel. A small rectangular concrete structure remains today in this location, and a pipe protruding from its base towards the waterfall lends credence to the presumption that it served as a cistern (Rogers 1986). An inscription "1910" at the cistern base suggests it was in use early on, but two oral histories recall the Hick's fresh water supply terminating in one or two wooden barrels located in the Hick's yard (Goodall 1985, Lack 1984). Both interviewees' recollections would have been from sometime after 1910, so it is possible that the concrete cistern was replaced by the barrels (but not removed), or that the barrels were used in conjunction with the cistern.

The Hicks livery service, from which horses were available for rent, was established sometime prior to 1910. The 1910 census described 12-year-old Roscoe as a "liveryman" of a "home barn" (United States Census 1910). The barn associated with this service, which former Rush resident Ware Lafoon recounted as large and similar to the Morning Star Mine's livery barn, was located northwest of the hotel near the road (Lafoon 1986, Figure 31). Nadine Goodall, another former Rush resident, recalled the barn as "long" and painted red, with a hay loft (Goodall 1985). She also remembered floods in which the Buffalo River would back up past the Hicks property and a boat would be brought in to unload the hay and other items from the loft. Pastures for the Hicks' horses extended east from the barn across their property, north of the hotel. A "cattle dip" or "vat" was also located near the barn; a narrow, rectangular concrete vat approximately 30 feet long with sloping ends, allowing livestock to pass through an insecticide solution. The chief target of this activity was the cattle tick, the main spreading agent for "Texas fever" (*babesiosis*). Texas fever was as a cause for concern in Marion County according to local newspapers. A 1913 article reported on areas that had cattle under quarantine to prevent spread of infection (Local and Personal 1/21/1913). Another article

advised that "in order to free the cattle of ticks, it is necessary to dip them every two weeks" (Cattle Dipped Saturday 6/29/1922).

The third economic endeavor undertaken by the Hicks family upon arriving at Rush was a general mercantile business. Obeta recounted that "one of the earliest stores in Rush was a general store owned and operated by Mr. William Fernimen and his wife, Aunt Lou. Mr. Fernimen sold this store to my father, who operated it many years as a general store carrying practically everything that could be found in stores anywhere in Northern Arkansas" (Hall 1977). An ad in the *Mountain Echo* shows that Fernimen had been operating a store for 19 years by the time the Hicks moved to Rush, but this store was in Onset (Rea Valley), a small community some 9 miles to the north over rough roads (Wm. Fernimen's, Onset, Arkansas 2/6/1903). Fernimen also opened a store in Rush, possibly in the early 1900s, although it is not known where it was located. Lee purchased Fernimen's Rush store in late 1910 or very early 1911: "Lee Hicks is preparing to put a stock of goods in his building formerly occupied by Wm. Fernimen on Rush. Mr. Fernimen is erecting a new store building" (Local and Personal 1/6/1911). Fernimen's new store sold groceries and was located east the Hicks property near "boiling springs," but when the World War I mining boom ended he relocated back to Rea Valley (Lafoon 1986, Goodall 1985, Town of Rush Is Rapidly Becoming a Nice Little City 2/11/1916, Local and Personal 10/30/1919). A newspaper account shows that Lee was operating both the hotel and the store by the summer of 1911, as well as making annual business trips to Joplin, Missouri (Rush Creek Squibs 7/14/1911). Fourteen year-old Roscoe even joined in the entrepreneurial effort and "opened a cold drink stand next to his Father's store" (Rush and Sylva 6/14/1912). Another colorful account indicates that, at least occasionally, running a store was a physical activity:

> *Lee Hicks has had several adventures lately chasing delinquents. Last week a fellow bought a pair of shoes and cashing his check at another place tried to make a get-away to Buffalo. Lee run [sic] him down with his horse and collected the bill and also livery for his horse. They just naturally can't get away from him. (*Rush and Sylva 7/26/1912*)*

Prosperity (1916-1918): When World War I began in Europe, the zinc market soared since the lead European producer of the mineral, Germany, withheld the trade to western markets. This created a "boom" period for the mining town of Rush, with many more mines and other businesses taking advantage of the lucrative zinc market. The *Mountain Echo* records Rush's prosperity:

> *That the Rush district is still the center of attraction in North Arkansas zinc field is evidenced by the fact that new operators are entering the game almost every day. Business in every line is on the increase, and almost every day some new enterprise is launched...she boasts of ten general stores, three bakeries, and many boarding houses and hotels…*

> *There are also two saw mills running full time, but their output is wholly inadequate to the demand of lumber.* (Personal Notes 1/28/1916)

Thousands of people now inhabited Rush Creek valley, ushering in a period of prosperity and expansion for the Hicks family businesses.

> *Lee Hicks, one of the progressive merchants of Rush, we understand, has let the contract for the erection of a large concrete business house, and that work will begin at once. Lee pinned his faith to Rush many years ago, and has stayed there through every condition and today is one of the most prosperous merchants in North Arkansas.* (Local and Personal Happenings 12/24/1915)

The "large concrete business house" actually featured a stone exterior, the only one in Rush, made of white limestone ashlar, masonry block with pink limestone accents. It was a two-story, flat-roofed building, and approximately 30' x 60', built on the east side of the Hicks hotel (Figures 32-33). The opening of the new building was announced in the *Rush Creek Bugle* in September 1916, featuring a general mercantile on the first floor and an 11-room expansion to the hotel on the second (Locals and Items of Interest 9/10/1916, Hall 1977)[1]. A digital reconstruction of the Hicks store based on historic photographs, written descriptions, oral histories, and newspaper articles depicts the store during the Hicks period of ownership (Figure 34). Customers and salesmen arrived at the store via Rush Road at a pullout area for horses and wagons, then climbed concrete steps at the east end of a 3' high, uncovered concrete porch. Three large, first-story bays filled with glass windows provided light and views into the store and space for advertisements. Benches and merchandise also occupied the two side bays, while access to the store was provided through a large door in the central bay (Kastning 1999). The hotel rooms on the second floor were only accessed by an exterior metal staircase on the windowless west wall. Four double-hung windows overlooked the road to the south from the second floor. An unidentified, single story building was located adjacent to the east wall of the store during the Hicks period.

The new Hicks store sold both groceries and dry goods and "carried practically everything that could be found in stores anywhere in Northern Arkansas" (Hall 1977). Former Rush resident Helen Lack recalled "the Hickses sold everything, even down to caskets... when my baby died, that's where we got the casket." (Lack 1984) According to Obeta, many people of Rush and the surrounding region relied on the Hicks store:

> *Miners bought their supplies at our store and most of them bought "on*

[1] Accounts vary on the number of second-story rooms. Nadine Goodall recalled 13, while Bessie Kastning remembered 24 (Goodall 1985, Kastning 1999).

> *credit", paying every two weeks when they were paid. Farmers on Big Creek, Clear Creek and the Buffalo River also traded at our store "on credit", buying their groceries and whatever they needed to make the crop. They would pay their bills when they sold their crops. Father bought his merchandise on credit usually from the traveling salesmen - "drummers" - who called on him to see what he needed. Occasionally, he would go to Little Rock or Springfield to the markets to select his "wares."* (Hall 1977)

The second-story rooms above the store were small but well-furnished, each containing a bed and dresser, and since "back then nobody had any indoor toilets every room had a pot. So she and her girls really had a job keepin' things a going 'cause she couldn't hardly keep a hired girl" (Lack 1984). The occupants of these rooms were typically single male miners who worked nearby, while more prominent guests and families stayed in the main house (Lack 1984). All boarders would eat at the hotel, as would others "just like any restaurant" (Goodall 1985). During the World War I mining boom there was a great need for housing in Rush Creek valley, and the Hicks capitalized on the opportunity. In addition to the hotel and rooms above the store, the Hicks also owned several houses on the south side of Rush Creek on the narrow, sloping bench below the bluff in front of the hotel and store. Few details of these rental homes are known, but a former occupant did recall that they were two-story frame houses with two rooms downstairs and an "upstairs" (Lack 1982).

At the same time the new store was completed in 1916 a "new cobblestone fence around the hotel" was also built (Locals and Items of Interest 9/10/1916). This retaining wall, ranged between 3'-5' high and made of local sandstone and limestone, was a key landscape feature that brought senses of permanence and prominence to the property which tied the new store to the hotel site. It also flattened the slope of the front yard and likely served as protection from cattle, as the general practice at the time was "open range," in which cattle were allowed to roam freely throughout the valley (Goodall 1985). The wall followed the bend in the road from the farmyard northwest of the hotel, wrapping around the front yard of the hotel before terminating at the new store's porch. Two concrete stairways flanked by mortared cobblestone piers provided access to the yard on the west and south sides of the hotel through wrought iron gates (Figure 35).

Other prominent landscape features that were likely installed in the front yard of the hotel during the late 1910s or early 1920s include a brick path and several diamond-shaped and circle-shaped concrete and pebble-bordered flower beds[2]. The path, which was bordered on both sides by trough-shaped concrete and

[2] Several other paths are visible in Figure 29 but the flower beds and brick walk are not readily apparent. It could be that they are simply not visible due to poor resolution, or that they were installed at a later time. Due to the nature of construction and the relative prosperity of the Hicks family and the period compared to subsequent owners and periods, we presume the beds were built by the Hicks family.

pebble flower beds, led from the south concrete steps to the hotel's porch. Goodall recalls "many beautiful flowers" at the hotel, but specific types are not known (Goodall 1985). Remnant daffodils and roses are still found in the beds and forest undergrowth today and it is possible they are descendants of Hicks period plantings, but they may have also been installed by subsequent owners. The only known photograph of the front yard from the Hicks period shows lawn, shrubs, small trees, and shade trees (Figure 29).

Figure 29 also reveals several outbuildings behind the hotel, including what appears to be a large shed or smokehouse and a small shed or outhouse. Fences and hedgerows are also visible north of the hotel, and possibly an unstacked pile of firewood. North of the store, however, the land is cleared and appears to be pasture. An aerial photograph from 1938, near the end of the Hicks period, depicts the same condition (Figure 36).

Transition (1918-1923): The conclusion of World War I in 1918 was accompanied by a plummeting zinc market, mine closures, and mass exodus from Rush. The Hicks family remained committed to the Rush community, however, as they had in previous downturns. Patience and hopes of recovery were tested, however, when Lee suddenly became ill and died on March 28, 1920. A detailed account of his decline and death was published in the *Mountain Echo*:

> *About three weeks ago Mr. Lee Hicks, a prominent merchant at Rush, went to Joplin on business. On his way there his left eye became affected [sic], but he thought a cinder had blown into it. He was slightly ill for a day or so at Joplin. His eye continued to grow worse after his return. On Tuesday of last week Dr. Ware was called to see him, but his eye continued to get worse. A message was sent to Dr. Mayes, an eye specialist at Little Rock to come at once and he replied that he would be in Yellville Saturday. Mr. Hicks met him here and the doctor diagnosed the case as erysipelas and stated that he had better be taken to a hospital in Little Rock for treatment. He started Sunday, in company with his wife, his son Roscoe, his son-in-law, Con Medley and Dr. Mayes, but shortly after leaving he began to grow worse and the end came in Cotter. The body was taken off the train and prepared for burial and Monday was brought back to Yellville and taken to the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Will Cowdrey, where it was taken to the Cowan graveyard and laid to rest by the Woodmen of the World, of which organization he had long been a member. Mr. Hicks leaves a wife, five children, an aged mother, a sister and one brother, besides a host of friends to mourn his untimely death*. (Lee Hicks Dead 4/1/1920, Figure 37)

Despite this tragic setback, the family seemed determined to press forward. Alice continued to manage the hotel business. Lee's eldest son, Roscoe, not only took over his father's mercantile trade at the age of 22, but also expanded it (Figure

38). In the fall of 1920, despite the lull in mining operations, Roscoe opened a second store approximately 20 miles to the south of Rush Creek valley:

> *Roscoe Hicks of Rush, was transacting business in Yellville Friday of last week. He informed us that they had recently erected a store building and stocked it with goods on the pike road in Searcy county, near where it touches the Marion County line, and are doing a good business. He says there is lots of activity in the timber business along this road, and it is putting lots of money in circulation. Fred Tunstall has charge of their store on the pike.* (Local and Personal 9/23/1920)

Roscoe began advertising the Hicks Store in Rush in the *Mountain Echo* for the first time. The first ad, however, was perhaps a sign of financial uncertainty, as it was really a notice stating that they were "forced to put our business on a STRICTLY CASH BASIS"; at the same time encouraging customers that "the merchant who sells strictly for cash can undersell the merchant who uses the credit system" (Hicks Store Ad 9/23/1920). A new ad followed in October and ran for four weeks, but the tone and overall message of the ad was the same; "GET THE HABIT of PAYING CASH for your goods!" (Man! 10/14/1920).

Business at the Hicks Store, perhaps not surprisingly, did not pick up. In August of 1921 Roscoe reported that business "was very quiet," but to be fair "that [was] no different from other sections" in the area (Local and Personal Notes 8/11/1921). Roscoe's efforts continued, however, and more ads for groceries and dry goods followed in the spring of 1922, although still only for cash (Hicks Store Ad 4/6/1922). He also participated with other merchants of Rush in two "sales day" events and auctions in 1921 and 1923 (Local and Personal 11/17/1921, 10/4/1923). A follow-up article in the *Mountain Echo* described the second sale as a "real success" (News From Over the County 10/25/1923). In addition to Roscoe's entrepreneurial efforts, in 1921 he was appointed U.S. postmaster for Rush (Appointments of U. S. Postmasters, 1832-1971). At the same time the Rush post office was relocated to the Hicks Store, just to the right (east) of the front door (Laffoon 1986).

The marriage of three Hicks siblings in the early 1920s also brought change to the family and the Hicks landscape. Roscoe was the first of the three to marry on November 6, 1921, to Bernice Dunlap of Cowan Barrens; the couple are "among the most popular young people of that section of the county, and have a host of friends who wish them happiness and prosperity through life" (Local and Personal/Notice! 11/10/1921)[3]. Obeta was the next to wed, marrying school teacher Robert Lee Hall of Cowan Barrens in the Hicks Hotel on June 28, 1922

[3] The eldest daughter Maudie had married James Con Medley, who in the 1910s was made superintendent of the Morning Star Mine, eleven years prior on May 8, 1910 (Arkansas, County Marriages 1837-1957, United States Census 1920, Hall 1977).

(Hall and Hicks 7/4/1922). The Halls built a "big house" with a "high porch" on the north side of the Hicks' property, north of the store (Kastning 1999). Although no photographs of the home are known to exist, the footprint of the structure is visible in the 1938 aerial photograph, separated from the store by a gently sloping fenced pasture (Figure 36). Juanita, the youngest of the three, was married at the Hicks Hotel on September 28, 1923 to Troy Tilley, "an enterprising young timberman of Marshall," and it was in Marshall, Arkansas where the new couple established their first home (Hicks-Tilley 10/4/1923, News From Over the County 7/17/1924).

Decline (1924-1929): Despite continued optimism (Alice felt that mining interests would "be revived in the near future") and occasional bursts of activity, the mining industry in Rush did not recover (Local and Personal 4/2/1925). Although the valley did retain enough of a population through the 1920s for several stores and hotels to remain in operation, the Hicks Store did not. The timing and reasons for its demise are not fully understood, but there are a few clues. The last mention of the Hicks Store in the *Mountain Echo* was in January 1924, in which Roscoe is reported traveling to Yellville for a business trip (Local News Notes 1/24/1924). In September of that year, Roscoe and Burnice were divorced (Arkansas Divorce Index, 1923-1939). Roscoe was mentioned in the *Mountain Echo* returning from a trip to Colorado in November 1924 - the last reference to Roscoe in the paper until 1929 (Local and Personal 11/6/1924). Roscoe was married again on May 8. 1926 to Goldie Pearl Miller of Rea Valley, but the wedding was not announced in the paper, and again the marriage was short lived (Arkansas, County Marriages, 1837-1957). On the other hand, Alice remained very involved in running the hotel, with seven business trips to Yellville and other nearby communities reported in the *Mountain Echo* between 1924 and 1925. These reports ceased in 1926, however, caused by unknown events. The last reference to the Hicks Store in the newspaper was made in January 1929, when Alice (listed as "owner") took out an ad for a "Big Auction Sale!" (Big Auction Sale! 1/24/1929). While the auction was held at the Hicks Store, the items listed for sale specifically in the ad related almost exclusively to the hotel:

> *12 dressers; 15 or 20 stand tables; 1 chiffonier; all sorts of chairs; 12 or 15 bed-steads; 12 or 15 bed-springs; 12 or 15 mattresses; 1 china closet; 5 gas lamps and lanterns; kerosene lamps; dishes, all sorts; 5 show cases; 1 davenport; 50 or 75 comforts or quilts; bedspreads and linens; blankets; curtains, all kinds; carpets; pictures; canned fruits.* (Big Auction Sale 1/24/1929)

Some oral histories tended toward village gossip as former neighbors speculated on the reasons for Roscoe's divorces and the demise of the Hicks Hotel and Store. Nadine Goodall echoed Helen Lack on the strain caused by no indoor plumbing: "[Alice] worked the daughter-in-law to death. [Roscoe] couldn't keep

a woman for working her to death at cleaning the rooms and carry the pots. They didn't have no bathrooms. That's the truth" (Goodall 1985). Goodall continued: "That boy [Roscoe] got rid of everything… One time [Alice] was almost rich. That's just what you can do if you get rid of any amount if you don't manage it right." Kastning claimed the flat roof of the store caved in due to Roscoe's lack of maintenance (Kastning 1999).

After the auction Roscoe married again on June 8, 1929, this time to Maude Gentry, also of Rush and "among the most able lady school teachers of the county" (Gentry-Hicks 6/13/1929). They left the following morning for Kansas City "where [Roscoe] will go to work" (Gentry-Hicks 6/13/1929). The 1930 census listed the couple as living in Kansas City with Roscoe employed as a salesman for a packing house and Maude as a teacher, accompanied by Roscoe's teenage brother Johnnie, who was living with Roscoe and Maude while attending school. (United States Census 1930).

Depression and Diaspora (1930s-1940s): Both the Rush community and the Hicks family had already been struggling for over a decade before the Great Depression hit. The 1930s brought continued change to the social structure and the Rush landscape as population continued to decline and vacancy rates increased. While Roscoe and Maude's departure proved to be short lived, Juanita and Troy moved to Hominy Township, Osage County, Oklahoma in the 1920s and did not return (United States Census 1930).

The auction of the contents of the Hicks Store and Hotel in 1929 was followed by the sale of land and buildings. Alice sold the hotel in the early 1930s to Harry Morrow, a young Rush schoolteacher, for use as a residence (Kastning 1999). It was soon sold again to Will and Mindy Maxey, who lived there with their adopted daughter Imogene Setzer until the early 1950s (Kastning 1999, Ott 2006, United States Census 1940). Will was "one of the good farmers of the Rush community" (Local and Personal 4/17/1935). Meanwhile, Alice moved into the Hall house with Obeta and Robert (United States Census 1930). By the spring of 1935, however, the Halls had moved to Matney Township, Baxter County, Arkansas, where Robert again taught school (United States Census 1940). About the same time, Johnnie Hicks married Irene Brantley, also of Rush, and moved to Visalia, Tulare County, California (Arkansas, County Marriages, 1837-1957, United States Census 1940). Maudie and Con Medley also moved to California prior to 1935, like so many others who migrated from the Central United States to the Pacific Coast during this period (United States Census 1940). Roscoe and Maude, however, initially resisted this trend and returned to Rush from Kansas City by the spring of 1935, moving in with Alice and two lodgers at the former Hall residence (United States Census 1940, Figure 39). He did not, however, return to the mercantile business, but instead worked as a self-employed "free ore" miner along with his fellow lodgers and others who remained in the valley (United States Census 1940).

While there were substantial changes to social and economic activity during this period, the overall landscape character of the former Hicks property remained largely intact. The Maxeys used the former hotel as a farmstead while the store remained vacant (Figures 40-41). Former Rush resident Lou Ann Ott recalled: "I can remember being in the Hicks Store after it had been closed for a long time. There were scales and some show cases and a casket was sitting on some rafters near the ceiling… I was real small but it caught my attention" (Ott 2006). Although contrast and resolution are both poor, the 1938 aerial photograph captures the land patterns and major structures of this period (Figure 36). The former store and hotel are both visible, as is the large outbuilding (possibly a smokehouse) north of the hotel. Deciduous trees surround the hotel and extend north toward the Hall house in a shallow ravine. A large pasture, divided by a fence, lies between and east of the store and the Hall house. The cattle dip/vat is visible on the west side of the property as a dark line angling to the northwest. The livery barn was located in this vicinity but it is not readily apparent in the photograph; it may have been removed by this time or be obscured by vegetation.

The remaining Hicks family members left Rush, and Arkansas, in the early 1940s. Even though zinc prices spiked once again during World War II the mines at Rush were not reactivated. Obeta and Robert left Baxter County for Oakland, California in 1943 (Obeta Bell Hall 3/27/1987). Alice died on November 1, 1944, and "was laid to rest by the side of her husband in Cowan Cemetery" (Cowan Barrens 11/08/1944). About the same time, Roscoe, the last of the siblings to leave Rush, also moved with Maude to Oakland. Johnny and Irene had already left Visalia by this time, however, moving to Naches Heights, Washington prior to 1940 (United States Census 1940). Johnnie became the first of the sibling to pass away on July 30, 1949. He "died at his home at Wolf Point, Montana" and was buried next to Lee and Alice in the Cowan Cemetery (Former Marion County Boy is Buried at Cowan 8/11/1949). His obituary also provides details on the location of his siblings at this time. Three lived in California; Maudie in Visalia and Roscoe and Obeta in Oakland, each with their spouses. Juanita remained in Oklahoma, where she had taken after her father and older brother by operating Tilley's Grocery with her husband (United States Census 1940, United States, GenealogyBank Obituaries, 1980-2014).

Ghost Town (1950s-1960s): By the early 1950s tourism had replaced zinc as the principal draw of Rush Creek valley. The Buffalo River was an increasingly popular outdoor recreation destination, and Marion County capitalized on this trend by promoting automobile-based tourism in the post-war era. A caricature map of the county, "The Crossroad of America's Vacation Trail of Fun," identified key local attractions and was published several times in the mid-1950s (Welcome Tourists! 1/3/1957). Rush and its zinc mines were featured on the map, but the subtitle read "ghost town." Special interest stories and photo essays

about the Rush ghost town began to appear in statewide newspapers about the same time (Ghost Town 12/9/1956).

Rush was not abandoned, however; a few residents remained farming, free ore mining, and catering to the increased tourism. This small population was not enough to arrest the significant changes that were being wrought upon the valley as structures were dismantled or destroyed by fire and forest began to reclaim the land. The Hicks property followed in the same trajectory. In the early 1950s the former Hicks Hotel was still one of the most impressive homes in Rush, despite its age. Several owners were drawn to the substantial structure during this period, although exact ownership is difficult to track. An oral history traces the property transition from the Maxeys to Chauncey and Juanita Parker (who allowed the Maxeys to remain as renters), followed by real estate developer Milton Wade in an approximately 5-year span (Kastning 1999). Another account reports that a woman, possibly from Iowa, (perhaps Juanita Parker or Milton Wade's wife) moved into the hotel in the early 1950s and began to make repairs (Goodall 1985). Before the repairs could be completed the hotel burned to the ground. Goodall suggested arson, claiming that "there was somebody that didn't want people. I could give names, but I won't because I wasn't there to see it" (Goodall 1985).

Oral history sources are sketchy on what happened next at the Hicks site. None of them recall who lived there and was responsible for the dramatic changes, but an aerial photograph from 1964 captured the extent of them (Figure 42). Most significantly, the store had been reoccupied; not as a business, but as a highly modified residence. The second story had been removed, and remaining shell had a low-pitched gable roof placed over it (Figure 43). The ashlar stone from the second story was repurposed as mortared retaining walls, extending from the bend in the 1916 fieldstone wall across the "parking" area to the southeast corner of the porch. A second retaining wall continued east along Rush Road after leaving a gap on the east side of the former store for a driveway. The driveway accessed a new narrow rectangular building to the north of the store but south of where the Hall house once stood, and there were several small outbuildings in the vicinity. A wooded fence line extended north from the northwest corner of the store, turned east behind the new building, and then returned to the road at what was presumably the property's east boundary. Although the hotel was gone, there were several structures west of the old store, including the large shed/smokehouse, a small outbuilding further north, and what appears to be another outbuilding about where the hotel's front porch had been. Other than a few of the outbuildings, most of this modified landscape is still visible in another aerial photograph taken in 1972 (Figure 44).

Buffalo National River (1970s-present): Approximately 150 miles of the Buffalo River and its adjacent landscape were set aside by an act of Congress as the country's first National River on March 1, 1972. This designation finally put

an end to plans to dam the river, the most serious of which was the Lone Rock Dam, proposed in 1938 by the Army Corps of Engineers. Among many other natural and cultural resources, Rush Creek valley would have been flooded had this project been completed, as the proposed site was only 6.5 miles downriver. While the establishment of the Buffalo National River (BNR) ended the eminent threat of submersion, the National Park Service (NPS) recognized the threats abandonment and neglect posed to the many cultural resources within the new park's boundaries. Efforts to document these resources began soon after BNR was created, spearheaded by park historian Suzanne Rogers. Although parts of Rush Creek valley remained in private ownership until 1983, the NPS recognized the historic significance of the former mining district. In fact, after interior remodeling approved by BNR, Rogers and her family took up residence in what had once been the Hicks Store in 1978, remaining there until a major flood drove her out in 1982 (Figure 43, Rogers ND). Following her evacuation, BNR deemed the site unsuitable for habitation and the site was left vacant. Rogers continued in her efforts to record the history of Rush and preserve its memory and its landscape, however, conducting oral history interviews with former residents, gathering documentation, and completing a National Register Nomination for the Rush Historic District in 1986[4]. About the same time, trails and interpretive signage was installed at the former Morning Star Mine community and stabilization efforts were made to its remaining structures.

Despite efforts of Rogers and others, the historic remnants of the Hicks site continued to deteriorate as forest gradually reclaimed the land. Questions about what to do with the site spawned various proposals. At one end the spectrum was a proposal to "divest the [former Hicks Store] of modern additions, leaving the limestone walls. Whether as a standing structure or a ruin, this building is significant to the story of Rush" (Rogers 1986). Several years later an ambitious rehabilitation strategy was suggested by the NPS Southwest Regional Office in 1989 (Figure 45):

> *The Hick's Store is significant as the only stone building in Rush… It was representative of a regional building type and reflected a sense of permanence about the future of Rush… This structure could be adaptively rehabilitated for visitor use, with interpretation exhibits, and/or leased for a commercial operation...*
>
> *The adjacent Hick's Hotel site could be restored and adaptively used as a picnic area with interpretive signage to explain the former use of the site… This site is significant as the only remaining example of a designed landscape at Rush... With research, the designed landscape could be re-established and the visitor would encounter an interpretive area that uses landscape materials to capture the feeling of a former time… The*

[4] The Rush Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places February 27, 1987.

> *Hick's Hotel site offers the best opportunity to explain to the visitor the important role hotels played in the town... These ruins could be further exposed, stabilized and incorporated into new design in this area, particularly landscape plans*. (Southwest office Division of Conservation 1989)

Through the 1990s, however, neither proposal was enacted and vegetation enveloped the site. In the late 1990s BNR, again with Rogers' involvement, cleared the vegetation and conducted stabilization projects on the wall, brick path, and other elements (Figures 46-47). On October 25, 2004, an arsonist set fire to the former Hicks Store, completely gutting the structure but leaving the historic walls (Figure 48). A report issued the following spring summarized the new treatment strategy: "[The Hicks Store] was gutted by an arson fire in the fall of 2004. Park plans had one point suggested removing all modern alterations and retaining only the historic masonry components. Its current condition if viewed as a building is poor, but if classified as a ruin it requires only clean-up and stabilization" (Hicks General Store DRAFT, Single Entry Report). The same year a report was completed by a consultant team that featured the most comprehensive documentation of the Rush Creek valley to date, including the Hicks site (Stratton and Mansberger 2005). This report and accompanying drawings described a landscape devoid of all buildings but still containing numerous clues to its past, and it served as the starting point for this HALS documentation.

Conclusion: There are few extant site features that tell the story of the entrepreneurial Hicks family, their rise to prominence, and their struggles in an industrious yet beautiful Ozark mountain landscape. All of the family members have passed away; Lee (d. 1920), Alice (d. 1944), and Johnnie (d. 1949) are buried in Arkansas; Roscoe (d. 1962), Maudie (d. 1971), and Obeta (d. 1987) in California; and Juanita (d. 1997) was interred in Oklahoma (Figure 49). Similarly, the historic landscape character of the Hicks property has faded almost beyond recognition. Present conditions of the site make interpretation of the mining era difficult at best. Only walls attest to the Hicks' impact on the once thriving mining town of Rush, or at least they are the only evidence paddlers and tourists can readily identify.

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Historian: Kimball Erdman, Associate Professor
Department of Landscape Architecture
Fay Jones School of Architecture + Design
University of Arkansas
409 Vol Walker Hall
Fayetteville, AR 72701

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This HALS report and accompanying drawings and digital reconstructions were completed by Kimball Erdman, with Jordan Pitts and Addison Warren, Research Assistants, and students enrolled in the Spring 2016 semester of LARC 5053 Historic Landscape Preservation: Nathan Adams, Morganne Bryner, Dalton Carlson, Jordan Pitts, Benjamin Magee, and Addison Warren. Angie Payne, Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies, University of Arkansas, assisted with the digital reconstructions of the hotel and store.

2016 HALS Challenge Entry: Documenting National Register Listed Landscapes



Figure 1: A 1972 aerial depicts Rush Mountain and Rush (lower) and Clabber (upper) Creeks. The Hicks site, circled in red, is located in Rush Valley midway between the former school house to the west (left) and Rush Landing on the Buffalo River to the southeast (lower right) (Rush-Buffalo Point 522 1972).



Figure 2: Rush Valley contains abandoned historic mining community structures and ruins that depict various aspects of the former life of the region, including these simple wood frame houses (Erdman 2016).



Figure 3: A retaining wall on a prominent bend of Rush Creek and the adjacent road is the most visible historic remnant of the former Hicks property (Erdman 2016).



Figure 4: The west stair leads to an unpaved walk that historically ended at the side entrance of the hotel (Erdman 2016).



Figure 5: The southern stair once led to the front entrance of the Hicks Hotel (Erdman 2016).



Figure 6: The 1916 fieldstone wall (left) was extended in the late 1950s or early 1960s by a subsequent owner who reused limestone ashlar masonry blocks removed from the upper story of the former Hicks Store (Erdman 2016).



Figure 7: This image is an attempt to replicate the historic photograph seen in Figure 33, taken from the top of the bluff on the south side of Rush Creek (Erdman 2016). The lower walls of the former Hicks Store can be seen on the right, while the rest of the site is obscured by forest (Erdman 2016).

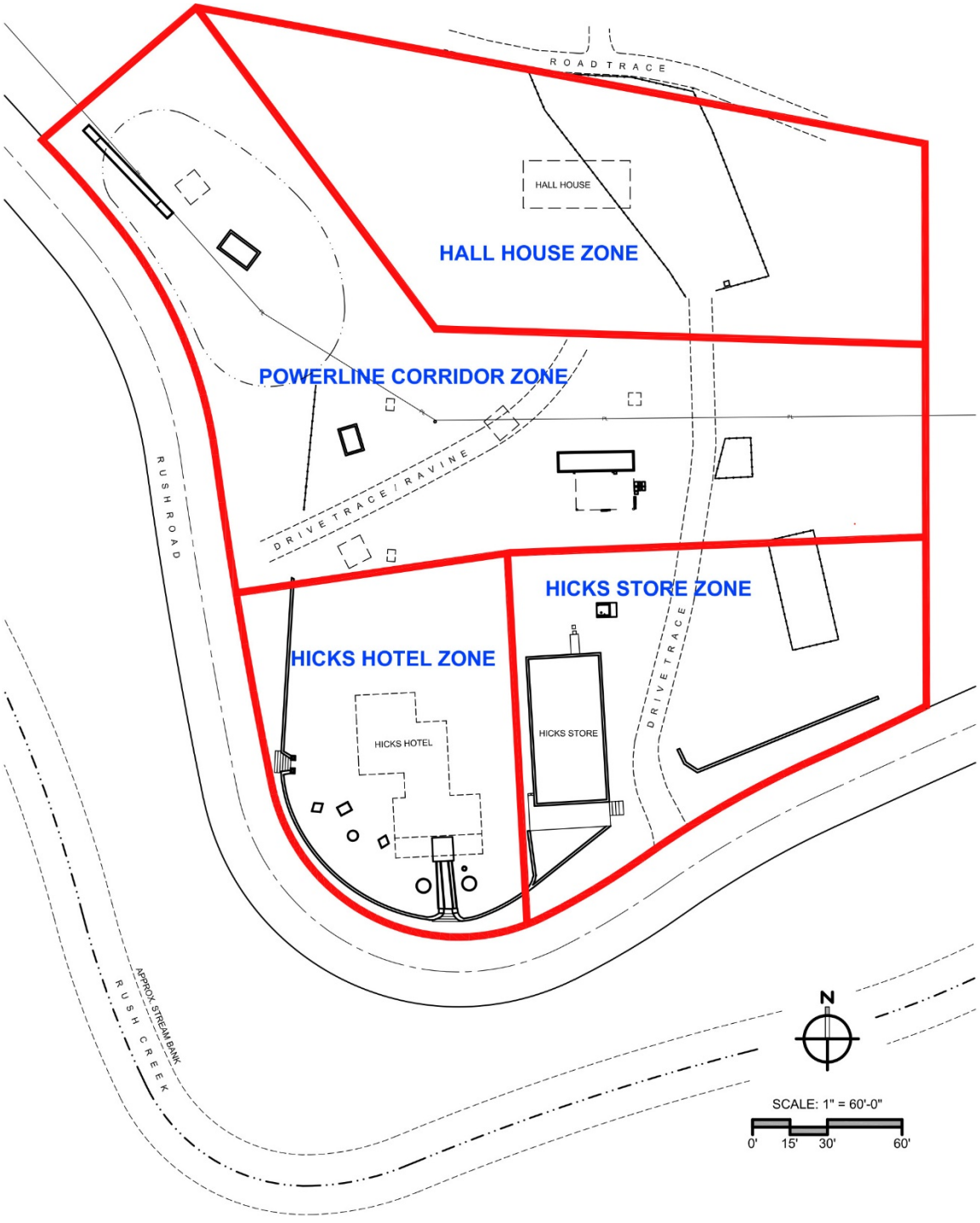


Figure 8: The four landscape character zones of the existing Hicks site (Erdman).



Figure 9: Rush Creek lies at the bottom of a steep valley that is lined with high bluffs and strewn with boulders. The Hicks site sits slightly uphill north (left) of this image, while the Hicks rental houses would have been on the right (Erdman 2016).



Figure 10: The bluffs form a box canyon at the south at the end of the ravine, creating a waterfall and small pool. Water from the pool was piped to a cistern on the Hicks property in the early 2oth century (Erdman 2016).



Figure 11: The ravine located directly south of the Hicks site and Rush Creek that leads to the waterfall and pool, once the Hicks' water source, is populated with dense hardwoods and moss-covered boulders. A portion of bluff line can be seen in the background, echoing the geographical character of the rest of Rush Valley (Erdman 2016).



Figure 12: The littered brick walk that once led to the hotel's front porch is flanked by fieldstone piers and mortared pebble troughs filled with daffodils and volunteer vegetation (Erdman 2016).



Figure 13: One of two circular mortared pebble flowerbeds, still containing daffodils, which flank either side of the brick walk (Erdman 2016).



Figure 14: The wooded area that once served as the Hicks' front lawn also contains two diamond-shaped planting beds filled with daffodils, one of which is shown here (Erdman 2016).



Figure 15: A concrete cistern obstructed by soil and debris sits near several flowerbeds on the side of the former hotel site (Erdman 2016).



Figure 16: Several concrete piers and foundation stones demarcate portions of the hotel's footprint (Erdman 2016).



Figure 17: A small set of concrete steps likely led to a rear porch of the hotel (Erdman 2016).



Figure 18: The cut limestone ashlar masonry walls of the first floor of the store are still a prominent presence (Erdman 2016).



Figure 19: The interior of the former store is relatively clear of brush. A bathtub, likely from the 1978 interior renovation, is one of the few artifacts that remains (Erdman 2016).



Figure 20: The original concrete steps of the Hicks Store had deteriorated substantially, prompting the National Park Service to replace them with the cut stone steps seen here within the past decade (Erdman 2016).



Figure 21: A powerline corridor, with its cyclical clearing, creates a contemporary division between the Hicks Store and Hotel sites to the south (left) and the Hall house site to the north (right) (Erdman 2016).

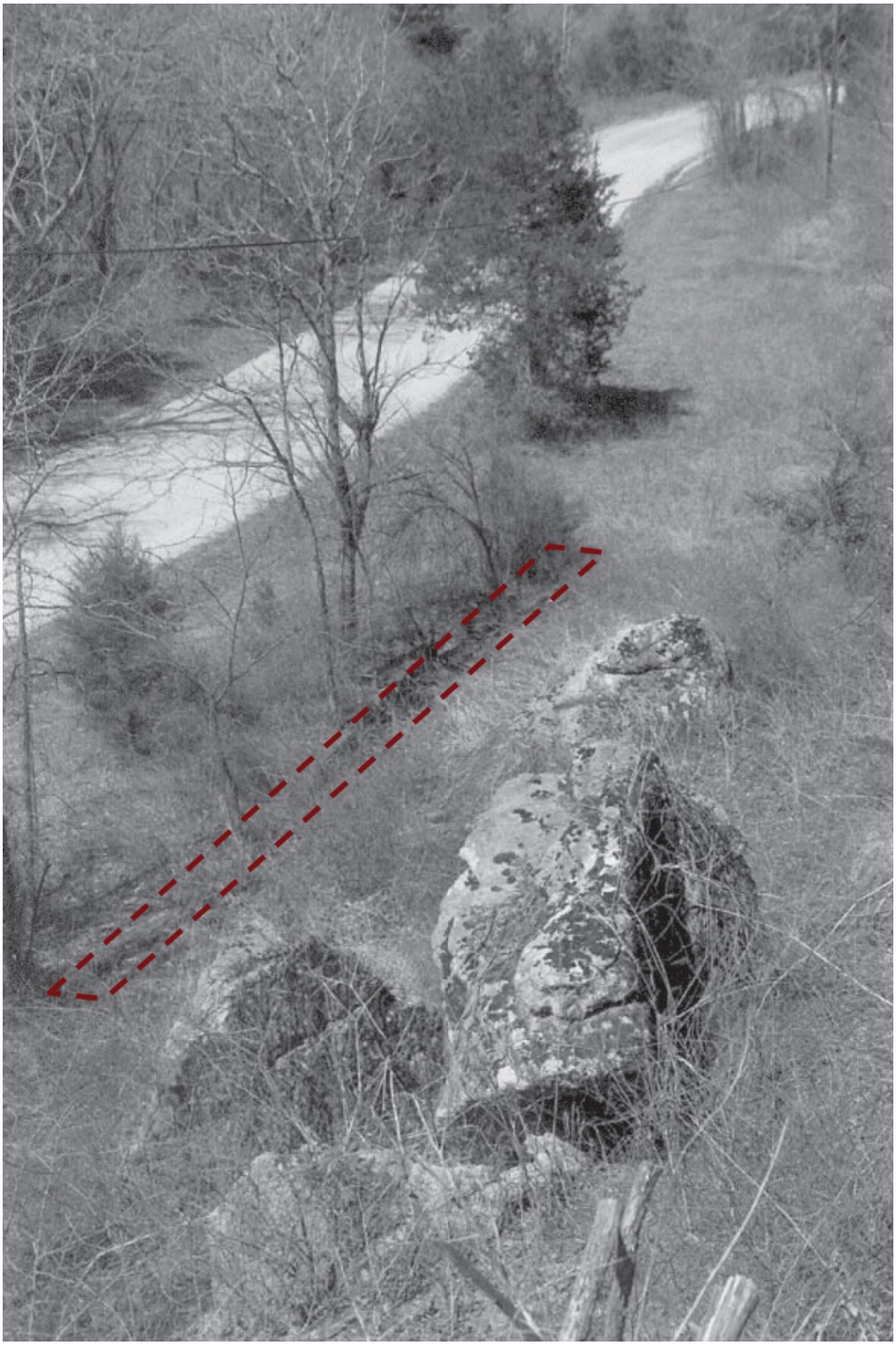


Figure 22: The red line indicates the approximate outline of the Hicks-era concrete cattle dip, now filled with soil and vegetation. The Hicks' livery barn once stood to the southeast (left) (Stratton III-287).



Figure 23: This foundation at the edge of the powerline corridor was one of several structures built in the area between the former store and Hall house by a subsequent owner in the late 1950s or early 1960s (Erdman 2016).



Figure 24: This stone may have supported the porch of the Hall house. No other remnants of the house are visible. (Erdman 2016).





Figure 25 (top): Lee Hicks, who with his wife Alice and five children founded the Hicks Hotel and Hicks Store (Ca. 1910s) (Ott 2010 page 64).

Figure 26 (left): Alice Hicks with her youngest son Johnnie (Ca 1916) (Ott 2010 page 63).



Figure 27: Alice Hicks with her four elder children and one grandchild. Left to right: Juanita, Obeta, Roscoe, Maudie, grandson Ray (Maudie's son), and Alice Hicks (ca. 1913) (Ott 2010 page 59).



Figure 28: Photograph taken from Rush Road of the west side of the Hicks Hotel, with the stone wall and west stair in the foreground. The people on the porch appear to be Mindy Maxey (left) and her adopted daughter Imogene Setzer (right), suggesting that the photograph was taken in the late 1930s or 1940s (Ott 2010 page 23).

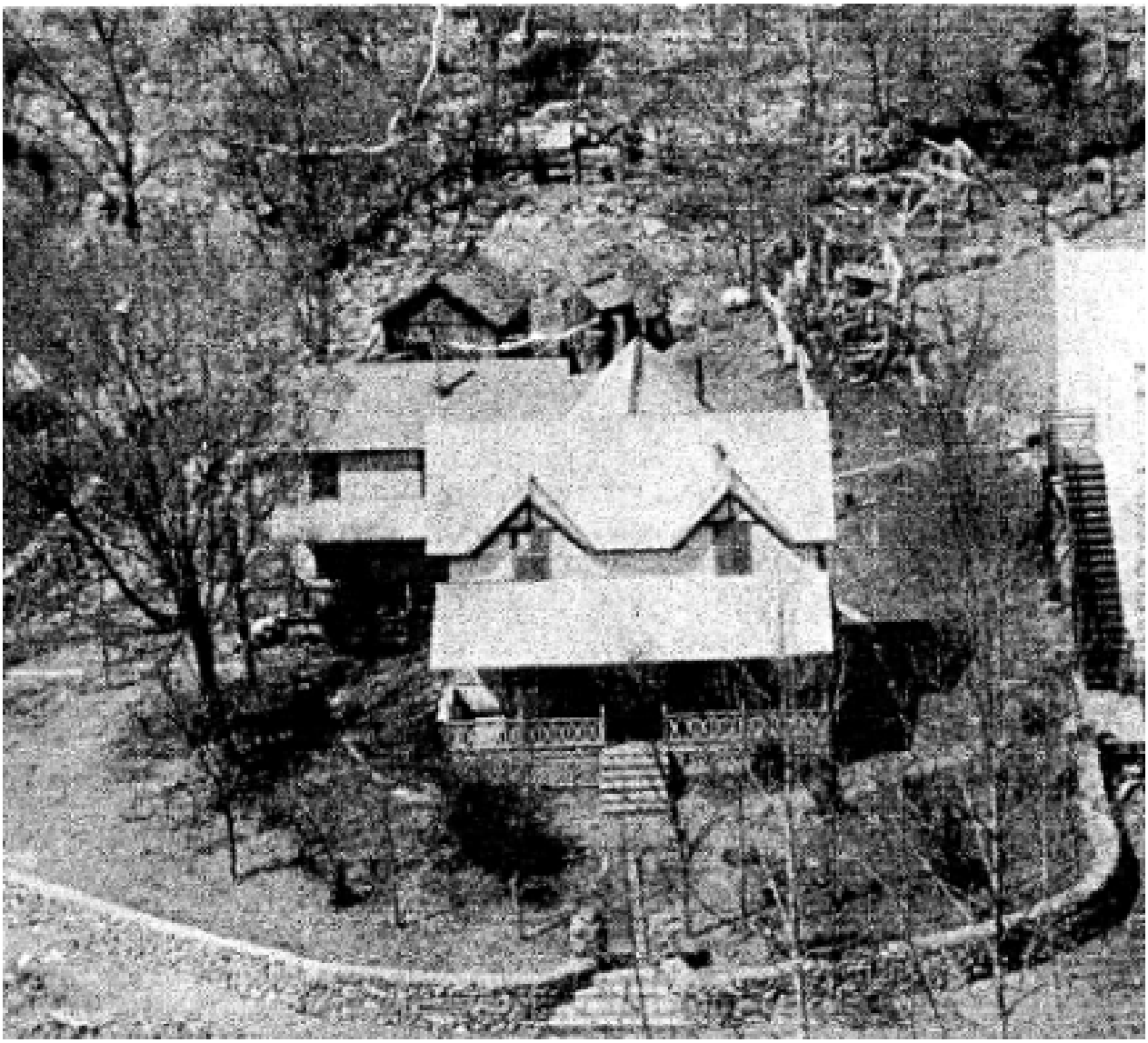


Figure 29: Photograph of the front (south) facade of the Hicks Hotel. Other visible elements include the stone wall, trees, shrubs, paths, outbuildings, fences, and gates. The livery barn stood west (left) of the hotel; a corner of the structure may be visible in the photograph. The brick walk and flower beds are not visible in this image, but these elements are still believed to have been installed during the Hicks period (ca. 1918) (Ott 2010 page 24).



Figure 30: Digital reconstruction of the Hicks Hotel ca. 1918 based on historic photographs and accounts. The hotel was painted white with dark trim on the south façade, but the trim color is not known (Erdman, et al.).



Figure 31: Photograph of the Morning Star livery barn ca. 1901, located about one half mile west of the Hicks livery barn. No photographs of the Hicks livery barn are known to exist, but former resident Ware Lafoon compared it to the Morning Star barn (Stratton 2006 pg III 160).

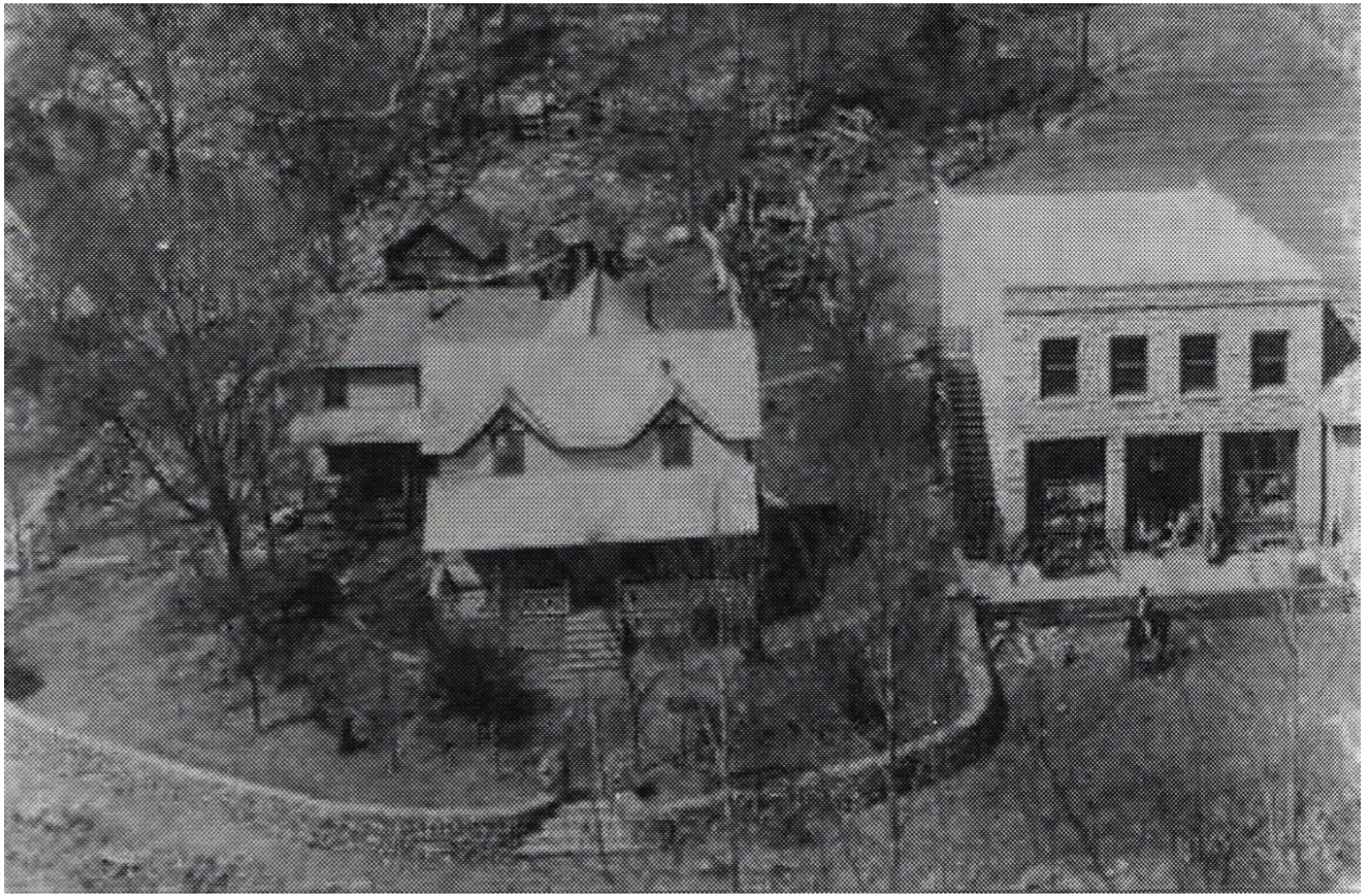


Figure 32: A photograph of the front (south) facade of the Hicks Hotel and Hicks Store taken from atop a bluff on the south side of Rush Road and Rush Creek (ca. 1918) (Kastning 1999).



Figure 33: A detail of Figure 33 showing the Hicks Store, the only large structure in Rush made predominately of stone. The second story contained hotels rooms accessed by the exterior stair (ca. 1918) (Kastning 1999).



Figure 34: Digital reconstruction of the Hicks Store ca. 1918 based on historic photographs and accounts (Erdman, et al.).



Figure 35: Young Rush residents have their photograph taken at the retaining wall and west stair near the Hicks Hotel. A “salt box” addition is clearly visible on the north (left), and a gate, possibly wrought iron, is located between the stone piers at the top of the stair (ca 1920s) (Kastning #36 group in front of Hicks House).



Figure 36: An aerial photograph taken in 1938 depicts the Hicks property after the store was closed and the hotel was sold, but while Alice, Roscoe, and Maude Hicks still lived in the Hall house. All three structures are visible in this image, as are pastures at the cattle dip (a faint diagonal line on the left). The shadows of some outbuildings can also be seen, but the livery barn is not apparent (Lone Rock 1938 Flight Lone 30 LR 383.).



Figure 37: Lee Hicks' headstone, a "Woodmen of the World Memorial," in Cowan Cemetery, Marion County, Arkansas. The epitaph reads: "'twas hard to give thee up, but Thy will O God, be done. O 'twill be sweet to meet on that blest shore, all sorrow passed and pain forever o'er" (Erdman 2016).



Figure 38: Roscoe Hicks, possibly in his 20s and after he took over his father's mercantile business (Ca. 1920s) (Ott 2010, page 51).



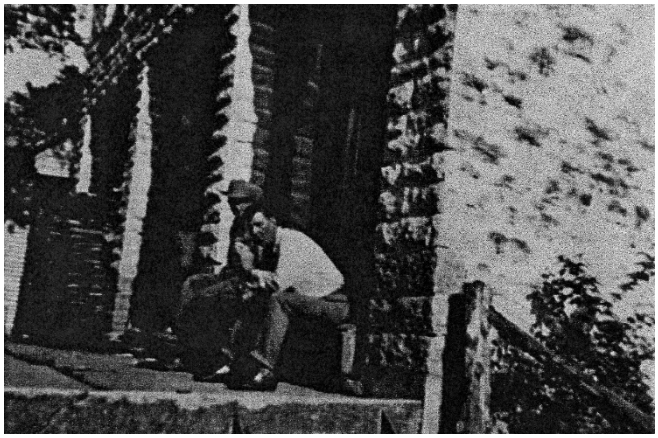




Figure 39 (top): Roscoe and his third wife, Maude, after a fishing trip in the Rush area, likely on the Buffalo River, in the 1930s or early 1940s (Ott 2010, page 66).

Figure 40 (top right): Will Maxey (left), who at the time owned the former Hicks Hotel, sitting on a bench in front of the vacant Hicks Store with an unidentified friend in the late 1930s or 1940s (Ott 2010, page 27).

Figure 41(right) : Mindy and Will Maxey standing on the vacant Hicks Store porch (Ca. 1940a) (Ott 2010, page 84).



Figure 42: An aerial photograph taken in 1964 and depicts significant changes in the Hicks landscape since the early 1950s, including the loss of the hotel and the conversion of the store to a residence (USGS 1964).



Figure 43: The former Hicks Store after it was converted to a single story residence in the 1950s or 1960s, then renovated for use by a Buffalo National River employee in 1978 (ca. 1980s) (Rush photographs and Maps-Hicks Site 1984-1993).



Figure 44: A detail of the 1972 aerial photograph from Figure 1 more clearly shows adaptations made to the Hicks site in the 1950s and 1960s (Rush-Buffalo Point 522 1972).

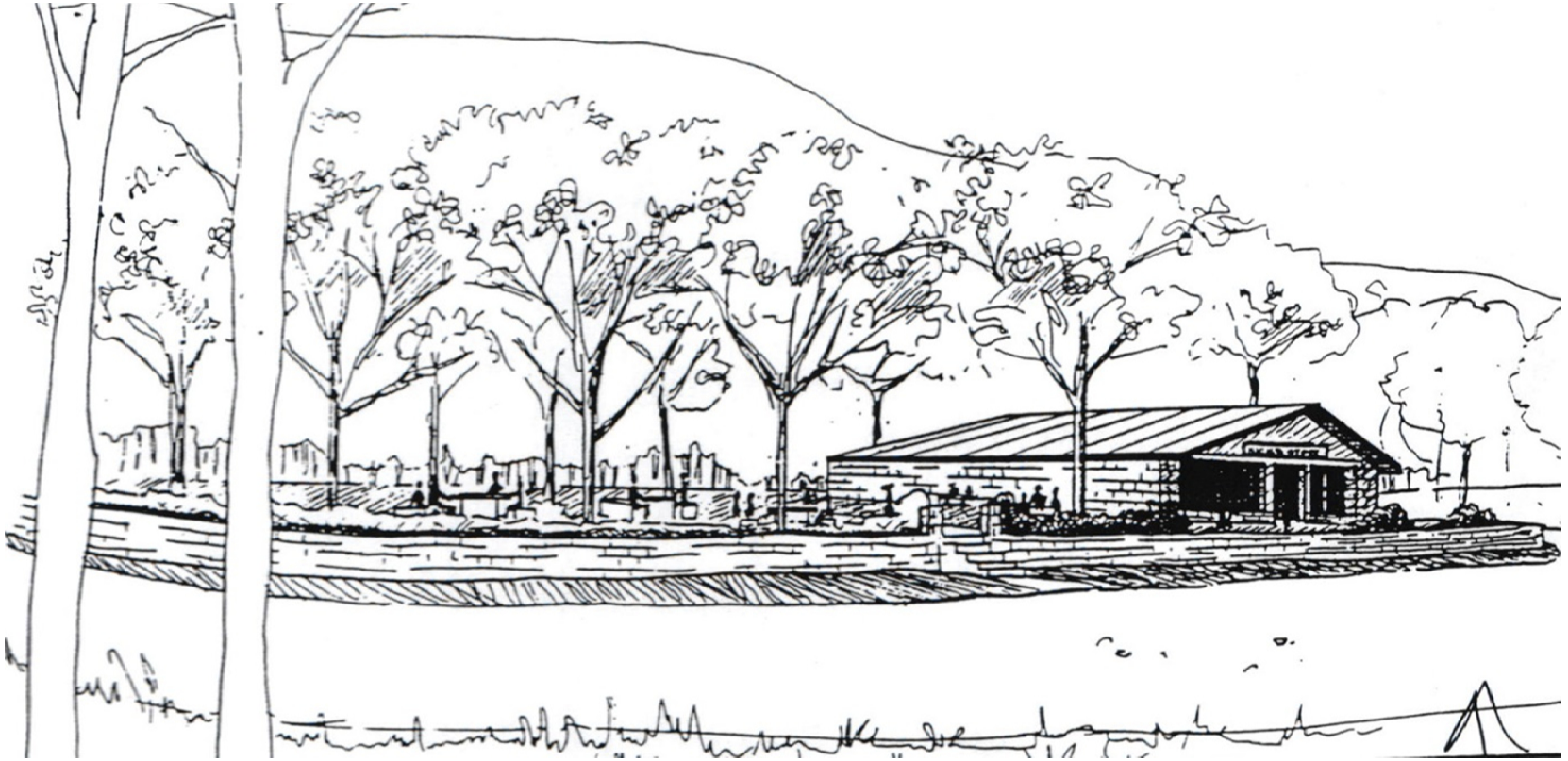


Figure 45: A National Park Service sketch depicting a possible treatment alternative for the former Hicks property, in which the hotel site and yard is utilized as a picnic area and the former Hicks Store/residence is adaptively reused as a visitor center (1989) (Special Study Rush Historic District Buffalo National River 1989, page 43).





Figures 46-47: Before (top) and after (bottom) photographs of the Hicks site depicting existing conditions and subsequent cleanup and stabilization tasks conducted by Buffalo National River in 1999 (Site Monitoring, Hicks Stone Wall, Rush Histoirc District 2 1999).



Figure 48: Remnants of the former Hicks Store/residence after an arsonist burned the structure in 2004. (National Park Service Incident Daily Cost Report, Short Form 2004)



Figure 49: Left to right: sisters Maudie Hicks Medley, Obeta Hicks Hall, and Juanita Hicks Tilley, the last members of the Hicks family in the 1960s or early 1970s (Ott 2010 page 60).