

A REPORT ON THE RESEARCH AND EXECUTION  
OF THE SCENIC DESIGN FOR  
*COME BACK TO THE 5 & DIME JIMMY DEAN, JIMMY DEAN*  
BY ED GRACZYK

CREATIVE PROJECT

Presented to the Graduate Council of  
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in Partial Fulfillment of  
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For the Degree

Master of Arts

By

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To my parents: Richard and Margaret

and to my wife: Jennifer

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE STORY AND THE PEOPLE

#### **The People**

The action of *Come Back to the 5 & Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean* takes place in one of the few remaining businesses in the small fictitious town of McCarthy; a town that has been by-passed by the interstate highway system. It is a bus ride away from Marfa, Texas, where the movie *Giant* was filmed in 1955. A drought is upon the land. As in the Greek myth of Oedipus in ancient Thebes, the drought is presented as a punishment for the “sins” of the characters in this play. Rain, and more specifically water, is quite symbolic in this play; water represents the innocence of the past as well as a resurrection from the interminable heat of this hell, McCarthy, a town that I believe was named after the former Senator Joe McCarthy.

Juanita, who assumed the business when her husband Sydney died, owns the Kressmont Five and Dime store. Up until his death, Sidney had been one of McCarthy’s more prominent businessmen; he had even been elected

mayor of McCarthy. All of this pomp and circumstance existed only on the surface, though, as Sidney was a bigot and an alcoholic. Graczyk uses Sidney's character as a stereotype of much of what is wrong with McCarthy.

The Kressmont's current owner, Juanita, is also presented as being flawed. Her sin began as a cover-up for her husband's bigotry and alcoholism. Juanita used religious zealotry as a mask to camouflage Sidney's sins. She was completely controlled by him while he lived, and she now justifies her submissions by making a saint of him after his death. This zealotry continues well past Sidney's death and into true denial of past events and circumstances. This cover-up permeates her existence and infests the day to day operation of the Kressmont and its other employees, Mona and Sissy.

Mona, the play's central character, has been employed at the Kressmont for more than twenty years. Her presence in the store began when she was a schoolgirl in high school and, to a great degree, has changed little since. After high school, her only development has come from dime store romances and movies. Her view of the world is narrow and jaded. She has done little to move beyond her pitiful existence, allowing herself to appear frail and sickly.

Mona, with the assistance of Sissy and some other childhood friends created the Disciples of James Dean, a club originally dedicated to worshiping the personality and being of James Dean and, ultimately, to ensuring his immortality after his untimely death in 1955. For Mona, this obsessive idolization of Dean surely began as a schoolgirl crush, but it has since escalated into a grand facade to disguise the paternity of her son, the Jimmy Dean of the play's title.

Sissy, another longtime employee of the Kressmont five and dime, began her career there in high school, just as Mona. She left for a time, but, after a substantial absence, returned to McCarthy. Sissy's character is presented as having somewhat loose morals and a very carefree spirit. She is visually portrayed as being quite buxom and inferences to her healthy libido recur frequently throughout the script.

Joe, the actual father of Mona's child and a former employee of the Kressmont, was fired by Sidney for dressing as a woman and creating a "scandal" in the town. Also a member of the Disciples of James Dean, Joe's character returns to a reunion of the Disciples of James Dean as a woman named Joanne. I believe that in many respects Joe/Joanne is an autobiographical dramatization by the author, Ed Graczyk, or at least

reveals much of who Graczyk is or could be.<sup>1</sup> The little that I have learned of the author's West Texas background indicates an upbringing similar to the story of the play, an upbringing stifled by bigotry and hatred, typical of some smaller towns.

The remaining two characters, Edna Louise and Stella May, are also members of the Disciples of James Dean. Edna Louise, the simple minded and unassuming one of this duo returns as a hairdresser and mother of six, soon to be seven kids. Her simpleton appearance and spirit adds a degree of humor and reality to this play. Stella May helps to round out the personality of the cast with her own version of life and her "take it as it comes" attitude. She returns to the reunion as the wife of a rich Amarillo oil tycoon, carefree and quite superficial.

The Disciples have each come back to McCarthy to attend the twentieth anniversary of the death of James Dean. Mona has maintained a shrine to him at the Kressmont since his death in 1955, when the Disciples agreed to return to pay homage to the actor. Entwined with this shrine and its creation by the disciples are the origins of the drought.

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<sup>1</sup> This conclusion is based upon a series of conversations I had with Albert London, who had worked in the theatre community in Odessa, Texas, where Graczyk spent time shortly before he wrote this play.

There are two inseparable times presented in this play. The first is the objective reality in which the reunion occurs in 1975. The second, which is more important, occurs in 1955 when the characters relive the events that brought them to this condition. Through the course of the reunion and flashbacks to 1955 the characters come to understand and purge their sins. Though most of the flashbacks appear to be a fabrication of Mona's imagination, they all occur in such a manner as to suggest everything exists simultaneously. The action of the play is unbroken as time seamlessly shifts from 1955 to 1975 and back to 1955.

Different actors present both Mona and Sissy for 1955 and 1975. They are so indicated by either a (then) or a (now) added to their name, as in the original script. For those instances where no indication is made, refer to the (now) character. Juanita, Edna Louise and Stella May move freely through time as the play unfolds. Ultimately this is a story of the transformation of Mona, Sissy and Juanita through the intercession of Joanne and witnessed by Stella May and Edna Louise. The character Joe/Joanne exists outside the drought that plagues McCarthy. His leaving precedes the drought and his return (as a female) is the catalyst that begins the transformation to self-redemption, if not salvation.

## Act One

The play opens, in 1975, with Juanita and Mona preparing for the reunion of the Disciples of James Dean. Mona has just returned from her daylong bus ride to Marfa, an annual pilgrimage to retrieve memorabilia from Reata, the movie setting for most of the action of *Giant*. Mona has always claimed and maintained that the famous actor James Dean sired her son while *Giant* was being filmed. Actually, Mona and Joe had gone to Marfa to try to appear as extras in the film; That's when the child was conceived. Mona claims he is retarded, to keep him forever close, in an effort to hide his true paternity.

Mona has just gone out the screen doors when we experience the first flashback to 1955. Thunder and rain introduce a breath of fresh air into the scene, but the wet is as wrong as the dry. It is in the wet that the sins are committed. To the audience, the rain should come as glass of salt water to a desert traveler. In 1955, Mona (then) enters with a suitcase. She claims to have returned from college due to asthma, which as it turns out is another fabrication of her imagination. Actually she was pregnant. Prophetically, Juanita sees the return of rain to McCarthy as the salvation of this dried up town, as we return to 1975.

Thunder and rain return us, again, to 1955. We find Sidney has fired Joe. He was upset that Joe performed with Mona and Sissy in an imitation of the McGuire Sisters at a school talent show. Sydney was also concerned about the rumors of a homosexual incident at a school dance with a boy named Lester T. Callahan. Juanita declares, “[Joe] is a sick boy that should be treated before he grows up into a communist.”<sup>2</sup>

Sissy enters in 1975 from outside the store carrying groceries for the reunion and a newspaper. She is excited about an article in the paper concerning an Ice Capades’ audition. In the banter between Sissy and Juanita, we learn a good deal about Sissy’s character and her wild and flirtatious nature. There are references to her large breasts, former escapades roller-skating, her current short dress, and her flirting with Luke Dempsey at the Texaco station. Juanita unpacks the groceries and discovers that Sissy has forgotten the bread. Irritated, Juanita goes to get the bread herself. Sissy fumes, “Jeezus, you’d think I’d committed [*sic*] a mortal sin or somethin’ [*sic*] . . . hell, it’s only bread.”<sup>3</sup> This is spoken in front of a lighted copy of Da Vinci’s painting of *The Last Supper*, which is second

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<sup>2</sup> Ed Graczyk, *Come Back to the 5 & Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean* (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1982), 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

only to the shrine to James Dean, as the most significant visual image of the play. This interesting religious metaphor hints that Sissy, Mona and Juanita need salvation.

Juanita, having returned with a loaf of bread, begins to make sandwiches, while Sissy paints her nails. Sissy is quite artificial and superficial. Mona enters from the storeroom and reveals that both water faucets are dry. She remarks that it has been three years without rain. Sissy looks at the thermometer outside of the store and then asks Juanita for a broom to bang the blades of the broken ceiling fan. She directs Juanita to flick the switch of the fan; all attempts fail. They comment on how the only patrons to the store are Mexicans, and they are used to the heat. All of this exposition helps to paint a picture of the drought that plagues the city and defines the conservative, prejudiced climate found in McCarthy.

Their discussion moves from the town to the decorations. One streamer has fallen, and Sissy goes to the ladder to rehang it. Sissy comments that the higher the elevation the hotter it gets. She says, “Wouldn’t it just tick everybody off though, if all their lives they worked their butts off to get to heaven an’ hell turned out to be the coolest spot all along?”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 33.

Mona goes to the screen door wondering about Jimmy Dean. She goes out front to call Jimmy Dean then storms back in complaining about “those warped an’ demented people”<sup>5</sup> out there who take advantage of Jimmy Dean’s handicap. Mona feigns an asthma attack and goes to a chair for support, a symptom that repeats any time she tries to hide the paternity of Jimmy Dean. Sissy says the town folk are really laughing at her, “Mona Magdalene.”<sup>6</sup> not at Jimmy Dean. Mona attempts to knock Sissy off the ladder, but Juanita intercedes. The confrontation wanes. Sissy goes out front to cool off, and, at Mona’s urging, Juanita calls the Texaco station to locate Jimmy Dean.

Mona suddenly catches a glimpse of a figure outside of the screen door; it is Joe with a battered and bruised face. This vision disappears just as suddenly. Sissy (then) suspects something is wrong with Mona (then) but Mona (then) refuses to discuss her pregnancy. Mona sees the apparition of Joe through the screen door again and tries to get Juanita to see it. Instead, both witness a yellow Porsche drive up and park outside on the street.

Soon the driver, Joanne, enters the store, looks around, and comments on not seeing many dime stores like this anymore. Juanita asks if she needs

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

anything. Joanne, in an attempt to fabricate a reason for entering, says she needs sunglasses and goes to the sunglass display. Joanne tells Juanita she is just passing through. Mona comments on the superhighway passing them up. Mona finds Joanne's voice familiar as she says, "I saw one of your signs down by the highway. . . 'See the son of James Dean, visit Kressmont's five-and-dime, nine miles ahead.'" We subsequently learn how Sidney and Juanita, and Mona profited from the claim that Jimmy Dean was the son of James Dean. We learn that Sidney became mayor of McCarthy. The entire town of McCarthy reaped significant financial reward from the child's notoriety.

Stella May and Edna Louise arrive for the reunion, and through the rest of the act try to identify Joanne. Mona has another asthma attack and grabs onto the doorframe for support. The attack seems to be prompted by Joanne's presence. Juanita helps Mona to a seat. Joanne suggests a shot of whiskey for Mona. Juanita forbids the consumption of alcohol in the store. Joanne says Sidney hid a bottle under the counter, died of liver disease, etc. Juanita and the rest are shocked that a complete stranger knows so much about Sidney. Mona sees Joe again and begins to realize who she is seeing

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 35.

in the door, as well as who Joanne is. Sissy (then) enters from the back room with magazines for the magazine display. Mona (then) follows her. Joe opens the door, Mona rushes to him. Sissy is the first to express what everyone is now discovering that Joanne is actually Joe. Sissy exclaims, “Holy shit! . . . The McGuire Sisters are reunited!”<sup>8</sup> A quick blackout ends act one.

## Act Two

The action continues unbroken from the previous scene. Mona (then) and Sissy (then) take Joe to the back room to clean his wounds, while Sissy embraces Joanne. Stella May slowly realizes who Joanne really is. These simultaneous actions reveal Graczyk’s major thematic comment. The autobiographical Joe is cast in the role of a messiah. He has been sacrificed for these sinners, and as a resurrected Joanne has returned to save their souls. Joanne reveals that Joe saw Sidney’s face when Joe was beaten and raped by Lester T. Callahan. Juanita claims he was in Waco. This is the first revelation of Juanita hiding of Sidney’s sins. Joanne says, “I don’t have to

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 48.

pretend any more,”<sup>9</sup> and begins to tear down the facades so desperately erected by Mona, Sissy and Juanita.

The reunion progresses to the meeting of the Disciples of James Dean. Joanne toasts the Disciples. Mona (then) enters and “both groups become involved in the same meeting. Only Stella May and Edna Louise will double as ‘then’ and ‘now’ switching ages as their lines indicate. Neither group acknowledges or is aware of the other except them [*sic*].”<sup>10</sup> Mona is asked to repeat her story of *Giant* and the encounter with James Dean. Mona describes how she lent James Dean a box of matches to light his cigarettes, how the matches were a part of the shrine and ultimately how she had to sell them to pay for braces for Jimmy Dean.

As Mona tells her story we begin to see into her character. She is so frail, and weak. She tries to prevent Joe or Joanne from adding to or altering her version of the events. She is unable to share the spotlight with anyone. Mona insists that Joe was never with her at Reata. Yet one must feel for her, must understand her. She is that uncertainty that is inherent in everyone. Her story goes on: she and James Dean met on the porch of Reata; they made love, and the sun eventually rose to the brightest red she

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 52.

has ever seen. Graczyk chooses to use a red sunrise with its ancient prophecy of storms to come.<sup>11</sup> Mona tells the others that She and James Dean had sex that night in Marfa, and that she is pregnant with his child. Thunder is heard. A car is started. Juanita has just seen Jimmy Dean drive away. Joanne looks for her keys and realizes that she left them in her car. A radio announcer reports that James Dean has just been killed in an automobile accident. In this way Graczyk underscores the death of Mona's story.

In response to a subtle insinuation that Joanne planned for Jimmy Dean to flee in her Porsche, Joanne begins tearing down Sissy's facade. Joanne tells of a meeting with Lester T. Callahan in Oklahoma City where Lester described his breakup with Sissy. Sissy finally admits that Lester T. Callahan left her and reveals that she had a mastectomy. In fact, she runs out the screen door and exclaims, "Hey . . . hey, everybody out there in McCarthy, Texas . . . guess what?! . . . They're rubber!. Sissy's got rubber

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>11</sup> The origin of this ancient method of forecasting the weather probably precedes recorded history. In the NAB Book of Matthew Verses 16: 2 - 3 Jesus is quoted as saying "In the evening you say, 'red sky at night, the day will be bright'; but in the morning, 'sky red and gloomy, the day will be stormy.'"

tits!”<sup>12</sup> She laughs for the first time in a long time at this new found freedom.

Sissy, feeling liberated and healed, begins to attack Mona’s facade. Mona still tries to keep her secret. Sissy reveals how she helped Jimmy Dean get out. She tells how she, as well as almost everyone else in town has known James Dean wasn’t the father of Jimmy Dean. Mona begins to absorb the truth.

Grabbing for the bottle of bourbon, Juanita faces her secret: “I tried to protect him [Sidney]. I even lied to God so’s he’d take him into heaven. Maybe that’s why God has punished me.”<sup>13</sup> The storm has passed, though it never rains. As Juanita reaches for the bottle, Sissy turns off the light above *The Last Supper* painting. Eventually Joanne and Mona forgive each other and the two join with Sissy to perform their McGuire Sisters routine until the end of the play.

### Analysis

This absence of rain ultimately is Graczyk’s comment that though individuals may change, society as a whole resists change. There is no

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<sup>12</sup> Graczyk, 85.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 90.

indication that any of the characters acquire true happiness, only an acceptance of the past.

I assume that Graczyk grew up in a town just as conservative and overbearing as McCarthy was to Joe/Joanne. McCarthy is home to the hypocrisy that enables Sidney to come across as being an upstanding citizen, to the point of being elected mayor of the town, while he remains an alcoholic and a bigot hidden by his wife's religious zeal. McCarthy is that town which accepts the bludgeoning and rape suffered by Joe, at the hands of Lester T. Callahan, as a cure for an illness referred to as communism.<sup>14</sup> This specific reference is my evidence that Graczyk did indeed have the former Senator Joe McCarthy in mind when he named his town McCarthy.

Like Joe, Mona is a victim as well. She is a victim of her upbringing, her surroundings and her denial of Joe's paternity of Jimmy Dean. It is McCarthy and its citizens' conservative view of single motherhood that Mona fears. She feels her only chance of surviving such a scandal is to sensationalize the event. Such a ploy is probably not unlike those she reads about in her dime store romances or sees at the movies. This denial forms the root of her existence, that of constantly keeping up her facade.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 20.

To a lesser extent, Sissy is also a victim, though less so than Joe or Mona. Sissy is someone who lives as she pleases in spite of the conservative nature of McCarthy. Her curse stems from her hiding the fact that her husband Lester T. Callahan left her because he couldn't accept her mastectomy. Sissy's is a sin of pride and the inability to face the humiliation of losing her husband due to a loss of a portion of her perceived womanhood.

Juanita's suffering comes purely at the hands of her blind denial of Sidney's hypocrisy. Though she is a citizen of McCarthy and a product of that society, if only by association, she was controlled by her husband and consequently blindly followed him. He was the root of her evil, and her salvation was most easily obtained.

Stella May and Edna Louise are special. They exist outside of the parameters of McCarthy's plague in that they either left before the curse befell McCarthy or never accepted the guilt by association. They exist as foils, or possibly witnesses, for the redemption of Mona, Sissy and Juanita.

Though Mona's, Sissy's and Juanita's true redemption is never revealed, one can assume that they at least gained an acceptance of the events that forced them into their situation. Ending the play in this manner illustrates that Graczyk believes in the salvation of the individual, not the whole. It is

with the individual that he chooses to display hope; Sissy, Juanita and most notably Mona are the ones to rise above their pasts and move on to a better tomorrow. The rest of the citizens of McCarthy don't achieve this same self-realization. Hope isn't a characteristic of society, at least in McCarthy, Texas.

## CHAPTER 2

### REPORT ON RESEARCH

#### **The Life of Ed Graczyk**

The Play is set in the fictitious town of McCarthy – a bus ride away from Marfa, Texas where the movie *Giant* was filmed in 1955. McCarthy has been bypassed by the Interstate Highway system and, with it, the urbanization of the latter part of the twentieth century. No new commerce has come to town since 1955. Many of its citizens have moved away. A drought is upon the land. As in the Greek myth of Oedipus in ancient Thebes, the drought is presented as a punishment for the “sins” of the characters in this play.

The author, Ed Graczyk, I believe, has chosen to name the town McCarthy after the former United States Senator Joe McCarthy. He typifies the depiction of the citizens of McCarthy, who are presented as being rather

conservative, closed minded and somewhat prejudicial of any ideology not consistent with white, Christian evangelical dogma.

Whereas one typically begins the journey of researching a play with the life of the playwright, my journey to discover Ed Graczyk was very brief. There was little to no mention of Ed Graczyk, beyond general biographical information, in any reference material I found. In addition, I would argue much of the play is autobiographical on behalf of the Joe/Joanne character. However, though valuable and critical to the understanding of the play, this insight manifests itself little in any visual component in the world of *Come Back to the 5 & Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean*.

### **McCARTHY, TEXAS**

Upon first glance, there are few facts presented in the script with which to begin research. They are simply, the time, September 30, 1975 and September 30, 1955, and the place, “a five and dime in McCarthy, a small town in west Texas.”<sup>1</sup> Looking at any map of Texas one quickly realizes there is no town of McCarthy, which frees one from accurately depicting a particular five and dime in this specific town. With this metaphorical representation of any small west Texas five and dime, and I suspect any

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<sup>1</sup> Graczyk, 6.

coffee shop, diner or dime store in any small town, comes the responsibility to accurately represent this particular five and dime. In other words, any scenic representation of the H. L. Kressmont Company dime store must, to the audience, become a specific and readily recognizable place where these characters must exist. With this knowledge, I began a journey that ultimately lead to the creation of the set.

I began at this point with a severe disadvantage, I hadn't the slightest idea what a west Texas dime store should look like. I grew up with discount superstores and fast food establishments. I needed to discover just exactly what a west Texas five and dime looked like. I had to learn what they sold, how merchandise would have been displayed, who would have operated the store, etc., Though the entire action of the play centers around the interior of the store, there needed to be a sense of the exterior, which required that I discover the town of McCarthy as well. My only experiences of west Texas were in El Paso. No town in Texas could be further from an accurate representation of the McCarthy of the script than El Paso. I had never seen the movie version of the play or an actual live production. Consequently, I started with almost no prior knowledge of this show.

My research began at the Southwest Texas State University library in August, 1993 where I found very limited resources initially. There were no

specific sources for five and dimes, much less west Texas five and dimes, and though I found some images worthy of note in various Texas county pictorial histories, their value proved to be quite limited.<sup>2</sup> The images I found tended to be exterior views that weren't labeled as anything other than a particular family from a particular town, who happened to be on the steps of a general store. When I found an interior view the image either wasn't a five and dime, or the focus was on a group of citizens, not architectural detail. Tables of contents and bibliographies were of little value here, as these county histories are poorly indexed. Except for sheer luck of finding a few applicable images, these histories were of little value.

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<sup>2</sup> John B. Black, *John Black's Pictorial History: Honey Grove, Texas 1880-1925* (Wolfe City, Texas: Henington Publishing Co., 1988).

Judith Singer Cohen, *Cowtown Moderne: Art Deco Architecture of Fort Worth, Texas*, with a forward by David Gebhard (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1988).

John L. Davis, *San Antonio: A Historical Portrait* (Austin: The Encino Press, 1978).

Faye Downs and Ray Fluckinger, *Abilene: An American Centennial. A Collection of Historic and Contemporary Photography* (Abilene, Texas: Rupert N. Richardson Press, 1982).

Dolores Kenyon, *From Arrows to Astronauts: A Short History of the Communities Surrounding Clear Creek* (League City, Texas: National Association of Conservation Districts, 1976).

Jerry Thompson, *Laredo: A Pictorial History* (Norfolk: The Donning Company, Publishers, 1986).

Eleanor Mitchell Traweek, *Of Such as These: A History of Motley County and its Families* (Wichita Falls, Texas: Nortex Offset Publications, Inc., 1973).

Young County Historical Survey Committee, *Grahm Centennial History, Graham, Texas 1872-1972: 100 Years of Progress from Salt Works to Space Age* (Wichita Falls: Nortex Offset Publications, Inc., 1972).

In addition to Texas county histories, I consulted sources devoted to the restaurant and supermarket industries.<sup>3</sup> These sources tended to cater to upscale establishments, not small dime stores. I did find specific period set decorations such as cash registers, product displays, etc. Little of this information found its way into the actual design.

Still lacking essential information, I scheduled some field trips to discover and photograph needed visual information. I had no time to travel out to west Texas. Instead I made several trips to nearby towns in central Texas, which my inquires suggested might provide applicable data. The first trip, which started here in San Marcos and ended up in Shiner, Texas,

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<sup>3</sup> William Wilson Atkin and Joan Adler, *Interiors Book of Restaurants* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1960).

James Brough, *The Woolworths* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1982).

Mildred Constantine and Egbert Jacobson, *Sign Language for Buildings and Landscape* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1961).

Robert B. Konikow, *Point of Purchase Design: The Graphics of Merchandise Design* (New York: PBC International, Inc., 1985).

Robert B. Konikow, *Point of Purchase Design 2* (New York: PBC International, Inc., 1989).

Naoki Mukoda, *Signs: Signboards and Storesigns in Europe and the United States of America*. (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppan-Sha, 1987).

Laszlo Roth, *Display Design: An introduction to Window Display, Point-of-Purchase, Posters, Signs and Signage, Sales Environments, and Exhibit Displays* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1983).

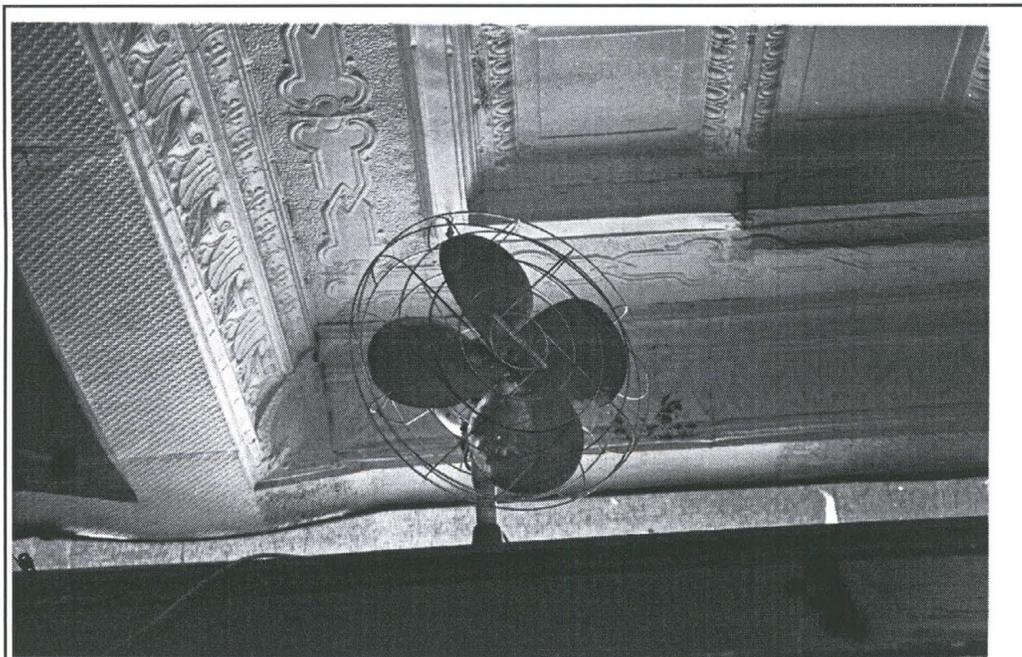
Pat Watters, *Coca-Cola: an Illustrated History* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1978).

with several stops between. I found that family owned and operated dime stores have been replaced with discount super centers. I was able to “taste” the flavor of the town squares and buildings. Still I found no kernel on which to base my design.

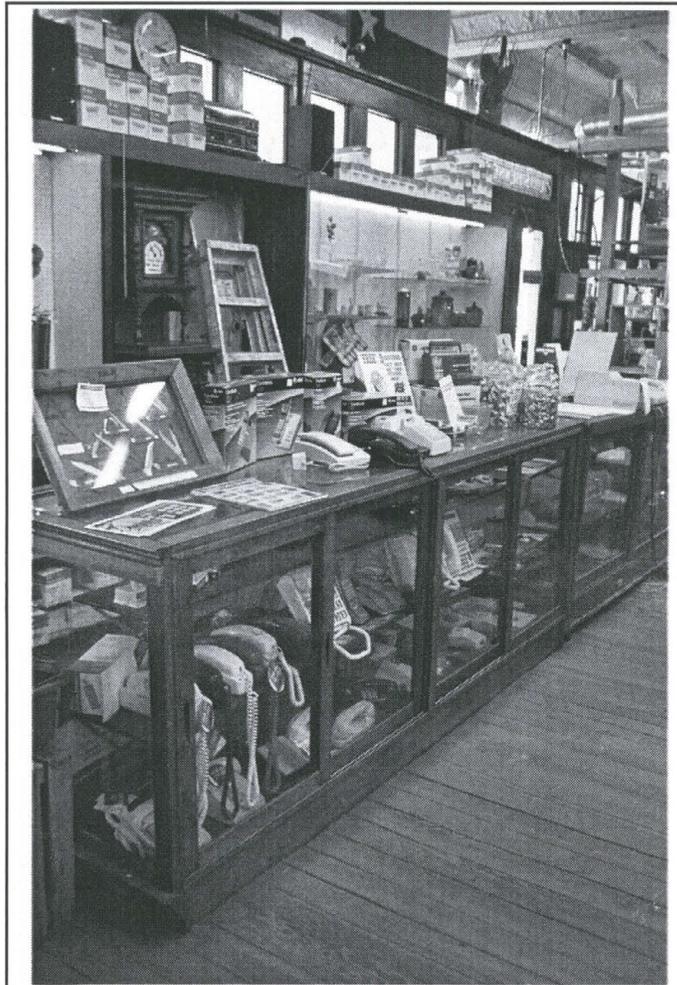
I made little progress in my research until late October, when the director, G. W. Bailey, returned from filming a movie in Russia. It was at this time that four separate events took place that resulted in the creation of my kernel idea. The first breakthrough came during a trip to New Braunfels and San Antonio, Texas. The second discovery was a book about diners in America that I found in the University Library. The third discovery involved a pharmacy in Austin, Texas. The fourth event was actually a rediscovery of photographs I had taken when preparing a scenic design of *The Last Meeting of the Knights of the White Magnolia*, by Preston Jones, the setting for which was a small Texas town. I’ll explore each of these developments in some detail.

The trip to New Braunfels and San Antonio, revealed that the most accurate representations of dime stores, or should I say the most useful research for my particular needs, was in older, slightly larger cities. In New Braunfels I found Henne Hardware. Although it was not a dime store, it had a particular presence that appealed to me on an instinctive level as being the

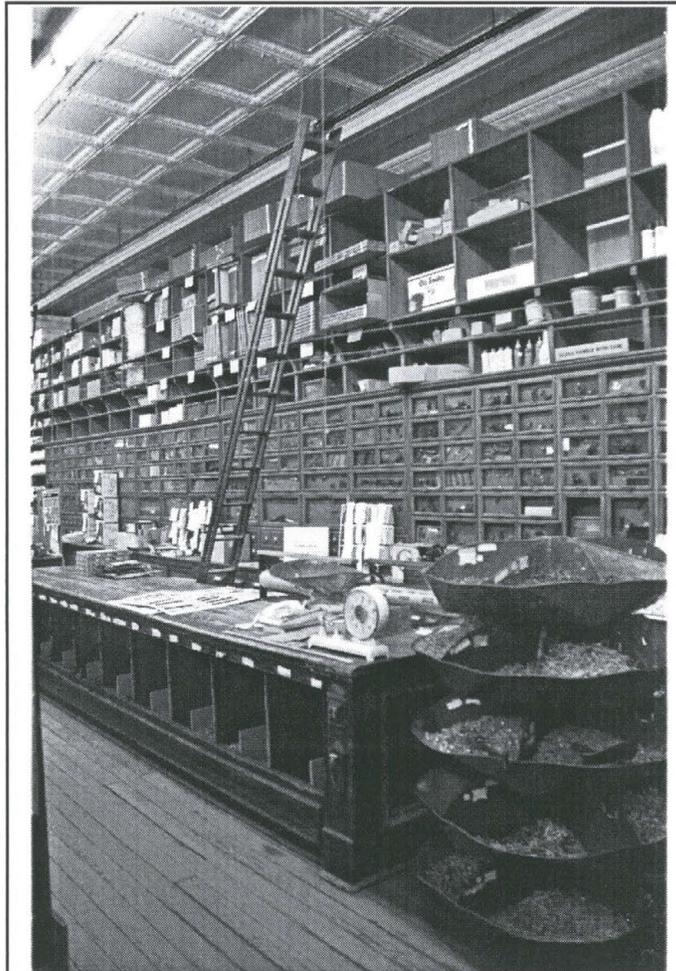
correct feel for this show. Particular elements of the store seemed right for the play. From the wood floors and pressed tin ceiling to the crown moulding and the service counters, this store helped establish what would eventually become my design (see figs., 1–4).



**Figure 1: Ceiling Detail**



**Figure 2: Merchandise Display**



**Figure 3: Merchandise Display**

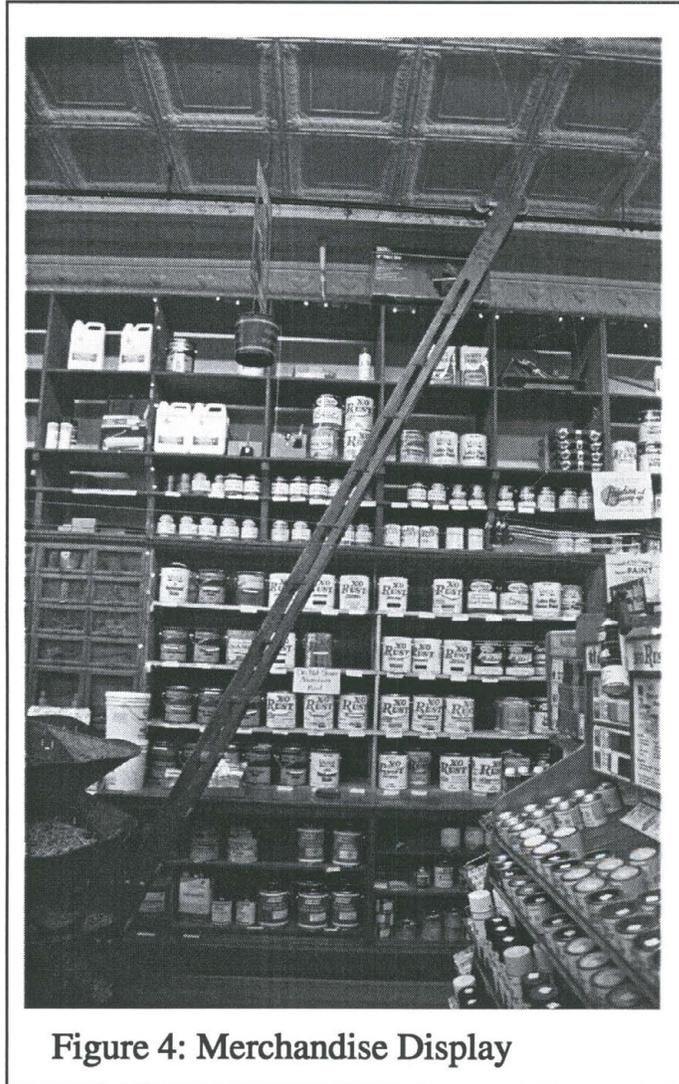


Figure 4: Merchandise Display

The various antique stores in New Braunfels also proved useful as a source of period set dressing research (see figs., 5–11). Graczyk's play demands a certain level of realistic representation in regard to scenery and set dressing. Though two time periods are specified, the story occurs in 1975. Therefore, all scenic elements must fit the loose description of being from the mid-seventies or earlier, which is a rather comfortable level realistic representation.



**Figure 5: Merchandise Display**

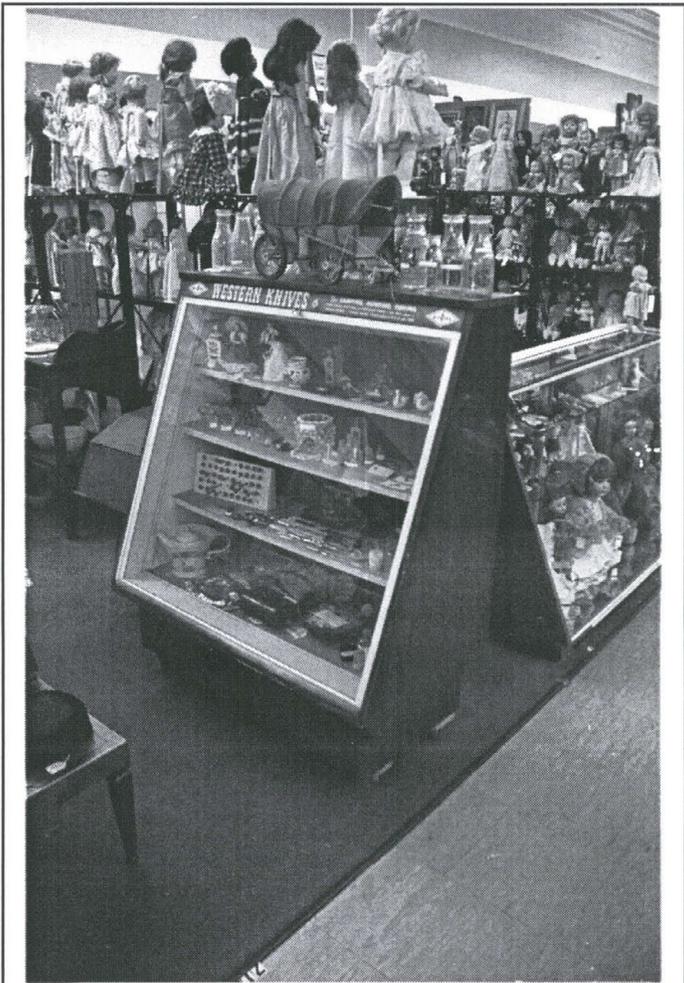


Figure 6: Merchandise Display

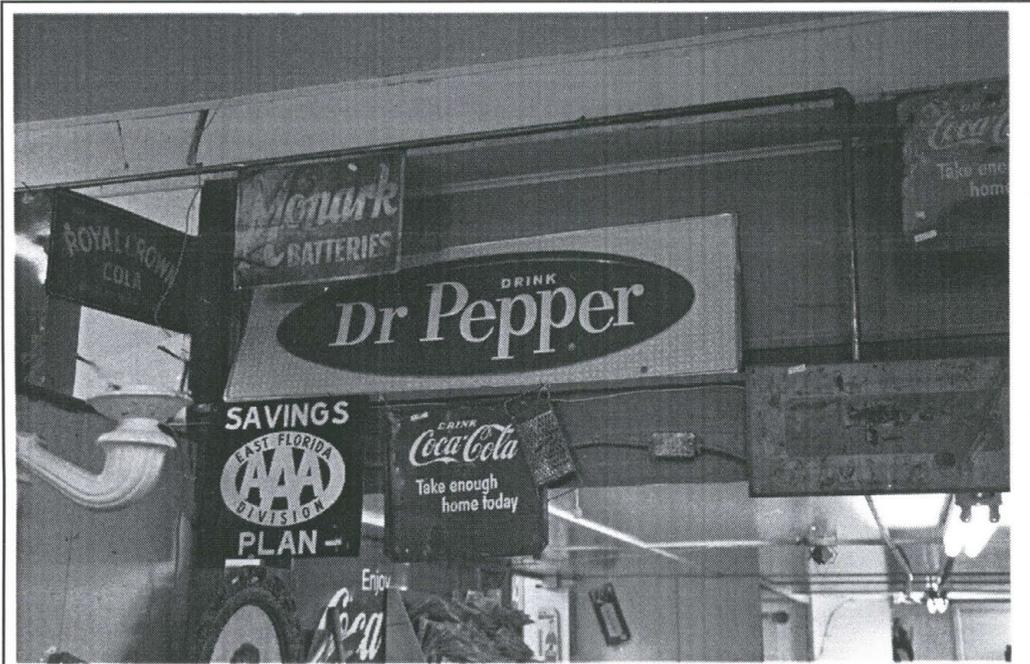


Figure 7: Period Signage

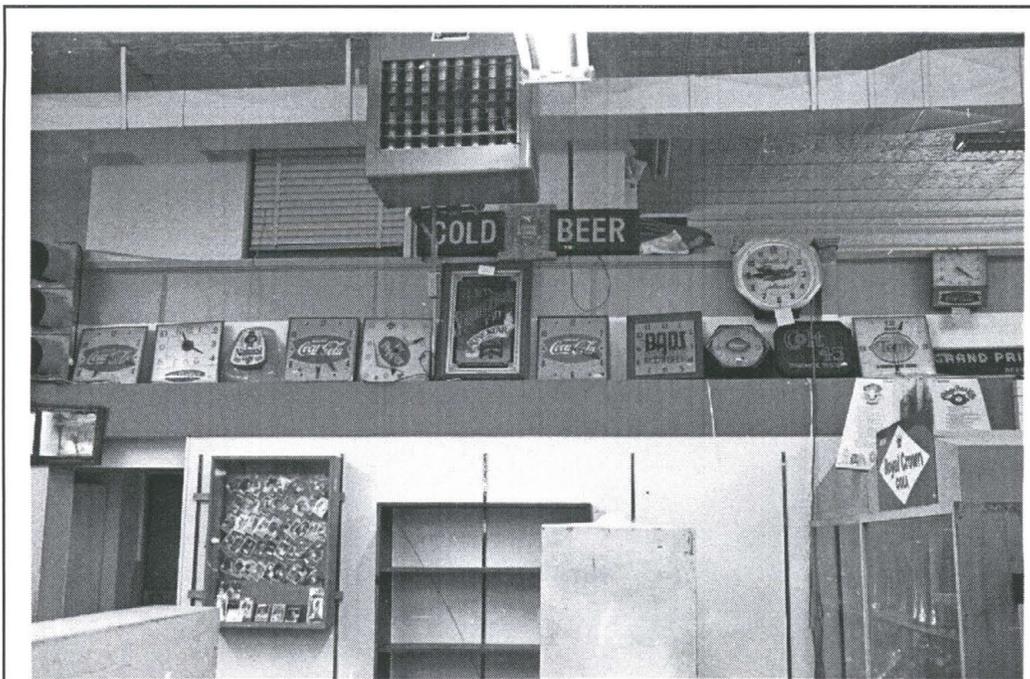


Figure 8: Period Signage



Figure 9: Period Set Dressing



Figure 10: Period Set Dressing and Signage

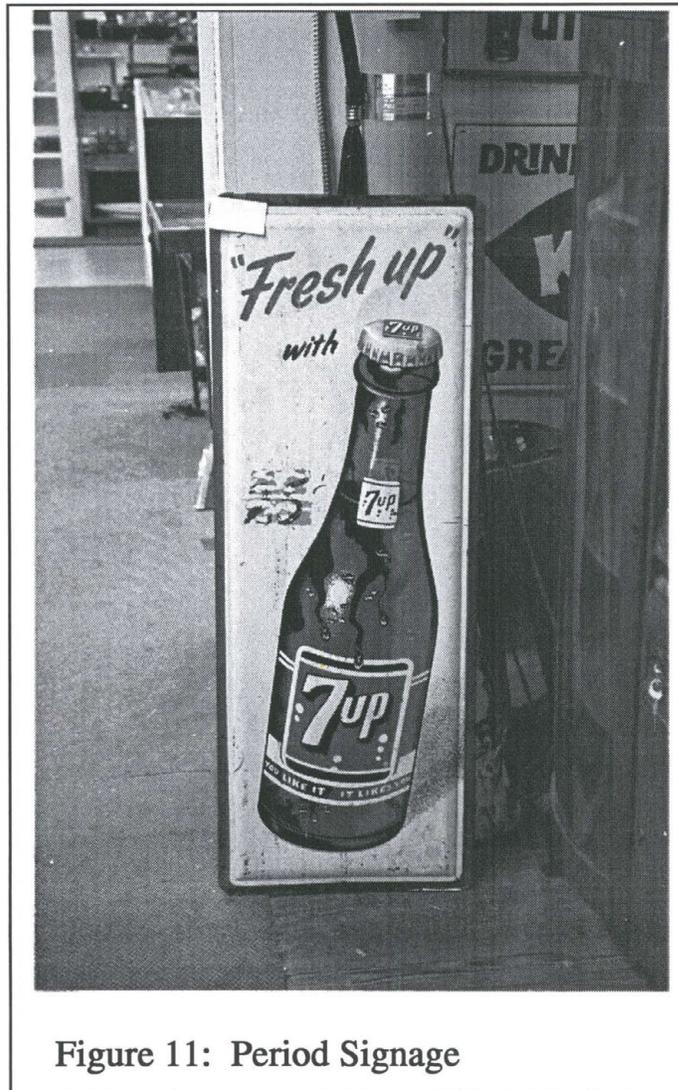


Figure 11: Period Signage

In addition to the interior elements I observed, I found the downtown area surrounding Henne Hardware to be particularly interesting (see figs., 12–16). This two block stretch of buildings, which is on one of the four main streets leading off the New Braunfels town square, exists, almost as its own little town, separate from the remainder of New Braunfels. A one time New Braunfels may have been a small town much like McCarthy. That

certain separate yet self contained feel present in this section of New Braunfels struck a particular chord that seemed so relevant to my research. It was here that I was beginning a journey into the town of McCarthy, and eventually into the H. L. Kressmont. The buildings on either side of Henne Hardware and across the street seemed to me to be analogous to those I would have found in McCarthy. The train tracks were just down the street with a restored train station, surely I saw Jimmy Dean watching the passing trains. Luke's Texaco was just down the street. The Henne hardware store was no Kressmont, yet walking the street in front of the store was a tremendous asset in defining McCarthy.



**Figure 12: Downtown New Braunfels, Texas**



Figure 13: Downtown New Braunfels, Texas



Figure 14: Downtown New Braunfels, Texas

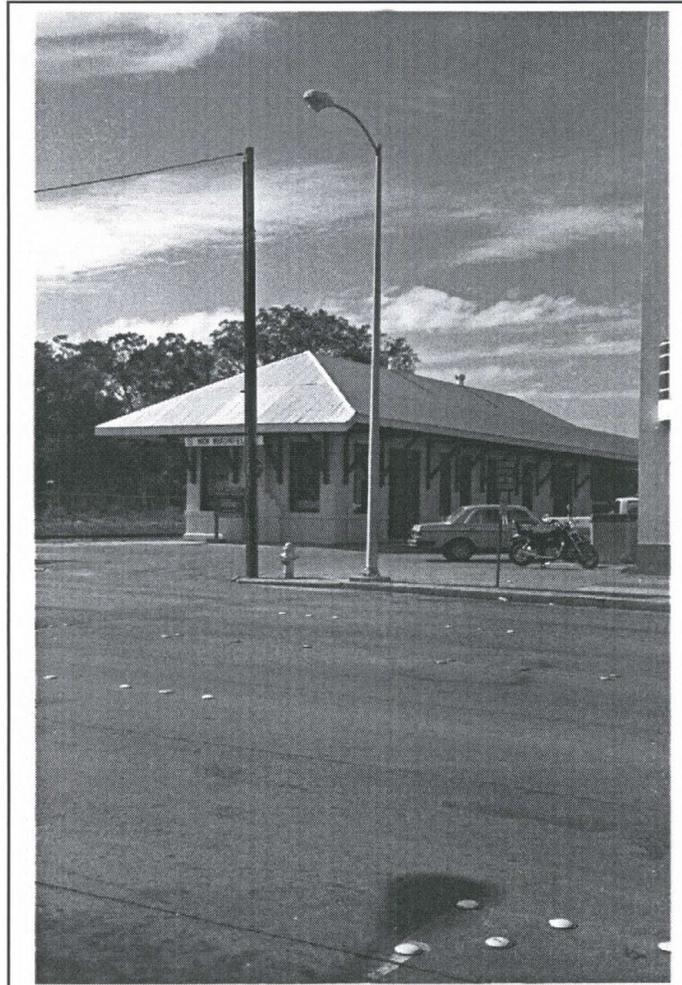


Figure 15: Downtown New Braunfels,  
Texas



Later that afternoon I hit upon a gold mine in two Kress stores, a Woolworth, and a variety of food and drink establishments located in downtown San Antonio.

The Woolworth, though aged and considered somewhat mediocre in our modern society of 24 hour superstores, represents the pinnacle of five and dimes (see figs., 17–18). Occupying a rather large corner across from the Alamo in this historic city, this particular store caters to a large variety of local citizens and tourists. Replete with two floors of bargain wares and clothing as well as obligatory Alamo souvenirs, the Woolworth is too big and impersonal to be the Kressmont. Still it is the larger version of any

small time five and dime of twenty years ago; it has a soda fountain, bargain wares, and so many of the appropriate details.

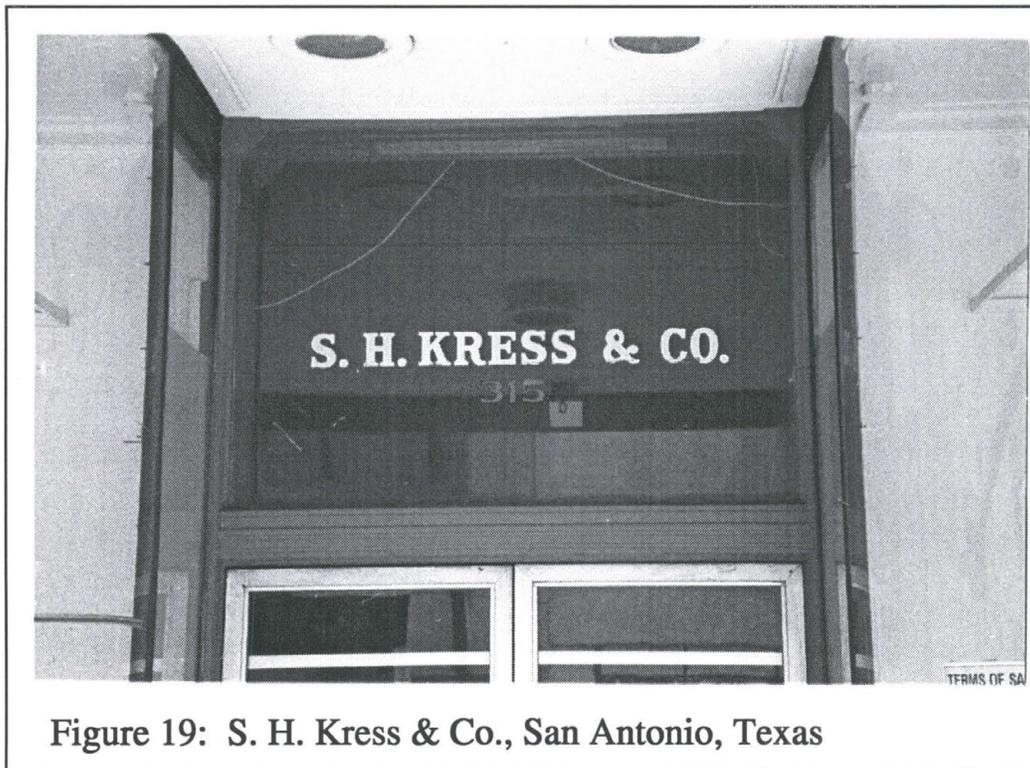


Figure 17: F. W. Woolworth Co., San Antonio, Texas



Figure 18: F. W. Woolworth Co., San Antonio, Texas

More significant in regard to my defining the Kressmont was the Kress chain of stores in San Antonio (see figs., 19–22). One, just a street over from the Woolworth, though closed, presented an air of sophistication that had no place in Graczyk’s play. The other, ten or so blocks away, was less sophisticated and gave me a greater feel for dime stores as they would have been nearly twenty years ago and twenty years prior to that. There were the rows of bargain merchandise, the cash register with candy surrounding it, the deli bar, etc. Though the cash registers were modern and this particular store was much larger than the Kressmont, this dime store was authentic; it might have existed in 1975 or even 1955.



**Figure 19: S. H. Kress & Co., San Antonio, Texas**

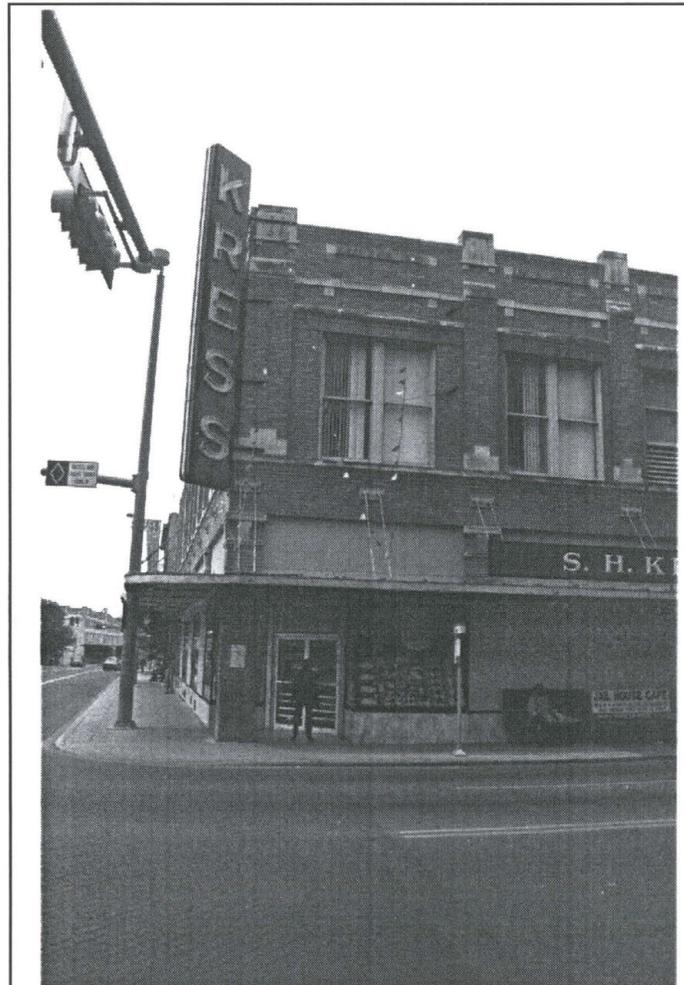
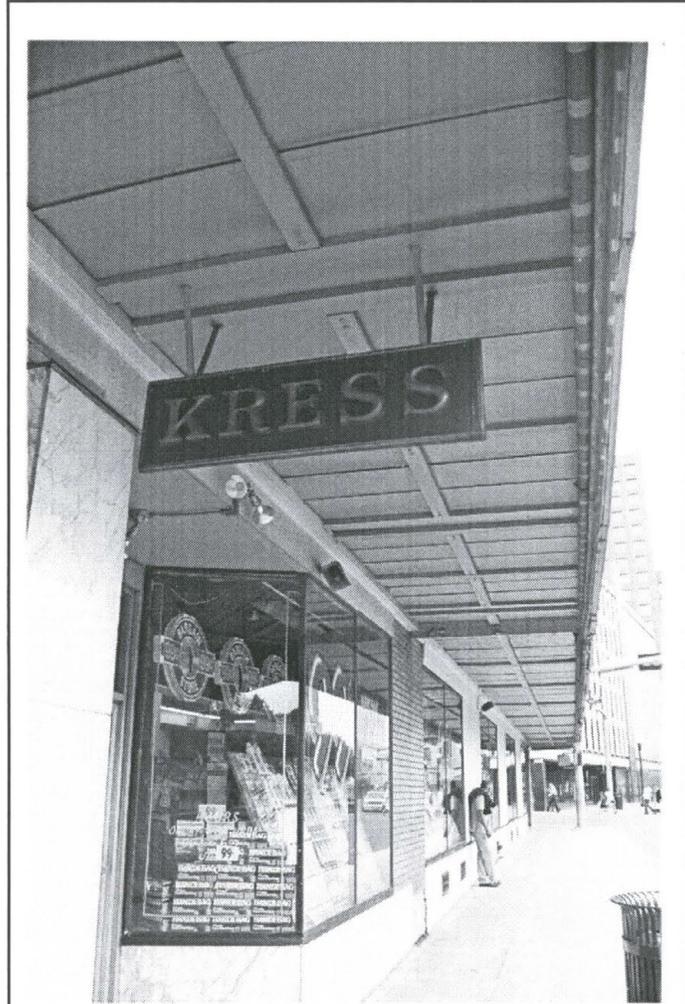
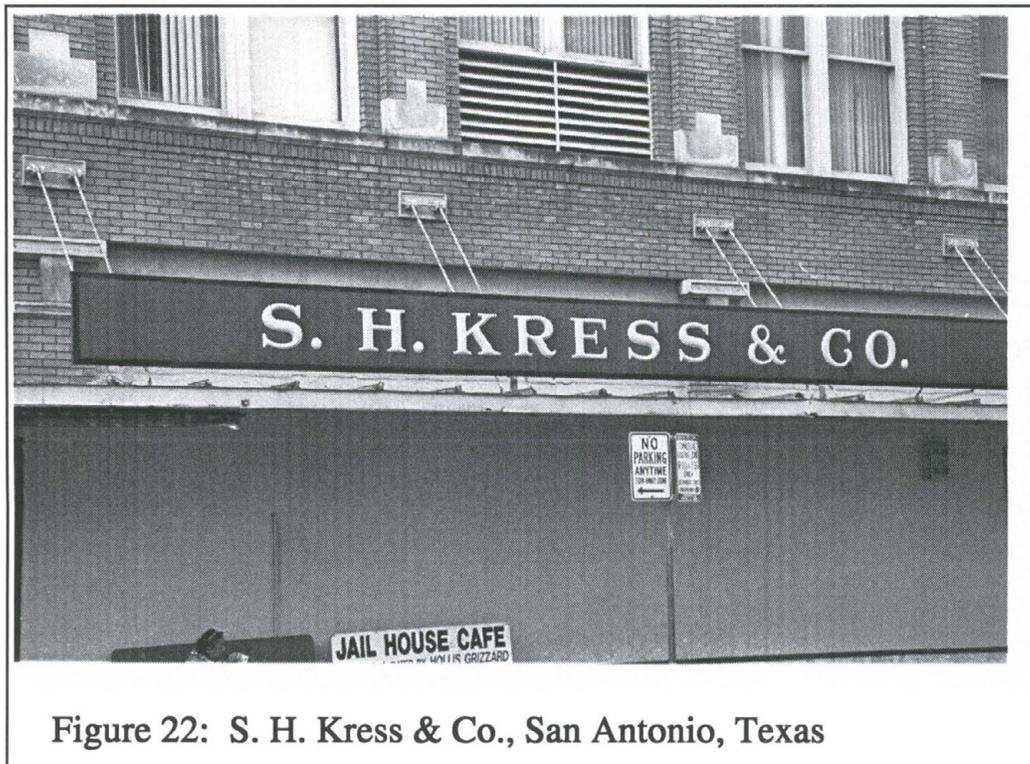


Figure 20: S. H. Kress & Co.,  
San Antonio, Texas



**Figure 21: S. H. Kress & Co.,  
San Antonio, Texas**



**Figure 22: S. H. Kress & Co., San Antonio, Texas**

The essential problems of the size of the store and the size of San Antonio remained. None of my discoveries could completely provide an accurate Kressmont. This fact overshadowed my endeavors and clouded the focus of my research until I realized I could never find a Kressmont; it is a place that must exist solely for this production. That understanding gave me the freedom to focus my research towards specific elements that were necessary in the play and this production. Most of the action of the play centers around a soda bar. Further stops in San Antonio were made at various bars and one deli, which was closed this particular Sunday. In two

I found information I felt critical to defining the Soda bar component of this five and dime (see figs., 23–25).



Figure 23: Deli, San Antonio, Texas



Figure 24: Deli, San Antonio, Texas



**Figure 25: Bar, San Antonio, Texas**

Nothing seemed to spark my imagination and creative thinking as much as *American Diner*, a book I discovered at the Southwest Texas State University Library.<sup>4</sup> It is a history of American diners and includes three photo essays depicting life in diners (see figs., 26–31). The Kressmont five and dime is not a diner, but much of the action centers around the soda and deli bar in this dime store. The people shown in the photo essays gave me images of the characters of Graczyk's play. They inhabit the dime store, and, therefore, the scenery must necessarily come from their existence.

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<sup>4</sup> Richard J. S. Gutman and Elliott Kaufman, in collaboration with David Slovic, *American Diner* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1979).

Finding this source seemed to focus my energy towards defining the Kressmont. I had progressed from the streets of McCarthy to the Kressmont, and, was now beginning to define the characters. The people would lead me back to the interior of this five and dime and into the world of Graczyk's play. Armed with these images I indeed had a concrete grasp of my objective. Unfortunately, somehow I allowed my excitement with *American Diner* to create a diner instead of a five and dime.



Figure 26: *American Diner*, Page 96.

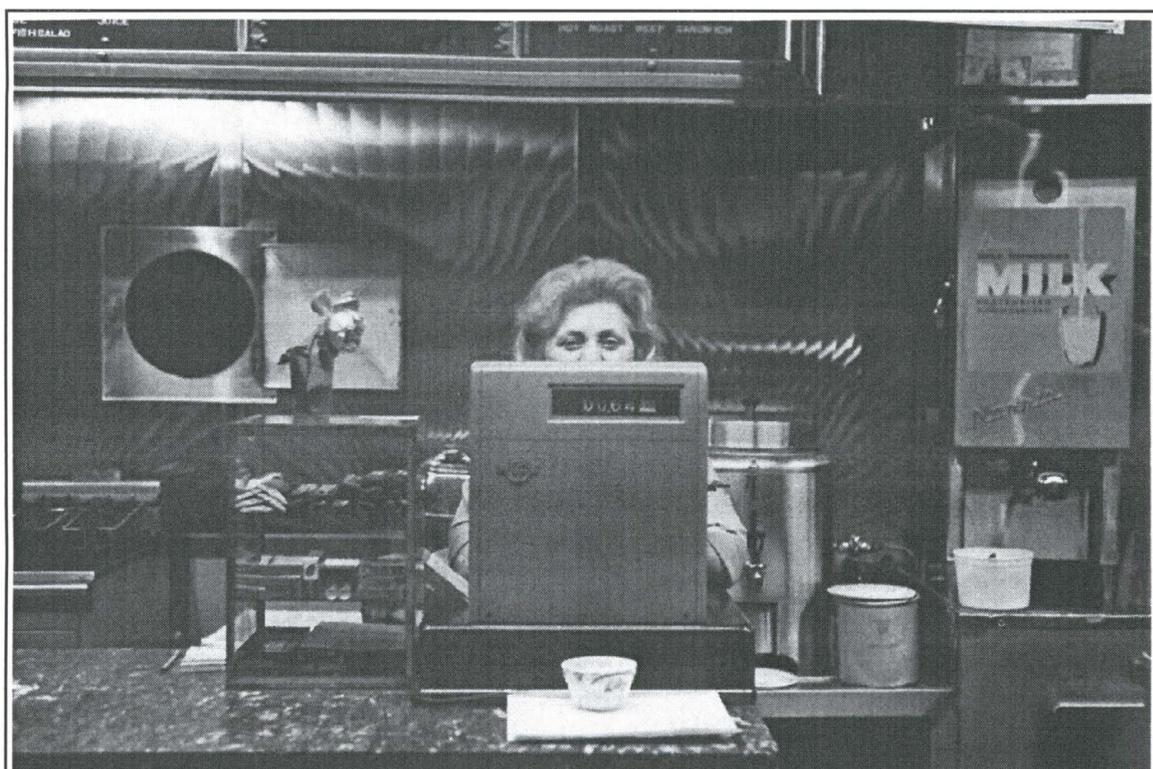


Figure 27: *American Diner*, Page 102.



Figure 28: *American Diner*, Page 117.



Figure 29: *American Diner*, Page 122.

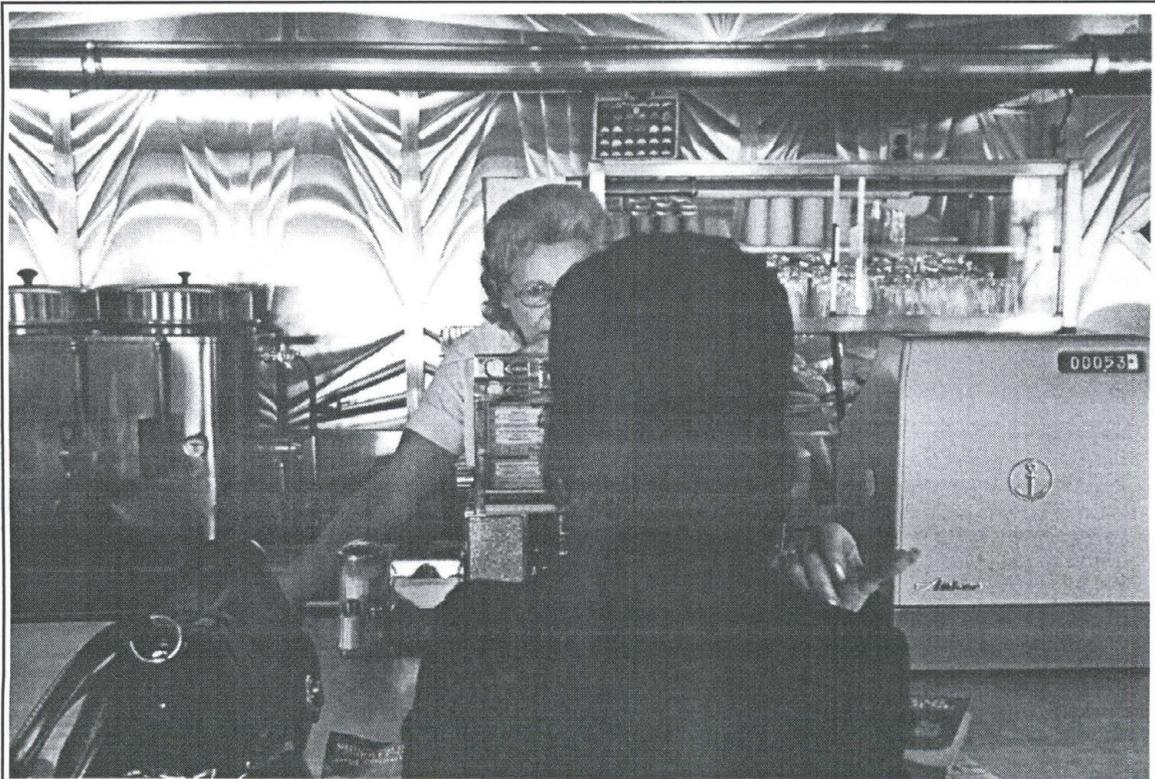


Figure 30: *American Diner*, Page 132.



Figure 31: *American Diner*, Page 110.

As I consulted the script I realized that I still didn't have a grasp on just what a west Texas five and dime was like, although, I knew it wasn't merely a diner. The Kressmont was much more than that. Then while dining at a restaurant in Austin I chanced to visit to a small pharmacy across the street from the restaurant (see figs., 32–36). Fortunately I had my camera, for this discovery was to be the crowning moment of my research. Here I found information critical to shaping the look of the Kressmont five and dime.



Figure 32: Pharmacy, Austin, Texas

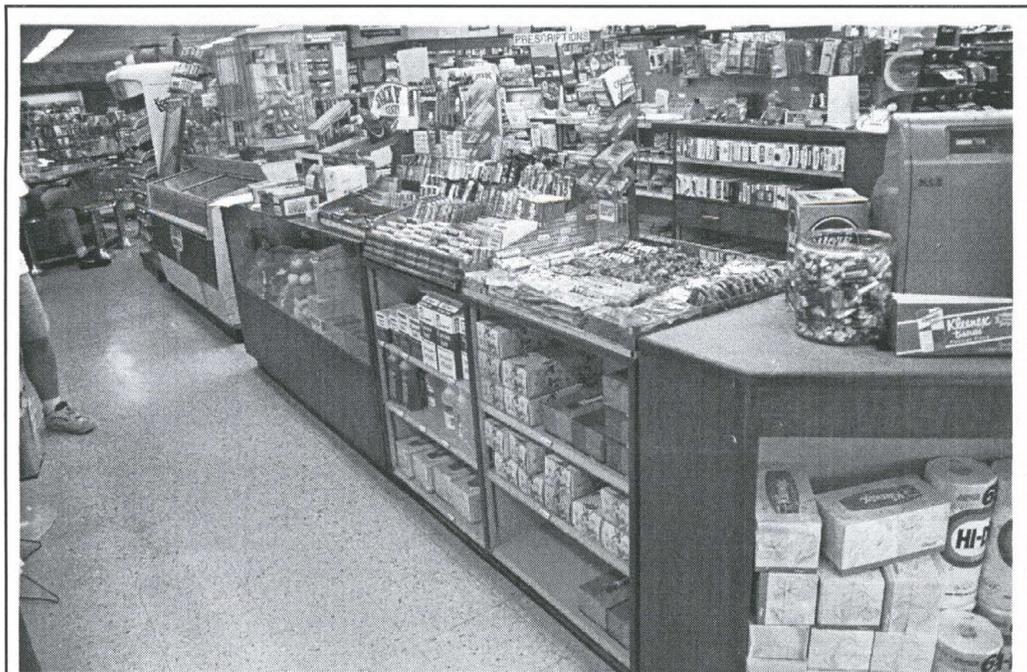


Figure 33: Pharmacy, Austin, Texas

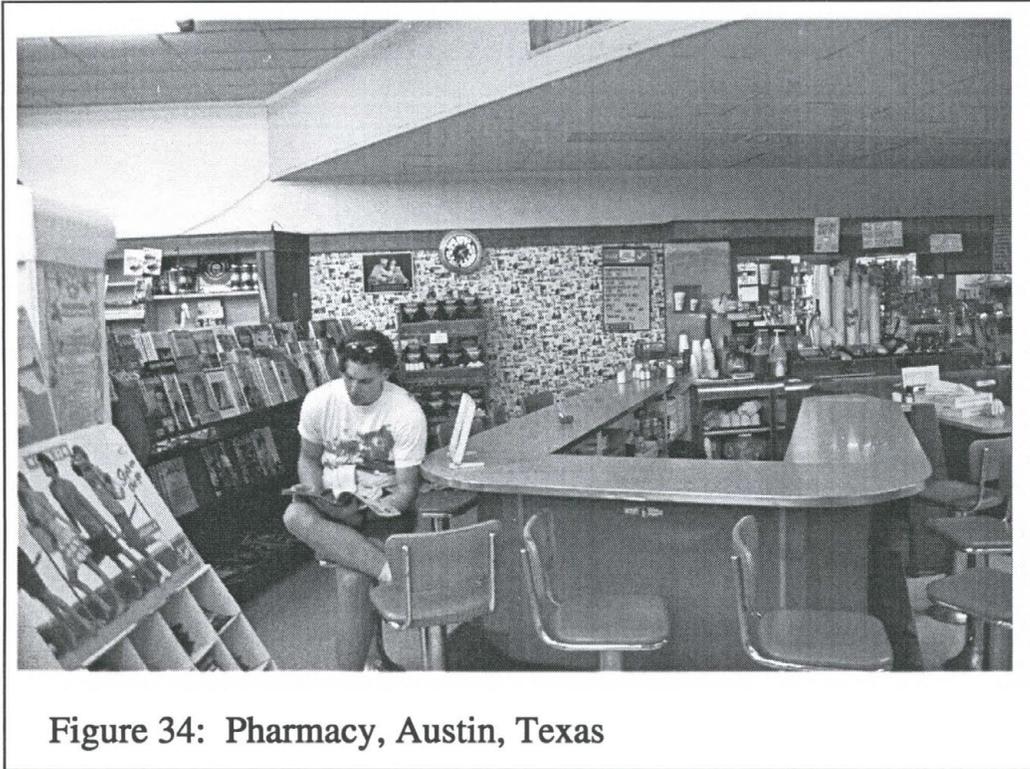


Figure 34: Pharmacy, Austin, Texas

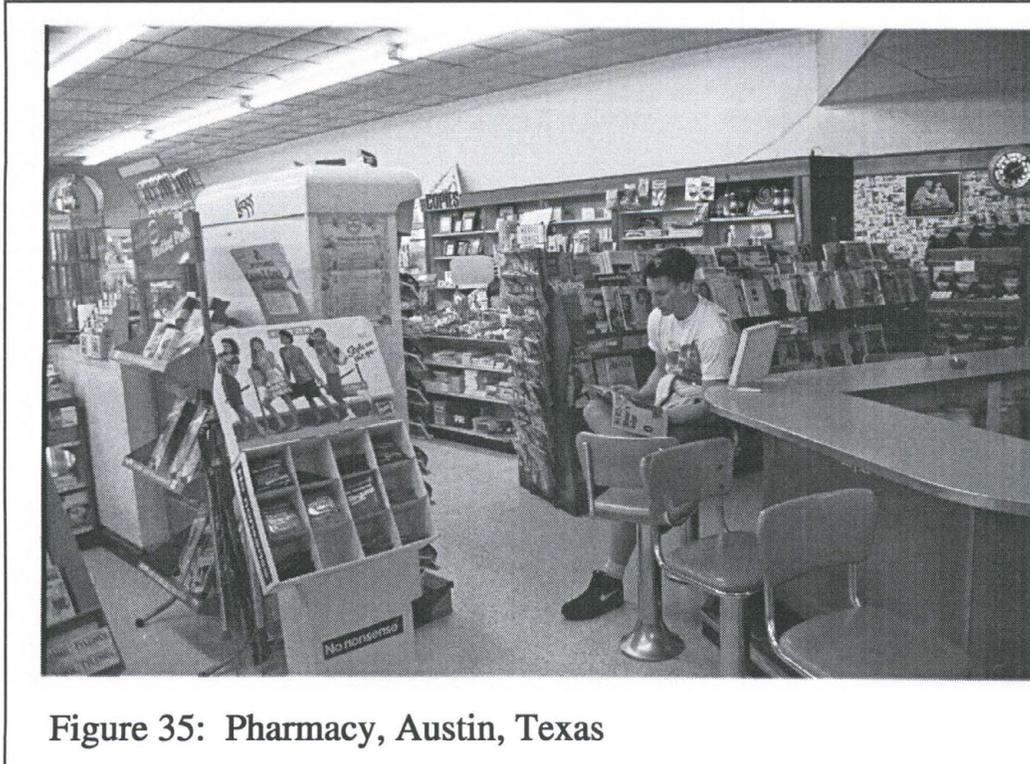
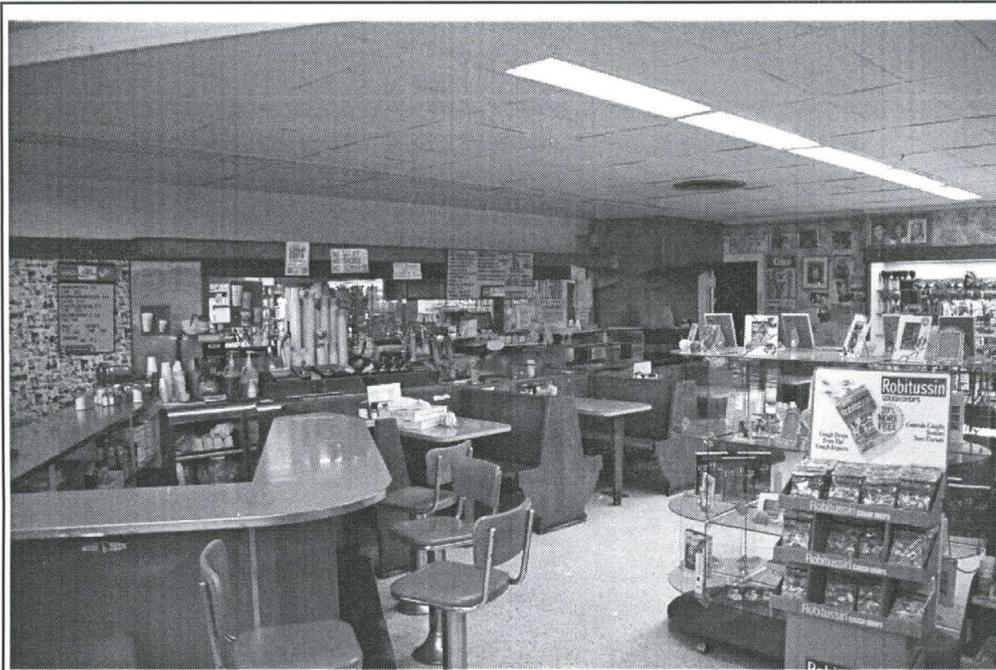


Figure 35: Pharmacy, Austin, Texas

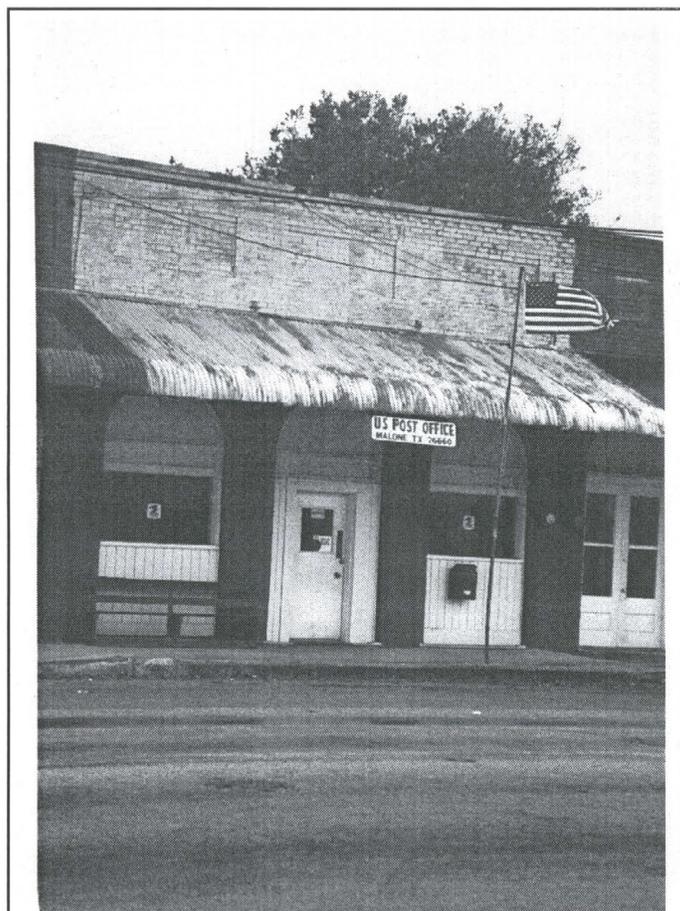


**Figure 36: Pharmacy, Austin, Texas**

This pharmacy was the closest to the bygone dime store that I had yet found. From the deli bar to the magazine and candy displays to the authentic 1950's cash register, I knew that I had found that critical piece of information required to move beyond the diner. This single discovery allowed me to visualize the initial look of this show.

The last step was the rediscovery of photographs I had taken several years prior to *Jimmy Dean* (see figs., 37–43). These photos completed the circle for my interpretation of the world of Graczyk's play. The physically decaying architecture of Malone Texas was typical of a small dying town that modern life has left behind. Most of the buildings were abandoned and

boarded up; yet a number of people remained to fight another day. This town helped me to finally see McCarthy. A vision I hadn't truly found in New Braunfels, Gonzales or, Shiner, and certainly not in San Antonio.



**Figure 37: Downtown Malone, Texas**



Figure 38: Downtown Malone, Texas



Figure 39: Downtown Malone, Texas

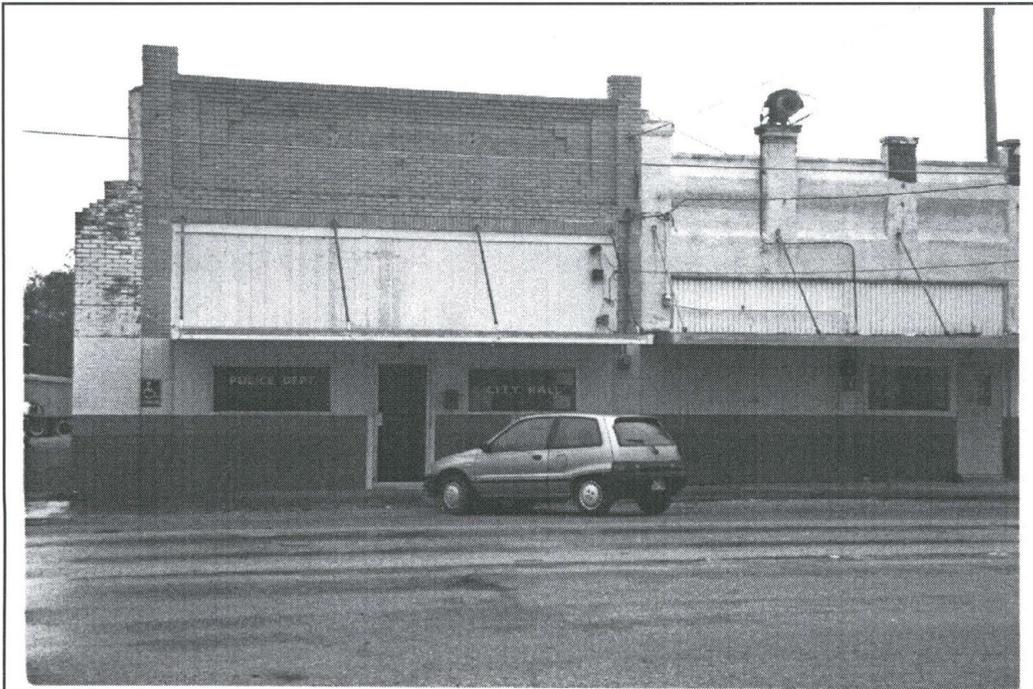


Figure 40: Downtown Malone, Texas



Figure 41: Downtown Malone, Texas



Figure 42: Downtown Malone, Texas



Figure 43: Downtown Malone, Texas

Surely Ed Graczyk had a specific place in mind when he wrote this play. Was it a hole in the wall joint in his hometown? Was it perhaps a dime store in Odessa, Texas? I never found the answer to these questions. Still this production demanded a representation of a true place, even if that place was a fabrication of my mind. I felt I now had sufficient material to begin that fabrication.

## CHAPTER 3

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESIGN

In my quest to define the world Ed Graczyk created I began my journey from outside the script and moved towards the inside. I tried to discover a McCarthy, Texas somewhere within the real world that was within a reasonable distance to San Marcos, Texas. I soon realized such a place did not exist. The research excursions I made did help me learn the flavor and feeling of a west Texas town, which, as it turns out, is more of a philosophical designation, than a geographical one. Discovering this distinction helped me develop an understanding of this script. These characters live in McCarthy and are as much a part of McCarthy as McCarthy is a part of them. Even though McCarthy doesn't really exist, such a place does resonate somewhere within the scope of our experience.

Based upon earlier readings and analysis of the script I concluded that the essential scenic elements required to depict the H. L. Kressmont five and dime were as follows: (1) an entrance from outside the store; (2) the store

interior, which includes the deli/soda fountain and any merchandise display; (3) a store room; (4) and an exit offstage to a restroom. The script details many more specific scenic requirements, (see Appendix 1) but as far as defining the physical space there are only the previous four requirements.

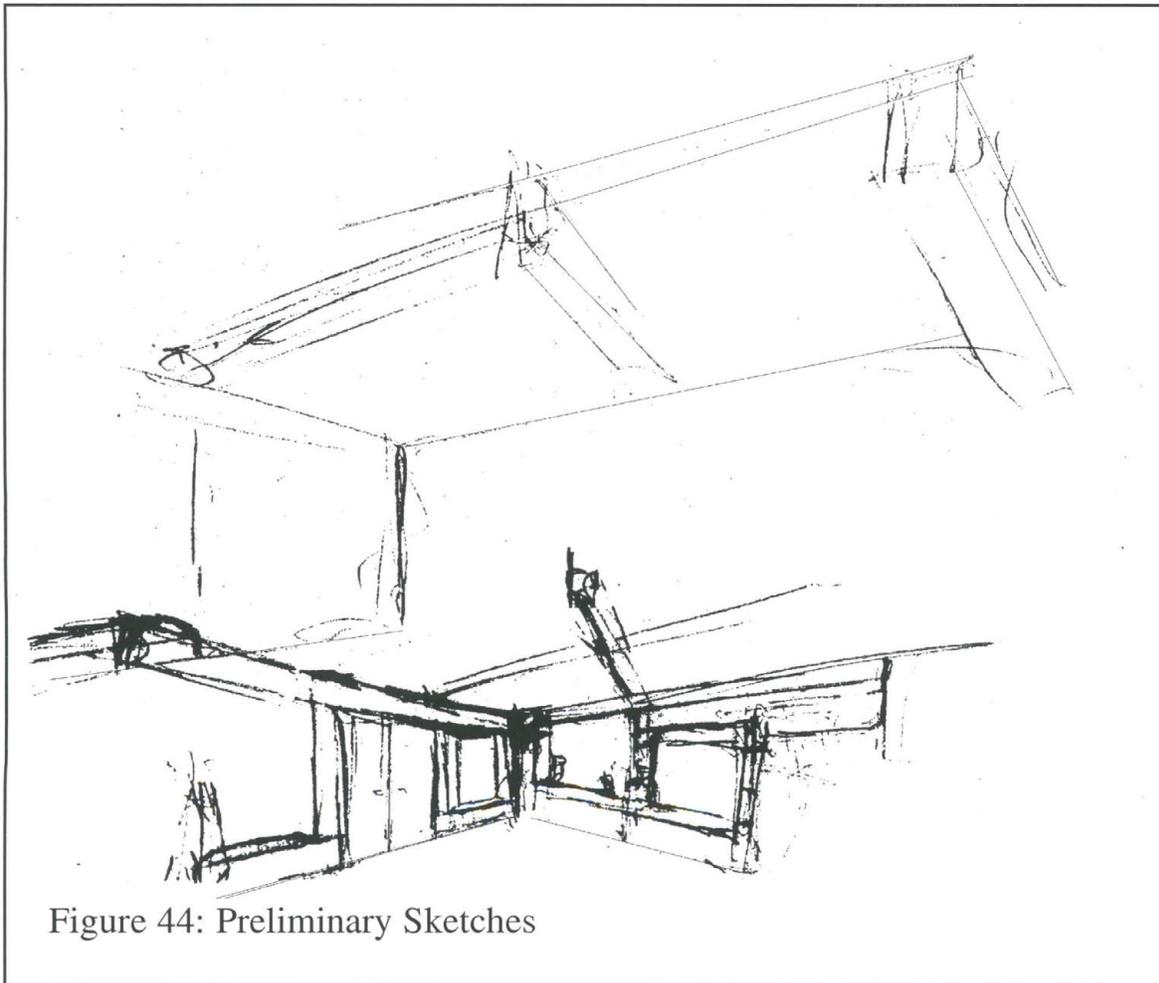
Early discussions with the director, G. W. Bailey, concluded with a desire to portray some sense of an exterior to the H. L. Kressmont. We determined that just as this feeling for an exterior was critical, so too was the creation of a feeling of isolation from the exterior. The Kressmont needed to exist within the town of McCarthy, yet it needed to exist in spite of McCarthy. These parameters suggested I utilize some strong metaphoric representation of the outside of the Kressmont and/or of McCarthy. In addition, we decided to utilize three acting areas: the store interior; some semblance of a storeroom with access to restroom facilities, which could be offstage; and a visually strong entrance. G. W. Bailey's final, and most crucial request, was that all of this should be "in the audience's lap".

With the research I had done and the demands of the play and the director in mind, I began to sketch. Early along in this process I began to create an image dominated by two major components. The first was a sense that the set was receding towards a vanishing point. The second component, expanding out from a vanishing point, was a visual representation of the

store's exterior. Once established these components remained throughout the entire design process. While the representation of the exterior was quite deliberate, forcing the set into perspective turned out to be almost accidental. I drew my early sketches trying to simulate visual depth by drawing them in perspective. Doing so, I tended to overexaggerate the perspective, giving them an unrealistic viewpoint. As I refined the sketches I kept the exaggerated perspective, finding it interesting and dynamic.

With respect to the interior of the Kressmont, two visual elements seemed to shape the design, the presence of overhead beams and the soda fountain area of the store interior (see fig. 44). While the visual dominance of the soda fountain element proved to be a distraction at first, and ultimately shrunk in visual importance, the overhead beams remained as I continued to sketch and were refined into essential elements to the design.

As I began to incorporate the scenic demands of the script into my sketches the visual importance of other scenic elements began to play a greater role. The design began to appear more like a five and dime and less like an ice cream parlor (see fig. 45). I began to incorporate merchandise fixtures and the other pieces of scenery necessary to outfit the H. L. Kressmont. Still, the predominance of the overly exaggerated forced perspective remained.



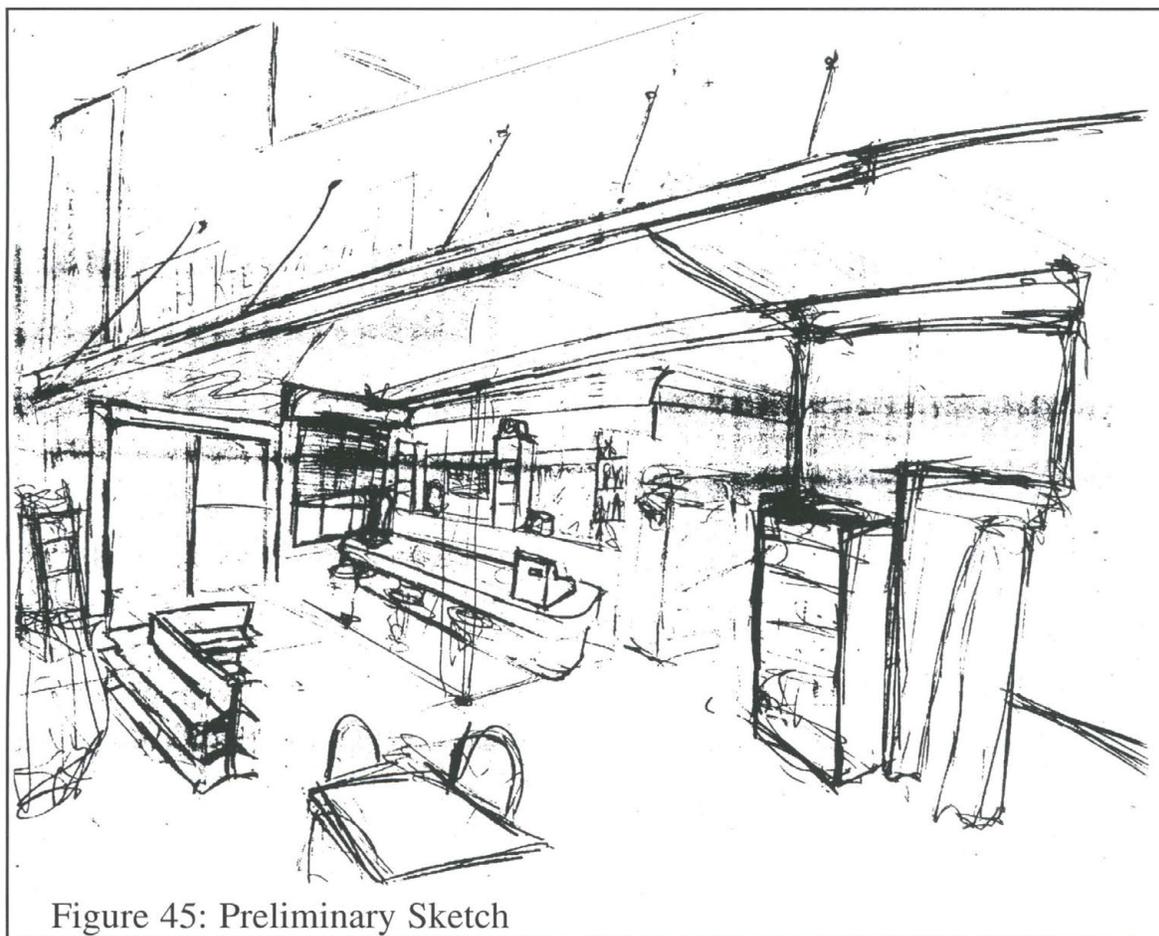


Figure 45: Preliminary Sketch

With the desire to more accurately and realistically represent the developing design to G. W Bailey, I began to work on a model of the set (see figs. 46-49). Though the design was refined greatly compared to the initial sketches, I stayed true to the kernel idea. The exterior entrance remained upstage right, the service counter upstage center and the exit into the back of the store center stage left. However, in the three-dimensional form the rake of the floor and the perspective of the walls really took shape. Their visual appearance combined to focus ones attention to the action on the set. The eye was constantly drawn in towards the center of the image, as opposed to being free to roam the space of the set and the theatre around it.

The director's request for an acting space in close physical proximity to the audience prompted me to utilize a raked platform that sat almost entirely on the thrust stage of the theatre with a portion actually protruding beyond the thrust. This decision solidified the desire to render all scenic elements in perspective. All walls and subsequently all furniture required treatment that fit the perspective. Although this decision proved to be extremely challenging and to some extent unattainable, forced perspective defined the form of the design from that moment.



Figure 46: Scenic Model

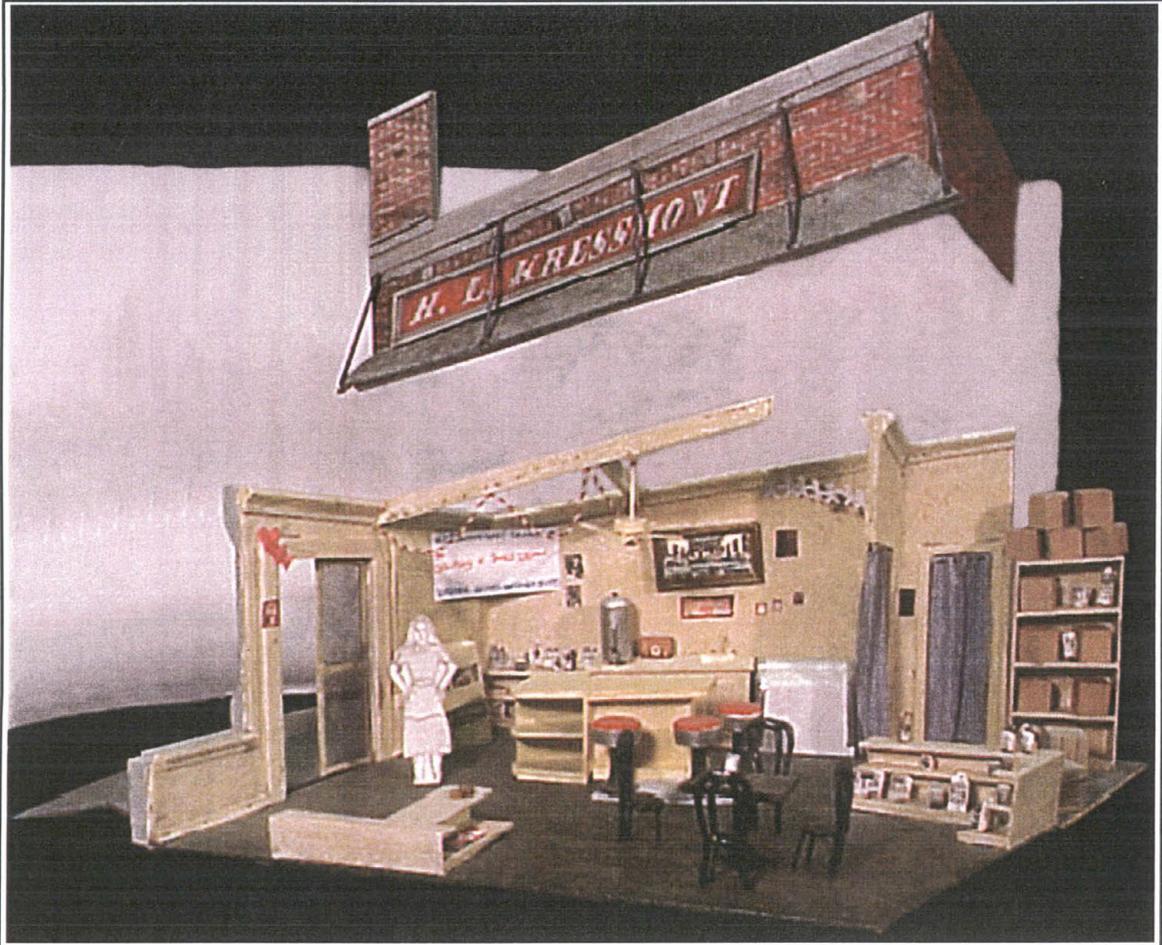


Figure 47: Scenic Model



Figure 48: Scenic Model

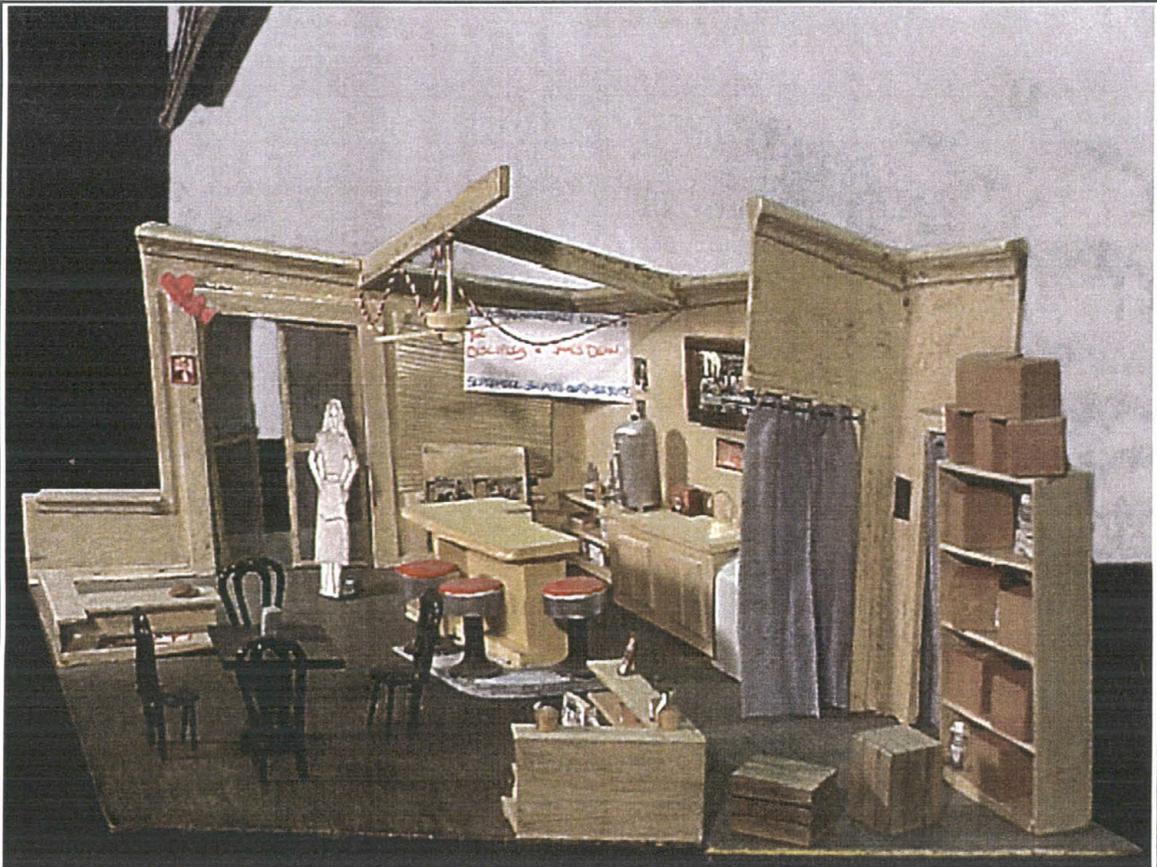


Figure 49: Scenic Model

Working directly on a model, the actual definition and development of the angles of the walls in relation to each other and to the floor proceeded on an intuitive basis. There were no formulas utilized nor any strict geometry employed to achieve these ratios. This script neither implied nor warranted strict adherence to established visual rules of proportion. This script was born and bred in the mind of a playwright educated with a blend of American Naturalism and American cinematic technique. This is not to say that the scenic representation should, or could be sloppy. On the contrary, it required a certain level of exactitude and precision in it to render the H. L. Kressmont, in McCarthy, Texas.

Another visually significant design decision, in keeping with the perspective treatment begun on the walls and floor, was to actually suspend the ceiling fan from an element of the set as opposed to having it suspended from the gridiron of the theatre. I felt that doing this anchored the fan, giving it a place on the set, as opposed to it just being an afterthought. Towards this end, I decided to use the two suspended beams to support the fan continuing the perspective motif and, visually, gave the model a sense of wholeness. The beams also helped establish the desired sense of isolation from anything outside. The floor created the base of the visual image, and the ceiling, suggested by the beams, formed the visual top of this interior

view. Together they rooted all other elements between them to this one visual image.

In order to achieve a sense of the outside world of McCarthy, I choose to suspend a facade of sorts, modeled after so many of the facades I saw throughout my research. Items within this unit included an H. L. Kressmont sign, an awning and a metal ladder to suggest a fire escape or access ladder that might have been found on the back of the exterior of the building. This scenic element was also in perspective yet it appeared to emanate from the vanishing point as opposed to receding towards it. Like the ceiling beams, though, this scenic element helped to frame the visual image.

While the facade functioned to relate the scenery to the outside world of McCarthy, I choose to place the set alone on the stage in front of the cyc without backing flats that would have suggested surrounding buildings. This choice allowed lighting to paint the mood and, combined with the visual isolation, perfectly illustrated the idea these characters and this store truly did exist in and of themselves, separate from the rest of McCarthy.

Color seemed to be the next development requiring attention. Stephanie Grebe, the lighting designer, G. W. Bailey and I wanted a distinct visual change to usher in flashbacks to 1955. While the nature of the scenery forced it to remain mostly static, the lighting on the set in conjunction with

the color palette I had chosen worked to signify those flashbacks. The color of the bricks painted on the suspended facade were chosen with the color of light used to illuminate the facade so that in 1975 the brick seemed gray and dull, yet viewed under 1955 lighting the brick seemed more colorful and vibrant. To the same extent color choices on the set itself functioned in a similar yet less pronounced manner. Color in 1975 was much more amber and “dry”. In 1955 more vibrant colors were introduced to signify the past. While the transitions through the times of the play were primarily signaled through the visual changes of the lighting designer, Stephanie Grebe and I worked together diligently to ensure our collective visions were achieved in such a manner as to appear “natural” and believable to the audience.

Overall, the entire color palette outside of the lighting, and costumes, was quite realistic in the sense that the colors I selected could easily be found in a real life store. The colors in Henne Hardware and that pharmacy in Austin, Texas were not much unlike those I used on the model. I warmed the colors some, moving from a whiter wall color, based on reality, to a creamier, warmer color. To this base I added a significant amount of actual texture and painted texture to the walls to age them, and to give them life and depth. The floor was painted to look like a planked hardwood floor. Though the treatment was not intended to exactly replicate every minute

detail of grain and outline of individual pieces of lumber, I did desire a somewhat believable grain and texture treatment.

Properties and set dressing for this show proved to be a challenge. Working to prop and dress the set, I made one key assumption, I chose to date most set dressing anywhere within the thirty years between the late 40's to the late 70's. This was a relatively safe assumption considering the building the Kressmont was in could have been built at any time in the 1900's yet most any appliances and other dressing items found on the set would have been much more recent. Fixtures such as the cash register, ice box, clock, radio, etc could have been any age within that period. Yet the merchandise items and displays would have been more recent and extends into the late 70's, though the later time period of the show was 1975. The challenge presented itself in that finding multiples of circa 1975 items to stock the shelves would be difficult and most of this set dressing that would actually be used on the set would be limited to those items that could be found. Packaging on some items such as certain varieties of dish soap, older screw type electrical fuses, hair combs, etc., look the same today as their predecessors.

Overall, the development of this design, from kernel idea to finished model, went well. Though G. W. Bailey was out of the country for much of

the development of the kernel idea, we did have contact and discussion concerning basic thoughts and requirements of the script. While I was confident my energies were focused in the right direction, I felt that G. W. Bailey's absence was a detriment to the process. It wasn't until I had begun to experiment in 3D that I was able to get specific direction from him. In the end Mr. Bailey was willing to work with almost any set that spatially filled his needs. He outlined his expectations, and contributed information to the design process, which was critical to him and, as such, was a true participant in the entire design process.

However, collaborating with the Costume Designer, Sheila Hargett and with Stephanie Grebe, the Lighting Designer, was much more beneficial, overall. In all respects, there seemed to be a genuine rapport established among the artistic staff. Sharing of research discoveries and conceptual ideas was the rule. Though much of the actual design process proceeded on an individual level, all attempts were made to include all necessary personnel in the process. Individual successes were treated as group successes and, as a whole, the collaborative production design melded into one cohesive idea.

## CHAPTER 4

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DESIGN

Moving from the design development phase of the production to the implementation phase was a challenging part of the production process. Probably the most challenging portion of that entailed completing designer's drawings. Much of the time spent drafting designer's drawings was completed over the winter break of 1993. While the overall scope of the production was relatively small, considering the nature of the play, the amount of information required to send the drawings to the shop floor was relatively large. Even considering the relative simplicity of just the set walls and the anticipated construction techniques, the level of detail required was significant. To compound this challenge, I was just beginning to use MicroStation's CAD program<sup>1</sup>. While the ability to alter existing drawings was nice, fighting the learning curve associated with a program as complex

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<sup>1</sup> MicroStation Version 4.0, Bentley Systems, Inc., Huntsville, AL, 1992.

as MicroStation and my prior lack of experience hand drafting ensured that completing designer's drawings would be difficult.

One of the interesting challenges in developing a set of designer's drawings for this set were the custom fixtures and scenery, such as merchandise displays that needed to be drawn and detailed for construction. Since most were designed in perspective, they required much more detailing than that which would have been otherwise necessary. Something as simple as a shelving unit required almost twice as much information as a normal shelving unit. Likewise, the wall dividing the store interior from the storeroom, though quite simple, needed to have both sides detailed for construction purposes (see Appendix 2).

When construction began, we began with the raked floor. Instead of trying to utilize existing 4' x 8' stock platforms with custom modifications, Lynn Cobb, the Technical Director and I decided to build the raked deck as a single unit with 2 x 6 joists and a 3/4" plywood surface. We legged the joists on 4' centers and had a 3' cantilever on the down stage right and furthest down stage portion of the down stage left sides where the deck overhung the thrust of the stage. Though somewhat more costly than using stock platforms, gains in speed proved to be worth the additional cost in materials.

The next items to be constructed were the flats, which comprised the walls of the set. Here, too, we chose to build these as single units as opposed to a combination of stock and custom flats, which would have bolted together. Though they were somewhat large and cumbersome, working with these flats as single units was not a problem. After the flats were framed and skinned with 1/8" plywood, we erected them into place and the student crews began to apply a "Phlexglu" brand flexible glue and tissue texture. This would ultimately be the base for the visual treatment of the flats.

Construction of the header followed the walls. This was constructed as three hard covered studio flats, or as flats with the 1 x 3 framing on edge. This was the first scenic piece to receive its final paint treatment. The production schedule dictated that it be hung as early as possible. Consequently it was finished and hung early in the production process. This unit was painted a medium gray to match the intended mortar color and then was given a two-color spatter. From there, I snapped chalk lines to indicate the placement of bricks and proceeded to base each individual brick. I then gave selected, assorted bricks a dye wash to darken or lighten their value and give the overall appearance more believability. Finally, I

gave the flats an additional two color spatter treatment accented most bricks with a dash of highlight and a hint of shadow (see figs. 50 & 51).

While the header was being painted, the shop began the custom merchandise displays and other pieces of set dressing that required fabrication. This was probably the most challenging portion of the build period. All of these custom pieces were fairly complex considering the skill level throughout the shop. Ultimately, however, these pieces were finished satisfactorily.

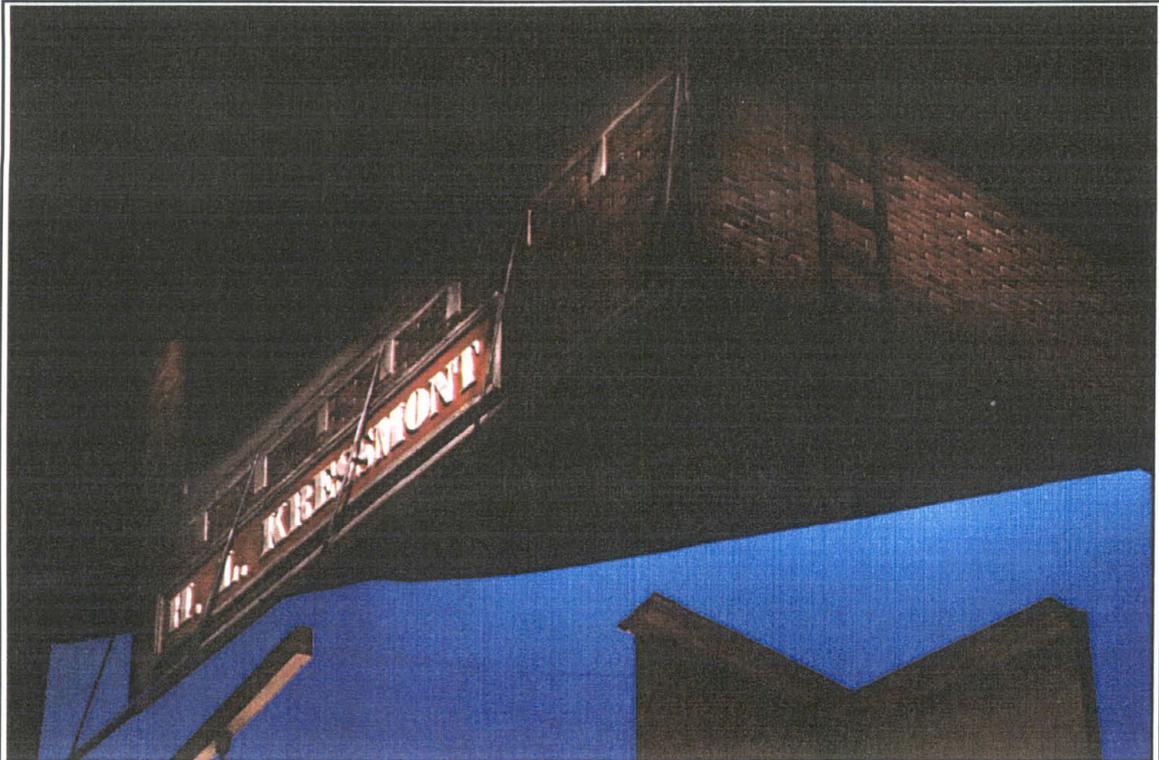


Figure 50: H. L. Kressmont Facade

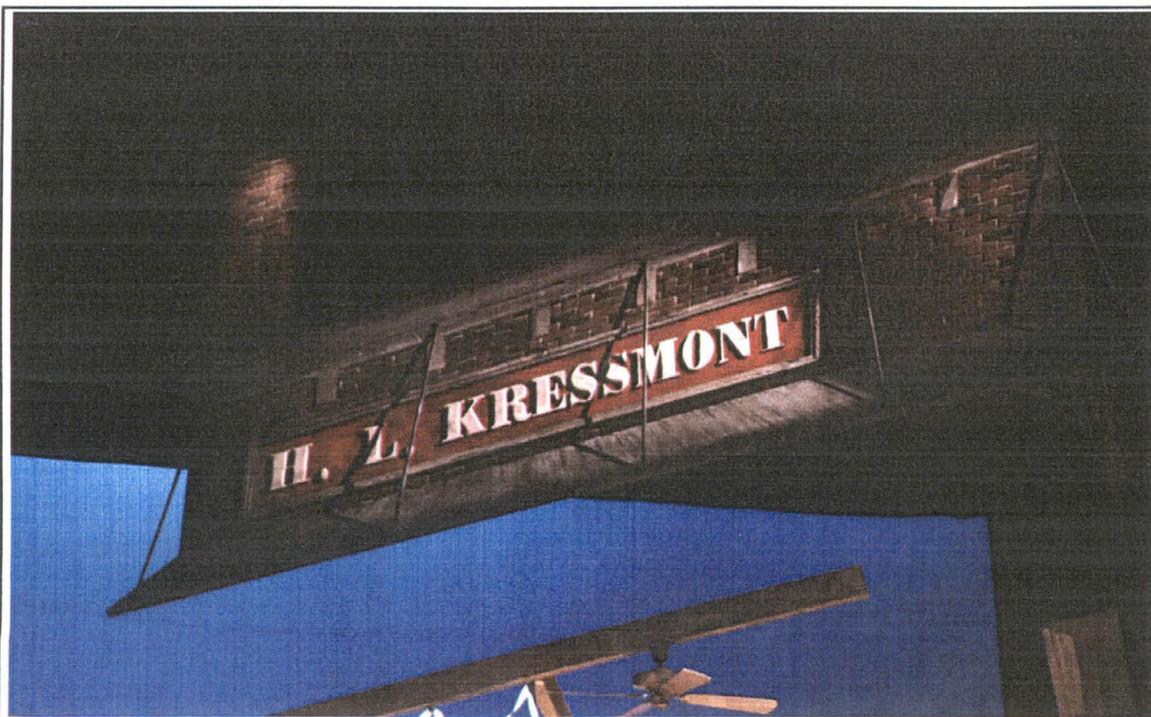


Figure 51: H. L. Kressmont Facade

With the exception of properties and set dressings, scenic paint treatment on the floor and walls was one of the last components of the construction phase. The finishes chosen were not unnecessarily complex nor oversimplified so as to appear unfinished. The walls received a two-color scumble with a series of mostly transparent glazes or "dirty water" washes. Most of the distressing or coloration with these washes was in corners and outside edges of flats fading to the center areas of the flats where more of the base was visible.

Paint on the floor in areas upstage of the bar, and in the storeroom was painted to simulate institutional/commercial grade asphalt floor tile common in the 1970's. It consisted of a gray base with a deeper shade gray dirty "water wash" and a 3-color spatter. No attempt was made to line or delineate individual tiles. I felt this color and paint treatment described was sufficient to achieve the feel of this type of tile.

The wood grain on the floor received the most precise scenic paint treatment. Prior to construction and in conjunction with Lynn Cobb we established a desired grain or direction for the simulated planking. Accordingly we built the deck of the raked stage with the grain of the plywood running parallel with the painted grain. This helped to simulate the

floor grain by accentuating existing features and helped to make the appearance more organic as opposed to the smooth and uniform look of a painted masonite surface. The nature of the desired effect, though, allowed for a more loose treatment of the floor.

The final touches and real character of the set really came to life when properties and set dressing began to appear. To a great extent, the success of this rode on the shoulders of Albert London, the properties master for the production. His diligence, attention to detail and unending quest to fill the space with the appropriate wares, trinkets and appropriate set dressing was a godsend. The sheer volume of props alone was staggering. His ability to acquire these items at little to no cost to the University was worthy of note as well.

Albert's success stemmed from his recollection of similar dime stores in West Texas in the 1970's and his keen observations of life and those around him. He knew exactly which items Juanita would have kept visible behind the bar. He knew which types of items would have been stored in the storeroom. Yet, with all of this knowledge he was very cognizant of the limits of my, G. W. Bailey's, and the audiences' willingness to accept this merchandise and other properties as correct (see figs. 52 - 56).



Figure 52: Production Photograph



Figure 53: Production Photograph

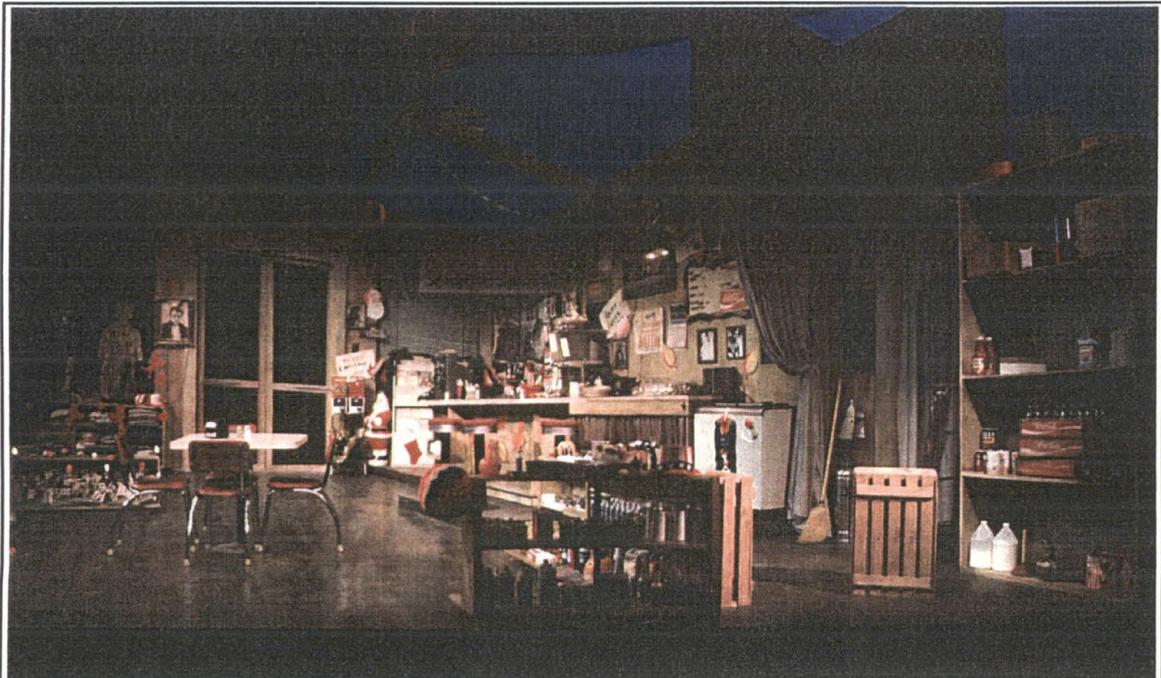
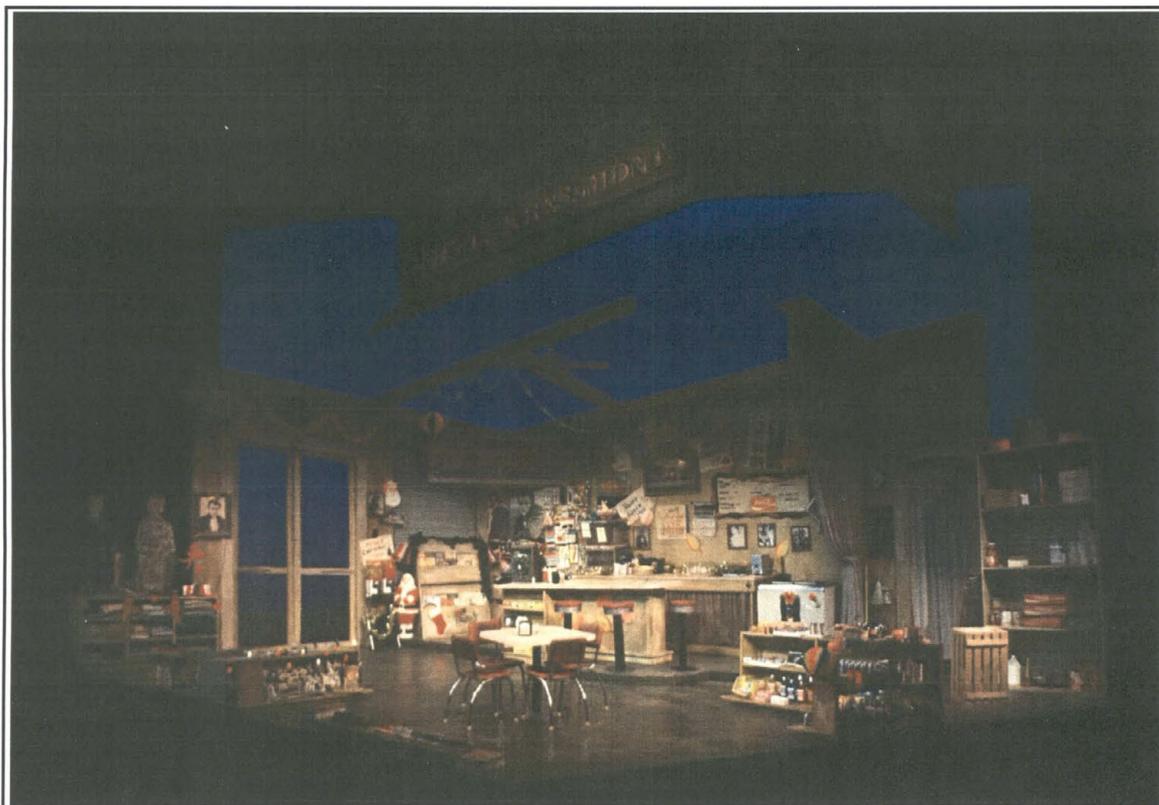


Figure 54: Production Photograph



**Figure 55: Production Photograph**

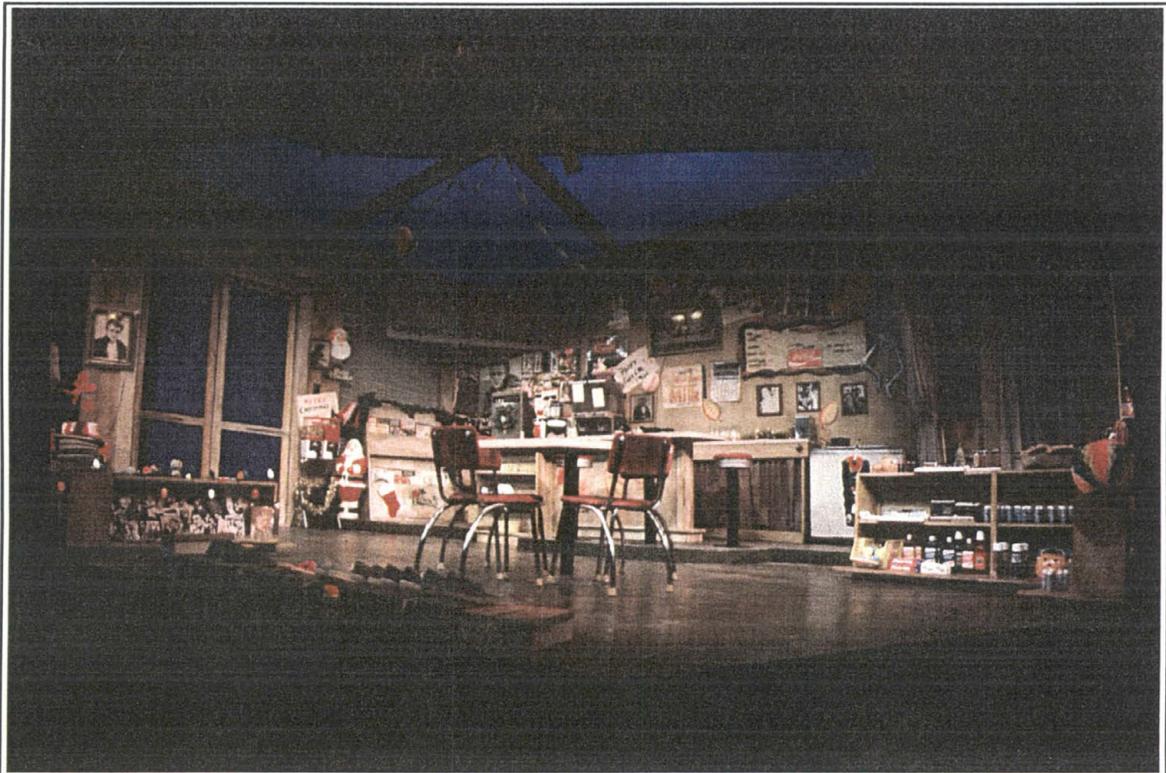


Figure 56: Production Photograph

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATIONS

I began work on *Come Back to the 5 & Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean* in the fall of 1993 when I was assigned this show as a creative project. Initially I wasn't too excited about the show. How can you get excited about a dime store in west Texas? *Come Back to the 5 & Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean* was no *Marat-Sade*, *Macbeth*, nor some other play with endless scenic possibilities, or so I thought. Mine was the good fortune of trying to enter a world I had never been to and the challenge to portray this world accurately. My fortune was the opportunity to work with a group of very talented artists to create a dream world of sorts.

As mentioned earlier, my research was critical to my understanding of this script. Beyond that it was critical to the success of the production. Without the depth or the amount of research I came across, I would have missed the mark. Something would not have seemed right. Beyond that, the physical nature of the production would have been different. The

conversations I had with G. W. Bailey and the design staff concerning the likeness to Oedipus Rex were very significant early along and most definitely made an impact on the overall production. I feel the audience would have been cheated out of a whole different facet or level of complexity, had the research been less complete or thorough.

As winter approached and with it the end of 1993, Dr. Hannon and I had established a goal to complete the design and all designer's drawings before the Christmas break. This milestone was certainly missed. G. W. Bailey was out of the country and not available for consultation during the projected design phase of the production. This impacted my ability to proceed with the design. Did I not have the appropriate research? Did I require a longer incubation period? Looking back at my initial sketches and seeing them with my mind's eye and comparing that image with the actual production photos I can tell my design stayed true to the kernel idea set forth in the first sketches. I was too timid to commit to an idea. I was concerned G. W. Bailey would have wanted something completely different. Perhaps the idea that this show was to be my graduate creative project was intimidating. I certainly wanted to achieve near perfection in all aspects of the design. For whatever reason and perhaps for all of those reasons the design development phase lasted much longer than was projected. These delays prevented Lynn

Cobb from completing construction drawings in a timely fashion which is contrary to the philosophy of the graduate theatre program at Southwest Texas State University. The creative project is partially set up to take someone through the design process in its entirety addressing all issues surrounding a design.

In this respect there was an obvious shortcoming on my behalf. Another facet of the creative project, though, is that these steps must still be taken to fulfill graduation requirements. As such, my obligation to complete the drawings still remained. The immediate task at hand, though, was to get the show open.

The long hours immediately before and during tech rehearsal seem to be nothing compared to the effort to go back and compile all the research, drawings, and photographs. In many respects, completing this after the fact is like doing the show over, in that you still need to take all the steps necessary to design a show once again. The irony, though, is that there is this sense that “I have done this before,” which unfortunately is and should have been true.

My evaluation of just the design and its implementation is favorable. I feel, even considering the difficulty in constructing many of the set pieces, the raked stage and the forced perspective were appropriate. This somewhat

warped and askewed view or vision of the H. L. Kressmont fit the script, our production, and my vision of the play. I feel the set had a particular degree of visual interest, to the credit of all who helped finish the set. The degree of scenic detail was more than adequate for the show and the numerous properties really sold the space as a true five and dime.

I feel the physical constraints of the space were appropriate for this production. I do not feel that there were any significant problems with the space from a traffic or movement standpoint, nor did any areas seem to overwhelm the actors visually. I feel the physical space worked exactly as envisioned and designed. In addition I fulfilled G. W. Bailey's prime request: to put the set in the audience's lap, which, no doubt, was a significant concern and issue for Stephanie Grebe and her efforts to light the stage effectively.

There were some shortcomings with the design, though. To a certain degree, I feel I never finished the design. Looking at the model and comparing that with the actual set, I did not accurately account for all the necessary properties and set dressing. This of course begs the question of how far a design should be carried. To my satisfaction, though, I feel I never completed the design with respect to choosing properties and set dressing. Fortunately, the production was blessed with one of the most

talented properties masters I have had the fortune of meeting. Albert London ensured the successful fruition of this one aspect of the design.

Another shortcoming of the design process was that I would have desired more collaboration with Sheila Hargett, the costume designer. I feel I could have learned more had we shared our research more. This is not to say I was not satisfied with the final outcome. I desired a greater level of design collaboration out of a desire to have a better design. This experience did teach me that, on some shows, there may never be a great level of collaboration amongst the design staff, or at least there will probably never be a consistent level from show to show.

As stated earlier, I am very pleased with the outcome of the design for *Come Back to the 5 & Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean*. I am proud of the work I did on the show and very proud of the efforts of all the other artists and technicians who worked countless hours to complete this project. As a learning tool, this design functions as a critical step in the process of my growth as a set designer. It illustrates the level of completion I should strive towards with other designs and it serves as a benchmark with which to compare my future design work.

## APPENDIX 1

### PROPERTIES AND SET DRESSING

#### Store Interior

Magazine Rack	Assortment of Period Magazines
Operable Ceiling Fan	Wall Mounted Toggle Switch for Fan
Clothing Shelf	Mannequins
Display Stocking Legs	Assortment of Blouses and Trousers
Assortment of Leggings	Assortment of Hats
Shoe Rack	Assortment of Casual Shoes
Assortment of House Slippers	2 Product Display Shelves
Assortment of Toiletries	Assortment of Make Up
Nail Care Display	Assortment of Hair Care Products
Sunglasses Rack	Gum Ball Machine
Assortment of Light Bulbs	Assortment of Roach and Ant Spray
Table with Four Chairs	Screen Doors on Entrance
Horse Shoe above Entrance	Venetian Blinds on USR Window
Seasonal Decorations from Years Past	

#### James Dean Shrine

Large Assortment of Photos	Reata Tripe
Christmas Tree Lights	

## Lunch Counter

Orange Crush Machine	Cash Register
Cake Tray with Doughnuts	Telephone
Salt and Pepper Shakers	Condiment Squeeze Bottles
Sugar Dispenser	Napkin Dispenser
Christmas Wreath	Three Swivel Bar Stools
Assortment of Candy Bars	

## Behind the Lunch Counter

Bottle Opener	Toaster
Radio	Ice Box
Sink	Lighted Portrait of Last Supper
Coffee Maker	Menu Board
Easter Decorations	Christmas Decorations
Halloween Decorations	Clock
Reunion Sign	Plaque (under counter)
Bus Tray	Plates
Coke Glasses	Silverware
Paper Plate Holder	Cups and Saucers
Orange Crush Sign	Borden's Milk Sign
Coca Cola Sign	Assortment of James Dean Photos
Calendar	Drape to Store Room
Fly Swatter	
Wall Hanging of Various Barrettes, Brushes and Combs	

## Store Room

Shelving	Bottles of Bleach
Paint Cans	Paint Supplies
Empty Coke Bottles	Coffee Cans
Toilet Plunges	Toilet Paper
Christmas Decor Storage Box	Various Store Merchandise
Hat Box	Toothpick Boxes
Tool Box	Extra Napkin Holders
Tea Urn	Message Chalk Board
Fire Extinguisher	Extra Crates
Ladder	Candles used for Meetings
Exit to Restroom	

## CHARACTER SPECIFIC PROPS

## Juanita

Purse	Loaf of Bread
-------	---------------

## Mona

Suitcase	Piece of Reata
Book of Gone With the Wind	Handkerchief
Purse with Asthma Pills	

## Mona Then

Club Jacket	Lace Handkerchief with Matchbox
Magazine with James Dean Feature	

## Sissy

Case of Lone Star Bottles	Grocery Bag
Sandwich Meat	Mayonnaise
Potato Chips	Odessa-American Newspaper
Purse with Cigarettes	Assortment of Magazines

Sissy Then

Lone Star Bottles

Cigarettes

Club Jacket

Edna Louise

Dry Cleaning Bag with Dress

Purse with Notebook

Stella

Purse with Bottle of Bourbon

8x10 Nude Photo of James Dean

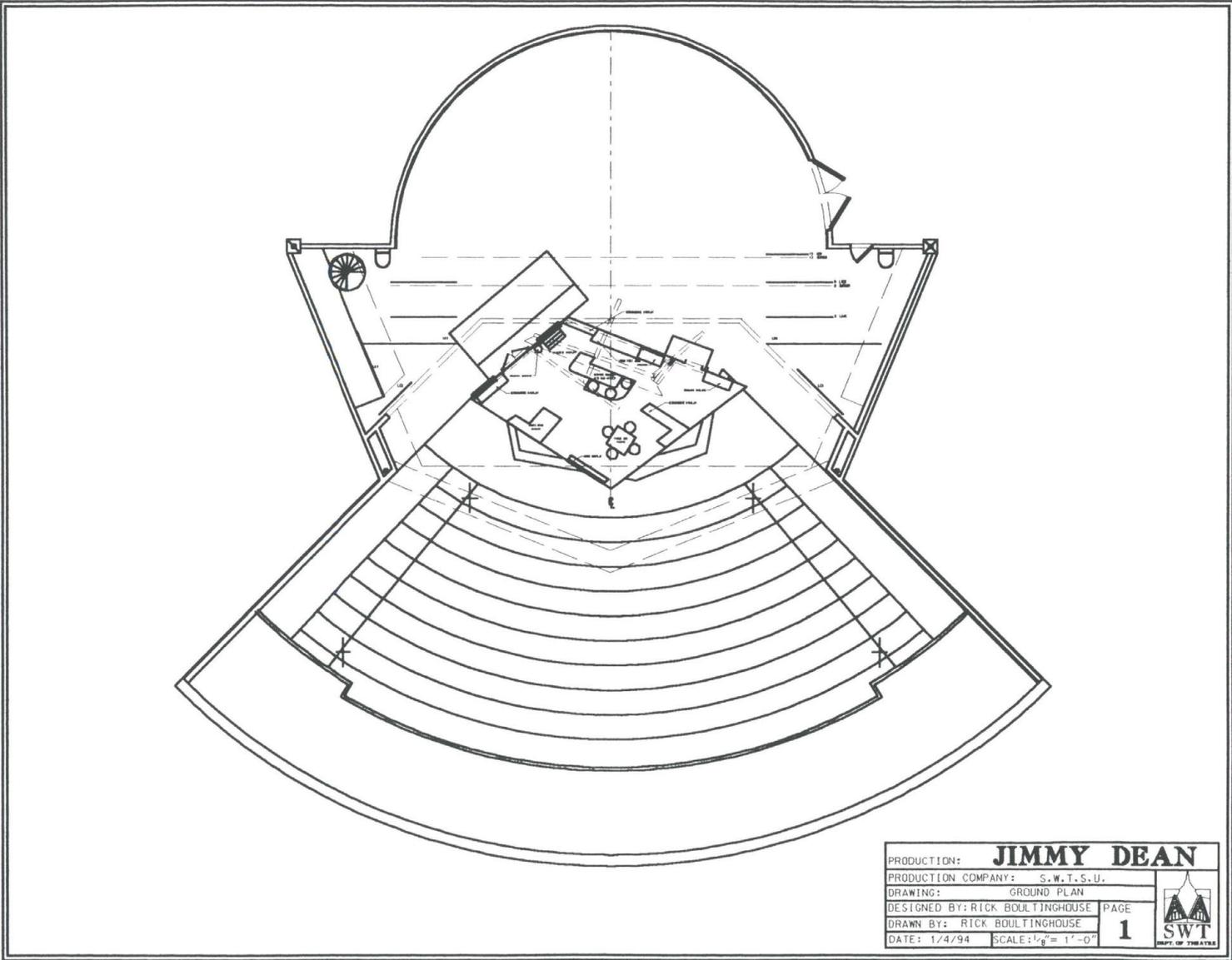
Joe

Suitcase

Cigarette Butt

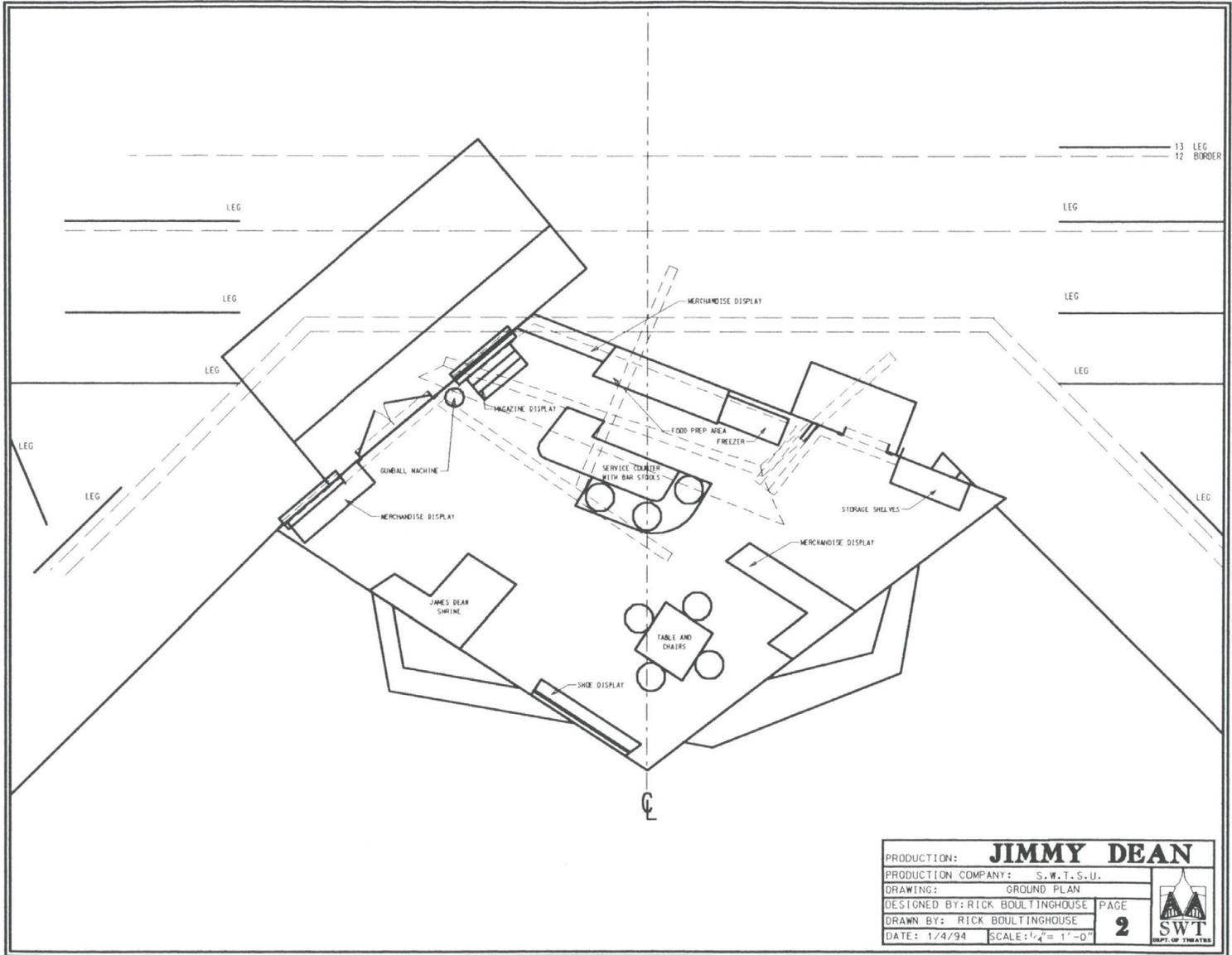
## APPENDIX 2

### DESIGNER'S DRAWINGS



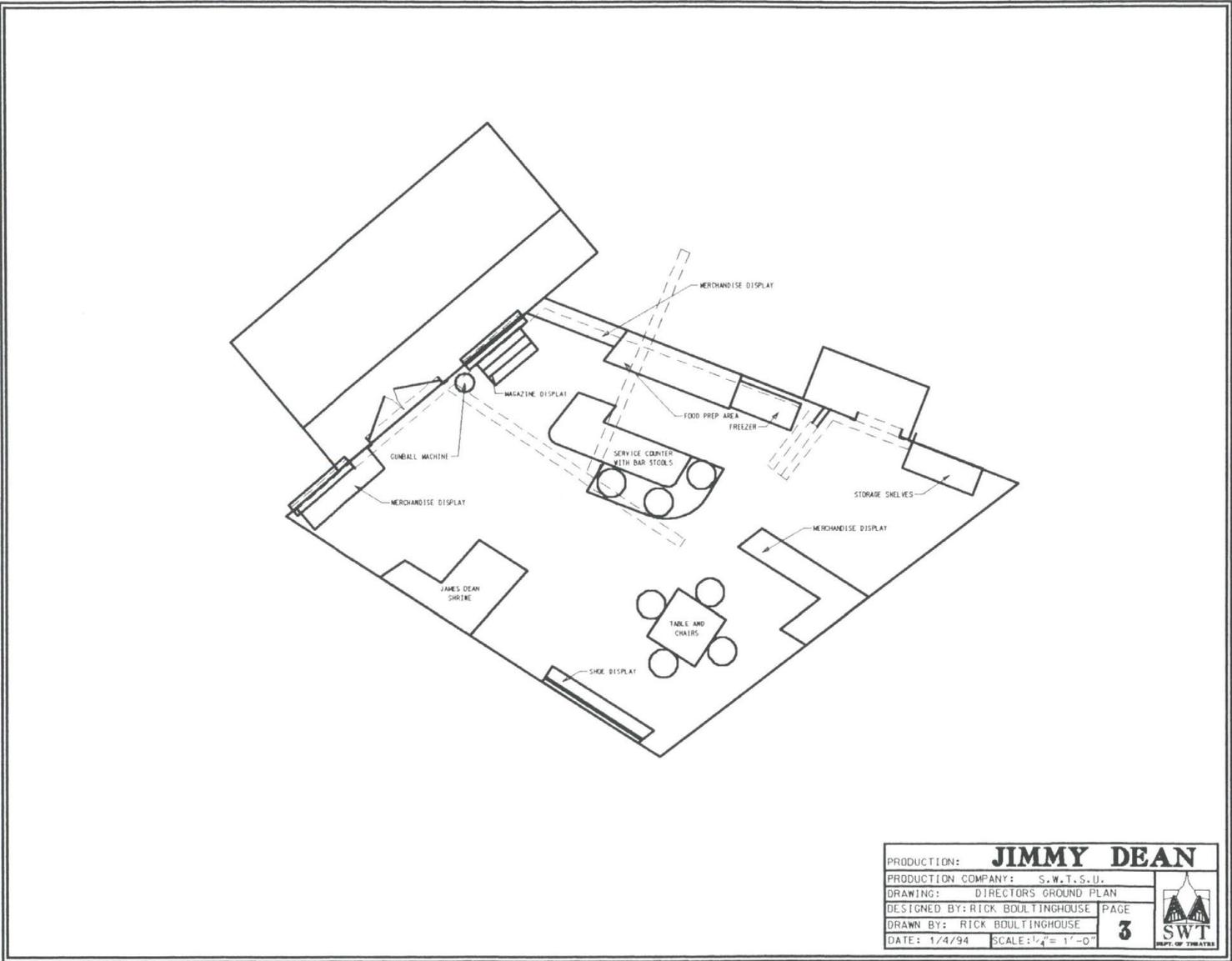
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PRODUCTION COMPANY: S.W.T.S.U.	
DRAWING: GROUND PLAN	
DESIGNED BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	PAGE
DRAWN BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	<b>1</b>
DATE: 1/4/94	SCALE: 1/2" = 1' - 0"





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DESIGNED BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	PAGE
DRAWN BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	<b>2</b>
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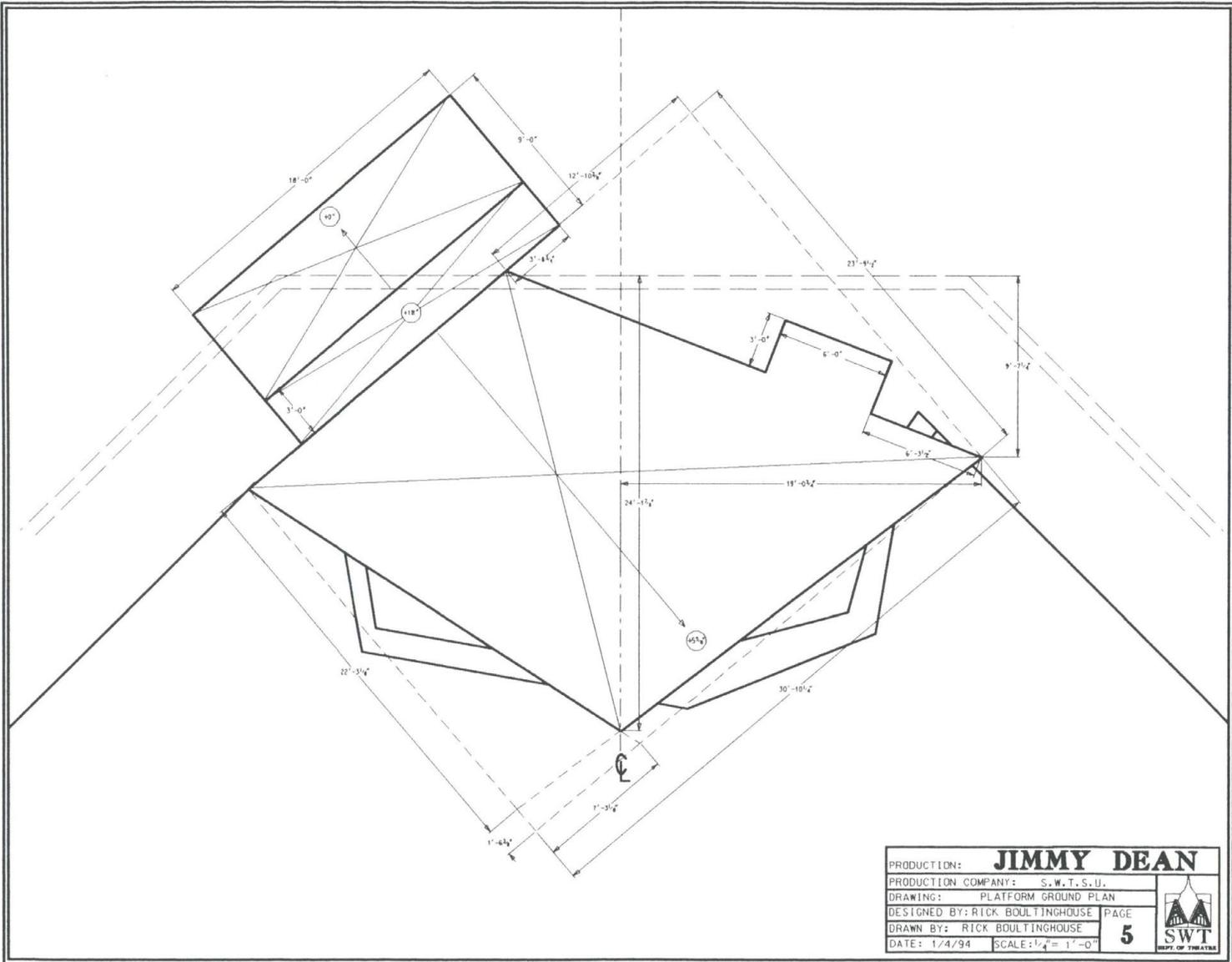




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DRAWING: DIRECTORS GROUND PLAN	
DESIGNED BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	PAGE
DRAWN BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	<b>3</b>
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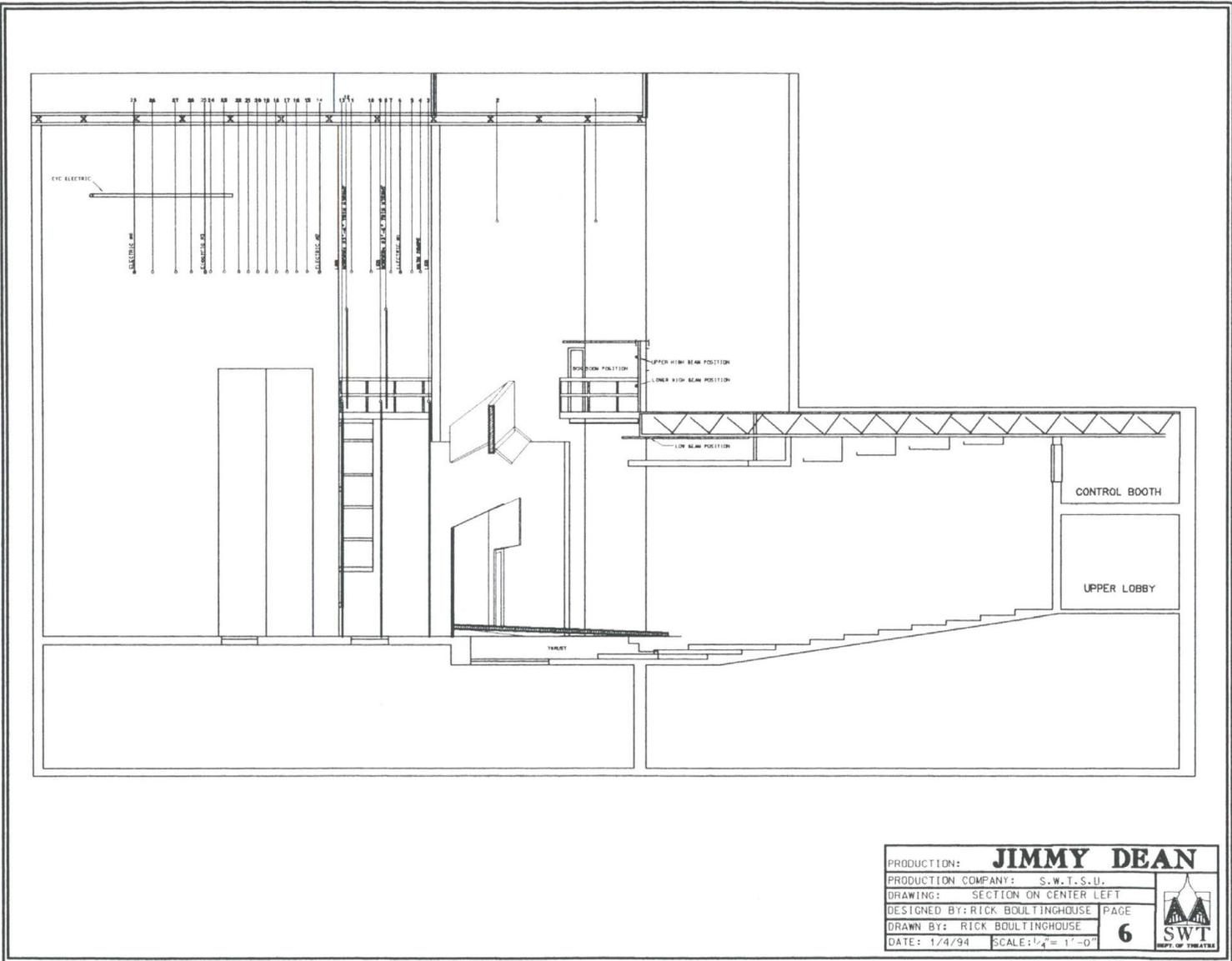






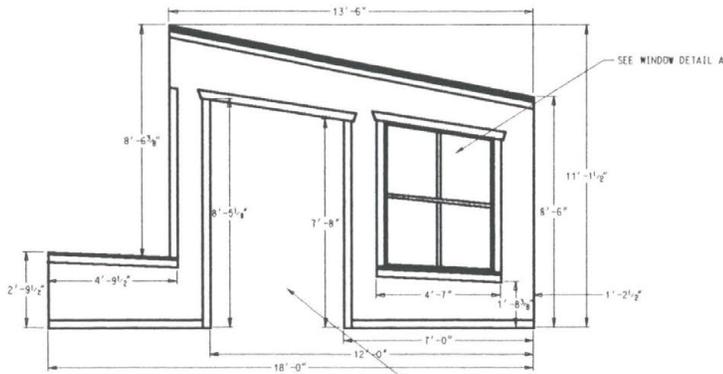
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PRODUCTION COMPANY: S. W. T. S. U.	
DRAWING: PLATFORM GROUND PLAN	
DESIGNED BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	PAGE
DRAWN BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	<b>5</b>
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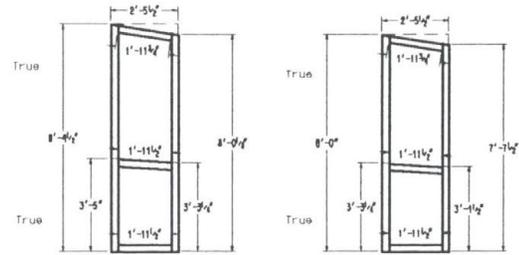
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PRODUCTION COMPANY: S.W.T.S.U.	
DRAWING: SECTION ON CENTER LEFT	
DESIGNED BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	PAGE
DRAWN BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	<b>6</b>
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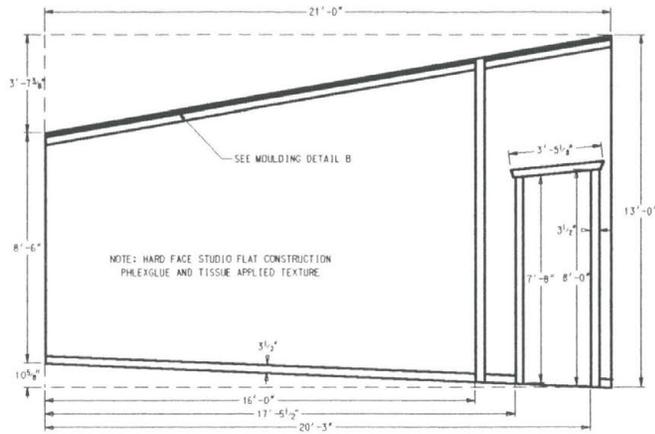


NOTE: HARD FACE STUDIO FLAT CONSTRUCTION  
PHLEXGLUE AND TISSUE APPLIED TEXTURE.

ELEVATION A



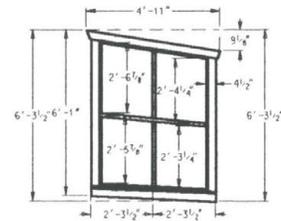
SCREEN DOOR DETAIL A



ELEVATION B



MOULDING DETAIL B



WINDOW DETAIL A

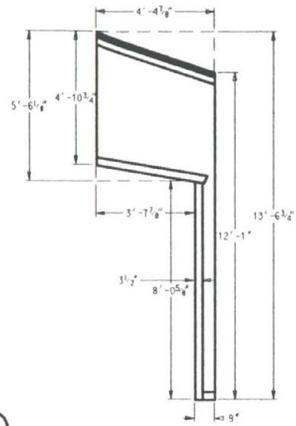
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DRAWING: ELEVATIONS A & B	
DESIGNED BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	PAGE
DRAWN BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	<b>7</b>
DATE: 1/4/94	SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



NOTE C & D: HARD FACE STUDIO FLAT CONSTRUCTION  
PHLEGLUE AND TISSUE APPLIED TEXTURE



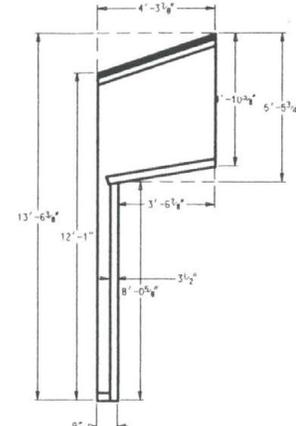
DETAIL - PLAN VIEW



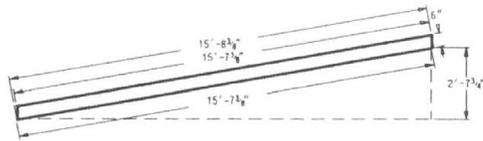
ELEVATION C



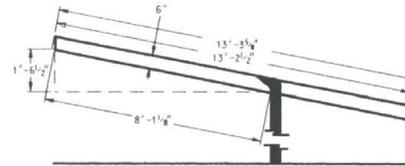
SIDE VIEW C & D



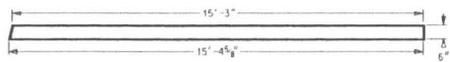
ELEVATION D



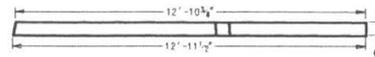
ELEVATION E



ELEVATION F



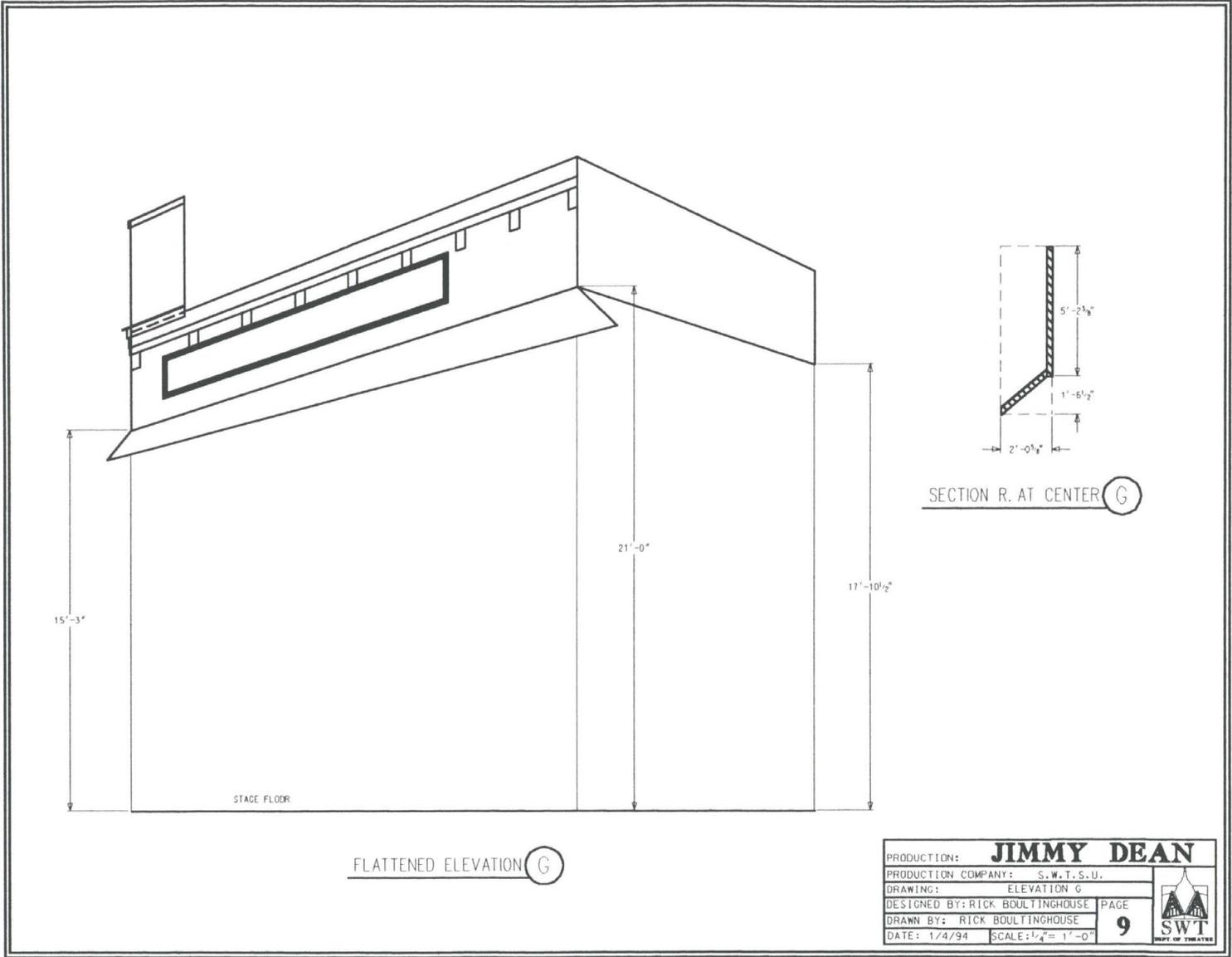
PLAN E

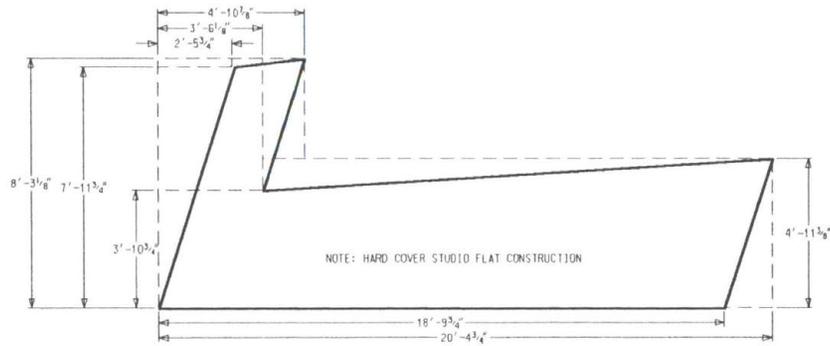


PLAN F

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PRODUCTION COMPANY:	S.W.T.S.U.	
DRAWING:	ELEVATIONS C - F	PAGE
DESIGNED BY:	RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	8
DRAWN BY:	RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	
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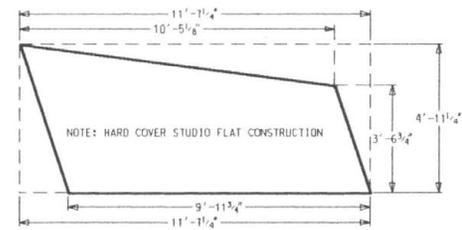




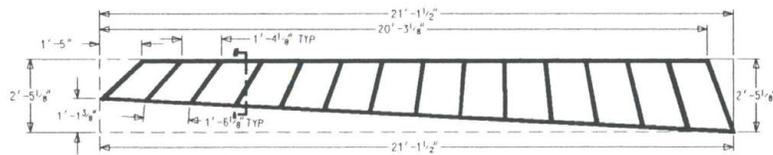
ELEVATION SR FLAT (G)



SECTION A - A' (G)



ELEVATION SL FLAT (G)

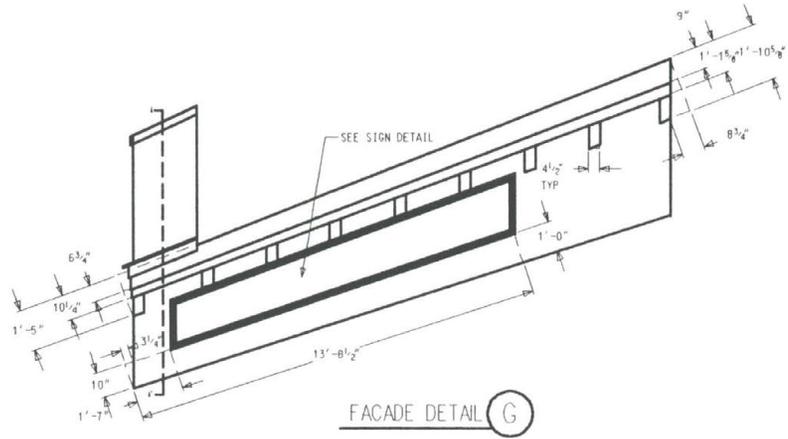


PLAN AWNING (G)

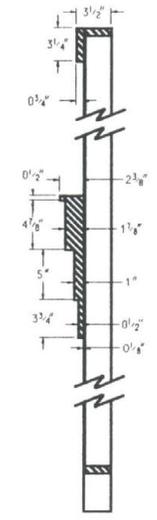
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PRODUCTION COMPANY: S.W.T.S.U.	
DRAWING: ELEVATIONS G	
DESIGNED BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	PAGE
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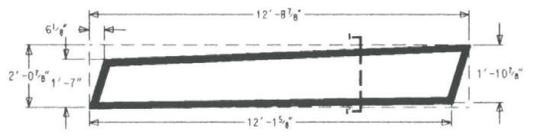




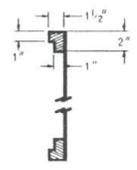
FACADE DETAIL G



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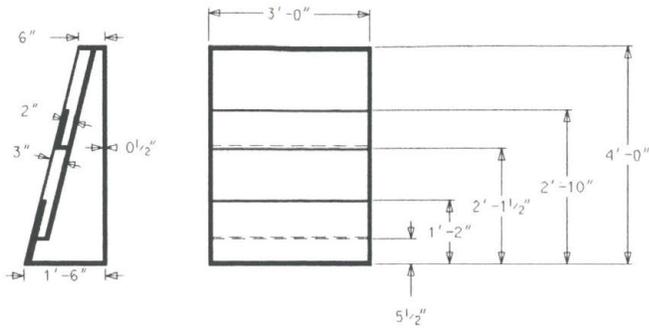


SIGN DETAIL G

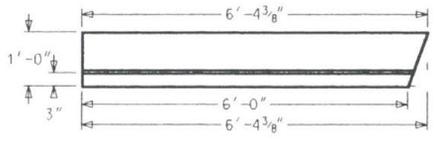
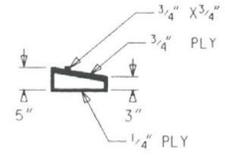


SECTION B - B' G  
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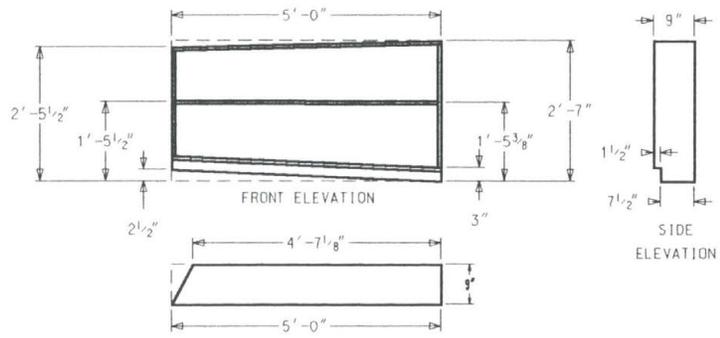
PRODUCTION: <b>JIMMY DEAN</b>	
PRODUCTION COMPANY: S.W.T.S.U.	
DRAWING: DETAILS UNIT G	
DESIGNED BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	
DRAWN BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	
DATE: 1/4/94	
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"	



MAGAZINE RACK SECTION AND PLAN

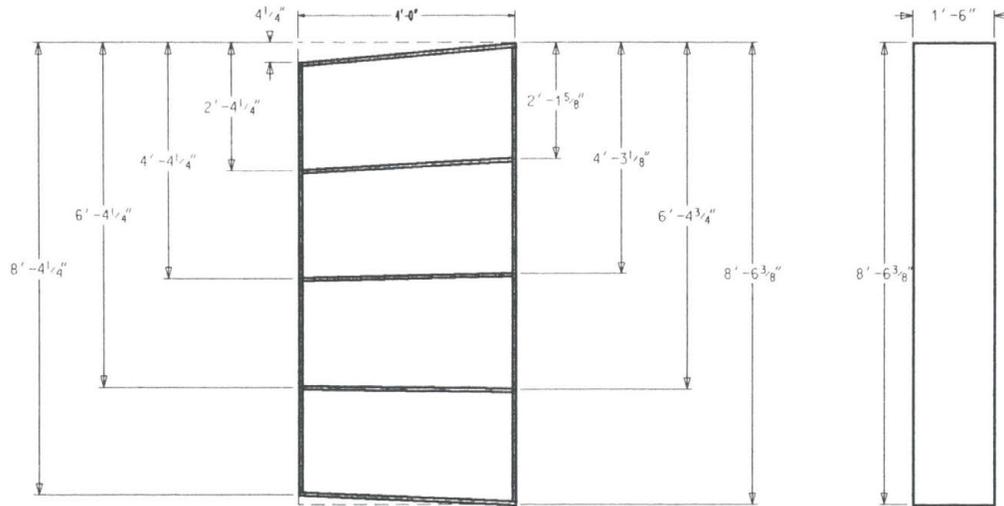


SHOE RACK SECTION AND PLAN



PRODUCTION: <b>JIMMY DEAN</b>	
PRODUCTION COMPANY: S.W.T.S.U.	
DRAWING: FURNITURE DETAILS	
DESIGNED BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	PAGE
DRAWN BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	<b>12</b>
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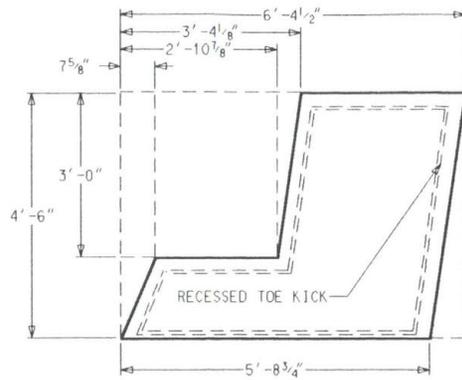




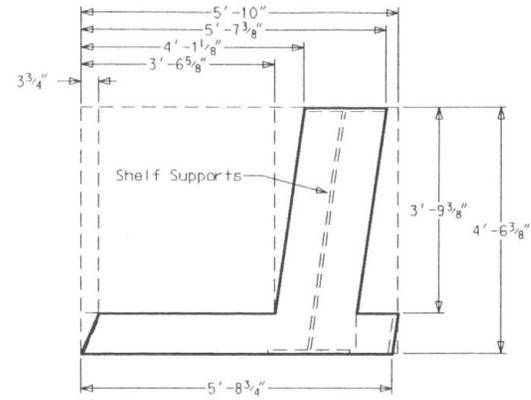
STORAGE ROOM SHELF ELEVATION AND PLAN

PRODUCTION: <b>JIMMY DEAN</b>	
PRODUCTION COMPANY: S.W.T.S.U.	
DRAWING: FURNITURE DETAILS	
DESIGNED BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	PAGE
DRAWN BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	<b>13</b>
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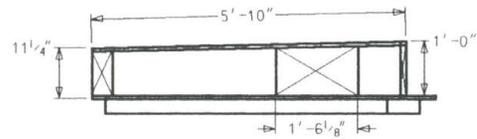




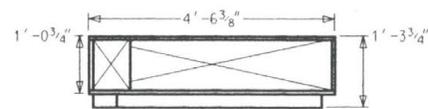
JAMES DEAN SHRINE -- BOTTOM SHELF PLAN



JAMES DEAN SHRINE -- TOP SHELF PLAN

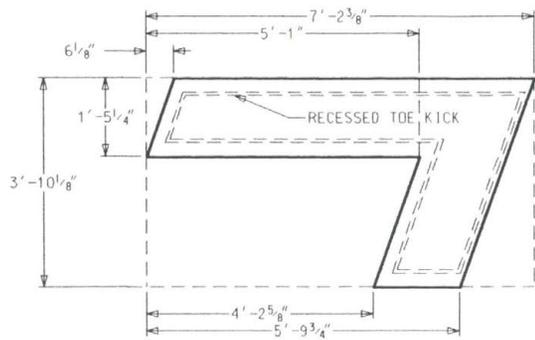


JAMES DEAN SHRINE -- FRONT ELEVATION

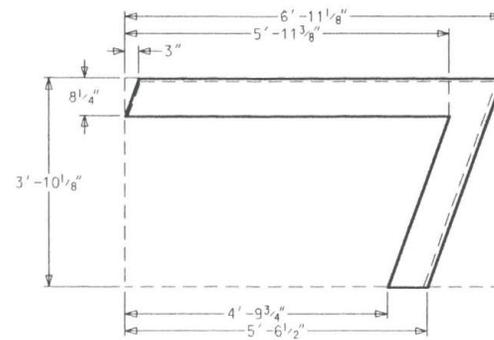


JAMES DEAN SHRINE -- SIDE ELEVATION

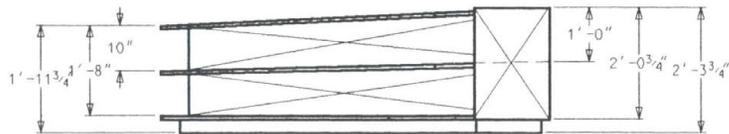
PRODUCTION: <b>JIMMY DEAN</b>	
PRODUCTION COMPANY: S.W.T.S.U.	
DRAWING: FURNITURE DETAILS	
DESIGNED BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	
DRAWN BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	
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MERCHANDISE DISPLAY -- BOTTOM SHELF PLAN

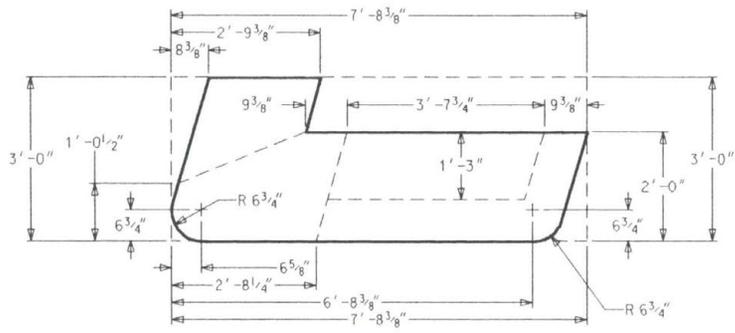


MERCHANDISE DISPLAY -- UPPER SHELVES PLAN VIEW

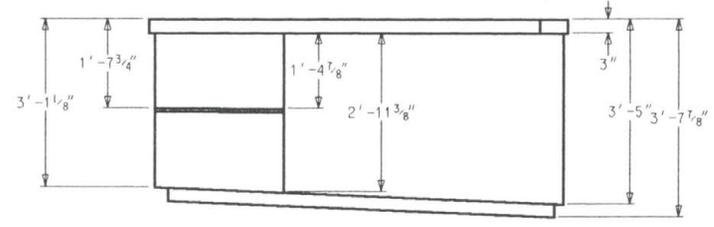


MERCHANDISE DISPLAY -- FRONT ELEVATION

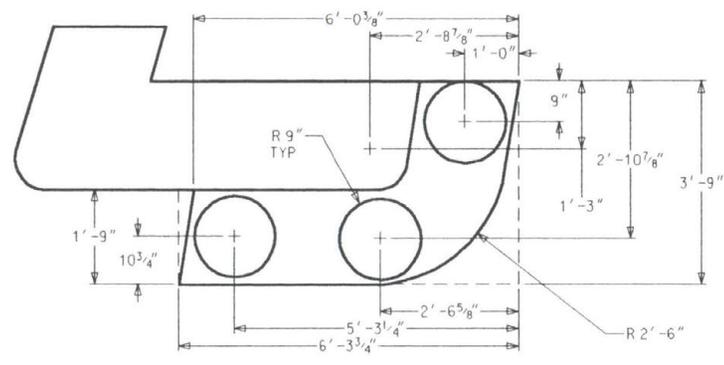
PRODUCTION: <b>JIMMY DEAN</b>	
PRODUCTION COMPANY: S.W.T.S.U.	
DRAWING: FURNITURE DETAILS	PAGE
DESIGNED BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	15
DRAWN BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	SWT
DATE: 1/4/94	SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"



SODA BAR PLAN VIEW



SODA BAR FRONT ELEVATION



SODA BAR PLAN VIEW

PRODUCTION: <b>JIMMY DEAN</b>	
PRODUCTION COMPANY: S.W.T.S.U.	
DRAWING: SODA BAR DETAILS	
DESIGNED BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	PAGE
DRAWN BY: RICK BOULTINGHOUSE	<b>16</b>
DATE: 1/4/94	SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

APPENDIX 3

SCENERY BUDGET REPORT

DATE	VENDOR	P.O. NUM.	AMOUNT	BALANCE
				\$2,000.00
12/10/93	Tuttle	9467257	\$208.86	\$1,791.14
12/15/93	Tuttle	9460128	\$195.46	\$1,595.68
1/3/94	Tuttle	9467651	\$535.78	\$1,059.90
1/11/94	Texas Power Nailers	9467986	\$95.09	\$964.81
1/11/94	Roddis	9467987	\$128.70	\$836.11
1/24/94	Randall's	P.C. 00044	\$5.81	\$830.30
1/26/94	Garden Ridge	P.C. 00046	\$28.64	\$801.66
1/31/94	Hi-Lo Automotive	P.C. 00047	\$18.55	\$783.11
2/1/94	Little Bit Used Furniture	P.C. 00049	\$31.00	\$752.11
2/2/94	BMC West	P.C. 00051	\$14.71	\$737.40
2/3/94	Hercules Wire Rope	P.C. 00052	\$77.18	\$660.22
2/4/94	Dollar Store	P.C. 00053	\$51.53	\$608.69
2/11/94	Travis Tile	P.C. 00061	\$128.17	\$480.52
2/16/94	Sherwin Williams	P.C. 00065	\$26.55	\$453.97
2/17/94	Dollar Store	P.C.00067	\$41.18	\$412.79
2/17/94	Tuttle	9469537	\$48.02	\$364.77
2/17/94	Wal Mart	P.C. 00062	\$54.08	\$310.69
2/18/94	Texan Wholesale Foods	P.C. 00068	\$41.18	\$269.51
2/18/94	Randall's	P.C. 00068	\$40.09	\$229.42
2/21/94	AAA Resturaunt Supply	9469731	\$95.00	\$134.42
2/25/94	Olden Lighting	P.C. 00037	\$18.08	\$116.34
2/28/94	Tower Records	P.C. 00077	\$99.42	\$16.92
3/11/94	Wal Mart	P.C. 00084	\$22.60	(\$5.68)

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## VITA

Hueland Richard Boultinghouse III was born in Alexandria, Louisiana, on January 4, 1969, the son of Hueland Richard Boultinghouse Jr. And Margaret McAinsh Boultinghouse. After completing his work at The Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts, in Natchitoches, Louisiana, in 1987, he entered Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. He received a Bachelor of Arts from Texas A&M University in May, 1992. In January, 1992, he began work as a Scenic Artist for Fiesta Texas, San Antonio, Texas. In September, 1992 he entered the Graduate School of Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas. During the summer of 1993, he worked as a Scenic Artist for Fiesta Texas. During the summer of 1994 he returned Fiesta Texas as a Scenic Artist and was soon promoted to Shop Foreman. In the fall of 1998 he accepted the position of Project Manager with Chicago Scenic Studios, Inc., in Chicago Illinois.

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This creative report was typed by Hueland Richard Boultinghouse III with assistance from Taryn Cobb.