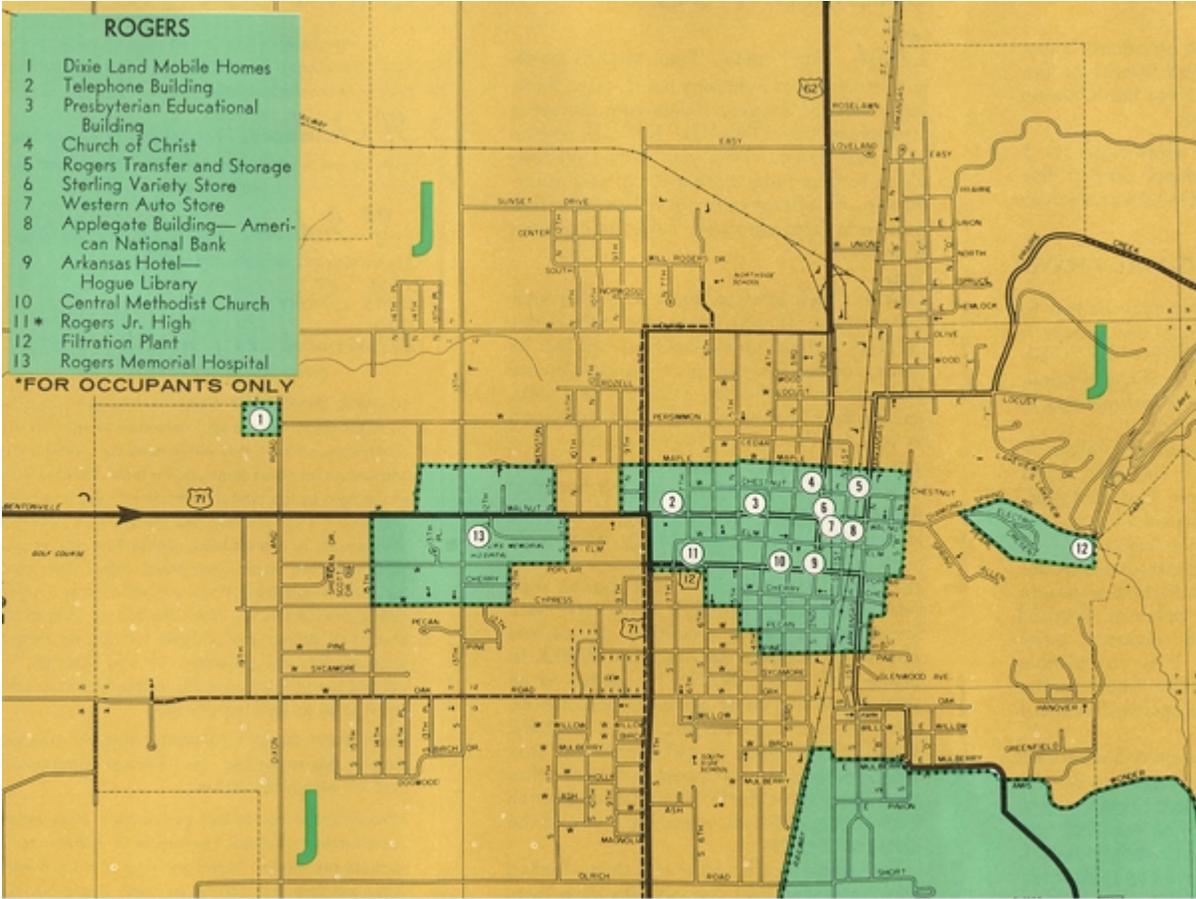
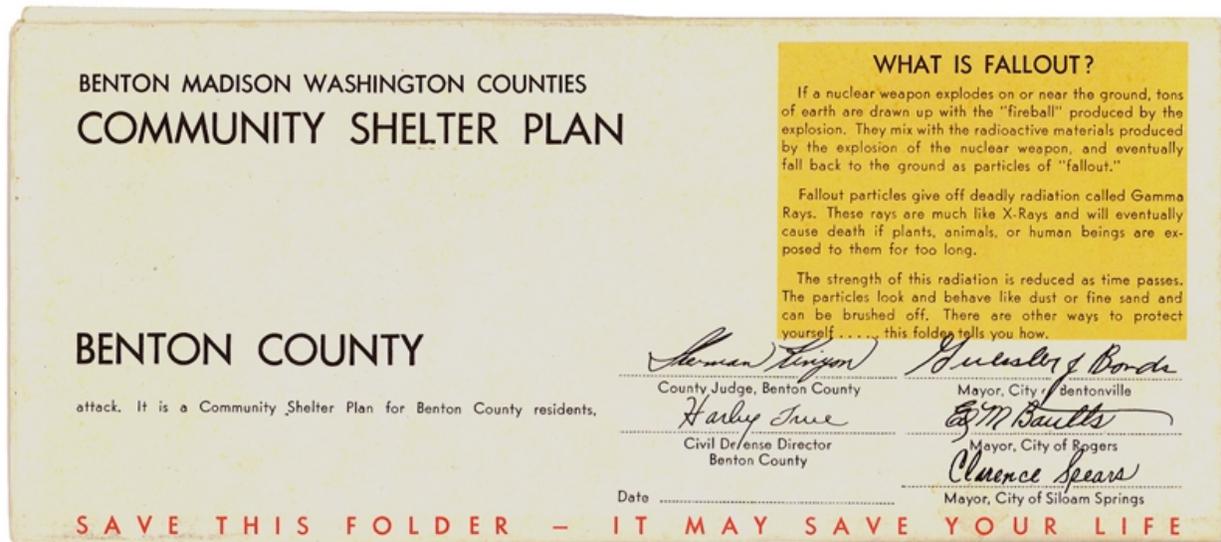


# Photo of the Month

## Rogers Civil Defense in the 1960s



Rogers Map Detail, Benton County Community Shelter Plan  
Accession #2005.20.1



Cover of Benton County Community Shelter Plan, c.1963  
Accession #2005.20.1

During the intense Cold War years of the early 1960s Rogers took part in the national effort to prepare for nuclear conflict. Illustrated at right is the Benton County Community Shelter Plan. The cover advised individuals to "save this folder – it may save your life." Preparation and shelter were encouraged as the best forms of protection from nuclear fallout, which results from an atomic explosion on or near the ground that draws soil and debris up in the fireball and then drifts back to earth carrying radiation.

County and local civil defense planners established community fallout shelters marked with highly visible yellow and black signs and stocked with food and medical supplies. According to the folder, a civil defense siren sounding a wavering tone for three to five minutes indicated that an attack had been detected. Based on potential regional targets and prevailing winds, local people were warned that fallout might reach them between one to three hours at an intensity level requiring as much as two weeks of shelter.

Rogers civil defense officials designated thirteen locations as community shelters. For example, downtown buildings such as the Hotel Arkansas and the post office were selected for this use due to their strong brick construction, thick walls, and large basements. Officials reported that 548 people would be able to take shelter at these locations.

Citizens were also instructed how to react in the event of a nuclear attack. Given the chance that little warning may come before an attack, families were encouraged to create plans for reaching these shelters or for preparing one at home. First, people were advised not to panic and take one minute to assess their situation. Next, individuals should review their maps, locate their nearest shelter, and help others who may not be "as well informed" as those people around them. Lastly, the folder directed people to "get going" without running or speeding in their cars, so that traffic would continue to move at a safe and constant rate.

Officials also formed a five member disaster squad to respond to emergencies. Fortunately the need for fallout shelters or this form of disaster relief never became a reality. Nevertheless, this folder represented a portion of the effort to prepare for an unthinkable event and the vigilance of a handful of community leaders during this tense time period.

