

1394

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Smith-McCurry House

other name/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number: 3 1/2 mi. e. of El Dorado on n. side of State Hwy. 15

not for publication: N/A

city/town: El Dorado

vicinity: X

state: AR county: Union code: AR 139 zip code: 71730

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

=====

#### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A. Byrd  
Signature of certifying official

9-8-92  
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

=====

#### 5. National Park Service Certification

=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

~~Entered in the~~  
National Register

- ☒ entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register  
\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
\_\_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Nelson Byrd

10/15/92

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
of Action

=====

#### 6. Function or Use

=====

Historic: Domestic

Sub: Single Dwelling

Current : Vacant/Not In Use

Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

=====

## 7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification:

Greek Revival

Craftsman

\_\_\_\_\_

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation Concrete roof Asphalt

walls Weatherboard other Brick

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

=====

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: B,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Industry

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: c. 1867-c. 1922

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): McCurry, Mamie Smith

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.  
X See continuation sheet.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

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**Summary**

The Smith-McCurry House was constructed in 1867 as a single-story, four-room dog-trot residence. The frame house is clad with weatherboard and covered by a gable roof, which also covers the recessed, full-facade front porch that is bolstered by six box columns. Originally supported by brick piers, the house now rests upon a continuous concrete-block foundation. At some point after construction, a kitchen ell was constructed at the rear of the house, and two second-story rooms were added in the attic space. Around 1922, the house was altered to reflect the contemporary Craftsman style of architecture. The roof was shingled with composition shingles laid in a pattern to resemble slate. False decorative rafter ends were added to the front porch eve, and latticework was applied along the columns and underneath the entablature. Additional rooms were constructed on the eastern and northern elevations of the house, and an open trellis porch was attached to the western elevation.

**Elaboration**

The Smith-McCurry House was constructed in 1867 as a single-story, four-room dog-trot residence. The frame house is clad with weatherboard and covered by a gable roof, which also covers the recessed, full-facade front porch that is bolstered by six box columns. Originally supported by brick piers, the house now rests upon a continuous concrete-block foundation.

The house originally consisted of four rooms with two on each side of the open central hallway. Each of the four rooms are entered through a single-leaf door located in the hallway. Apparently, a fifth door existed at one time between the two windows on the front elevation of the western room (from examining the cuts in the flush boarding). The front or southern elevation was fenestrated by four asymmetrically placed six-over-six, single-hung windows. This elevation is currently composed of a mixed assortment one-over-one and six-over-one windows. Greek Revival detailing is found in the wide, full entablature spanning the front porch and the flush boarding on the front wall underneath the porch. Simple capitals adorn the columns, which have a stick balustrade connecting them. Although there is currently only one exterior brick chimney on the western elevation, there are two historic fireplace mantels in the house which reflect Greek Revival styling. The second mantel is presently attached to a wall in the eastern upstairs room.

A gable-roofed ell is located on the western end of the northern elevation. This kitchen ell was most likely added at some point after the construction of the house, but could possibly be the original detached kitchen that was later attached to the main house. In typical fashion, the owners constructed a shed-



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Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

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roof porch on the inside or eastern elevation of the ell which connects with the shed-roof porch built onto the rear of the house. The date of construction for both porches is unknown. Another alteration to the original structure appears to be the two second-story rooms, which are not thought to have been originally finished. Both rooms are sheathed with beaded-board siding and feature tray ceilings. The eastern room is lighted by two side-by-side windows placed in the center of the gable end, while the western room has two windows flanking the chimney. Like the front elevation, the pane arrangement is varied. The fenestration of the first story of the western elevation also has been altered since construction. There are two one-over-one windows flanking the chimney and two side-by-side, one-over-one windows lighting the rear or southern room.

Around 1922, following the discovery of oil in Union County, the house was more drastically altered with the Craftsman style providing the inspiration. The roof was shingled with composition shingles laid in a pattern to resemble slate, a common practice on Craftsman houses. False decorative rafter ends were added to the front porch eave, and latticework was applied along the columns and underneath the entablature.

A one-story hipped-roof addition was constructed along the eastern elevation and wrapped partially around to the rear of the house. The two additional rooms on the eastern side became a music room and an office, and the space at the rear of the house was utilized as a bedroom. A concrete stoop was laid at the front or southern elevation of the addition, which is accessed through double-leaf doors flanked by two narrow windows. Nine six-over-one, double-hung windows compose practically all of the eastern elevation of the addition. Since a six-over-one configuration is somewhat unusual, the owners may have utilized the bottom sashes of the six-over-six windows from the original dog-trot and purchased the single-pane sashes to produce a Craftsman pattern of multiple-panes-over-one.

The northern elevation of the wrap-around addition consists of three six-over-one windows and a single-leaf door. To the west of this bedroom addition, a portion of the rear shed roofed-porch was enclosed to form a bathroom. Instead of weatherboard, novelty siding was applied to the small exterior area, and a single rectangular window was placed in the center. The addition that most reflected the Craftsman influence is the open trellis porch that was added to the western side of the kitchen ell, which received two side-by-side, four-over-one Craftsman windows on the southern elevation at this time. This porch has since been covered and enclosed with corrugated tin.

Other than the enclosing of the open trellis porch, the only other exterior alterations since the Craftsman-izing of the early 1920's have been the enclosing of the front breezeway and the rear shed-roof porches with a lightly constructed framework of plywood and plastic sheeting.

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Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

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The interior is basically unaltered with the exception of modern imitation wood paneling covering the western front room. The four doors that lead into the original rooms are all historic; however, the front room doors are considerably taller than the rear room doors which has led to some speculation whether the doors were enlarged at a later date. Nevertheless, the door paneling and surrounding molding are consistent with the other two doors and the time period from when the house was constructed.

There are no surviving historic outbuildings.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

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**Summary**

The Smith-McCurry House is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best known example of a Greek Revival-styled frame dog-trot in Union County. Under Criterion B, the Smith-McCurry House is locally significant for its association with Mamie Smith McCurry, El Dorado's foremost woman oil operator and a pioneer in the development of the oil industry in Arkansas.

**Elaboration**

The Smith-McCurry House is located approximately 3 1/2 miles east of El Dorado. It was constructed in 1867 for David Carroll Smith by his father, Lawson Smith. The elder Smith immigrated to Union County from Wilcox County, Alabama, in 1829 with his brother Joel Smith. The two brothers settled approximately five miles apart and built identical houses facing each other. Joel constructed his house a few miles south of El Dorado in what became the community of Smith. His c. 1840 house is currently listed in the National Register. Lawson Smith erected his home a few miles east of El Dorado, where a community likewise grew up around his homestead and was named Lawson in his honor (a community still exists in Lawson; the community of Smith is now virtually abandoned).

David Carroll Smith was born on September 16, 1851, and was the only son of Lawson Smith's third wife. David attended the University of Mississippi, where he met his future wife. They were married shortly after the end of the Civil War and returned to Arkansas. As he had done with his other sons, Lawson Smith gave David a plot of land, which was located closer to El Dorado than the community of Lawson (probably due to the fact that David was the last of Lawson's sons, and his older brothers had already received the land nearest to their father's house), and built the newlyweds a house. On his farm, David Smith raised cotton, corn, cane, cattle, chickens, and hogs as well as a vegetable garden and a fruit orchard. Smith was a deacon in the Old Union Baptist Church and served on the Board of the El Dorado Bank. Following his death on September 16, 1919, his only heir, Mamie Smith McCurry, returned to manage the farm.

Mamie Smith McCurry had been living in Little Rock where her husband, Dr. William Thomas McCurry, practiced medicine. They were married on August 14, 1898, and had their only child, Ruth, in November of the following year. After Mamie's return to her home place, her husband became ill. Spurred on by the necessity of caring for him and educating their daughter, Mamie Smith McCurry remembered her father's oft-mentioned belief that there was oil beneath their property and unearthed two government survey maps of the area which indicated

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

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the East field and the Rainbow field as oil-producing territory. One of the maps had been published in 1895 and the other in 1912, long before anyone in Arkansas dreamed about drilling for oil in Union County.

Bruce Hunt, a geologist from Tulsa, contacted Mrs. McCurry about oil exploration in Union County, and she subsequently invested in the Busey well, which came in as a gusher on January 10, 1921. McCurry then directed interest east of El Dorado and drilled a well on her property, which became known as the Old McCurry No. 1. Hensy and Zoda were the actual contractors for the drilling, and after the well was successfully completed as a gusher in May of 1921, the firm of Hunt, McCurry, and Zoda was formed to launch other operations in the area. Zoda was the drilling contractor; Hunt was responsible for leasing; and McCurry was the bookkeeper for the company. The Old McCurry No. 1 well was the third well drilled in Union county, the second producer in the county, and the first well drilled east of El Dorado. On its initial test, the well produced 75 barrels of oil and 25 million cubic feet of gas at 2149 feet in the Nachitoches sand.

Only one other well was ever drilled on her 280 acre farm, which was never leased to other companies. Neither well proved to be a perpetual producer. In a 1941 interview for the *El Dorado Daily News*, McCurry discussed the early days of the oil boom and commented on the drilling technology of that time period:

All we knew was to set casing and test. We had no conservation department and had never heard of a Schlumberger or a drill stem test. If we had, a great many wells of that period might have produced for a longer period of time.

The Hunt, McCurry, and Zoda Company was active for about four years and operated in a number of different fields. They drilled the discovery well in the Urania field in Louisiana and completed 15 producers in that field. The company's interests in that territory were sold to H. L. Hunt, another El Dorado oil operator. Mrs. McCurry also served on the board and as secretary-treasurer of the East Side Oil and Gas Company. Besides the development of the East field, McCurry was involved in developing the Rainbow field and the Shuler field in Union County. Before she retired, Mrs. McCurry had drilled in seven states: Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi. The last well she personally had charge of drilling was in Alabama near Bay Minnette. While there, McCurry was given a membership by the Mobile Chamber of Commerce and was voted a resolution of appreciation from the Bay Minnette Lions Club for arousing interest in the development of oil in that area. Mrs. McCurry sold her interests in the well before it was completed.

After the discovery of oil and the financial reward that accrued thereon, Mrs. McCurry expanded considerably the size of her house with additions that

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reflected the then-fashionable Craftsman style of architecture. When the Old McCurry No. 1 was being drilled, McCurry utilized her additional space to house up to 15 workers in her home. By having her workers within sight of their drill, McCurry greatly increased the efficiency of her operation, for housing was difficult to find in El Dorado, and what few roads existed at that time were practically impassable due to the increased traffic created by the oil industry.

In 1931, McCurry took a vacation from active involvement in the oil business and joined an International Universities group, which toured the world. On her return, she embellished her living room with exotic furnishings acquired from her travels. Mrs. Mamie Smith McCurry died on August 2, 1952, and was survived by her only child, Ruth McCurry Brown, and two grandchildren, Mamie Ruth Brown Williams and Claudia Ann Brown Willey.

The Smith-McCurry House is locally significant under Criterion C as the best known example of a Greek Revival-style frame dog-trot in Union County. Although the residence currently reflects the c.1922 Craftsman-style alterations and additions, the owner, W. L. Cook, plans to restore the structure to its original Greek Revival dog-trot appearance by using a historic photograph as his plan. Under Criterion B with local significance, the house is important for its association with Mrs. Mamie Smith McCurry, El Dorado's foremost woman oil operator and a pioneer in the development of the oil industry in Arkansas.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ```

_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been
  requested.
_ previously listed in the National Register
_ previously determined eligible by the National Register
_ designated a National Historic Landmark
_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

```

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- X State historic preservation office  
 \_ Other state agency  
 \_ Federal agency  
 \_ Local government  
 \_ University  
 \_ Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Five

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing      Zone Easting Northing

|   |           |               |                |   |   |   |   |
|---|-----------|---------------|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| A | <u>15</u> | <u>538170</u> | <u>3675680</u> | B | — | — | — |
| C |           |               |                | D |   |   |   |

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Commencing at the Southeast corner of the Southeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 19, Township 17 South, Range 14 West, Union County, Arkansas, and run North 20 feet to the North line of State Highway No. 15; thence West along said line, a distance of 593 feet to the point of beginning; thence North, perpendicular to said highway a distance of 660 feet; thence West, parallel to said highway a distance of 330 feet; thence South 660 feet to the North line of said Highway No. 15; thence East, along said line, 330 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with this resource that retains its integrity.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

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**Bibliography**

Information supplied by Mamie Ruth Brown Williams, April 1992.

"Mrs. Mamie Smith McCurry, El Dorado's Foremost Woman Oil Operator, Among First to Seek Oil in Union County." *El Dorado Daily News*. June 17, 1941.

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Patrick Zollner, National Register Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 09/08/92

Street & Number: 225 E. Markham, Suite 300 Telephone: (501) 324-9346

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Smith--McCurry House  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Union

DATE RECEIVED: 9/15/92 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/29/92  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/15/92 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/30/92  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 92001394

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 10/15/92 DATE

Entered in the  
**National Register**

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_  
REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

---

CLASSIFICATION

\_\_\_count      \_\_\_resource type

---

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

---

FUNCTION

\_\_\_historic      \_\_\_current

---

DESCRIPTION

\_\_\_architectural classification  
\_\_\_materials  
\_\_\_descriptive text

---

SIGNIFICANCE

Period      Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates      Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

\_\_\_summary paragraph  
\_\_\_completeness  
\_\_\_clarity  
\_\_\_applicable criteria  
\_\_\_justification of areas checked  
\_\_\_relating significance to the resource  
\_\_\_context  
\_\_\_relationship of integrity to significance  
\_\_\_justification of exception  
\_\_\_other

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

\_\_\_acreage      \_\_\_verbal boundary description  
\_\_\_UTMs      \_\_\_boundary justification

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ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

\_\_\_sketch maps    \_\_\_USGS maps    \_\_\_photographs    \_\_\_presentation

---

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_



Smith-McCurry House  
Union Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Patrick Zollner  
April 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View from the south





Smith-McCurry House  
Union Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Patrick Zollner  
April 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of dogtrot from the south





Smith-McCorry House  
Union Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Patrick Zollner  
April 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of dog trot from the north





Smith-McCurry House

Union Co., Arkansas

Photographed by Patrick Zollner

April 1992

Negative on file at AHPP

View of upstairs mantel





Smith-McCurry House  
Union Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Patrick Zollner  
April 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View from the southeast





Smith-McCurry House  
Union Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Patrick Zollner  
April 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View from the east





Smith-McCurry House

Union Co., Arkansas

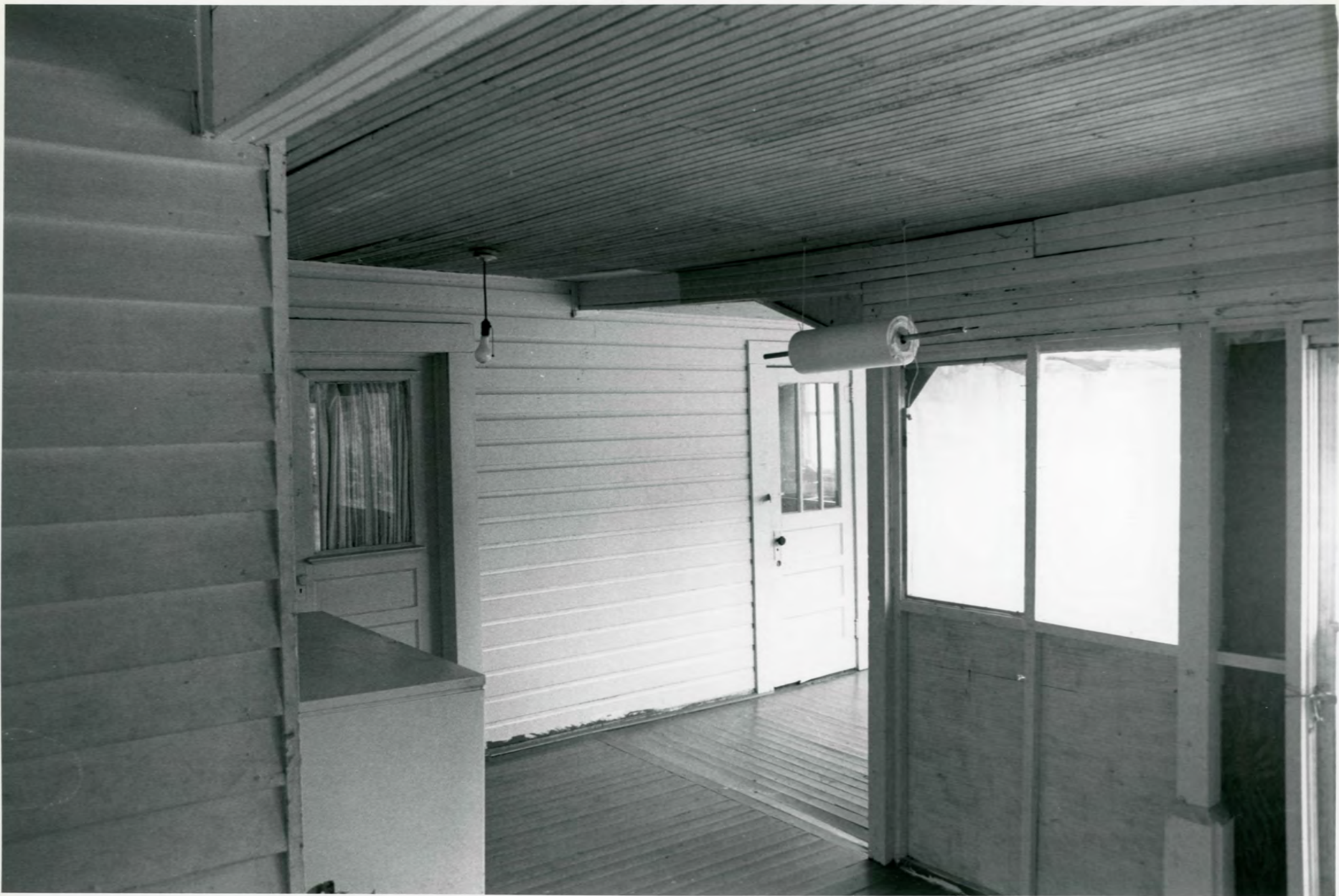
Photographed by Patrick Zolher

April 1992

Negative on file at AHPD

View from the west.





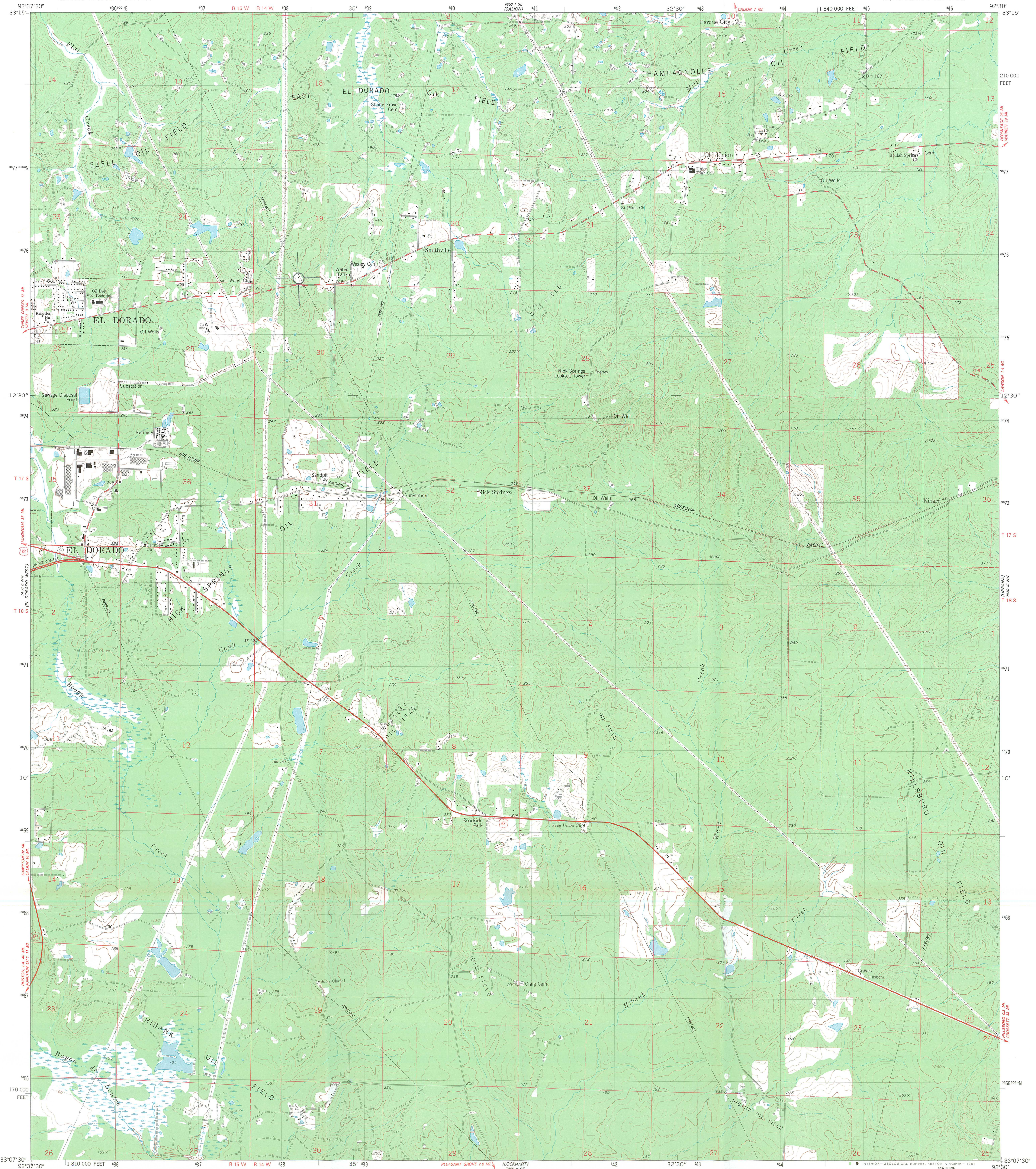
Smith-McCurry House  
Union Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Patrick Zollner  
April 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of rear porch



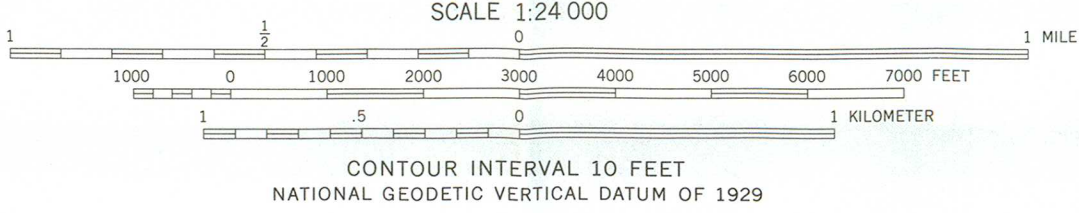
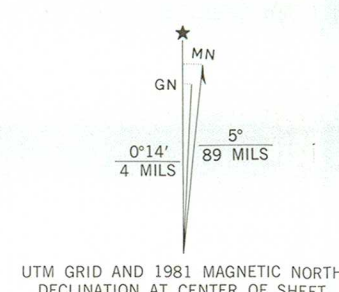
Smith-McCurry House  
El Dorado vic., Arkansas  
UTM: 15/538170

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

EL DORADO EAST QUADRANGLE  
ARKANSAS-UNION CO.  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)  
NE/4 EL DORADO 15' QUADRANGLE



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1976. Field checked 1978. Map edited 1981  
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Arkansas coordinate  
system, south zone (Lambert conformal conic)  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15  
1927 North American Datum  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983  
move the projection lines 11 meters south and  
14 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Primary highway, hard surface  
Secondary highway, hard surface  
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface  
Unimproved road  
Interstate Route  
U. S. Route  
State Route

EL DORADO EAST, ARK.  
NE/4 EL DORADO 15' QUADRANGLE  
N3307.5-W9230/7.5

1981

DMA 7450 II NE-SERIES V884





ARKANSAS  
HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION  
PROGRAM

RECEIVED  
SEP 15 1992

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

September 8, 1992

Carol D. Shull  
Chief of Registration  
United States Department of the Interior  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1100 "L" Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Smith-McCurry House  
El Dorado vic., Union County

Dear Carol:

We are enclosing for your review the nomination of the above referenced property. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Cathy Buford  
State Historic Preservation Officer

CB:kg

Enclosures

