



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

The attached property, the Prairie County Courthouse, in Prairie County, Arkansas, reference number 77000266, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the National Register on 04/18/1977, as evidenced by the FEDERAL REGISTER/WEEKLY LIST notice of Tuesday, February 7, 1978, Part II, Vol. 43, No. 26, page 5171. The attached nomination form is a copy of the original documentation provided to the Keeper at the time of listing.


Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places

9/12/2008
Date

59-1-D105-33

NR 4-18-77
FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Prairie County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Des Arc

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

STATE

Arkansas

CODE

05

COUNTY

Prairie

CODE

117

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☒ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Prairie County

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Des Arc

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Prairie County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Des Arc

STATE

Arkansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Des Arc has had numerous courthouses. The present two-storey, red brick structure was constructed in 1913. In 1902 an earlier brown brick courthouse of the same dimensions and style was constructed on the same site. A fire in 1911 razed the building, and when the county rebuilt, the new courthouse was constructed on the foundation of the old building.

The ornate, two-storey building is basically Georgian Revival style, but it also combines elements of Romano-Tuscan architecture. It is constructed of red brick and has white details.

The front entrance, which faces south, is the most elaborate feature. Four massive Romano-Tuscan columns support a white, flat-roofed, two-tiered portico that is topped by white railing and balustrades interspersed with four red-brick piers. White pilasters and architrave frame the main-floor double doors, which are flanked by sidelites and transom. White gun-sight iron railing encloses the second-storey porch. The double-door entrance to the second-storey, characteristic of Georgian buildings, has a transom but no sidelites.

The facade is constructed with a center portico and projecting wings on both ends. The wings are similarly constructed, yet there are differences. The wing on the west elevation is larger in dimension than the wing on the east. Also, the second-storey windows on the west wing have eighteen-pane transoms which are not present on the east wing. Both projections have pedimented gables with modillions, which are featured along the cornice line of the building and portico, and semicircular air vents.

Window openings are numerous on all elevations. Second-storey windows are placed directly above the lower-storey windows. Windows are double-hung sash and have bracketed shelves above the bottom-storey windows. The double windows above the entrance on the west elevation have an arched transom. Above the entrances on the side elevations are signs which read "Prairie County Courthouse."

The low-hipped roof features two very decorative architectural features. Centered just behind the portico is a small brick dormer with pediment, modillions and double-hung sash windows. Behind the dormer in the center of the main roof is a tower. The square tower has piers at each corner and double, louvered windows below the clock. Double round-headed windows of the Roman order are below the louvered windows. An iron railing identical to that on the second-storey portico forms a small porch at each elevation of the tower.

Chimney placement is symmetrical, but the two chimneys on the west elevation are corbelled, while the other two are not.

An addition was made to the north elevation in 1947. The two-storey rectangular appendage has a flat, stair-step roof. The main entrance to the addition was placed on the west side. Steps with handrail and a hood remain, but the door itself has been infilled with bricks, as have all the first-storey windows and doors of the addition. The only entrance into the addition, which serves as the jail, is through the main building. The numerous second-storey windows in the addition are unbricked.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE one

The interior of the courthouse is designed for office use and appears to be basically unaltered. Original pressed tin ceilings, tile floors, and plastered walls remain. Because the early courthouses in Prairie County had numerous fires, thick vaults were bought in 1856 and have been in each subsequent courthouses. In the present one at Des Arc, the vaults, which have walls about two feet thick, are included in the room which separates the county judge's office from the county clerk's office. County records dating back to 1856 are contained in the vaults.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1913 BUILDER/ARCHITECT R. P. Morrison

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The largest number of architecturally significant public buildings in Arkansas are the courthouses scattered over the States' seventy-five counties. A structural symbol of American government, the county courthouse serves as the center of local political activity. Often the largest and most costly building in the county, the courthouse is almost always a source of pride to the citizens who financed and make use of its facilities.

Prairie County was formed in 1846 from part of Pulaski County. The first county seat was located at Brownsville (now a part of Lonoke County). In 1873 DeValls Bluff became county seat, and in 1875 an election moved the county seat to Des Arc. In 1877 DeValls Bluff became seat of justice for the southern part of the county and Des Arc for the northern part. Des Arc is now considered the main county seat.

Des Arc has had three courthouses. The first one was constructed in 1875 when the county seat was moved to Des Arc. In 1904 a new brown brick courthouse was constructed. A fire in 1911 razed the building and when the county rebuilt, the new courthouse was constructed of the same style and on the foundation of the 1904 structure.

The courthouse was designed by R. P. Morrison and constructed at a cost of \$27,500. It was first occupied in 1913.

Very ornate in appearance, the courthouse combines elements of Georgian Revival and Romano-Tuscan architecture. Constructed of red brick, all the detail and decorative work is white.

The facade contains most of the architecturally significant features. A two-tiered portico with Tuscan columns is situated between projecting wings. Each wing is capped by pedimented gables. A dormer is centered on the hipped roof just behind the portico.

A square tower with brick piers at each corner caps the roof. A clock is located at the top of the tower with pairs of louvered windows under the clock and pairs of round-headed windows below the louvered windows.

In 1947 a new jail building was added to the rear elevation. The addition is a rectangular brick building with stair-step roof. All ground-floor openings have been infilled with brick, and the jail is accessible only through the courthouse.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Garth, Billy, (Prairie County Clerk) personal interview at Des Arc, Arkansas, January 15, 1976.

Prairie County Fact Sheet. On file at the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.
Worley, Ted R., History of Des Arc, (Reprinted from the White River Journal, March 22, 1956), 1957.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	5
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6	3	7	4	5	5
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3	8	7	1	3	9	10
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B

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C

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D

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Donna DuVall, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

DATE

3/9/76

STREET & NUMBER

300 West Markham

TELEPHONE

501-371-1639

CITY OR TOWN

Little Rock

STATE

Arkansas

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ☐

STATE ☐

LOCAL ☒

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Anne Bartley

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 3-9-76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

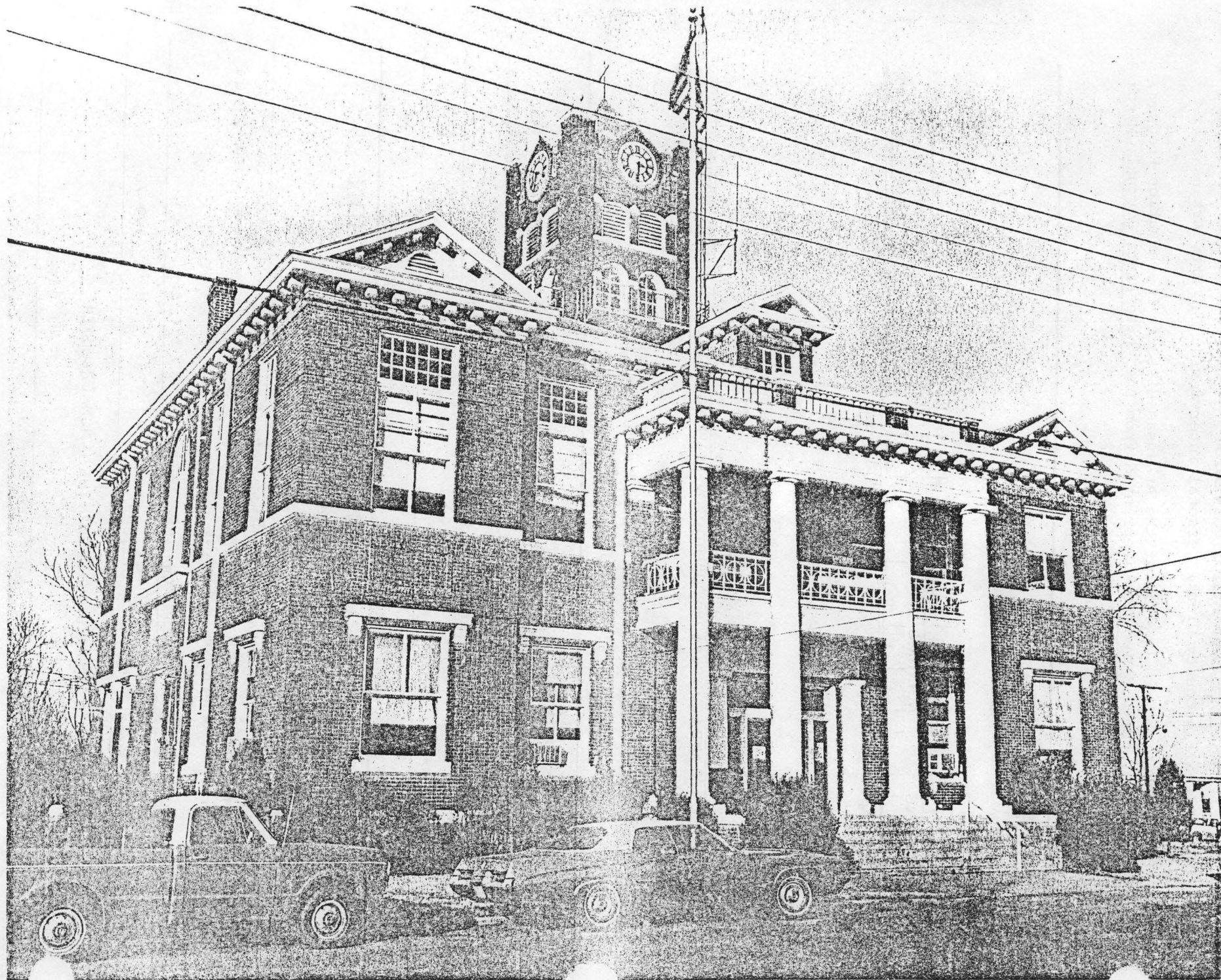
DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Missing Core Documentation

Property Name

Prairie County Courthouse

County, State

Prairie, Arkansas

Reference Number

77000266

The following Core Documentation is missing from this entry:

☒ Nomination Form (Original Nomination missing, only a copy from Arkansas SHPO present)

☐ Photographs

☐ USGS Map



#1

Prairie County Courthouse
Des Arc

View of facade, which faces south.

1/1976

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

- 1) Prairie County Courthouse
- 2) Des Arc, Arkansas
- 3) Bob Dunn
- 4) 1976
- 5) Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
- 6) View of facade, which faces south
- 7) 1 of 4

DOE APR 18 1977

MAR 31 1976



2 of 4

Prairie County Courthouse

Des Arc

View of west elevation, when has

1/1976

- 1) Prairie County Courthouse
- 2) Des Arc, Arkansas
- 3) Bob Dunn
- 4) 1976
- 5) Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
- 6) View of west elevation
- 7) 2 of 4

005 APR 18 1977

MAR 31 1976

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



#3
Prairie County Courthouse
Des Arc
View of east elevation
1/1976

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

- 1) Prairie County Courthouse
- 2) Des Arc, Arkansas
- 3) Bob Dunn
- 4) 1976
- 5) Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
- 6) View of east elevation
- 7) 3 of 4

DOE APR 18 1977

MAR 31 1976



#4

Prairie County Courthouse

Des Arc

View of 1947 addition to the rear of
building.

1/1976

- 1) Prairie County Courthouse
- 2) Des Arc, Arkansas.
- 3) Bob Dunn
- 4) 1976
- 5) Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
- 6) View of 1947 addition to the rear of
building
- 7) 4 of 4

DOE APR 18 1977 MAR 31 1976

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAR 31 1976

DATE ENTERED

APR 18 1977

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Prairie County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Des Arc

____ VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Prairie

STATE

Arkansas

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE U. S. Geological Survey

SCALE 1:24 000

DATE 1968

4 REQUIREMENTS

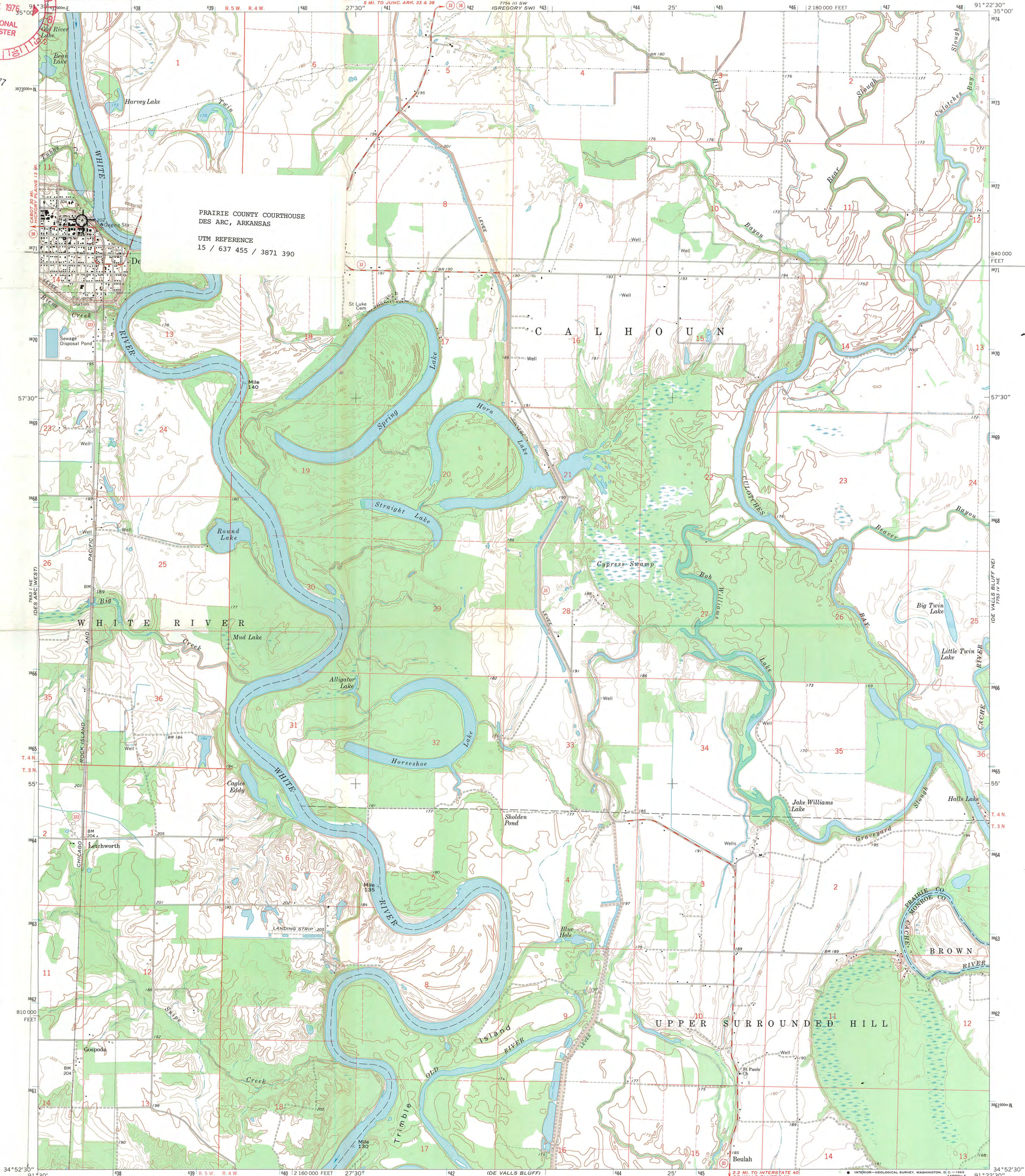
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES

RECEIVED
MAR 31 1976
NATIONAL REGISTER
APR 18 1977

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

PRAIRIE COUNTY COURTHOUSE
DES ARC, ARKANSAS
UTM REFERENCE
15 / 637 455 / 3871 390



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1968
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Arkansas coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 15, shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

UTM GRID AND 1968 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24,000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
AND BY THE ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Medium-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Unimproved dirt ———
State Route ———

DES ARC EAST, ARK.
NW 1/4 DE VALLS BLUFF 15' QUADRANGLE
N3452.5—W9122.5/7.5

1968

AMS 7753 IV NW—SERIES V884