

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received OCT  
date entered 3 1984  
NOV 1 1984

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic James A. Rice House

and/or common Ralph and Gwen Williams House

**2. Location**

street & number 204 Southeast Third St. 541 N/A Not for publication

city, town Bentonville N/A vicinity of

state Arkansas code 05 county Benton code 007

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Ralph and Gwen Williams

street & number 204 Southeast Third

city, town Bentonville, AR 72712 N/A vicinity of state Arkansas

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Benton County Courthouse

street & number Bentonville Square

city, town Bentonville state Arkansas

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☐ good  
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

#### SUMMARY

Located in Bentonville, the Rice House, built c. 1879, is a two-and-one-half story Italianate structure. Tall arched windows, a bracketed cornice, a three-sided bay projection and a two story arched porch are all features of this residence that suggest the dominant influence of the widely popular Italianate style. However, the steeply pitched gable roofs and asymmetrical plan are characteristic of the concurrently fashionable Queen Anne style. Thus, the design of the Rice House illustrates a creative blend of the two most popular late nineteenth century domestic stylistic trends.

#### ELABORATION

Facing north, the Rice House occupies a large corner lot which is graced by two large Sugar Maple trees believed to be of the same period as the house. A brick sidewalk laid in a herringbone pattern leads from the street to the front porch and continues around the house.

Of load-bearing brick construction, all walls are two bricks thick with an air space between. The brick was probably manufactured locally, as there was at least one brickyard in Bentonville at the time this house was constructed. Intersecting hipped, gable, shed and visor roofs create an unusual roof configuration. Though originally covered with slate, it has been replaced with asphalt shingles. Though no longer visible due to a change in grade, an old photograph reveals a continuous foundation with scored stucco.

The front elevation is dominated by a gabled projection with a visor roof that lends the gable end the appearance of a large dormer. The face of the gable end is sheathed in diagonal wood siding and has two one-over-one double-hung windows with paired brackets between and at each corner. The apex of the gable end is highlighted by simple curved wood ornament. To the left of this projection is a three bay two story shed-roofed frame porch, supported at each level by four simple square columns. The columns on the first floor rest on stone plinths and brick piers that replace the original railing. An engaged column at the east corner allows the graceful wood decoration that forms arches between each column to continue around the corner. The porch is further embellished with brackets and a partial decorative railing on the second floor. The simple front entrance, consisting of a single wood door with glass upper sash and arched single-light transom, is tucked in the corner of the porch and gabled projection. A second story door, slightly to the left of, and identical to that on the first floor, provides access to the second floor porch. There are two-over-two double-hung windows on the front elevation. The tall window openings have arches of headers and stone sills. None of the original louvered shutters remain. On each elevation, brackets adorn the simple cornice and give the appearance of supporting the overhanging eaves.

The east side elevation consists of three distinct sections that are set back from front to rear. A two bay section at the northeast corner is identical in its detailing to the one bay projection of the front facade. A one story shed roof

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protects a door in the second section, while the rear section has an identical door and evidence of a porch that has been removed.

The west side to the house has a three-sided two-story bay projection that is capped by a steeply pitched gable roof. A narrow porch at the southwest corner has been enclosed. The rear elevation is quite plain, with four windows, two on each floor, and no entry.

The floorplan, with a central hall, is similar on each floor. Ceilings are eleven feet in height throughout. Located in the hall, to the left of the front door, is a curved staircase with an elaborately carved newel post and balusters and decorative stair brackets. Wainscot is found along the wall of the stair and in the halls on each floor. Doors throughout the house have four panels with transoms. The only two transoms that appear to be original have etched glass. The two rooms to the west are connected by double doors. There is a carved arch over the downstairs bay windows and evidence that a similar arch was removed from the second floor when the ceilings were lowered. The carved woodwork is one of the most attractive features of the house, and is intact in most rooms. The mantels are of stone, with simple carving. There was originally a back stair, but it was removed, probably when the building was converted to apartments between 1943 and 1945. There are five bedrooms on the second floor and a door leading to the porch. The attic is only partially finished and has never been used for anything but storage. When converted to apartments, the interior was partitioned into four apartments, each with its own kitchen and bathroom and the central halls were closed off to make closets. The current owners are returning the plan to its original configuration. Though the originally unpainted, the brick exterior was painted pink when the structure was converted to apartments.



## 8. 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** c. 1879 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Rice House is significant as one of the largest and most beautiful structures built in Bentonville in the boom period of the 1880's. It is characterized by its distinctive Italianate influences and solid brick construction. The fact that it has survived virtually intact despite years of abuse is a testimony to the craftsmanship with which it was built. The original owner, James A. Rice, was a prominent attorney who served as mayor of Bentonville and for two terms was a member of the Arkansas legislature. The second owner, Helen King, managed the cold storage plant and ice factory in Bentonville. She and her husband owned the first cold storage plant, the first electric light plant, and the first bottling plant in Rogers.

Bentonville suffered greatly during the Civil War. Goodspeed estimates not more than a dozen buildings were left standing at the end of the conflict. Following this was a period of rebuilding and rapid growth. The peak of this boom was about 1888. Goodspeed in 1888 listed the population of Bentonville as between 2,500 and 3,000. Most of the people were small farmers and businessmen. The railroad spur came through town in 1881. Up until then the closest railroad station was Pierce City, Missouri. In 1878 and 1879 the major cash crop was tobacco, with apple orchards beginning to be common.

James A. Rice, who had the Rice House built, was born in 1850 in Tennessee and moved to Pea Ridge, Arkansas, when he was six. He taught school for a while, and then entered the law office of Judge Walker in Fayetteville, who later became a United States Senator. Upon admission to the bar he moved to Bentonville. In 1876 he married Lucy Winton of Pea Ridge, and they had four children. Mr. Rice was one of the best known lawyers in Benton County. He served two terms in the legislature, in 1875 and 1877, and was mayor of Bentonville for quite a number of years. He was frequently chosen to act as special judge in the district and had held court in Fayetteville, Bentonville and Eureka Springs.

Mr. Rice bought the property the house sits on in 1877, and is thought to have built the house shortly after. Mr. Rice died in 1910, and the house was sold to Helen King. She and her husband, H. Y. King, owned the first cold storage plant, the first electric light plant, and the first bottling plant in Rogers. They also owned, and she herself managed, the cold storage plant and ice factory that is still standing a few blocks from the house. Mrs. King must have been an unusual woman for her time, since she managed a business and her home was in her name alone.

When Mrs. King died in 1927 she left the house to her five daughters. During the Depression they let it go for taxes. Apparently no one in the family wanted the house and economic conditions made it impossible to sell. Since 1943 the house has changed hands ten times, and most of those owners seem to have wanted

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one  
Quadrangle name Bentonville South, Ark.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 1 5 3 9 1 6 4 0 4 0 2 5 3 7 0  
Zone Easting Northing

B                          
Zone Easting Northing

C                                             

D                        

E                                             

F                        

G                                             

H                        

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 2 in Block 5 in Railroad Addition to the city of Bentonville, except a strip of land 50 feet wide squarely off of the east side of said lot. Also, except a strip of land 50 feet wide squarely off of the south side of said Lot 2, and containing 23,748.11 square feet more or less.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gwen Williams, owner (edited by staff of Arkansas Historic Preservation Program)

organization none

date August 29, 1984

street & number 204 Southeast Third

telephone (501) 273-9446

city or town Bentonville

state Arkansas

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

   national    state X 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

*Wilson Stiles*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date

9-28-84

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date

11-1-84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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to put in the maximum number of tenants and get out the maximum amount of money. The fact that it is still standing relatively intact is proof that it was well built. The brick interior walls, and the absentee landlords, kept alterations to a minimum. The present owners have stabilized the building and are in the process of restoring the interior and exterior.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1930 Atlas of Benton County. A copy can be found in the Hawkins House Museum in Rogers.

The History of Benton County by J. Dickson Black, International Graphics Industries, Little Rock, 1975.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Bentonville.

King, Mrs. Pearse. (Daughter-in-law of Helen King) Interview. 1001 Southeast Third, Bentonville, 273-2656.

Obituary of James A. Rice from December 22, 1910, Rogers Democrat.

Obituary of Helen King from August 11, 1927, Rogers Democrat.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Rice, James A., House  
Benton County  
ARKANSAS

Working No. OCT 3 1984  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/4/86  
Date Due: 11/1/84 - 11/17/84  
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 11-1-84  
☐ RETURN  
☐ REJECT  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the

National Register

- ☐ resubmission  
☐ nomination by person or local government  
☐ owner objection  
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: \_\_\_\_\_ technical corrections cited below  
\_\_\_\_\_ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition

- |                                    |                                       |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good      | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair      | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed    |

Check one

- ☐ unaltered  
☐ altered

Check one

- ☐ original site  
☐ moved date \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph  
☐ completeness  
☐ clarity  
☐ alterations/integrity  
☐ dates  
☐ boundary selection



## 8. 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

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References

Verbal boundary description and justification

## 11. Form Prepared By

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_\_ state      \_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date

## 13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_





James A. Rice House  
Bentonville  
Benton County  
Photographed by Sarah Brown  
1983  
Negative at AHPP  
Viewed from the West





James A. Rice House  
Bentonville  
Benton County  
Photographed by Sarah Brown  
1983  
Negatvie at AHPP  
Interior (Stairway detail)





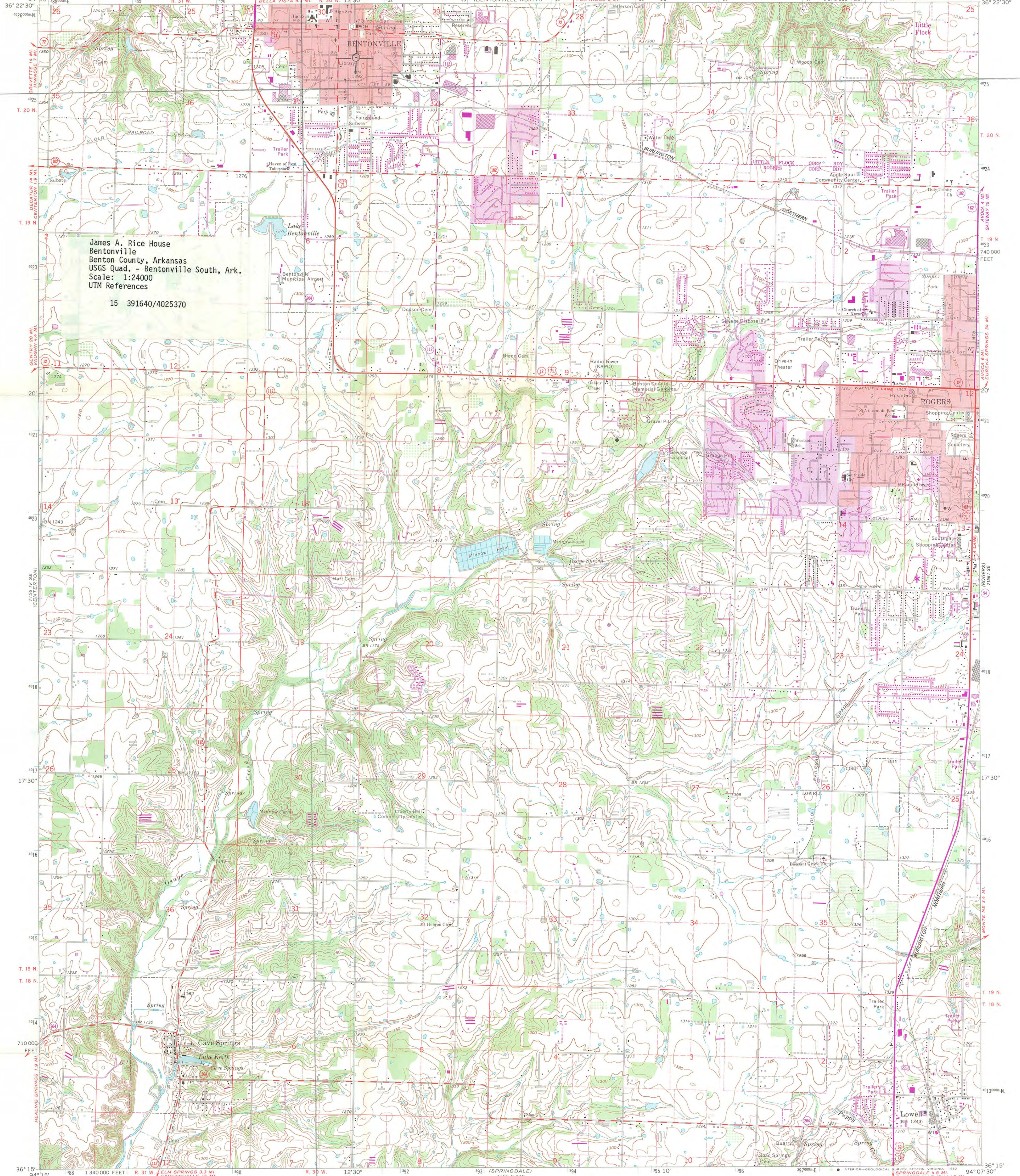
James A. Rice House  
Bentonville  
Benton County, Arkansas  
Photographed by Sarah Brown  
1983  
Negatives at AHPP  
Viewed from the Southeast



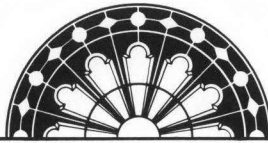


James A. Rice House  
Bentonville  
Benton County, Arkansas  
Photographed by Sarah Brown  
1983  
Negatives at AHPP  
Viewed from the Southwest









ARKANSAS  
HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION  
PROGRAM

August 27, 1984

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

Re: James A. Rice House  
204 Southeast Third  
Bentonville, AR  
Benton County

Dear Carol:

We are enclosing for your review the nomination for the James A. Rice House. 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,

Wilson Stiles  
State Historic Preservation Officer

WS/AJ/ss

Enclosure/s

