

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



337

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House

other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number 801 E. Commerce Street

NA	not for publication
NA	vicinity

city or town Altus

state Oklahoma code OK county Jackson 065 zip code 73521

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

[Signature] Apr 25, 2011  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

[Signature] 6.8.11  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
0	0	
2	0	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Domestic: Secondary Structure

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Domestic: Secondary Structure

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Mission/Spanish  
Colonial Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick

roof: Other: Urethane Foam

other:

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### Summary Paragraph

##### Location and Setting

The Elmer and Lela Garnett house and garage are located approximately six-tenths mile east of the Jackson County Courthouse in Altus. The front elevation faces south on the city street grid which follows the cardinal directions. The house is sited on a corner lot at the NE intersection of East Commerce and North Howse Streets. East Commerce Street is residential and connects downtown Altus to the west with a city park (once fairground) to the east. Six houses share the block with the Garnett house on relatively narrow lots. Neighborhood houses along East Commerce Street generally have a lawn, foundation plantings and landscaping around the sides of the homes. Neighborhood houses have large street setbacks, and driveway curb cuts that lead to mostly single-car wood frame garages along or near the service alley at the rear. There are sidewalks on both sides of East Commerce Street and there is a wide margin of lawn between the walks and the street. The street trees are mature although the original number of trees has decreased because of age and weather damage. Those that remain help create a shady street canopy when in leaf. Housing types in the area of Altus, from downtown to the Garnett house include mainly bungalows but ranches, late Victorian, and Tudor houses are also present.

The Garnett house has mature landscaping, a fenced back yard, and a two-story, two-car brick garage constructed at the same period as the home. The house has intact original windows and doors and the interior floor plan has been slightly altered only on the second floor. It is the most outstanding Mission Revival home among the other examples in the City of Altus and the house exhibits classic characteristics of Mission Revival architecture on both the house and contributing garage.

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### Narrative Description

The Garnett's constructed their two-story Mission Revival house in c. 1927. The house is approximately 38' x 38' excluding the one-story porch on the front elevation, the slightly recessed porte cochere along the east and a small one-story enclosed porch extension on the rear.<sup>1</sup> The house is a basic square symmetrical subtype that is described in A Field Guide to American Houses.<sup>2</sup> All roofs are flat and urethane foam covered.<sup>3</sup> Characteristic decorative attributes of the Mission Revival style are found on all four elevations and the garage. These include the stepped parapet walls finished with thick concrete finishing caps, and the concrete caps on the column capitals at the roof line and porch. Decorative groups of four tile ends are at the base of the parapet wall along all façades. All window sills and the porch wall caps are also finished with thick concrete trim painted brown. The house windows are double-hung, one-over-one and wood. One kitchen window on the rear elevation has been replaced with a metal double-hung.

#### South (Front) Elevation

The house is dominated on the front elevation by the one-story full façade flat-roofed front porch. The porch is supported by large square piers at the front steps and at the sides, and the porch walls are knee-high and finished with a thick concrete cap. Steps by the driveway provide a second access to the front door. The porch steps are clay tile, and the porch floor is finished with a random pattern of broken red clay and decorative tiles. The ceiling is bead-board. The first story has paired windows, symmetrically placed on both sides of the entry door. The entry door is a stained and glazed

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<sup>1</sup> The house was constructed at the same time the Hightower Place was platted in 1927 and the plat has two city blocks. At the time of platting, there was no service alley present and garages were located to the rear of lots. On Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Altus the house was not extant in 1925 but was in 1930. The plat date is confirmed by the William Bryan and Angie Grimes, "Final Survey Report, Reconnaissance Level Survey of Certain Parts of the City of Altus," Department of History, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1992, 94. See page 95 for location of the Hightower Place.

<sup>2</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 409. The Garnett house does not have a hipped roof, however, which is often a characteristic of this subtype.

<sup>3</sup> The roof was once copper but replaced because of a long time leaking. Information provided by Ellen Yates, house owner and granddaughter of Elmer and Lela Garnett, December 1, 2010.

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wood panel, with single glazed wood side-lights. The second story has five single windows, one of which is smaller and centered in the second story and lights the upper hall.

#### East Elevation

The two-story porte cochere is recessed slightly from the front elevation line, and is along only part of the primary east elevation. It is open for the drive to the garage at ground level and supported by brick columns that match the porch. The second story of the porte cochere has paired windows in the front elevation, a group of four windows in the east elevation and paired windows in the north elevation. The ground floor of the main house east elevation has two single windows within the porte cochere area, and beyond to the north there are paired windows on the ground floor and a single window in the second floor. The east elevation of the recessed one-story enclosed porch extension has a single window. There is no door in this elevation.

#### North Elevation

The north elevation ground floor small one-story porch extension has paired windows. The primary elevation has paired windows on one side of the extension and a single replacement metal window on the other. The second floor has three groups of paired windows spaced evenly on it.

#### West Elevation

The one-story rear extension has a multi-pane glazed wood door. The primary elevation ground floor has three single windows to the right of an entry door and a small window to the left. The entry door is a glazed painted wood panel and is protected by a small open wood gable roof supported by wood angle braces. The second floor has a pair of windows on both sides of a smaller single window.

#### Interior

The ground floor of the house has a living room with a fireplace to the right of a centered entry hall with a sitting room behind it to the north, a dining room is to the left, and center hall stairs access the second level. The kitchen is off the central hall to the rear of the house, there is a small bath by the west elevation pedestrian door. The one-story extension on the first floor is an original enclosed brick porch, which has an exterior door to the rear of the property. The second floor has three bedrooms and a bath (once a bedroom). A sleeping porch is over the porte cochere.

#### Double-Wide Garage

The flat-roofed garage matches the decorative details of the house at the parapet walls, decorative tile ends, and concrete caps except on the rear or service alley elevation. The south elevation ground level garage opening is double, and has a metal panel door, a segmented glazed overhead garage door and wood panel combination with multi-pane window. The second floor has two single windows. The east elevation has a single window on the ground floor and two single windows in the second floor. The north elevation is the only elevation with red brick instead of brown, and it has a single window on the ground level, and one in the second story. The west elevation ground level has one window, and a double door entry opening with a wood panel and single metal panel door.

#### Alterations

The house windows are original with the exception of one kitchen window on the rear elevation which has been replaced by a double-hung, one-over-one metal window. There are removable metal storms over all the windows, and there is a wood-covered deck on the rear elevation. On the interior, one second floor bedroom has been converted into a bathroom. The garage has a new overhead door and replacement entry doors although the openings retain their original sizes. Otherwise the house and garage are intact as constructed.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

c. 1927  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

c. 1927  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance is the construction date.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Elmer and Lela Garnett House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its local significance in the context of early twentieth-century Altus architecture. The house is the best example of a Mission Revival style symmetric subtype in Altus. There are very few Mission Revival houses in Altus and the Elmer and Lela Garnett house and garage are the best example of this architecture and the house has excellent integrity. The house is distinctive and an outstanding example of the use of Mission Revival architecture in this community.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

### Architectural Significance

Mission Revival architecture is attributed to California and its many examples of Spanish Colonial Mission Revival buildings. The architecture and use of shaped dormers, shaped or stepped roof parapets, and porches with large piers spread across the United States particularly after 1900. Architects and builders carried the style and houses with Mission Revival attributes elsewhere and houses with Mission Revival decorative details were constructed in suburbs throughout the United States, with the height of popularity between 1900 and 1920. The southwest is the area where this style remained most prevalent, but variations spread and interpretations of the style were constructed all over the United States. Architectural features were borrowed from Craftsman and Prairie movement and this house shows these influences in its large square piers of masonry and support porch roofs, symmetric form, basic square plan, and the contrasting concrete caps on the stepped parapets, porch railing, and window sills.<sup>4</sup> The decorative treatment of this house and garage are appropriately restrained for this subtype, yet there is no doubt that the builder constructed this house with Mission Revival defining elements.

A windshield survey of Altus identified only three other houses that display Mission Revival influence. These houses are within two blocks of the Garnett house and are also on East Commerce Street at 717, 819 and 938 addresses. The house at 717 is a one-story brick house but is more indicative of the Spanish Eclectic style with an elaborated chimney, low-pitched roof and arched openings, although it has Mission Revival attributes such as rounded windows, porte cochere and tile roof. The garage associated with this house is, however, a single-car wood-frame building; thus the house does not have a matching brick garage that the Garnett House has. The house at 819 East Commerce is a one-story stucco home with a small elaborated chimney and a porte cochere, but the tile roof has been replaced with asphalt shingles and the windows have been replaced with contemporary ones. The house at 938 East Commerce is two-story, with extremely limited details that indicate some Mission Revival influence, such as arched entry and windows, but the entry arch has a key-stone which is atypical of Mission Revival houses. The house also has shutters which also is uncharacteristic of Mission Revival style houses and perhaps these have been a later addition to the house. If the gable roof was once tile, it has been replaced with asphalt shingles. The best example of Mission Revival architecture in Altus is the Elmer and Lela Garnett House and complementary garage.

The Elmer and Lela Garnett House, with its distinctive stepped parapets, capped columns, contrasting concrete trim, large porch and porte cochere piers and columns, full façade porch and decorative tile accents is the most outstanding example of Mission Revival style in Altus. Of all possible examples where Mission Revival attributes are present, the Garnett House is the best and most detailed example. The house has an important and architecturally matching two-story garage of the same style. Both the house and garage retain a high degree of historic integrity in location, design, materials, feeling, workmanship and association in an intact neighborhood developed as part of Hightower Park. The Elmer and Lela Garnett House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Category C, as the best example of Mission Revival architecture in Altus, Oklahoma.

**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

Altus, Oklahoma, is the county seat of Jackson County in the southwestern portion of the state in a geographic area called the Red Bed Plains. The Altus area is open and rolling in a transition landscape between more wooded areas to the east and the tall, mid-height and short prairie grasses to the west. The area has intermittent streamlets and small rivers that

<sup>4</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 409-10, 440.

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lace through the area but rainfall is uneven. Altus is home to approximately 19,000 residents.<sup>5</sup> The community traditionally has been dependent economically on local agriculture, but since 1953, the reactivated World War II Altus Air Force Base has provided additional economic influence and stability. The area's primary crop is irrigated cotton, but the area also has numerous large cattle ranches.<sup>6</sup>

Altus began as the settlement community of Frazer founded in 1885 by Joe and Susan McClearen and their married daughters' families. The town's location was along the east bank of Bitter Creek (Section 14, Township 2N, Range 21W, centered in southern-most portion of the section).<sup>7</sup> The State of Texas had opened the area (Greer County) for settlement in 1860. Early settlers mostly from Texas and other southern states moved into the county believing they were in Texas. The whole area around Frazer was mis-identified however in an 1852 survey which incorrectly located the Texas state border along a northern channel of the Red River rather than the southern one, an original treaty line with Spain. The survey error was discovered in 1873-4 and the U.S. government assigned the Greer County area to Oklahoma Indian Territory. The federal government tried to stop all settlement in the area once the mistake was known, but too many settlers were already present, and even under threat of removal, they remained. The mistake caused land ownership issues for years to come. A U. S. Supreme Court case (United States v. Texas, 162 U.S.) was decided on March 16, 1896, and the court awarded Greer County to Indian Territory instead of Texas.<sup>8</sup>

Frazer was along the Great Western Cattle Trail which crossed the Texas side of Red River at Doan's Crossing. Frazer was approximately sixteen miles northwest this important crossing.<sup>9</sup> Frazer was also was along a north/south mail route and was known as well as the Buttermilk Station on a stage line.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately Frazer was severely damaged in a flash flood on June 4, 1891, and the residents decided the town location near Bitter Creek and the Salt Fork branch of the Red River was too susceptible to flooding. They decided to move the town to higher ground.<sup>11</sup> A settler, Sam Neal, had lived in what would become Altus (high ground), and Frazer town leaders purchased 160 acres from him to relocate their community and its displaced residents.<sup>12</sup> Some moved the buildings they could salvage from Frazer to their new town.

Despite the on-going indecision over Greer County's location prior to the Supreme Court's decision, the little town of Altus began to grow.<sup>13</sup> Churches were constructed, a city square, called central park, was delineated, and wood then brick commercial buildings ringed the square. The town grew despite the fact it was not platted until 1901. Large cattle ranches

<sup>5</sup> July 2009 Census. <http://www.city-data.com/city/Altus-Oklahoma.html>. Referenced November 20, 2010. The Red Beds Plains are the largest land region in Oklahoma. They stretch from the Kansas border in the north, south through the center of the state. The Red Beds Plains slope upward from east to west. In the east are some forested areas. In the west the region is covered with grass. Information from [http://www.netstate.com/states/geography/ok\\_geography.htm](http://www.netstate.com/states/geography/ok_geography.htm). Referenced November 20, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> In this area of uneven rainfall, irrigation is critical to cultivation of cotton and other crops. The area has the first U.S. Bureau of Reclamation project in Oklahoma, with construction that began in 1941. See "Altus, 'The Irrigation Pioneer of Oklahoma'", Altus, Oklahoma. This is a promotional pamphlet describing all the benefits of the irrigation district. (Altus, OK: Altus Chamber of Commerce, September 1947). This pamphlet was provided to the author, Cathy Ambler, by Ellen Yates, granddaughter of Elmer and Lela Garnett.

<sup>7</sup> The location is provided in several references: Meers Map of Greer County, Indian Territory (1890), and material provided by Joe McClearen from the McClearen Family Papers in his possession. Also see John Wesley Morris, *Ghost Towns of Oklahoma* by (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 79. This has a brief history of Frazer including the location which is supported by two early township maps with Frazer marked in the location noted above; one is undated and one is dated 1890.

<sup>8</sup> <http://supreme.justia.com/us/162/1/index.htm>, this site has the full text available for the court decision. Referenced December 1, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> The trail began at Brownsville, Texas, and went north into Kansas. Early area settlers used the trail to move their open range cattle to market. A stage line stop was at Frazer, also known as Buttermilk Station, so called because of the McClearen family in Frazer that supplied buttermilk to both cowboys and stage travelers.

<sup>10</sup> Map of mail/wagon/and stage road provided by Bart McClenny, Director of the Museum of the Western Prairie in Altus. See Cecil R. Chesser, *A History of Jackson County* (Altus, OK: Altus Printing Company, 1971), 138, for reference on Buttermilk Station. A website documents the existence of the station (<http://forum.treasurenet.com/index.php?topic=121557.0>) but location is incorrect. Referenced on November 10, 2010. Also see Grimes, *ibid.*, 89.

<sup>11</sup> A post office had been established in Frazer on February 18, 1886 and functioned until December 21, 1896. The post office was on the Lone Star mail route. Chesser, *ibid.*, 138.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, 141.

<sup>13</sup> The Grimes survey report speculates that the town's late platting date was the railroad's demand for one-half interest in the town that spurred the plat, *ibid.*, 91. Oddly, a condition of getting the Orient railroad was to change the town's name to Leger, and this name remained with the town until 1904 when "Altus" use resumed.

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and prolific cotton production attracted three railroads: the St. Louis and San Francisco (Frisco) in 1903, the Kansas City, Mexico and Orient in 1908, which eventually became part of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe. The Altus, Wichita Falls and Hollis Railway built southward from Altus in 1910 to the Texas border. This line became part of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas (KATY). Railroads helped Altus become an agricultural trading center. Hugh Garnett, native son of Altus born in 1911, described in a 1980 interview the set pattern for trading. Most farmers came to trade on Saturdays, but the first Monday of the month was a heavy business day at the courthouse (Altus became the Jackson County seat in 1908), and for visiting lawyers or attending to other business. It was also a day for mule trading. Many farmers used this day to shop for supplies, some shopping only once a month.<sup>14</sup>

Most settlement communities had town boosters and Altus was no different. Locals promoted the rich soil in the area; space for large ranches, and the Frisco railroad promoted the area through the Hooker-Wishart Company, which brought potential land buyers and farmers from Iowa, Illinois and Ohio.<sup>15</sup> Elmer Garnett, owner of the Garnett house was an agent for this company for three years, from 1910-1913. Good weather, the railroads, a new cotton oil mill, statehood and the creation of Jackson County (carved from Greer County), helped the community continue to maintain its reputation as a regional agricultural processing center and this brought new residents into the area.<sup>16</sup>

The town's growth is reflected in the twenty-seven additions added to the community and they established much of the community's present form. The names on some of these additions were two original Frazer residents, Dr. J. E. Fowler and C. C. Hightower.<sup>17</sup> By 1910, over 512 buildings had been constructed in the community.<sup>18</sup> Besides houses, the town had general mercantile, grocery stores, a hardware and drug store, four banks, sixteen hotels and boarding houses, harness shop, wagon yard, barber shops, steam laundries, auto garage and machine shop – all concentrated in the downtown area. Also in 1910, the Jackson County Courthouse was constructed in the city square, now the courthouse square. The population was approximately 5,000.<sup>19</sup>

The growth of the community is directly related to its agricultural economy. In 1907 old Greer County, still undivided at this time, was the second-leading cotton producer in the nation. Much of the cotton produced in the county arrived to be ginned in Altus's four cotton gins and further processed in the cotton oil mill. Wheat and alfalfa joined cotton as significant agricultural crops; they did reasonably well in dry land farming. The city in the early 1900's had an alfalfa mill, elevator, flour mill, bottling works, ice plant, produce and poultry distributors, and grocery companies; most of which were located near the railroads for easy shipping access.<sup>20</sup>

Between 1910 and 1920, the city's population stagnated, and only four new housing additions were added to the town. The boom period of the twentieth century's first decade had ended. The lack of growth can be attributed to what locals called a "disaster year (1913)" with extreme heat and dry conditions. The entire decade of the 1910's, however, was generally one of low rainfall in Oklahoma with persisting droughty conditions.<sup>21</sup> For example the amount of acreage

<sup>14</sup> Transcribed and typed interview with Hugh Garnett by Al Turner, November 22, 1980, 7-8. Garnett's father, Elmer, was an early resident of Altus in real estate, loan and insurance businesses. Hugh Garnett was born in 1911, and his father told him much about Altus's early days although Hugh remembered Altus's history as well. This interview is located at the Museum of the Western Prairie in Altus and was provided to the author, Cathy Ambler, by Bart McClenny.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 1. The railroad bought land to resell to incomers.

<sup>16</sup> Grimes, *ibid.*, 92.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>18</sup> "Altus Oklahoma: There is Business to do and a Place for You in Altus." This was a promotional brochure published by the Hooker-Wishart Investment Company with sub title on the first page "A Book of Unbiased Facts." Published in 1910. A copy of this brochure was provided to the author, Cathy Ambler, by Ellen Yates, granddaughter of Elmer and Lela Garnett.

<sup>19</sup> M. Brett Baker and Jim Gabbert, National Register Nomination for the W. C. Baker House, Altus, Section 8, page 13. Also see Altus Oklahoma brochure's "list of partial industries."

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, and Grimes, *ibid.*, 96.

<sup>21</sup> Horace J. Harper, "Drought Years in Central Oklahoma from 1710-1959 Calculated from Annual Rings of Post Oak Trees," Proceedings of the Oklahoma Academy of Science for 1960, 27. Harper looks at central Oklahoma in his study, but his findings support locals' perception of this time period. Harper shows that in this ten year period almost every year had moderately or severe drought conditions.



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farmed in cotton increased from 88,673 in 1916 to 126,033 in 1917, but number of bales produced was almost the same.<sup>22</sup> World War I also compounded the situation when the lack of a foreign market caused the price of cotton to drop.<sup>23</sup>

The decade of the 1920s, however brought a second period of growth in for Altus. Between 1920 and 1930 the city's population almost doubled which destined the need for more housing. With this demand, five new additions were made to the city, including Hightower Place, the location of the Elmer and Lela Garnett home. Research sources attribute the decade's growth to better agricultural conditions in the area. Statistics show that the number of acres under cultivation increased during this decade, the number of farmers increased, as did variety of crops.<sup>24</sup> Increased wealth from the better market value of crops started a small building boom that Hugh Garnett confirmed in his 1980 interview. He noted the housing boom began the late 20's stimulated two of the biggest cotton crop years in 1924 and 1927. Market prices had increased therefore farmers were getting more income for their product.<sup>25</sup> This was the decade of improvements in Altus and included as street paving and lighting, the construction of a public hospital and sanitarium, the establishment of a junior college, and the construction of a new reservoir to provide a better source of water for the town.

This small boom, however, did not last because bad crop years in 1928-29 ended the burst of local optimism. When the Great Depression began at almost the same time, Altus was further affected by the collapsed agricultural economy. The extended period of drought and falling farm income created hard times in Altus. The first bank in town failed in 1930.

The effects of the Depression began to be mediated in 1941 when two significant developments occurred: 1) W. C. Austin irrigation construction project began which would help assure a more stable water supply for crop irrigation, and 2) the construction of the 1942 Altus Army Air Field, which provided additional economic support in the area. In 1953, old World War II bases were reopened during the Korean War and the Altus base provided a new source of economic support for the community. Altus's economy today is still agricultural, but the air force base and a reliable irrigation district provide the much needed balance which stabilizes the town's economy.

### Elmer and Lela Garnett

In c. 1927 the Garnetts constructed their Mission Revival house at 801 East Commerce Street in Altus in the Hightower Place addition, platted in 1927. Elmer Garnett came to Altus in 1906 with a law degree from Northwestern University Law School. From 1910 to 1913 he was the manager for a farm loan company organized by Hooker and Wishart, immigration agents for the Frisco railroad. The company promoted the sale and settlement of land around Altus.<sup>26</sup> His wife Lela married Elmer in 1910 and moved to Altus. The Garnetts were active citizens in the community. Elmer was a charter member of the Altus Rotary Club, served as president of the Chamber of Commerce, sat on the City Council, was Chairman of the Altus Civic Trust Fund Committee (Community Chest), and helped organize the Child Assistance Association, a charitable institution. He also helped organize the Altus Golf and Country Club and the George C. Wright Lumber Company; he served on the lumber company's board of directors for more than 20 years. He also served as director of two local banks. Elmer's businesses were real estate, loans, insurance and farming. He helped organize the Home Building and Loan Association of Altus in 1921, which was a main source of housing loans in the city until it dissolved in 1945. Lela had a college degree from the University of Illinois and taught school in Chicago for five years until she married. She also was a civic leader in Altus. She was a member of the school board for eight years, belonged to PEO and the DAR and was active in the Methodist Church.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Grimes, *ibid.*, 97.

<sup>23</sup> Garnett, *ibid.*, 3, 25.

<sup>24</sup> Grimes, *ibid.*, 99.

<sup>25</sup> Garnett, *ibid.*, 9, 11. Garnett stated that his father began a Home Loan Association in c. 1921, which locals invested in to help stimulate growth in the local economy. During the 1920s period of plenty, new in-comers bought houses they could not sustain in difficult times. The association tried to rent them out, but the association ended up with assets that could not be sold. Hugh Garnett's father Elmer managed to keep the organization from dissolving during the Depression, however.

<sup>26</sup> Railroads sought to promote the sale of lands around their tracks, knowing that increasing the number of new settlers and farmers would increase the use of the railroad.

<sup>27</sup> This information was provided by Ellen Yates, granddaughter of Elmer and Lela Garnett. Also see Book of Remembrance: Families of Southwest Oklahoma (San Antonio, TX: Historical Publishing Network, 2007): 75-76. Published for the Altus Centennial Memorial Center, Official Oklahoma Centennial Project.

Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House

Jackson County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

The Garnett's house, with a reputation for hospitality, is remembered by their family as spacious and the scene of many family reunions. Today the house serves as a reminder of Altus's prosperity in the 1920's and is the best example of Mission Revival architecture in the City of Altus.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

- Baker, M. Brett and Jim Gabbert, W. C. Baker House, Altus, National Register Nomination.  
Chesser, Cecil R. *A History of Jackson County*. Altus, OK: Altus Printing Company, 1971.  
Grimes, William Bryan and Angie, "Final Survey Report, Reconnaissance Level Survey of Certain Parts of the City of Altus," Department of History, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1992.  
Harper, Horace J. "Drought Years in Central Oklahoma from 1710-1959 Calculated from Annual Rings of Post Oak Trees," *Proceedings of the Oklahoma Academy of Science for 1960*, 23-29.  
McAlester, Virginia and Lee, *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 199  
Altus, "The Irrigation Pioneer of Oklahoma", Altus, Oklahoma. Altus Chamber of Commerce. September 1947.  
Morris, John Wesley. *Ghost Towns of Oklahoma*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978.

### Websites

- <http://www.city-data.com/city/Altus-Oklahoma.html>. Population figures referenced November 20, 2010.  
[http://www.netstate.com/states/geography/ok\\_geography.htm](http://www.netstate.com/states/geography/ok_geography.htm). Geography referenced November 20, 2010.  
<http://forum.treasurenet.com/index.php?topic=121557.0>. Buttermilk Stage Station information referenced on November 10, 2010.  
<http://supreme.justia.com/us/162/1/index.html>. This site has a full text of the Supreme Court decision regarding where Greer County was located.

### Personal Collections

Ellen Yates, granddaughter of Elmer and Lela Garnett, provided personal histories of her grandparents and the irrigation district and was a source of information about the house's roof. Information provided by Ms. Yates on November 15, and December 1, 2010. Ms. Yates also provided a copy of the brochure, "Altus Oklahoma: There is Business to do and a Place for You in Altus," published in 1910 by the Hooker-Wishart Investment Company.

Joe McClearn is descended from the original founders of Frazer, John and Susan McClearn. Mr. McClearn has family papers which include early township maps with the location of Frazer and an unidentified history of the settlement town.

### Maps

1925 and 1930 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Altus, Oklahoma. Chicago, IL: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company.

### Maps and Information Provided by Bart McClenny, Director of the Museum of Western Prairie, Altus

Map of Greer County Mail, Wagon and Stage road.

Meers Map of Greer County, Indian Territory. 1890.

Transcribed 1980 interview with Hugh Garnett, by Al Turner

Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House  
Name of Property

Jackson County, OK  
County and State

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than 1 acre  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>14S</u>	<u>470265</u>	<u>3833088</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lot 1, Block 4, Hightower Place Plat  
Parcel Number: 0305-00-004-001-0-000-00

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary contains the entire property historically associated with the Elmer and Lela Garnett House.

Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House  
Name of Property

Jackson County, OK  
County and State

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Cathy Ambler, Ph.D., Preservation Consultant for Western Trail Historical Society  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date December, 2010  
street & number 1129 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Street telephone 918 584-3566  
city or town Tulsa state OK zip code 74120  
e-mail cambler@sbcglobal.net

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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### Photographs:

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Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

TIF Format Photographs are 1600 x 1200 pixels at a minimum, at 300 ppi

Name of Property: Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House  
City: Altus  
County: Jackson County  
State: OK  
Name of Photographer: Cathy Ambler  
Date of Photographs: November 15, 2010  
Location of Original Digital Files: Oklahoma SHPO

Photographs are labeled with the subject and direction of the photograph

- 1 of 11 Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House South (Front Elevation) looking North
- 2 of 11 Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House South (Front Elevation) Looking Northwest
- 3 of 11 Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House East Elevation with Porte Cochere Looking Northwest
- 4 of 11 Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House East Elevation with Porte Cochere Looking South
- 5 of 11 Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House North Elevation Looking South Southeast
- 6 of 11 Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House North Elevation Looking South
- 7 of 11 Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House West Elevation Looking East
- 8 of 11 Garnett, Elmer and Lela, Garage South Elevation Looking North
- 9 of 11 Garnett, Elmer and Lela, Garage East Elevation Looking Southwest
- 10 of 11 Garnett, Elmer and Lela, Garage North Elevation Looking South
- 11 of 11 Garnett, Elmer and Lela, Garage West Elevation Looking East

Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House  
Name of Property

Jackson County, OK  
County and State

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**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Tom and Ellen Yates  
street & number 801 E. Commerce telephone 580-482-3435  
city or town Altus state OK zip code 73521

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

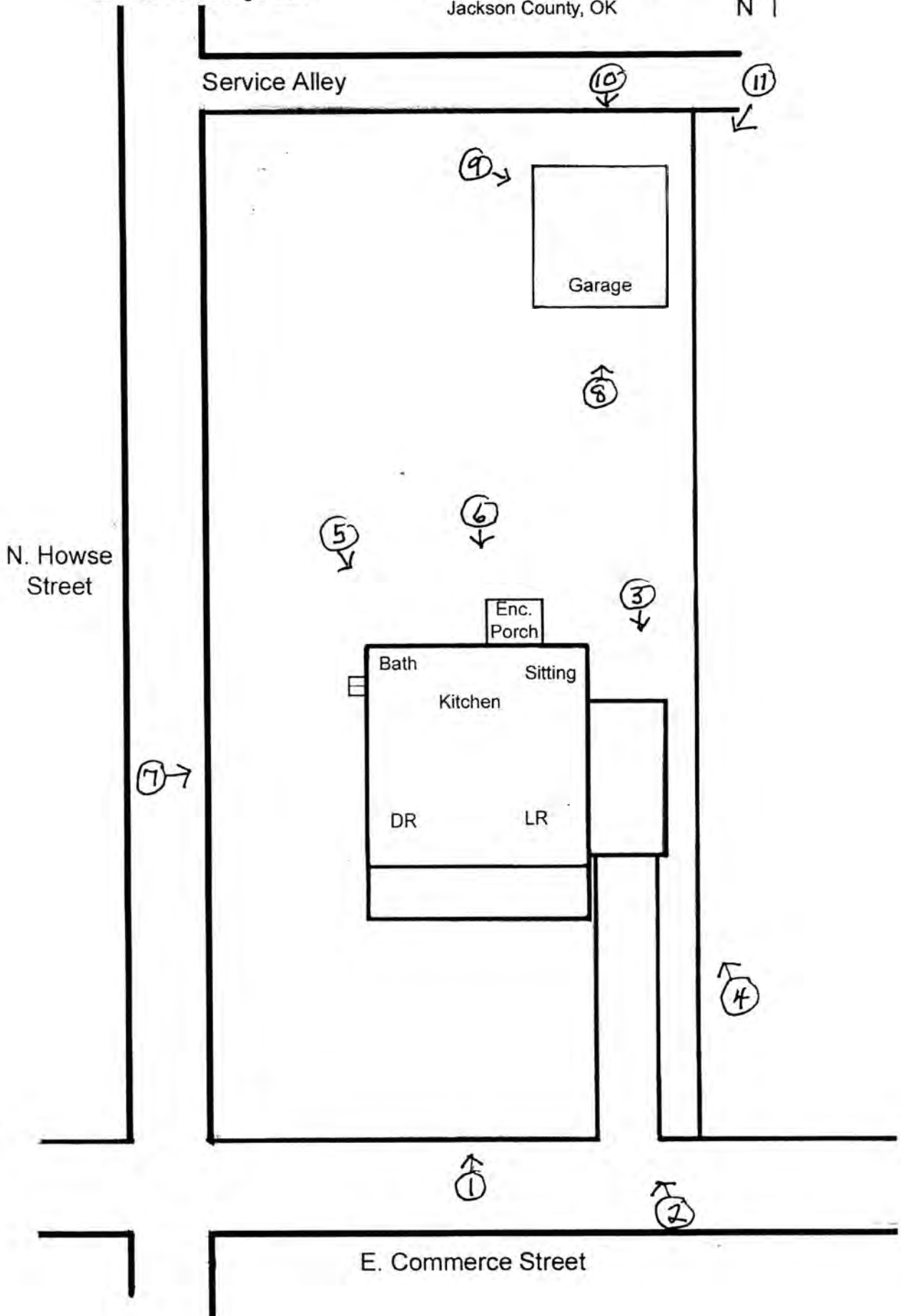
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Drawing not to Scale  
Derived from Google Earth

# Photo Map

Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House  
Jackson County, OK

N ↑



Service Alley

N. Howse Street

E. Commerce Street

Garage

Enc. Porch

Bath  
Kitchen  
Sitting  
DR  
LR



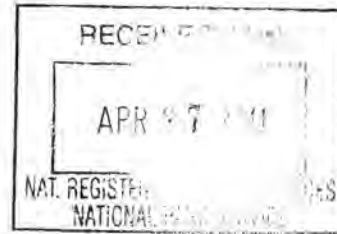
**Oklahoma Historical Society**  
**State Historic Preservation Office**

*Founded May 27, 1893*

Oklahoma History Center • 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive • Oklahoma City, OK 73105-7917  
(405) 521-6249 • Fax (405) 522-0816 • [www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm](http://www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm)

April 22, 2011

Ms. Carol Shull  
Acting Keeper of the Register  
National Park Service 2280, 8th floor  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW  
Washington D.C. 20005



Dear Ms. Shull:

We are pleased to transmit seven National Register of Historic Places nominations for Oklahoma properties. The nominations are for the following properties:

Chandler Baseball Camp, Chandler, Lincoln County  
Thomas Community Building, Thomas, Custer County  
Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education, Norman, Cleveland County  
Joyce House, Snyder Vicinity, Kiowa County  
Dobson Family House, Miami, Ottawa County  
Frazer Cemetery, Altus Vicinity, Jackson County  
Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House, Altus, Jackson County

Also included for transmittal is one Multiple Property Documentation form:

Resources Designed by Herb Greene in Oklahoma

We look forward to the results of your review. If there may be any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either Lynda B. Schwan of my staff or myself.

Sincerely,

Melvena Heisch  
Deputy State Historic  
Preservation Officer

MKH:lbs

Enclosures

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OKLAHOMA, Jackson

DATE RECEIVED: 4/27/11      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/18/11  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/02/11      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/12/11  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000337

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    6-8-11 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





OK - Jackson County - Garnett,  
Elmer and hela, House - 01  
South Elevation Looking N



OK - Jackson County - Garnett,  
Elmer and Lela, House - 02  
South Elevation looking NW



OK - Jackson County - Garnett,  
Elmer and Bela, House - 03  
East Elevation with Porte  
Coche looking NW



OK - Jackson County - Garnett,  
Elmer and Leba, House - 04  
East Elevation with Porte  
Cochere looking S





OK - Jackson County - Garnett,  
Elmer and Iela, House - 05  
North Elevation looking SSE



OK - Jackson County - Garnett,  
Elmer and hela, House - of  
North Elevation looking S



OK - Jackson County - Garnett,  
Elmer and Wela, House - 07  
West Elevation looking E



OK - Jackson County - Garnett,  
Elmer and Lela, Garage - 08  
South Elevation looking N





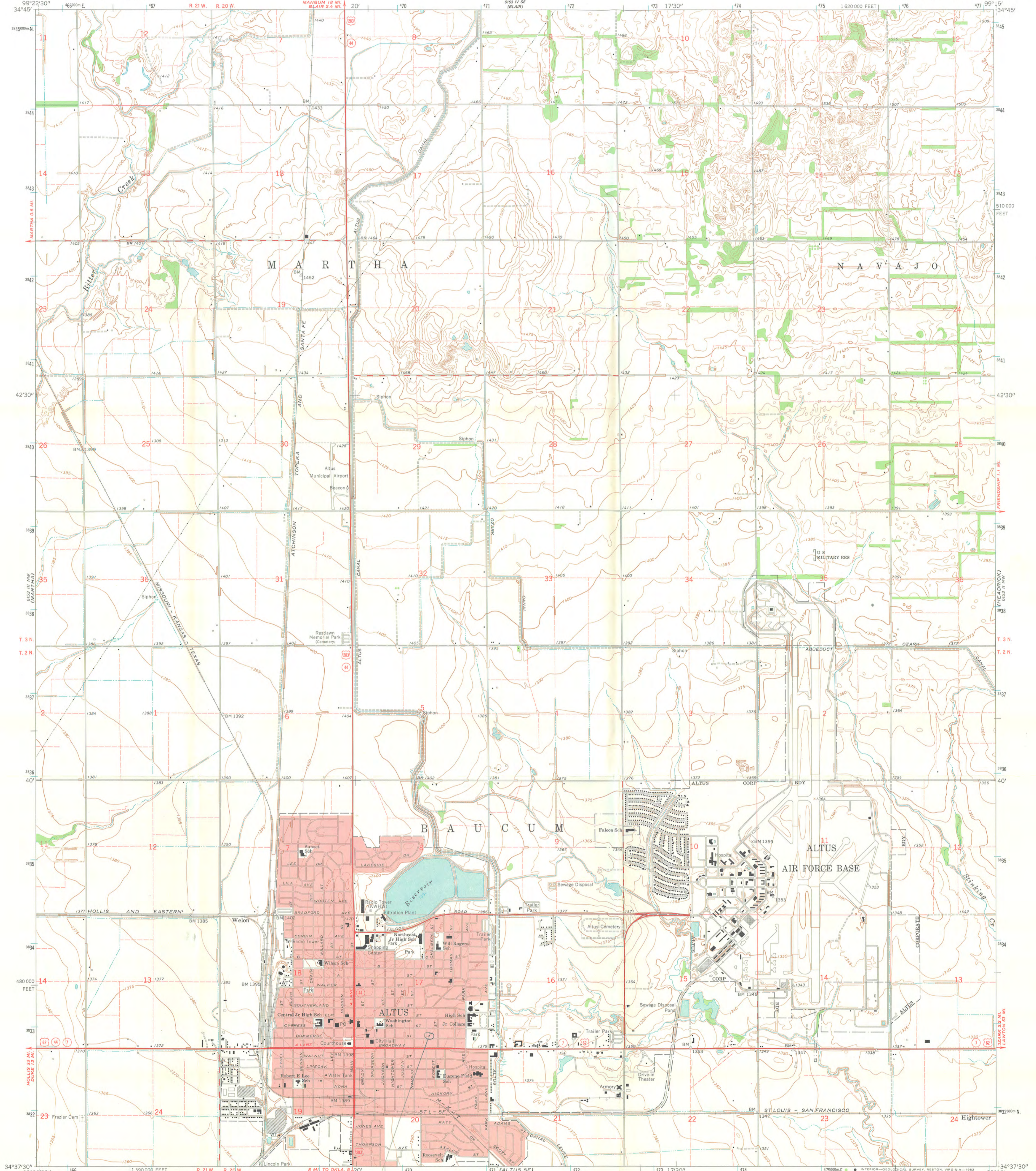
OK - Jackson County - Garnett,  
Elmer and Lela, Garage -09  
East Elevation looking SW



OK-Jackson County-Garnett,  
Elmer and hela, Garage-10  
North Elevation looking S



OK - Jackson County - Garnett,  
Elmer and Lela, Garage - 11  
West Elevation looking E



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1960, and in part by U. S. Bureau of Reclamation  
Field checked 1964

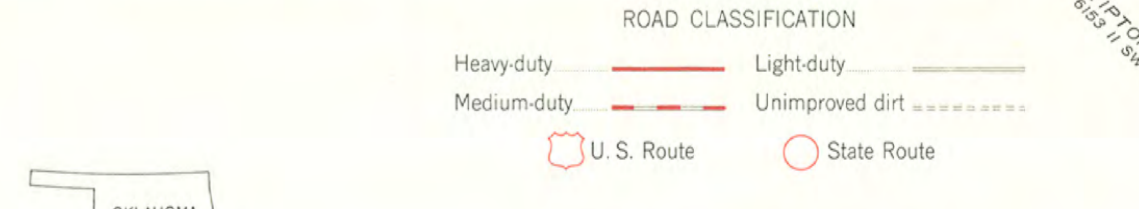
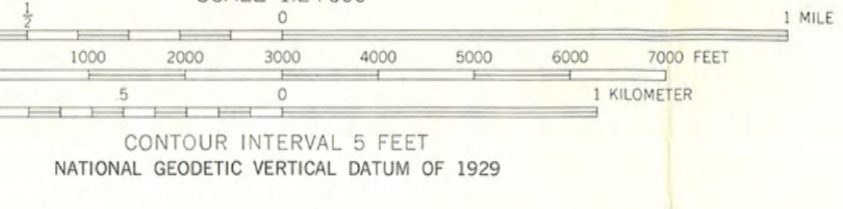
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Oklahoma coordinate system, south zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 14, shown in blue

Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983  
move the projection lines 4 meters south and  
33 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

*Garnett Elmer  
and Wela House  
Altus Jackson Co. Ok  
145 470265E  
3823088N*

UTM GRID AND 1964 MAGNETIC NORTH  
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
AND BY THE OKLAHOMA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, NORMAN, OKLAHOMA 73069  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ALTUS, OKLA.  
N3437.5—W9915/7.5

1964  
AMS 6153 III NE—SERIES W883