

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New Mexico	
COUNTY: Colfax	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70-10-30-0013	DATE 10/6/70

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Mills House

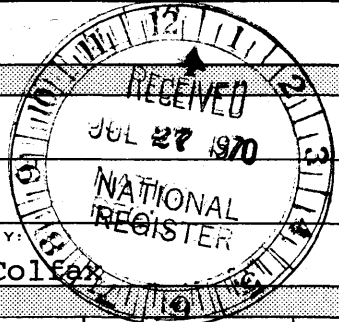
AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
509 First Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Springer

STATE: New Mexico      CODE: 87747      COUNTY: Colfax      CODE: 30      007



**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Mrs. V. L. Clegg

STREET AND NUMBER:  
P. O. Box 72

CITY OR TOWN: Springer      STATE: New Mexico      CODE: 87747      30

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
County Clerk's Office, Colfax County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:  
P. O. Box 159

CITY OR TOWN: Raton      STATE: New Mexico      CODE: 87740      30

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
New Mexico Cultural Properties Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
State Planning Office

STREET AND NUMBER:  
State Capitol

CITY OR TOWN: Santa Fe      STATE: New Mexico      CODE: 87501      30

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: New Mexico  
COUNTY: Colfax  
ENTRY NUMBER: 70-10-30-0013  
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located at the edge of Springer in Colfax County, New Mexico, the Mills House is situated on a slight rise near the Cimarron Creek. The three-story residence, which faces south, contains thirty-two rooms and hallways. It is constructed of adobe, painted white, and topped by a dark metal mansard roof. The house is built above a six-room basement, only five of which are accessible. A two-story wooden porch encloses three of its sides, and protective wooden wainscoting runs along the exterior of the first floor wall. Nearly all of the exterior wooden trim is painted green. Four chimneys protrude above the roof line. Many of the windows on the first and second stories are set in pairs and all have double panes of glass, as well as wooden shutters. Dormer windows admit light and air to the third story. The front entrance consists of elegant double doors which open beneath a fixed rose glass transom, and give access to a front hallway with a lavish two-story staircase. The larger west wing of the house seems to have been the public or formal area, since its detailing is elegant and its rooms are larger than those in the east. The west wing room on the second floor was originally large enough to have been used as a ballroom or reception room, but has now been partitioned into two smaller areas. The east wing of the house, which is generally simpler in detail, could well have been for the private use of the family itself.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	<u>Regional political history.</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Melvin W. Mills, the man for whom this house was built, and after whom it is named, was born in 1845 in Canada, educated at Law School in Michigan, and had arrived in the mining settlement of Elizabethtown, New Mexico in 1868, attracted by the widely circulated tales of its riches in gold. He engaged in mining and ranching as well as in the practice of law, gaining a reputation in this profession through his defense of several of the area's notorious murderers and desperados. In 1872, Mills was instrumental in the founding of Cimarron, which replaced Elizabethtown as the Colfax County seat after the mining boom collapsed. In 1875 he was elected to the State Legislature, but was falsely accused of murder by a defeated opponent and nearly lynched. He was saved only by the arrival of U.S. Cavalry. In 1877 he played an important role in the transfer of the county seat to Springer, made desirable because of Cimarron's decline when the Santa Fe Trail days ended and the railroad began operating in the state. Mills, at that time, was acting as county attorney. He assisted in the platting of Springer and moved there himself, building his extraordinary house. Mills was also associated for some years with Lucien B. Maxwell, owner of the famous Maxwell Land Grant. After Maxwell's death and with the decline of his land grant organization's fortunes, Mills became involved in disputes with recent settlers over the public vs. private status of the old grant. Although Mills lost his lavish home because of financial reverses, he was brought back to it to die, in accordance with his earlier wishes. Throughout his residency in Colfax County his influence on the affairs of northern New Mexico was great, and his reputation as one of the Territory's leading and most colorful figures remains secure.

From the standpoint of architecture, the Mills House is probably unique in the nation. For, although it is in the French Academic style, it has a definite New Mexican air due to the work contributed by local craftsmen who were trained in the Greek Revival techniques that prevailed in New Mexico during the Territorial Period. The porch of the house is definitely Territorial in design, and the craftsmen also left their distinctive

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Anderson, George B., History of New Mexico, Vol. II, Pacific States Publishing Company, Los Angeles, 1907  
 Keleher, William A., The Maxwell Land Grant, Argosy-Antiquarian, Ltd., New York, Revised Edition, 1964  
 Pearson, J. B., The Maxwell Land Grant, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1961  
 Twitchell, Ralph Emerson, The Leading Facts of New Mexican History, Vol. III, The Torch Press, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1917  
 Walter, Paul, "Melvin Whitson Mills" (Obituary), The New Mexico

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

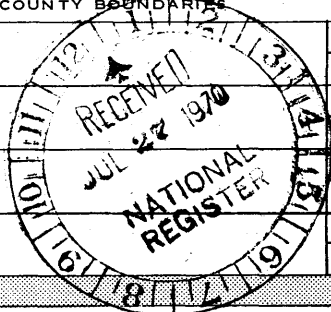
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		36° 21' 26"	104° 35' 30"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

NO  
UTM  
CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/2 acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Samuel Larcombe, Planning Technician, State Planning Office,  
 ORGANIZATION: State Capitol, Santa Fe, N.M. 87501 and DATE: July 8, 1970  
George Clayton Pearl, AIA, 115 Amherst Drive, S.E.  
 STREET AND NUMBER:  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106  
 CITY OR TOWN: STATE: New Mexico CODE: 30

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:  
 National  State  Local   
 Name: Eli S. Schreyer  
 Title: State Liaison Officer  
 Date: July 8, 1970

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.  
Ernest Allen Conrady  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
 OCT 6 1970  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ATTEST:  
William J. Mumford  
 Keeper of The National Register  
 AUG 12 1970  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE New Mexico	
COUNTY Colfax	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70.10.30.0013	DATE 10/6/70

(Number all entries)

Mills House

8. Significance (continued)

touch on the interior's lavishly carved walnut trim and paneling. Not only is this blending of styles unique, but the scale on which the styles were applied is fairly unusual. In the eastern United States, where buildings in the French Academic manner had been constructed since before the Civil War, they occurred commonly as town houses, smaller than the Mills House, and usually built as part of a block composed of several identical structures. The Mills House, with its thirty-two rooms and hallways, is considerably larger than a town house, and would have been an impressive residence anywhere in the country during the 1880's, and especially in New Mexico. That this French Academic building should have occurred at such a late date (for the school's influence was nearly played out then in the east) is understandable because of the time lag that generally controlled the development of trends in the southwest.

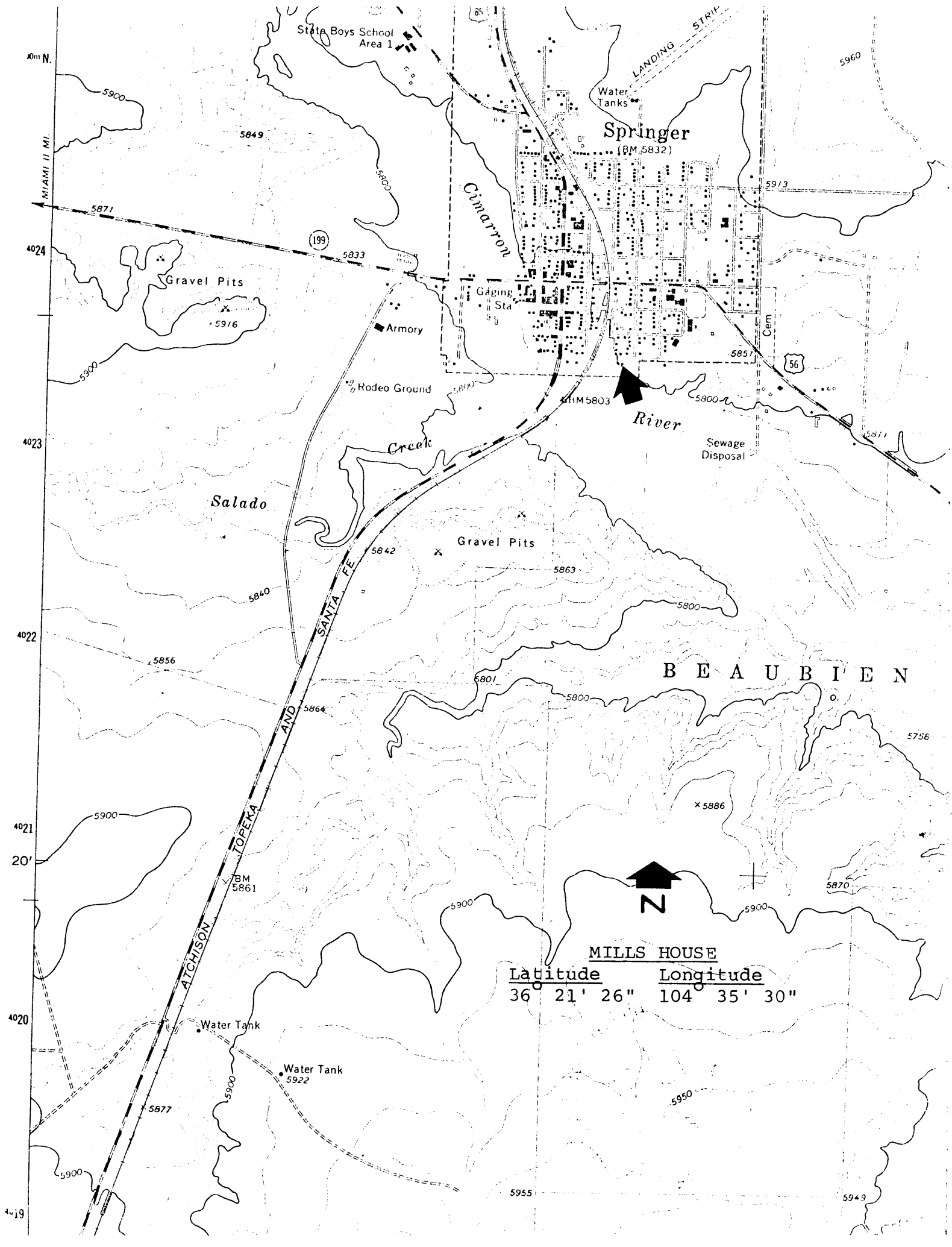
The architectural importance of this three-story residence lies partially in the mixture of French Academic and Greek Revival styles, and partially in the consistency of proportion and the blending of detail. The overall unity of the structure is remarkable, and testifies to the competence of its designer.

Materials used in construction include metal shingles for the mansard portion of the roof, and the cast iron railing that encloses it. Both the roofing and the railing were obviously imported from at least as far away as St. Louis, indicating the effort expended to achieve the desired result: an elegant and finely done house which has no equal in the southwest of its period.

9. (continued)

Historical Review, Vol. I, Santa Fe, 1926





State Boys School Area 1

Springer (BM 5832)

Gravel Pits

Armory

Gaging Sta

Rodeo Ground

River

Salado

Gravel Pits

BEAUBIEN



MILLS HOUSE

Latitude 36 21' 26" Longitude 104 35' 30"

Water Tank

Water Tank 5922

4019  
4020  
4021  
4022  
4023  
4024  
MIAMI 11 MI.

199

56

ATCHISON AND TOPEKA  
SANTA FE

LANDING STRIP

Sewage Disposal

Cem

BM 5803

BM 5861

5955

5949

5900

5849

5960

5973

5871

5833

5900

5916

4023

5833

5800

5811

4022

5856

5842

5863

5800

4021

5900

5864

5801

5800

5886

20'

5870

4020

5877

5900

5950

4019

5900

Form 19-301  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE New Mexico	
COUNTY Colfax	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70.10.30.0013	DATE 10/6/70

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>			
COMMON: Mills House			
AND/OR HISTORIC:			
<b>2. LOCATION</b>			
STREET AND NUMBER: 509 First Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Springer			
STATE: New Mexico	CODE 30	COUNTY: Colfax	CODE 007
<b>3. MAP REFERENCE</b>			
SOURCE: USGS, Springer 7.5 Minute Series Quadrangle			
SCALE: 1:24,000			
DATE: 1965			
<b>4. REQUIREMENTS</b>			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			

