Form 10-300 (Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Arkansas COUNTY:

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Prairie De Ann, a circular body of land embracing some twenty five or thirty square miles, lies in the northern part of Nevada County, a hundred miles southwest of Little Rock. The forests that once surrounded it have largely disappeared. Located in the central section of the prairie is the City of Prescott, a modern and progressive city, and the county seat, with a population of approximately four thousand. The prairie, for the most part, is taken up with farms and ranches. Through the prairie and the city pass the Missouri Pacific and the Prescott and Northwestern Railroads, and paved highways Interstate 30, U. S. 67, and state 24 and 19.

During the Civil War Prairie De Ann was far different from what it is today. One soldier, looking upon it for the first time, said that it "stretched away smoothly as a sea of glass." Another said, "Like an oasis lies this beautiful prairie in the midst of dense forests and almost impassable swamps, a relief for the eye of the traveller, who for many days has hardly seen anything but rocks crowned by dark pines or gloomy cypress swamps." Much of the land was unoccupied. Here and there, widely separated, were a few small farm houses, and the village of Moscow nestled away in the eastern edge. The prairie was a well-known landmark and noted for its singular natural beauty.

Remnants of the "Gum Grove" still stand. Sections of the old entrenchments, now dimly visible and almost forgotten, can still be seen lying along the western edge of the prairie to the north and to the south of Highway 24. Other sections are said to be overgrown and hidden by the weeds. The village of Moscow has long ago merged with the City of Prescott, but an old church and a cemetery mark the site where the four days of fighting came to an end, and where the Union forces left the prairie on their march to Camden.



PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

There were four days of fighting on Prairie De Ann which occurred during an expedition of Union forces into Southern Arkansas during the spring of 1864. This expedition was made up of two armies, one from Little Rock and one from Fort Smith. The campaign included, besides the fighting on Prairie De Ann, the battles of Okolona, Elkins Ferry, Poison Springs, Marks Mills and Jenkins Ferry.

In the second week of April, 1864, for four days, this prairie was a scene of conflict between the Union and the Confederate armies. The engagements as a whole are usually referred to as "The Battle of Prairie De Ann." But more specifically, the fighting on the north side of the prairie, on the first afternoon and night, was to the Union soldiers "The Battle of Prairie De Ann." To the Confederates it was "The Battle of the Gum Grove on Prairie De Ann." On the southern and western sides, Fort McKay and other defenses erected by the Confederates to command the road to Washington, after being attacked on the third day by the Union forces, were evacuated by the Confederates. On the eastern and southern sides, on the fourth day, was fought the "Battle of Moscow."

The story of the fighting on Prairie De Ann is not well known in Arkansas history. The number of casualties were relatively small; but the engagements here were significant in that they marked the end of the advance of the Union army toward the Red River as well as the point at which it became evident that the Union army would not be able to capture Washington, at that time the Confederate Capital of Arkansas, but would proceed to Camden, then the most strongly fortified place in the southern part of the state; and a place that had recently been evacuated by the Confederates in their effort to protect Washington.

On Sunday, April 10, the stage was set for the Union advance onto the prairie. General Frederick Steele was encamped on the Cornelius farm, some four miles to the

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#### 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ferguson, John L. (ed.) Arkansas and the Civil War. Little Rock: Pioneer Press, 1964. The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington: 1880-1901), Series 1, Vol. XXXIV, pt. 1.

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Form 10-3000 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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8. Significance Continued:

north. Steele had set out from Little Rock on March 23 and General Thayer from Fort Smith on the same day. Thayer had been delayed but had finally joined Steele on April 9. The combined forces, now ready to advance, consisted of approximately thirteen thousand men, eight hundred wagons, twelve thousand horses and mules, and thirty pieces of artillery.

Soon after noon, General Steele broke camp and began moving his troops along the road toward the prairie. For about four miles the road led through a pine forest. When the troops reached the edge of the prairie they looked out over the broad expanse of landscape now comprising the Gene Hale Cattle Ranch and the land on beyond. They saw "large numbers of the enemy cavalry...deployed upon the central ridge of the prairie running east and west, while the ridge in front dommanding the point where the road enters the prairie was held by the enemy's skirmishers concealed in the dense undergrowth covering the same." From the point at which it intersects Highway 19, the old road by which they entered the prairie can still be seen losing itself in the woods to the north.

First to arrive on the prairie was the Third Brigade of the Third Division, commanded by Colonel Adolph Engleman, with Battery A, Third Illinois Artillery. These troops deployed to the right of the road, the Fortieth Iowa taking its place to the right of the Battery and the Forty-third Illinois to its left. After a short time, the Fortieth and Forty-third were moved forward as skirmishers and the Twenty-seventh Wisconsin was advanced to support the Battery.

As the line advanced, it extended westward from the road for a mile or more and covered the ground between what is now Highway 19 and Hale's reservoir and club house.

After the Third Brigade had moved in, the First Brigade, commanded by Brigadier General Samuel A. Rice, entered and deployed to the left of the road. This Brigade consisted of the Fiftieth Indiana, the Twenty-ninth Iowa, the Thirty-third Iowa, and Voegele's Battery, manned by Company F, Ninth Wisconsin Infantry. As this Brigade advanced, for a time, it occupied the area through which now runs Highway 19 and probably extended from near Hale's cattle barn on Highway 19 to the suburbs of the present City of Prescott.

The Second Brigade, commanded by Colonel William E.

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8. Significance Continued:

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McLean came upon the prairie last. This brigade was charged with guarding the general supply and pontoon trains, but as the skirmishing began, the Seventy-seventh Ohio was ordered to advance and occupy a position in line on the right of the road; and the Thirty-sixth Iowa, which was posted along the train in detachments, was advanced in double-quick time a distance of over two miles, and was soon posted on the left of the road. These two regiments remained in line under arms all night. The Forty-third Indiana, which was in the rear of the whole train, did not arrive in camp near the prairie until about midnight. The Second Missouri Light Artillery, Battery E, was sent to the extreme right of the Union line where it took part in the artillery duel of the afternoon and evening. General Thayer's troops, who had arrived at the Cornelius farm on the previous day, did not enter the prairie until the next day.

Guarding the northern border of the prairie, immediately in front of where the Union troops entered, and stationed on a ridge covered with brush as seen by the Union troops, were Confederate troops comprising the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, Twentieth Arkansas, and the Twelfth Arkansas Battalion Sharpshooters, commanded by Brigadier General Thomas P. Dockery. They were at a distance of about half a mile. Further back on the higher ground, and somewhat further eastward, was the Brigade of Brigadier General Joseph O. Shelby, composed of the First Missouri Battalion, the Fifth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Missouri Regiments, Hunter's Missouri Regiment, and Collins' Battery. The combined forces of Dockery and Shelby probably numbered about two thousand men.

Occupying the defenses along the western edge of the prairie was Colonel Colton Greene's Brigade, composed of the Third Missouri, Fourth Missouri, Seventh Missouri, Eighth Missouri, and the Missouri Battery. Cabell's Brigade, composed of the First Arkansas, the Fourth Arkansas, the Seventh Arkansas, Gunter's Arkansas Battalion, and Blocher's Arkansas Battery; and Crawford's Brigade, composed of the Second Arkansas Regiment, Crawford's Arkansas Regiment, Wright's Arkansas Regiment, Poe's Arkansas Battalion, and McMurtrey's Arkansas Battalion, were stationed on different parts of the prairie along the southern and western sides. The combined forces of Greene, Cabell and Crawford probably amounted to about four thousand men. Four days earlier, the Confederates had been joined by Gano's Texas Brigade, and

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W. Significance Continued:

and Walker's Indian Brigade. These two had a total of about one thousand men. Thus, the Confederate forces were slightly more than half as large as the Union forces. The Confederate troops were mounted but they often fought as infantry, with every fourth man remaining in the rear to hold horses. Major General Sterling Price, who had recently been placed in command of the District of Arkansas, had arrived from Camden on April 7 and taken charge of all Confederate operations.

As the Union army advanced, the main Confederate line was formed along the highest ridge of the prairie. Just to the rear of this line was the Camden-Washington Road and from it a road led away to the south. There were, thus, three routes along which the Union forces might attempt to advance once they had come upon the prairie. They might follow the road to the left and advance toward Camden. They might continue south across the prairie and on to Red River, or they might turn to the right and try to advance toward Washington.

As the Union troops entered the prairie, firing began and soon an artillery duel was in progress. Skirmishers were sent forward and heavy firing of small arms began between these and Dockery's troops. In a short time, Dockery's troops were withdrawn and were ordered to take position on the left of Shelby's line. The Union troops continued to advance and for about three hours, until dark, the fighting went on. Then Shelby, under Marmaduke's orders, withdrew his forces a mile to the rear; and the Union troops occupied the high ridge where the Confederate had been stationed during the afternoon. Between this ridge and Shelby's new position is the "Gum Grove," from which the battle takes its name.

As to the volume of effectiveness of either the artillery or the small arms fire, it is difficult to form a judgement. The Union troops seem to have had at least three batteries with eighteen guns engaged. These were stationed at different points along the line. The Confederates used Collin's battery with Shelby's brigade, and Harris' battery with Green's brigade. They may also have used three other batteries, those commanded by Blocher, Krumbarr, and Hughey. One Union soldier wrote that Shelby's artillery fire did little damage except to the trees in the rear of the Union position. Another wrote, "The loss of the enemy in horses killed was many times our own." Still another wrote, "From 10 p.m. until midnight, Vaughn's battery and the infantry supporting it were subjected

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8. Significance Continued:

to repeated attacks from the enemy. These, however, were successfully repulsed without serious loss. The night was cold but the troops, without complaining, lay out on the open prairie with no fire to warm or shelter to protect them.

In an account published two years after the close of the War, one of Shelby's men wrote of the fighting in the afternoon; "Every horse and seventeen of Collins' men lay dead and wounded among the guns...two of Collins' guns were withdrawn by hand." One of Shelby's reports stated, "The artillery duel was terrible and magnificent. The broad prairie stretched away smoothly as a sea of glass. The long lines of cavalry on either side of the guns, and over all the bursting bombs and the white powder clouds came fast and furious. For three hours the fight went on."

Of the night engagement, one wrote:

Darkness came down upon the vast prairie, vet the battle was not ended. Steele showed signs of advancing and Marmaduke ordered Shelby to attack and check him effectively. Deploying his entire brigade, except Gordon's regiment, as skirmishers, he engaged Steele's whole army. The horizon from east to west was one leaping incessant blaze of about six thousand muskets lighting up the sky and making night hideous with the screaming missles. The batteries, too, joined in the combat and burst like volcanoes from the solid earth, throwing large jets of flame at every discharge. By midnight, Steele had made no advance and Shelby withdrew his troops.

Another description of the night battle is given in one of Shelby's reports. He says, "I ordered Collins once more to position on the naked prairie and deployed about 400 men as skirmishers along their entire front, and a real night battle began. For three hours more, the fight went on; the whole heavens lit up with bursting bombs and the falling flames of muskets. Their advance was checked for the night; at 12 p.m., I drew off after eight hours of severe

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fighting." Nowhere does the record so indicate, but it would seem that other Confederate troops would have been placed in line with those of Dockery and Shelby, along the high land of the prairie confronting the Union forces.

On Monday, April 11, there was little action until the afternoon. A soldier in the Thirty-third Iowa later recalled that "It was a beautiful day, and the singing of birds in the thicket near us contrasted oddly with the occasional booming of the cannon and the continued skirmishing on some part of the line. As for us, we hunted rabbits, played cuchre, read novels, wrote away at letters, slept and so on, as though there were no thoughts of battle in the world."

In the afternoon, about 2:30, the entire Union line was drawn up in battle array and a forward movement began. The line of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, extending some two or three miles across the prairie, was an imposing sight. Even the Union troops themselves were impressed. The Confederates, too, must have been.

Toward evening the Union line halted for some time on the high prairie. There was considerable skirmishing in front. There was also considerable artillery action. As night came on, the Union troops withdrew; and at least a part went back to occupy the same camp they had occupied the night before. This was true of the Thirty-third Iowa and probably, to some extent, of the other units as well.

On Monday night, the troops commanded by Shelby and Marmaduke left Prairie De Ann and camped on Prairie De Rohan, the present site of the City of Hope, some twelve miles to the south. The same evening, Price withdrew most of the other troops from the fortifications on the south-western side of the prairie to a point eight miles east of Washington. He stated that he did this in order to find a more suitable location for making a successful stand against the Union advance. It is also possible that Price had been influenced to withdraw the Confederates from the prairie by the formidable showing made by the Union troops in their advance on Monday afternoon.

On Tuesday morning about daylight, the entire Union army began advancing over the prairie toward the Confederate

#### Form 10-300a (July 1989)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
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COUNTY	
Nevada	
FOR NPS USE ON	ILY
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8. Significance Continued:

entrenchments on the western side. Price had left a small force here with orders to withdraw as the Union forces advanced. At times the skirmishing was reported to be "quite lively." The Confederates gradually withdrew. About nine o'clock, the Union troops reached the edge of the woods and entered the Confederate entrenchments which had just been evacuated. They found "nearly a mile of rifle pits with positions for artillery, and nearly a mile of fallen timber thrown up as breastworks." It is those entrenchments that can still be seen along the western edge of the prairie, to the north and to the south of Highway 24, in the vicinity of Miller's store.

As the Confederates withdrew, the Union Cavalry was sent in pursuit, as if it were Steele's intention to follow Price in the direction of Washington; but the main column, with the wagon train, took the road eastward across the prairie in the direction of Camden. After following the Confederates for several miles, the Union Cavalry returned to the prairie and joined the rest of the Union forces in the march eastward. That night, Tuesday, April 12, the head of the Union column encamped on Terre Rouge Creek, several miles to the east of the present City of Prescott. Other Union troops camped along the road in the rear of these; and many, especially Thayer's troops, did not leave the prairie until the next day, Wednesday, April 13.

When General Price discovered that the Union army had changed its course and was moving in the direction of Camden, he decided to return to the prairie and attack its near as it withdrew. Gano's Texas Brigade and Walker's Choctaw Brigade, commanded by General Samuel B. Maxey, together with Dockery's Brigade, now returned, recrossed the prairie, and attacked Thayer's troops as they were leaving the prairie in the afternoon about one o'clock. For four hours, the fighting continued. Thayer deployed his men in the edge of the timber and there stationed the Second Indiana Battery. During the engagement, his battery fired more than two hundred shots, solid and shell, an average of about one a minute throughout the afternoon. At length, the Confederates withdrew and were pursued back across the prairie for a distance of some four miles. About five o'clock, the pursuit ended and the fighting ceased. Under cover of the night, Thayer withdrew his troops from the prairie, renewed the march, and "marched all night through a swamp" to the east of Moscow. In this engagement

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

(Continuation Sheet)

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Arkansas	
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#### 8. Significance Continued:

known as the "Battle of Moscow," Thayer reported a loss of seven killed and twenty-four wounded. The Confederate loss was not reported.

The fighting at Moscow brought to an end the fighting on the prairie. The Union troops moved on to Camden. Here they remained for ten days. While there, one detachment fought the Battle of the Poison Spring; another the Battle of Mark's Mills. On the way from Camden to Little Rock, the entire army was attacked at Jenkins' Ferry on the Saline River. Here both armies suffered considerable loss, but the Union forces managed to escape across the river and get back to Little Rock. The expedition had accomplished nothing. Prairie De Ann had been the turning point in the expedition.



LEASE RE	TURN THIS FORM WHEN THE PROPERTY IS RESUBMITTED. DATE: 1-18-74 ROPERTY Prairie De Am Battlefold, Bik.
e attac	hed National Register Inventory-Nomination form is being returned to your r clarification of the information indicated below.
1.	Name.
2.	Location.
	Classification.
<b>X</b> 4.	Owner of Property. Please complete - "multiple private ewnership
	Location of Legal Description.
6.	Representation in Existing Surveys.
7.	Description.
8.	Statement of Significance.
9.	Bibliography.  Geographical Data.  a. Longitude and Latitude Coordinates. appear to be incorrect  b. Acreage.
11	Form Prepared By.
	Certification.
	tographic Coverage.
	Coverage. Please use a map bearing an identified system of coordinates, preferably an original USGS, which allows us to check latitude-longitude.
of nec	rification or correction of the above items must be made prior to the initiatiour professional review. Correction of these technical errors does not essarily insure that the nomination will then satisfy the National Register teria in full.

Thank you for your attention to the above items checked. Marks,
SIGNED: Charles

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Federal Register entry 5-7-74	Re-submit 2. 20.74	
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FORM 10-301 A

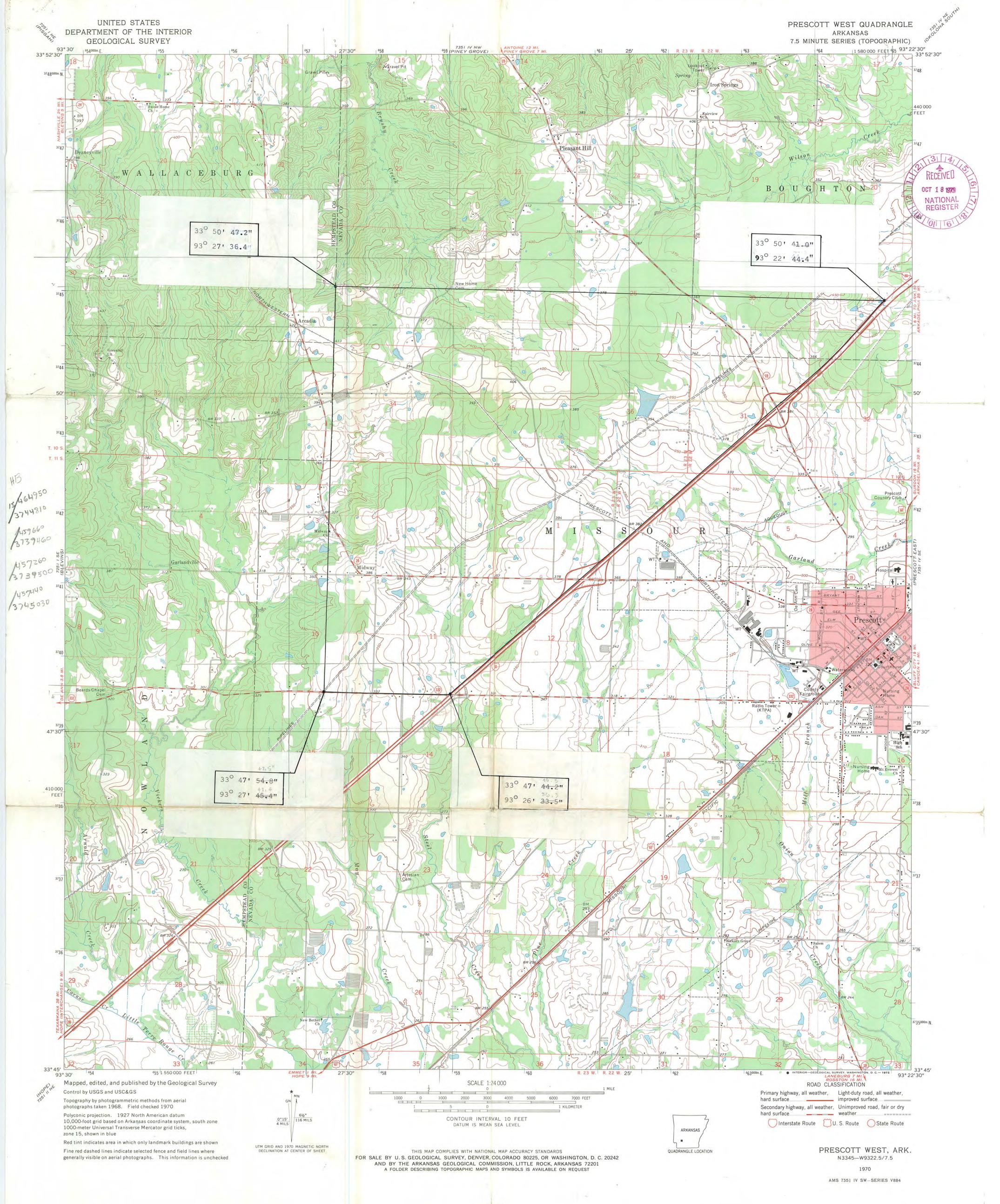
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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

1. NAME		NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)
COMMON	AND/OR HISTORIC	MAR 2 2 1974
PRAIRIE DE ANN		MPIN 2 2 19/4
BATTLEFIELD		
2. LOCATION		TOWN
STATE	COUNTY	TOWN
Arkansas	Nevada	
STREET AND NUMBER		
3. PHOTO REFERENCE		
PHOTO CREDIT	DATE	NEGATIVE FILED AT
Ed Baxter - AHPP	August, 1973	Arkansas History Comm.
4. IDENTIFICATION		(3) 4
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Form 10-301 (July 1968)

1. NAME

### 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)

AND/OR HISTORIC

PRAIRIE DE ANN	MAR 2 2 2 -	
BATTLEFIELD		
2. LOCATION		1974
STATE	COUNTY	TOWN
Arkansas	Nevada	
3. MAP REFERENCE		
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NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)

#### ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE ARKANSAS

Date Entered MAR 2 2 1974

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Location

Prairie De Ann Battlefield

Name

Nevada County

#### Also Notified

Hon. John L. McClellan Hon. J. W. Fulbright Hon. Ray Thornton

Regional Director, Southwest Region

PR

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3/22/74

State Historic Preservation Officer Mr. William E. Henderson, Director Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism State Capitol - Room 149 Little Rock, Arkansas 72201