

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Adrian Brewer Studio

Other Name/Site Number: PU9764

2. Location

Street & Number: 510 Cedar Street

Not for Publication: N/A

City/Town: Little Rock

Vicinity: N/A

State: AR County: Pulaski

Code: AR119 Zip Code: 72205

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

1

2

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Buildings

Sites

Structures

Objects

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Cathryn A. Sater  
Signature of certifying official

1-3-00  
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**5. 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 of Keeper Date  
Of action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic: Commerce/Trade Sub: Professional  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current : Vacant/Not in use Sub: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification:

Craftsman  
Moderne  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundation Cast concrete roof asphalt  
walls Brick other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

**Summary:**

The Adrian Brewer Studio is an eighteen-by-twenty-six foot secondary building located in the rear garden of an earlier Craftsman bungalow. The two structures are located on a fifty-foot lot in the Hillcrest Historic District of Little Rock, Arkansas. The district is a residential neighborhood with rolling terrain and dense foliage. The gable-roofed building was constructed as a working studio and source of livelihood for one of the most significant artists in Arkansas and the Southwest United States' history, Adrian Brewer. Brewer and his sons constructed the studio over a period beginning in 1945 through early 1948, largely using surplus materials from nearby construction sites. The walls are constructed of brick salvaged from the demolition site of a Southwestern Bell facility a few blocks away from the studio. Scattered stone rustication embellishes exterior wall surfaces. Studio windows of varying size and style are constructed of custom fabricated steel. Two prominent local architects, Max Mayer, a historicist and George Trapp, a modernist, conceived the design for their friend Brewer. Accordingly, the results show an Arts and Crafts influence coexisting with contemporary Post War technology. An earlier adjacent garden structure burned, leaving an unfinished appearance to the southern elevation. Otherwise, the building has not been altered. The property suffers from disrepair and its future is considered in jeopardy. The bungalow on the property, which was the residence of the artist, has been altered so it is not considered to be of overriding significance.

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**Elaboration:**

**Brewer Studio**

The floor plan and elevations of the Brewer Studio reflect three concepts: first, provision of a suitable functional space for a professional artist whose production was the sole source of livelihood for a family of five; second, creation of an optimum aesthetic environment with garden and sky views, various amenities and whimsical features which provided inspiration and comfort for the artist, his clients and friends; and third, a design which features economy of materials and ease of construction. The following is an elaboration of the building components that reflect these concepts.

The current composition shingle roof in a light shade is a replacement, though it is not far removed from the original, according to family members. Co-architect Max Mayer had a preference for metal or tile roofs. George Trapp, and a deference to economy would have swayed Brewer to an asphalt shingle system.

The studio is entered under a trellis constructed of bulky railroad ties on the eastern elevation. The entry door was custom-built of worm-stressed or "pecky" cypress door. (pecky cypress was an Arkansas product repopularized in the mid-twentieth century as interior paneling and door material in contemporary residences) The cypress door is enhanced by exaggerated Arts and Crafts inspired strap hinges. The straps improve the structural integrity of the door but are not functionally attached to the hinge system. The southeast corner of the building adjacent to the entry contains a large steel window consisting of eight fixed lights atop a large fixed pane beside a four-light casement window. The wall containing the window is angled at approximately forty-five degrees. The large window was strategically placed to offer optimum views from Brewer's easel to the lush gardens.

The south elevation features a boarded-up door that once joined the studio to a garden structure which was demolished by fire at an unknown date. A single-leaf paneled door opens into a small interior balcony above the boarded-over door. A two-beside-two steel casement corner window with a concrete sill is sited in the northwest corner.

The western elevation, which faces the alley features a single two-beside-two steel casement window in the southwest corner. This window wraps around from the southern elevation and is the only fenestration on this side of the building. A brick chimney rises from the southeast corner.

The northern facade is dominated by a large multi-paned, fixed steel window in the center of the wall. The three lower panes of the window are frosted for privacy while the upper panes permit a view of sky and trees from the interior and provide natural light for the studio. The corbeled shoulder of the chimney at the northwest corner provides an exterior incinerator for barbecuing and burning waste.

The interior of the studio is remarkably spacious in spite of the relatively small plan dimensions. According to his family, the height of the studio's ceiling was determined to permit the artist's brother, Edward, a frequent visitor from Minnesota and fellow artist, to erect canvases up to sixteen-

feet tall. Concrete slab flooring finished and placed by Brewer and his sons provided an appropriate working floor surface for the studio. Carpet currently covers the slab floor that was originally scattered with Native American rugs for seating areas. The structural system is composed of masonry load bearing walls, exposed rough-hewn beams and tongue-in-groove wood roof deck, which also serves as the finished ceiling. This combination roof support/finished ceiling system was a popular Post War design feature, particularly in West Coast Ranch-Modern homes. Modernist architect, George Trapp would have been well versed in this trend. The beams were stained dark to contrast with the more naturally finished ceiling. Several beams have been replaced and they match the original except by varying patina.

The interior walls are finished in varying sizes of limestone slabs, bricks and tile. Hardy Winburn, who owned a prominent tile manufacturing company and who acquired the Arkansas landmark, Niloak Pottery Company, donated to his friends, the Brewers, a quantity of surplus unglazed tiles. The family masonry crew worked these tiles in among the recycled bricks interspersing wood blocking to facilitate the hanging of artwork. The juxtaposition of the interior wall materials is a major design feature. The composite design was partially the result of available material, but can also be attributed to the inventiveness of the artist. Early photographs show the wall surfaces as untreated with finish or paint materials. Currently a light whitish wash is noticeable on several sections of wall, though other areas appear free of paint. None of the masonry has been otherwise altered or covered.

A fireplace dominates the northwest corner of the studio space. The mantel consists of a heavy timber shelf on a richly textured tile and brick wainscot. The area above the mantel is a composition of limestone slabs salvaged from local construction sites. The slabs of varying sizes are said to contain carved names of Brewer's friends and family members, however the inscriptions have not been located on several examinations. The fireplace wall is slightly slanted in contrast to the rectilinear stone walls of the studio interior. This adds interest to the interior space and complements the forty-five degree garden window wall on the eastern elevation.

To the left of the entrance, on the south wall, is a small balcony supported by heavy carved timbers forming four curvilinear brackets. Metal tie rods at the corners supplement the balcony support. Below the balcony are a secondary exit door and two alcoves, which held shelving for paints and artist materials. The balcony was accessed through a door to a adjoining (now destroyed) garden house, which predated the studio. The balcony is too small to have served a functional need of the artist's studio and is considered to be one of the playful design features conceived by the artist or designers. The family reports that it served as a podium for talented friends of the artist, as they created poetry, played music, or otherwise entertained their peers.

### **Trellis**

A path along the north side of the family residence brings a visitor through a gate and into the garden area which contains a trellis that was constructed across the eastern, entry elevation of the studio from railroad ties, salvaged from the nearby dismantlement of Kavanaugh Boulevard (formerly Prospect Avenue) streetcar tracks. The use of exterior garden structures as architectural features was a trademark of Max Mayer and the concept of a

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vined arbor greeting visitors and seen from the windows was embraced by the studio planners. The trellis is today without foliage and appears starker than originally intended. A small section of the trellis is in disrepair. A new wood deck replaces a stone and gravel terrace; however, it is not obtrusive and complements the setting.

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### 8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Local

Applicable National Register Criteria: B & C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture  
Art  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: 1945-1948

Significant Dates: 1945-1948

Significant Person(s): Adrian Brewer

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Max Mayer  
George Trapp

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and period of significance noted above:

**Summary:**

Adrian Brewer, his children and father, have been termed by the director of the Arkansas Arts Center as the "First family of Arkansas art". Brewer's illustrious career included exhibits of his landscape paintings in major American museums and portraits of prominent political and social leaders including U.S. Vice President John Nance Garner. He established an early professional art school and produced a painting, "Sentinel of Freedom", which was liberally reproduced and hung in most American public schools. Late in his career he accomplished through his own labor, a highly functional

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architecturally unique working artist's studio in the garden of his home, aided by the design skills of two prominent Arkansas architects. The design of the studio recalls features of the Arts and Crafts movement as it also blends Post-War modernism and technology. The studio provided not only a livelihood for Mr. Brewer and his family, but it also served as the backdrop for regular gatherings of nationally recognized artists and writers, including Pulitzer Prize winning poet, John Gould Fletcher. This unique site remains a living record of a master southern artist, the mid-twentieth century studio he hand-built to further his professional career, and a rich coterie of artists and writers who shaped the urban culture of a small southern state during that period.

**Elaboration:**

**Adrian Brewer**

By the 1940s, Adrian Brewer's (1891-1956) career was well established as he embarked on his lifelong dream the construction of a state of the art studio in the garden of his residence to replace the now demolished makeshift rental quarters in downtown Little Rock. He had exhibited and received critical praise for his beloved egg tempura landscapes in great museums of America for three decades, from the St. Paul Art Institute in 1917 to the Chicago Art Institute in 1918 and 1930. He had been awarded a coveted first place award among southern artists in 1928 at San Antonio's Witte Museum with coverage in Time magazine. He had received a gold medal at the Golden Gate International Exposition in 1940. He had established an art school, the Adrian Brewer School of Art in 1932 and had organized the Arkansas Art League. He had supported his family of five producing portraits of regional and nationally prominent individuals. The list included Arkansas Governors, Supreme Court Judges and Senator Joe T. Robinson (1934). His realm had expanded to New York where he painted members of the Whitney family and to Washington where Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Henry T. Raney sat for him. In 1935 as a result of these efforts, he had received a commission to paint Franklin D. Roosevelt and Vice President John Nance Garner. Brewer generously turned the Presidential appointment over to his 77-year-old father, N.R. Brewer whose own illustrious career was capped by the honor. Adrian accomplished the Vice Presidential commission. In 1941 Adrian produced a work which placed his name and artistic merits in almost every school in America. The oil painting, entitled "Sentinel of Freedom" depicts the American flag in a rich pastoral setting.

While leading art classes at the Little Rock U.S.O. and focusing his artistic efforts on regional low income residential structures (which he called his Tobacco Road Series) he resolved the final details for his studio and traded his brush and palette for pick and shovel. According to family members, Brewer's close friends architects Max Mayer (1887-1947) and George Trapp (1900-1980) guided the artist in the construction project with Mayer conceptualizing and Trapp producing working drawings. Unfortunately no record of the plans remains. Both architects figure prominently into the history of Arkansas' built environment.

**Max Mayer**

Mayer had graduated in the first architectural engineering class at Texas A & M University and then studied at E'cole des Beaux-Arts. He traveled

extensively in Europe and brought this exposure to the developing hilly terrain of Little Rock, where he designed dozens of homes for civic leaders. Mayer incorporated historically based concepts and built on unique sites with careful attention to views, climatic conditions and materials. Though the body of his work was large mansions for wealthy businessmen, in the 1940s he was completing his signature project, a restoration of Arkansas' Territorial Capitol. He had also embarked on a gratis commission for a low income minority congregation in North Little Rock at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. Mayer was a humanist - an accomplished violinist with a witty and sensitive personality and his architecture reflected such traits. It is not surprising that the Brewer studio was so thoughtfully conceived, with open views to the garden, a massive hearth and inviting Arts and Crafts inspired entry below a lushly planted trellis.

### **George Trapp**

If Mayer could be called Brewer's "Bohemian" architect friend (a label frequently used by his clients) George Trapp was the "straight man". A graduate of Columbia University, College of Architecture in 1926, like Mayer he also studied at E'cole des Beaux Arts, receiving a diploma. Prior to his forty-year career in Little Rock, Trapp worked in the New York office of Wiley Corbett (1873-1954). There Trapp shared drafting space with Edward Durell Stone (1902-1978), also an Arkansas native. Together they worked on plans for the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago. Though an artist and European traveler like Mayer, Trapp was more eager to embrace modernism and the various technological advances resulting from the wartime experience. Trapp's practice was broader than Mayer's, ranging from Little Rock civic projects such as the Robinson Auditorium, the least modern of his work, to institutions such as the Arkansas State Forestry Building and Hall Senior High School. Trapp's contribution to the Brewer Studio would have been the starkly modern steel windows, exposed tongue-in-groove roof deck and beam ceiling structure as well as the pragmatics of construction detailing. Trapp, later recognized for his etchings (now in the permanent collection of the Arkansas Arts Center) outlived Mayer and became a regular at the gatherings of writers, artists, and musicians who met socially at the Brewer studio.

### **Adrian Brewer Studio**

The studio is described by family members as a gathering spot for the central Arkansas creative community. Spontaneous visits interrupted Brewer's work schedule during the week, but Sunday afternoons were reserved for extended group conversation. Visitors included John Gould Fletcher, who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1939 for "Selected Poems". Fletcher had described Brewer in his 1937 autobiography, "Life is my Song", as one of the half dozen "artistic forces in the landscape" he befriended in Arkansas, and bonded with Brewer as "a painter who had an equally hard struggle to survive in Arkansas". Those who were present at these gatherings describe an occasion of Fletcher orating his poetry from the balcony in the studio. Other regular visitors were noted children's author Charlie May Simon (Fletcher's wife), Josef Rosenberg, an Austrian-born pianist, and photographer Larry Obstitnik.

The creative force of the studio and the artist were cut short by the death of Adrian Brewer in 1956 from lung cancer. A major retrospective "Adrian Brewer: Arkansas Artist" was held in the main gallery of the Arkansas Arts Center in 1996. The studio was opened for one weekend during the exhibition and Brewer's easels, Navaho rugs, paints and brushes were displayed. Parkview



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Arts-Science Magnet High School drama department under the direction of Fred Boosey, wrote an original play and performed before live audiences in the studio. Brewer was at his easel in front of the great north window, Fletcher was sparring with the artist and perched atop the balcony was Simon. Adrian Brewer's paintings remain in high demand by museums and collectors as the century closes.

The studio has become a maintenance burden for absentee landlords and its future is in jeopardy. Aside from short-term residential rental property, no other sites associated with Brewer exist in Arkansas. The Adrian Brewer Studio is thus unique due to the prominence of the Brewers, "Arkansas' First Family of Artists"; the unique blend of architectural styles resulting from the collaboration of noted colleagues George Trapp and Max Mayer; and the role of the building in the cultural history of Arkansas. It is an intact mid-twentieth century professional artists' studio designed for that purpose. The Brewer Studio is being nominated to the National Register with local significance under Criterion C for its Post-War Modern architecture and under Criterion B for its association with Arkansas artist, Adrian Brewer and Arkansas architects, George Trapp and Max Mayer.

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

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"Adrian Brewer, Arkansas Artist", catalogue prepared by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock for retrospective exhibit, 1996.

Fletcher, John Gould. Life is My Song. (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1937).

Halinski, Joey. "Adrian Brewer". Various research gathered for thesis.

Pfeifer, Jim. "Max Mayer, Architect". Files of interviews and research.

Pfieffer, Jim. "Legacy Lives On". (Quapaw Quarter Chronicle, December 1993-January 1994).

Rice, Betty Brewer. Interviews with daughter of Adrian Brewer, 1994-1998.

"George Trapp, Architect". Various files of information in collection of heirs of Mr. Trapp.

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 #

Primary Location of Additional Data: \_\_\_\_\_

State historic preservation office

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- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property: Approximately .20 acre.

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>562520</u>	<u>3846120</u>	B	_____	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____	_____

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at Northwest corner of 510 North Cedar Street property as defined by fencing and service alley pavement; Proceed thirty (30) feet south; turn left and proceed thirty (30) feet east; turn left and proceed thirty (30) feet north; turn left and proceed thirty (30) feet west.

Boundary Justification:

This boundary includes the studio and garden area historically associated with the resource.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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Name/Title: Jim Pfeifer, architect; Leigh Graham, editor; AHPP staff

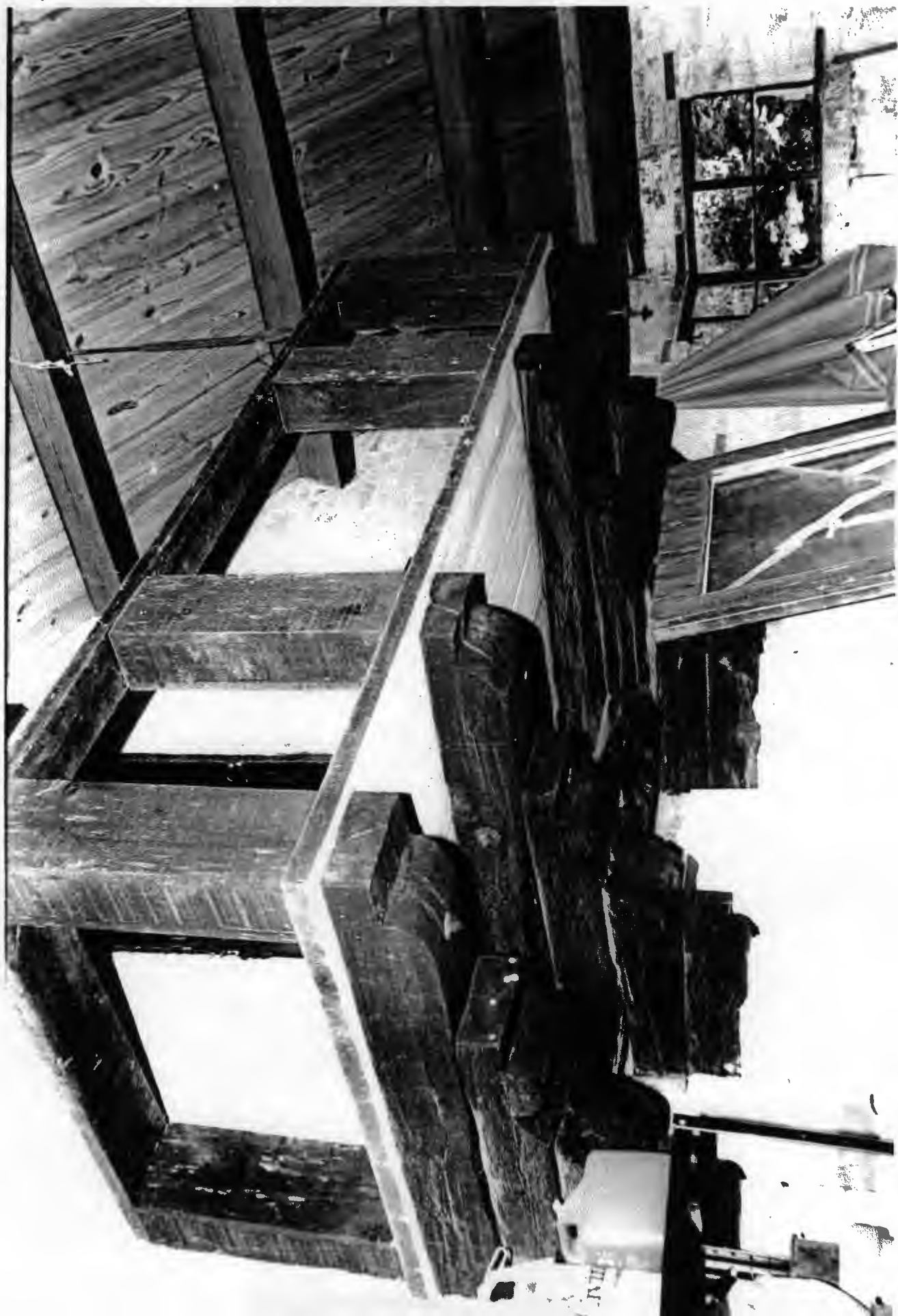
Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 11/01/99

Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg., 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201

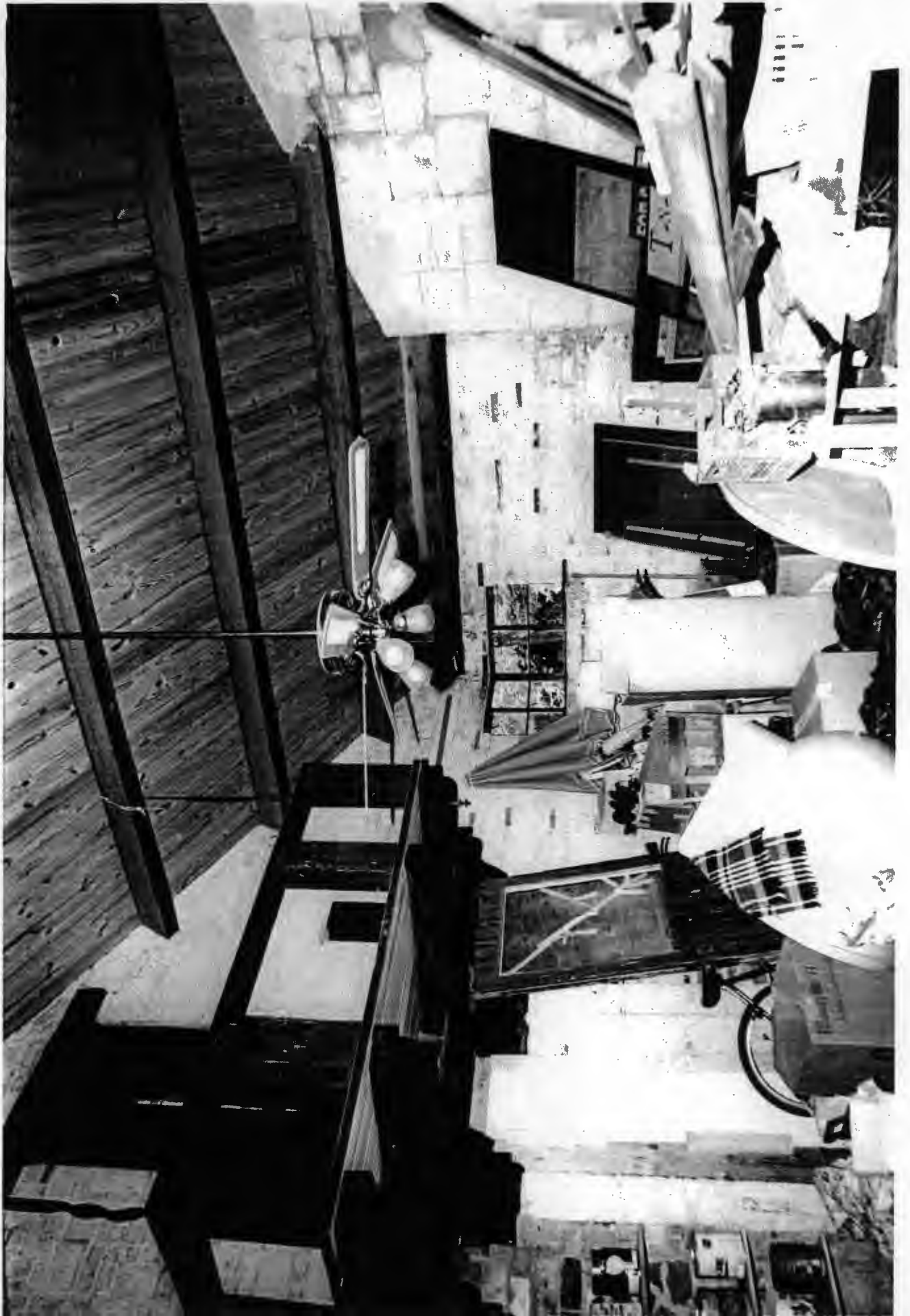


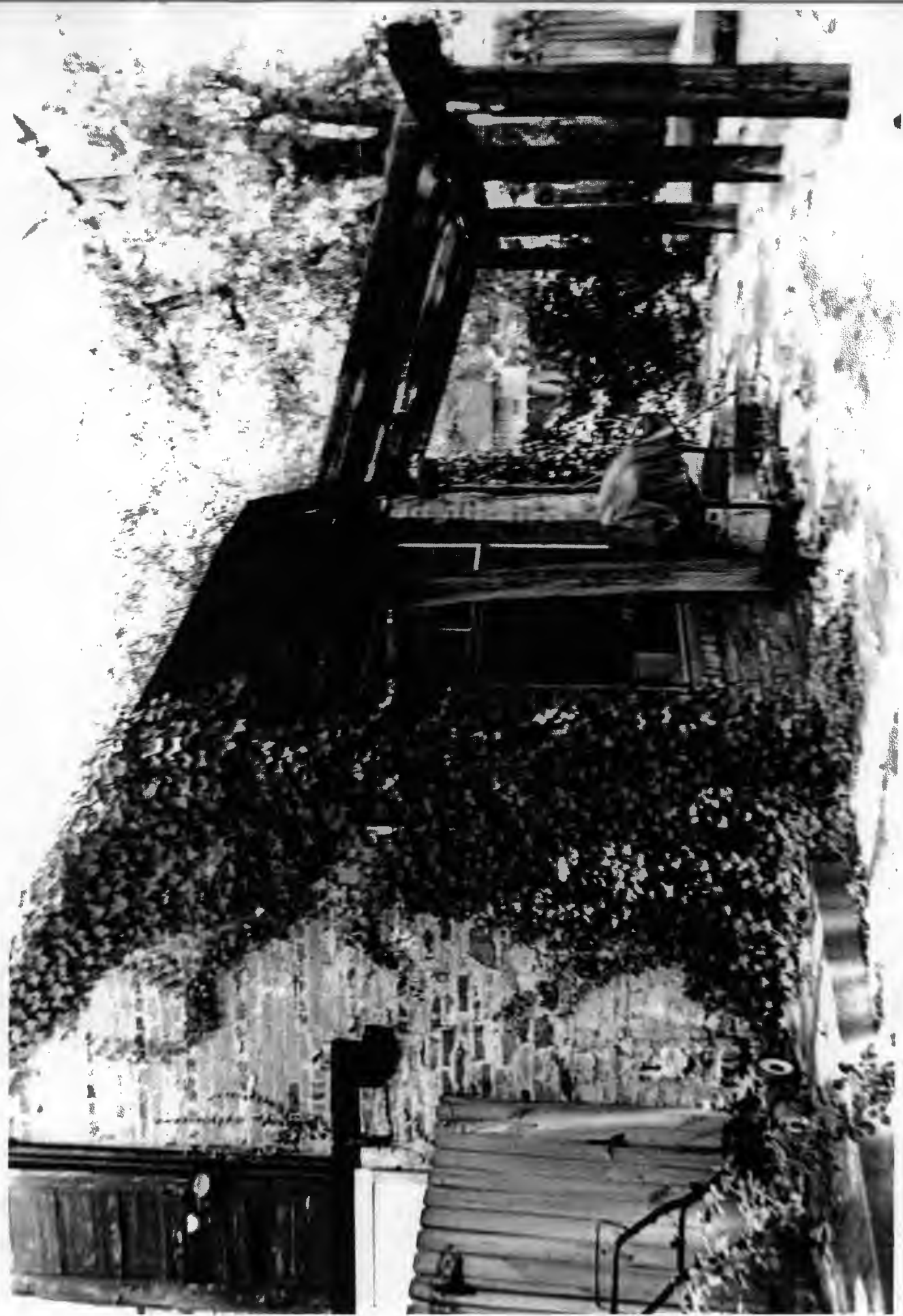


















DORIAN BRENER  
STUDIO  
LITTLE ROCK, AR

15/562520/3846120

T. 2 N.  
T. 1 N.  
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FEET

34°45'  
92°22'30"

1 890 000 FEET

559

R. 13 W

2.2 MI. TO U.S. 67 & 70

20' R. 12 W

562

(LITTLE ROCK)  
755  
SCALE

(ALEXANDER)  
7553 III NW

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs

taken 1960. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1984

Field checked 1985. Map edited 1986

Projection and 10,000-foot ticks: Arkansas coordinate

system, south zone (Lambert conformal conic)

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15

1927 North American Datum

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983,

move the projection lines 7 meters south and

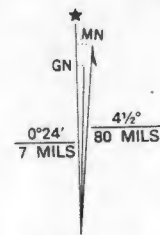
14 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Red tint indicates areas 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



UTM GRID AND 1986 MAGNETIC NORTH  
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



CONTOUR INTERVAL  
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT  
NATIONAL GEODETIC

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER  
AND ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS