

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

*NR Listed  
1-19-2005*

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Railroad Cottage

other names/site number BE2114

2. Location

street & number 208 N. Rust

not for publication

city or town Gentry

vicinity

state Arkansas

code AR

county Benton

code 007

zip code 72734

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 for 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

nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Catherine Matthews*

12/3/04

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Railroad Cottage

Name of Property

Benton County, Arkansas

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Folk Victorian

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD/weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.
[X] 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.

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 moved from its original location.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1900

Significant Dates

c. 1900

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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:

- [X] State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal Agency
Local Government
University
Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

References

(Enter additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>366742</u>	<u>4014833</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	See continuation sheet	

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Benita Duvall, National Register Historian  
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date September 8, 2004  
street & number Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone 501-324-9880  
city or town Little Rock state Arkansas zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

- 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.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

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

name Rick H. and Theresa Parker  
street & number P. O. Box 93 telephone 479-736-8703  
city or town Gentry state Arkansas zip code 72734

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 listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

### SUMMARY

The circa 1900 three-room house located at 208 N. Rust in Gentry, Arkansas, is known locally as the Railroad Cottage and is an excellent example of a one-story, post-railroad Folk Victorian house. No other unaltered period examples of this house style exist in Gentry today. It was built to accommodate the influx of modest income families moving to Gentry in association with the area's fruit and rail transportation industries. The wood-frame gable front and wing house rests on its original brick foundation. Lapped horizontal siding covers the walls and composite shingles cover the roof. A brick chimney flue on the gable front section has been removed. The house faces the west with front and rear dropped-roof porches inset in the ells of the wing. Turned-spindle porch supports of the front (west) porch have been recreated to match the profile of the original supports. Since the original balustrade of this porch was undocumented, a reconstructed balustrade was copied from an existing circa 1900 example in the area. The concrete porch flooring was added in 1938. Window and door openings are in their original configuration and retain their original hand-crafted decorative crowns. One small window on the north elevation is not part of the original construction. The exterior of the house is painted with its original paint scheme as determined by microscopic analysis. Replication of the original paint and wallpaper schemes recreates the most notable features of the interior. Two outbuildings from the historic period of the house, a circa 1930s stone garage and a circa 1945 storage building, have been preserved.

### ELABORATION

Demolition of a condemned house at 208 N. Rust in Gentry was in progress in 1997 when a circa 1900 historic house was revealed. The entire structure had been encased with composition siding. Under this camouflage, a gable front and wing Folk Victorian structure remained on its original continuous brick foundation. Additions made in the 1960s were easily identified and removed.

Original wood shingles existed under composition shingles. The old shingles have been replaced with textured composition shingles replicating the weathered appearance of the wood shingles. The original roof framing is intact except for minor replacement of nailing boards. A brick chimney flue existed originally on the gable front section but was removed at an unknown date.

### West Elevation

The west (front) gable front and wing elevation faces Rust Street. The house retains most of its original lapped horizontal siding, windows, window trim, doors and door trim. The original porch on the west elevation, which had been removed, was inset within the ell of the gable front and wing. Concrete porch flooring, bearing a 1938 date, has been retained as the concrete encased the original brick foundation of the house. A dropped-roof porch was reconstructed with turned-spindle porch supports replicating the

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porch-support profiles found on the original siding. The original porch balustrade was not documented. A reconstructed balustrade was added using a pattern from a gable front and wing house in the area.

The west (front) elevation features three original windows with the same hand-crafted decorative crowns that adorn the remainder of the windows of the house. One single window is off-centered to the south on the wing. The gable front features two paired windows. All are two-over-two double-hung fixed upper sash windows. Two original doors with the same decorative crowns as the windows open from the porch.

### South Elevation

A three window bay had been added to the south elevation and it enclosed a capped cistern located adjacent to the south exterior wall. This bay alteration occurred at an unknown date during the historic period. An original window from the north elevation had been relocated to this bay. The bay has been eliminated to restore the original footprint of the house. A single one-over-one period window has been installed in the enlarged opening. The window that had been relocated to the bay was returned to its original location on the north elevation. The capped cistern has been covered with foundation landscaping.

### East Elevation

The east (rear) elevation experienced several alterations in the historic period and in the 1960s. Fortunately, the original rafters and brick foundation of the original porch that was inset within the rear gable and wing had been left intact. This enabled a reconstruction of a porch with its original dimensions. An original window that was centered on the rear gable had been relocated to the non-historic addition. This window was returned to its original location once the addition was removed.

### North Elevation

The north elevation features a small single-sash fixed window centered between two original two-over-two double-hung windows (one having been returned from the south elevation). The small single-sash window was added during 1960s alterations but has been left in place and filled with a stained-glass window of a contemporary design so as not to be mistaken for an original stained-glass window. It has been topped with a crown in the same design as the original window crowns.

One significant exterior construction detail is the use of quarter-round trim applied with undecorated corner blocks, creating rounded corners. This distinguishing feature is noted in other historic structures of the same time period in Gentry. The original paint scheme has been established by microscopic analysis and recreated on the exterior by the owners. The bright lime green walls of the house contrast with the brick red and beige of the trim.

Railroad Cottage

Name of Property

Benton, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
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### INTEGRITY

The Railroad Cottage, built circa 1900, has regained its integrity in the recent past, with the help of its new owners. When the cottage was found, masked beneath several renovations, the owners went to great lengths to match the design, materials and workmanship to that of the original structure, while restoring the cottage to its original grandeur. It is still located in the residential neighborhood of Gentry, among several other homes of historic value. The Railroad Cottage once again stands as it did circa 1900, as a wonderful example of a Folk Victorian cottage.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### SUMMARY

The circa 1900 Railroad Cottage, located at 208 N. Rust in Gentry, Arkansas, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C with local significance** as an excellent example of a one-story post-railroad Folk Victorian style house. Numerous residents were drawn to Gentry at the end of the nineteenth century in association with the area's prosperous fruit-growing and rail industries. The Railroad Cottage represents the modest three-room dwellings built to house middle-income families who were part of this migration. The gable front and wing house is embellished with hand-crafted decorative trim popular across the country at the time. The accurately recreated exterior and interior paint schemes define the circa 1900 appearance of the house. These architectural and decorative features document the influence of the railroad on the built culture of rural Arkansas.

### ELABORATION

The town of Gentry, intersected by State Highways 59 and 264, is situated along the western border of Benton County. The county itself is located in the extreme northwestern corner of Arkansas and is bounded on the north by Missouri and on the west by Oklahoma. Benton County was established as the state's thirty-fourth county in 1836, the same year that Arkansas became a state. The county was named in honor of Missouri's U. S. Senator Thomas Hart Benton who led a strong campaign to secure statehood for Arkansas.

The site of Benton County is a plateau of the Ozark Mountains with elevations of the land ranging from 1,400 feet to 1,600 feet. The soils are well suited to diversified agriculture with numerous waterways and springs. Its greatest advantage in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the Railroad Cottage was built, was its complete adaptability to horticulture with apples, peaches, pears, plums, grapes and other small fruit grown in abundance in the county. At that time, it acquired the title of 'Apple Orchard of America.'

From the time of the first settlement of Benton County in the 1830s, the population increased only gradually until 1880. In that year the first railroad through the county, the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad, was completed. National advertisements stating that the region was "unexcelled in the United States for growing all kinds of fruit" brought an influx of immigrants into the county.

In the 1890s, Arthur E. Stillwell established the Kansas City-Pittsburg and Gulf Railway starting in Kansas City, Missouri, with the intent of extending it to the Gulf of Mexico. It was this railroad that spawned the settlement of the town of Gentry in 1894. It became the residential and financial center for a vast fruit-growing industry. Indeed, for a short time, the town was called Orchard but was incorporated in 1898 as



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Gentry, named in honor of the president of the railroad. The name of the railroad was changed to Kansas City Southern on April 1, 1900. By 1903 Gentry had a population of 1,000 people.

Gentry was surrounded by fruit farms from the large apple growers to the small berry growers. The industries of the town included shipping, evaporating and canning of fruits, as well as tourism. Numerous merchants in Benton County relocated to Gentry and several banks and hotels were established. Emphasis on education was evident. A public school costing \$10,000 and a private Methodist academy existed by 1902.

Tourism to the area at the beginning of the twentieth century was also one of the area's successful industries. A poster owned by Rick and Theresa Parker advertises a "special excursion from the Kansas City Southern Railroad" starting from all stations in Kansas City to all points south. Stops advertised included the rice district, oil fields and refineries in Beaumont and Port Arthur, Texas, as well as "all points in the Indian Territory" (present day Oklahoma). It also advertises that "stop overs" were permitted in the "famous Ozark Mountain fruit belt" and Gentry was listed as one stop over destination. The cost of the "excursion" was \$15.00 and the starting date was November 24, 1903. By the 1920s the railroad had built a brick depot at Gentry that was considered one of the finest on the line. Benton County's Apple blossom Festival was one of the largest events in the state in the mid-1920s.

Much of the land surrounding Gentry, known as Ozark Orchards, was owned and developed by a bank in Kansas City, Missouri. Small tenant and employee's houses were built in Gentry. These houses usually consisted of three rooms according to the local history recorded in *Happenings in Gentry, 1894 to 1976*. Eventually, many of the orchards were divided into tracts and sold to individuals who transformed the land from orchards to general farming. The railroad then hauled cattle to markets in Kansas City as well as the fruit produce. Gentry remains primarily an agricultural center today producing corn, soybeans, and cattle. The Kansas City Southern Railroad still serves Gentry but now transports coal through town without stopping and there is no depot to serve passengers.

Local lumberyards were created in towns all along the rail lines during the periods of first settlement. The Roush Lumber Company, one of two early lumberyards in Gentry, was established in 1903 to meet the construction needs fostered by the fruit-growing and rail industries. This lumberyard exists in the same location today and is owned by the Parks family who purchased the business from the J. P. Roush estate in 1945. Some of the original 1903 sales records still exist.

\* 1997 Rick and Theresa Parker purchased Lots 9 and 10, Block 15 in the Original Section of Gentry for the purpose of building an office for Parker's arts conservation business. Parker had grown up in the house adjoining the property to the south. The Parkers had commissioned drawings of a new structure that they planned to construct on Lots 9 and 10. The city had condemned the house that existed on the lots.

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Demolition of the house was in progress when the Parkers realized that inside the 1960s additions, covered with composition siding, there existed a nearly intact Folk Victorian cottage on its original foundation. After assessing their find, they carefully removed the non-historic additions, documented the historic changes to the structure, and made plans to restore the historic house instead of moving or altering it.

According to the history recorded in the abstract of the property, Lots 9 and 10, Block 15 were purchased prior to 1898 by the Philadelphia Construction Company. The modest house the Parkers uncovered was one of the three-room houses built to accommodate the influx of families moving to the area at the end of the nineteenth century. This company, which probably built several of these small residences, was obviously associated with the railroad's development of the town of Gentry.

The Parkers also learned that the name associated with their newly found historic house was Railroad Cottage. They considered the name appropriate, indeed, and have chosen to retain it. The Railroad Cottage not only represents the initial economic history associated with the establishment of Gentry, it also is an excellent example of the changes the arrival of the railroad brought to the area's built culture. While previously this isolated rural area of Arkansas relied on locally produced building materials, the railroad brought lumber, building materials plus new building styles from distant areas. The paints and wallpapers used in the decoration of the Railroad Cottage would have arrived by rail also. The railroad workers unloaded these building materials from the arriving trains, then reloaded the trains with produce.

While modest in architectural features, an analysis of the original interior and exterior decorative schemes conducted by arts conservator and homeowner Rick Parker reveals that the house was alive with color. Located only two blocks from the town's main street, this house was obviously intended to complement the visual aesthetics of the blossoming town. Directly across the alleyway to the east of the Railroad Cottage stands the Ward House, a two-story Folk Victorian, constructed in 1897. This structure featured multiple high-pitched gables, patterned shingle and stick-work decoration, spandrels, elaborate porch frieze, and multi-color paint scheme.

The craftsman who constructed the Ward House, adjoining the property to the east, is documented to be Robert L. Summers. This house features the same 'rounded corner' detailing (described in Section 7) as the Railroad Cottage. While confirmation that Summers was the craftsman who built the Railroad Cottage is presently lacking, further research may clarify the answer. Summers lived and worked in Gentry until his death in 1950.

Parker family history is very closely tied to Benton County and Gentry, including the railroad. The earliest ancestors to arrive in the area were the Chastains who followed the Cherokee Indians in the 1830s from Alabama to Arkansas on what is considered the 'Trail of Tears.' Mr. Parker's father worked for the

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Kansas City Southern Railroad for 49 years, beginning when he was only twelve years old. For many years, Rick Parker has collected numerous artifacts associated with the railroad's history in Gentry. It is fitting that the Railroad Cottage has become part of that history which Parker has cherished for so long.

Parker, who received his conservation education through the Smithsonian Institution's Furniture Conservation Training Program, maintains his private arts conservation business, Parker Restoration and Conservation, in Gentry and the Railroad Cottage serves as his office. In addition to teaching in the Smithsonian's conservation programs, he has served as chairman for the American Institute for Conservation's Wooden Artifacts Group, and published numerous articles on arts conservation. Theresa Parker is an executive buyer for Wal-Mart, Incorporated.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The circa 1900 Railroad Cottage, located at 208 N. Rust in Gentry, Arkansas, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** with **local significance** as an excellent example of a one-story post-railroad Folk Victorian style house. Numerous residents were drawn to Gentry at the end of the nineteenth century in association with the area's prosperous fruit-growing and rail industries. The Railroad Cottage represents the modest three-room dwellings built to house middle-income families who were part of this migration. The gable front and wing house is embellished with hand-crafted decorative trim popular across the country at the time. The accurately recreated exterior and interior paint schemes define the circa 1900 appearance of the house. These architectural and decorative features document the influence of the railroad on the built culture of rural Arkansas.

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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*Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Benton, Washington, Carroll, Madison, Crawford, Franklin And Sebastian Counties, Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1889.

Country American Revolutionary Bicentennial Committee. *Happenings in Gentry, 1894-1976*.  
Siloam Springs: Siloam Springs Printing, 1994.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York:  
Alford A. Knopf, 1994.

Parker Family History: Genealogical Records, Property abstract, Kansas City Southern Railroad  
Advertising poster: Rick and Theresa Parker.

Railroad Cottage

Name of Property

Benton, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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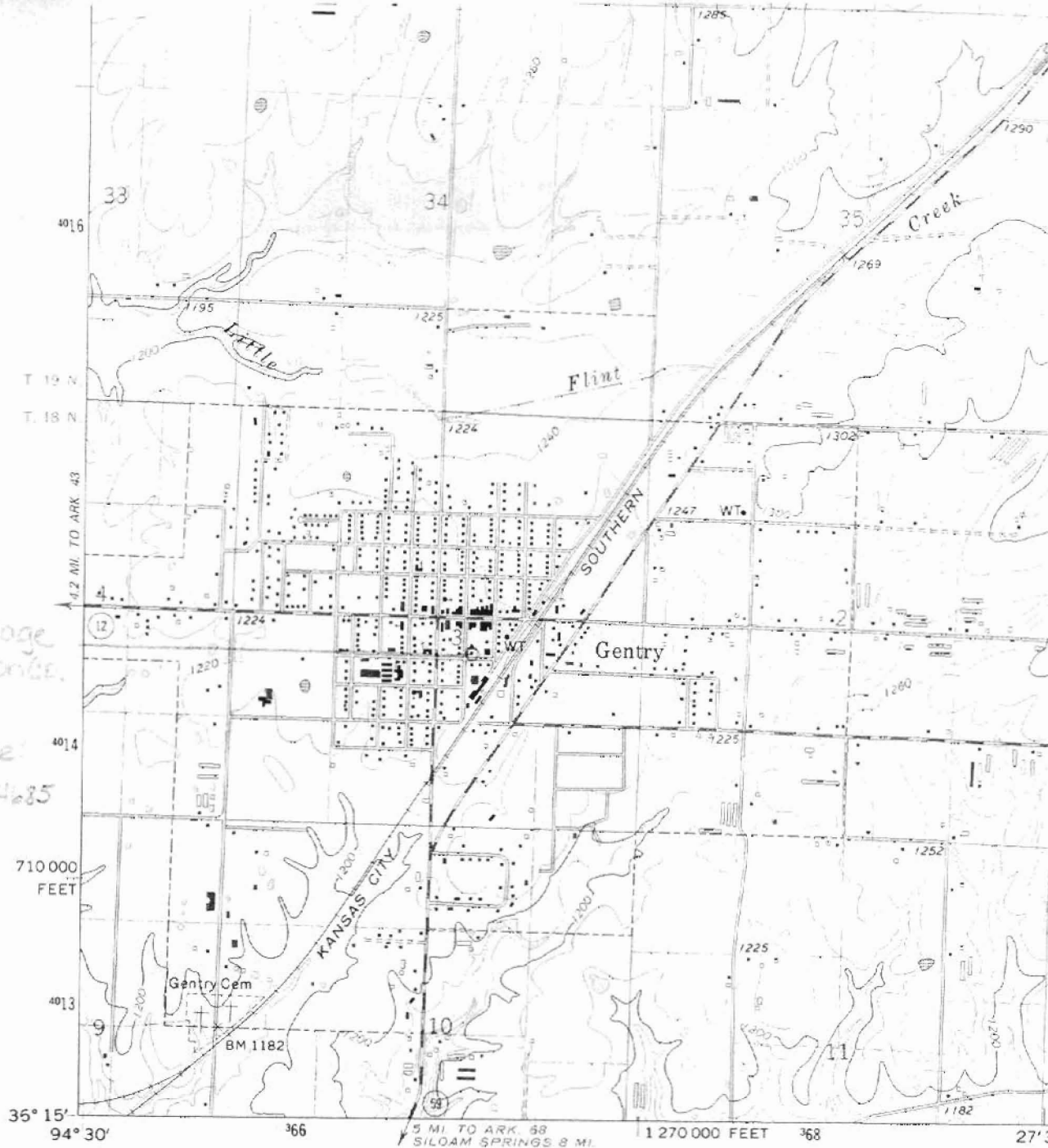
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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 9 and 10 in Block 15 in the Original Town of Gentry, Section 10, Township 18 in Benton County, Arkansas.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes all property historically associated with the Railroad Cottage.



Railroad Cottage  
 Gentry, Benton Co.  
 Arkansas  
 UTM Reference:  
 15/366730/4014685

(SILOAM SPRINGS)  
 7055 11 NE

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

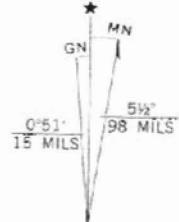
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1968. Field checked 1971

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Arkansas coordinate system, north zone  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue

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 5 meters south and  
 18 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1980 and other sources. This information not field checked. Map edited 1982



UTM GRID AND 1982 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

