

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *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 Merritt, S. D., House

other names/site number Site #FA1259

2. Location

street & number 45 Highway 25 North

not for publication

city or town Greenbrier

vicinity

state Arkansas

code AR

county Faulkner

code 045

zip code 72058

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.)

Cedric Matthews
Signature of certifying official/Title

10/26/04
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:

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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Merritt, S. D., House
Name of Property

Faulkner County, Arkansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

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

A Storm Couldn't Tear Them Down: The Mixed Masonry
Buildings of Silas Owens, Sr., 1938-1955

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

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)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Minimal Traditional

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls STONE
BRICK
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 birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
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.1950

Significant Dates

c.1950

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Silas Owens, Sr., and Silas Owens, Jr., Builders

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:

Merritt, S. D., House
Name of Property

Faulkner County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property Less than one.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>556103</u>	<u>3903325</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>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date August 25, 2004
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9787
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

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 Seth Merritt
street & number 15 Merritt Drive telephone
city or town Greenbrier state AR zip code 72058

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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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SUMMARY

The S. D. Merritt House is located in the Greenbrier vicinity of rural Faulkner County, Arkansas. The one-story house, which was built c.1950 in the Minimal Traditional style, was designed by Silas Owens, Sr., and built by Silas Owens, Sr., and Silas Owens, Jr. The house exhibits the distinctive characteristics of the work of Silas Owens, Sr., notably the cut stone laid in a rough herringbone pattern and the cream-brick trim around the doors, windows, and porch openings.

ELABORATION

The S. D. Merritt House is located in the Greenbrier vicinity of northwestern Faulkner County, approximately forty miles northwest of Little Rock. The one-story house, designed in the Minimal Traditional style, was built c.1950 by Silas Owens, Sr., and Silas Owens, Jr. The walls of the house feature the distinctive characteristics of Silas Owens, Sr., most notably the cut stone laid in a rough herringbone pattern and the cream-brick trim around the doors, windows, and porch openings, along with cream-brick joins at the building's corners.

The Merritt House features a stone foundation, and wood-frame, double-hung windows throughout. The roof of the house, which is a combination of a side gable and front gable, is covered in gray asphalt shingles.

Front/South Façade

The front façade of the house telescopes closer to the road as one proceeds from west to east. The western portion of the front façade is comprised of an open carport supported by three decorative wrought-iron posts on the west side. The next portion of the façade is fenestrated by a small pair of wood-frame, double-hung, six-over-six windows. As with all window openings in the house, it is surrounded by the distinctive Silas Owens cream-brick border.

The next portion of the front façade projects closer to Highway 25 North, and is fenestrated by a large single wood-frame, double-hung, eight-over-eight window in the center of that portion of the façade. This is the only portion of the house with a front facing gable roof, as opposed to a side gable roof. The easternmost portion of the façade projects even closer to the highway. The west half of this portion of the façade is dominated by a recessed front porch with a segmental arch opening framed in cream brick. The entrance to the house is located on the porch and contains a wood door with horizontal panels in the bottom half and glass panes in the top half. The floor of the porch is concrete and three concrete steps with stone and brick on the ends lead up to the porch level.

The right half of the easternmost portion of the façade is fenestrated by a large single wood-frame, double-hung, eight-over-eight window. In addition, a small attic vent, now enclosed with vertical wood boards and also surrounded by the distinctive cream brick border, is located in the gable peak.

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Side/East Façade

The east façade of the Merritt House is fenestrated by several windows. The southernmost window is a large single wood-frame, double-hung, six-over-six window. The center window is a small single wood-frame, double-hung, six-over-six window. To the right of the window a round white pipe provides drainage into the ground. The northernmost windows are a pair of wood-frame, double-hung, six-over-six windows.

Rear/North Façade

The rear façade of the house is divided in half with the east half having a gable front roof and the west half having a side gable roof. The east half of the façade is fenestrated by two pairs of large wood-frame, double-hung, six-over-six windows. As on the front façade, a small attic vent, now enclosed with vertical wood boards and also surrounded by the distinctive cream brick border, is located in the gable peak.

The side gable portion of the façade, which compromises the western half, is fenestrated by two pairs of small wood-frame, double-hung, six-over-six windows. The far west portion of the façade is the rear of the open carport.

Side/West Façade

The west façade of the house is dominated by the open carport. The gable end of the carport is covered in white synthetic siding, and an opening, now covered with vertical wood boards, is located in the gable peak. The west façade of the house, underneath the carport has a central doorway with a metal screen door. The door is flanked on each side by a small wood-frame, double-hung, six-over-six window.

The west side of the front façade's first projection is fenestrated by a single large wood-frame, double-hung, six-over-six window and the west façade of the front porch has segmental arch opening framed in cream brick.

INTEGRITY

Overall, the Merritt House retains excellent integrity. It retains its original windows, and is still located in a rural area of Faulkner County. Although the attic vents in the gable peaks have been enclosed and the carport may have been added later, they do not detract from the distinctive characteristics of the Silas Owen, Sr., masonry. The house still exhibits the distinctive cut stone laid in a rough herringbone pattern and the cream brick trim around the doors, windows, and porch openings, and it represents a good example of his work.

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SUMMARY

The S. D. Merritt House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** with **local significance** as the best example of a Minimal Traditional home built by African-American stonemason Silas Owens, Sr., in the Greenbrier vicinity. The Merritt House, which was built c.1950, exhibits the distinctive characteristics of the work of Silas Owens, Sr., notably the cut stone of the exterior walls laid in a rough herringbone pattern and the cream-brick trim around the doors, windows, and porch openings, and the cream-brick quoins at the building's corners. The S. D. Merritt House, is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple property listing "A Storm Couldn't Tear Them Down: The Mixed Masonry Buildings of Silas Owens, Sr., 1938-1955."

ELABORATION

Faulkner County was created by an act of the State legislature on April 12, 1873, by taking some land from Conway and Pulaski counties. The new county was named after Sandy Faulkner, who was the original "Arkansaw Traveler."¹ At the time that the *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland, and Hot Spring Counties, Arkansas* was published in 1889, Faulkner County was mainly an agricultural county, much as it is today.

Many of the communities that have developed in Faulkner County developed to serve the rural residents of the county. Although it is unknown when Greenbrier was founded, its post office was established in 1857.² By the late 1880s, the town had developed into a thriving little community. The *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland, and Hot Spring Counties, Arkansas* described Greenbrier as "a village and settlement twelve miles north bearing a little east of Conway, [that boasted] of eight general stores, three grist-mills, four cotton-gins, a steam saw and shingle mill, three churches, a school-house, and a population of about 350."³

By the twentieth century the Merritt Family had settled in the Greenbrier vicinity. John Merritt was the first member of the family to have Silas Owens, Sr., build a house. His house, which was located near the Highway 25 and U.S. 65 intersection, has been demolished and replaced by a convenience store. John's brother, Seth, liked the design of his house, and also hired Owens to build his house.⁴

¹ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland, and Hot Spring Counties, Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p. 703.

² Russell Pierce Baker. *From Memdag to Norsk: A Historical Directory of Arkansas Post Offices, 1832-1971*. Hot Springs, AR: Arkansas Genealogical Society, 1988, p. 95.

³ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland, and Hot Spring Counties, Arkansas*, p. 712.

⁴ Merritt, Seth, Jr. Telephone conversation with Holly Hope, Special Projects Historian at the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. 23 August 2004.

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The house that S. D. Merritt had built c.1950 was designed in the Minimal Traditional style that was popular just after World War II. Houses built in the Minimal Traditional style used a minimal amount of detailing similar to that found on colonial homes. The form of the Merritt House also begins to show characteristics of the ranch house that would become popular in the 1950s. Silas Owens, Sr., and Silas Owens, Jr., used their trademark masonry design for the house, which included the cut stone of the exterior walls laid in a rough herringbone pattern and cream-brick trim around the doors, windows, and porch openings, and the cream-brick quoins at the building's corners.

Today, the S. D. Merritt House is owned by his son, Seth, Jr., and still very much reflects the time of its construction c.1950. As the best example of a Minimal Traditional House constructed by Owens in the Greenbrier vicinity, the S. D. Merritt House remains as a lasting tribute to the creativity of African-American stonemason Silas Owens, Sr.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The S. D. Merritt House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** with **local significance** as the best example of a Minimal Traditional home built by African-American stonemason Silas Owens, Sr., in the Greenbrier vicinity. The Merritt House, which was built c.1950, exhibits the distinctive characteristics of the work of Silas Owens, Sr., notably the cut stone of the exterior walls laid in a rough herringbone pattern and the cream-brick trim around the doors, windows, and porch openings, and the cream-brick quoins at the building's corners. The S. D. Merritt House, is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple property listing "A Storm Couldn't Tear Them Down: The Mixed Masonry Buildings of Silas Owens, Sr., 1938-1955."

Merritt, S. D., House
Name of Property

Faulkner County, Arkansas
County and State

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baker, Russell Pierce. *From Memdag to Norsk: A Historical Directory of Arkansas Post Offices, 1832-1971*. Hot Springs, AR: Arkansas Genealogical Society, 1988.

Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland, and Hot Spring Counties, Arkansas. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889.

Merritt, Seth, Jr. Telephone conversation with Holly Hope, Special Projects Historian at the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. 23 August 2004.

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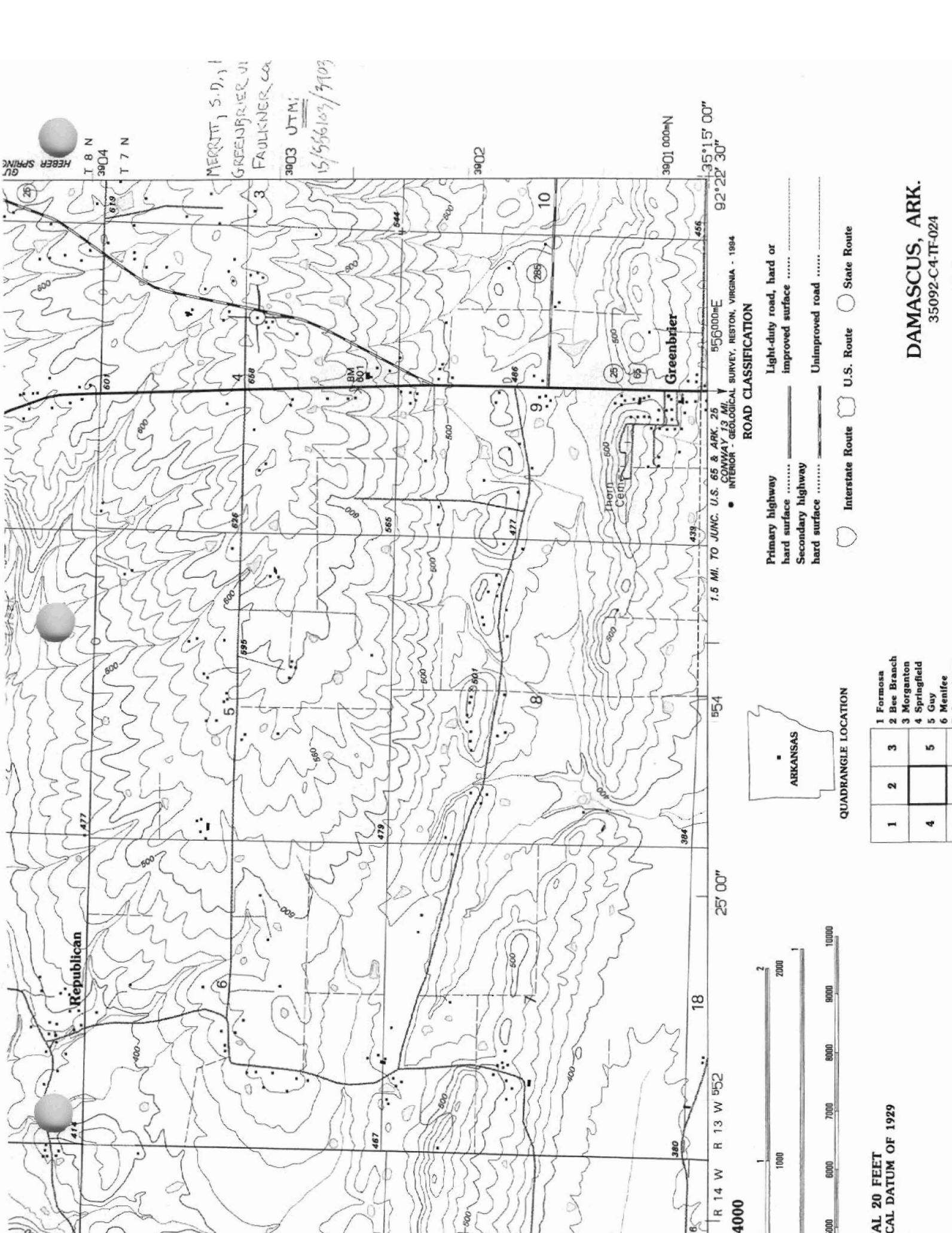
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

From the southwest corner of the Short Cut Road and Highway 25 North intersection, proceed southwest 145 feet along the west side of Highway 25 North to the point of beginning. From the point of beginning, proceed 165 feet southwesterly along the west side of Highway 25 North, thence proceed northwesterly 185 feet, thence proceed northeasterly 165 feet, thence proceed 185 feet southeasterly to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary contains the land that is historically associated with the S. D. Merritt House.



GU
HEBER SPRING
T 8 N
3904
T 7 N

MERRITT, S.D., I
GREENBRIER VI
FAULKNER CO
3003 UTM;
15/556109/3903

35°15' 00"
92°22' 30"

556000mE
1.5 MI. TO JUNC. U.S. 65 & ARK. 25
CONWAY 3 MI
INTERIOR - GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA - 1984

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway
hard surface
- Light-duty road, hard or
improved surface
- Secondary highway
hard surface
- Unimproved road

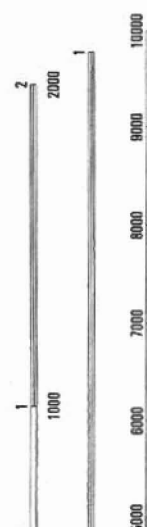
- Interstate Route
- U.S. Route
- State Route



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

1 Formosa
 2 Bee Branch
 3 Morganton
 4 Springfield
 5 Guy
 6 Menifee
 7 Greenbrier



SCALE 24000 FEET
VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

DAMASCUS, ARK.
35092-C4-TF-024
1004

