

Listed in the NR-9-8-83

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Keesee House

and/or common Keesee-Sparks House

2. Location

street & number 723 Arkansas Street N/A not for publication

city, town Helena N/A vicinity of congressional district First

state Arkansas code 05 county Phillips code 107

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Karl and Barbara Sparks

street & number 723 Arkansas Street

city, town Helena N/A vicinity of state Arkansas

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Phillips County Courthouse

street & number Cherry Street

city, town Helena state Arkansas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Helena Historic Resource Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 federal state county local N/A

depository for survey records Phillips County Library

city, town Helena state Arkansas

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY

Representative of the changing architectural tastes at the turn-of-the-century, the Keesee-Sparks House has features of both the Queen Anne and Classical Revival Styles. Built in 1901 for Thomas Woodfin Keesee, this residence has an asymmetrical plan with classical details, symbolizing the architectural transition that occurred early in the twentieth century.

ELABORATION

Less ornamented and exuberant than most Queen Anne houses, the Keesee-Sparks House is a residence of transitional design, combining a Queen Anne plan with restrained classical detailing. Reflecting the resurgent popularity of classical forms and details, this two-and-a-half story residence, built in 1901, possesses such details as Ionic columns, appliques of garland swags and a Palladian window. The irregular plan of the weatherboard-sided house consists of a rectangular block with a hipped roof, three multi-sided bays with projecting gable ends and an octagonal corner tower, all of which are united by a simply detailed cornice. The house has four brick chimneys, only one of which has decorative corbeling. Each elevation has a gabled bay projection with a gable end covered with imbricated shingles. Elongated console brackets support the extending cornice beneath the gable end. With the exception of four fixed windows, all others are double-hung, the majority having one-over-one configurations. The front elevation (north) and east elevation are dominated by an L-shaped wrap-around porch with a dentilled cornice and sloped roof supported by Ionic columns. A rounded bay forms the northeast porch corner and extends to form a flat-roofed tower, the top of which is detailed with appliques of garland swags. One of the most striking features of the front elevation is a leaded glass Palladian window, to the right of the entrance, that is composed of an arched double-hung center window flanked by rectangular fixed windows. All three have a simply detailed surround and are separated by pilasters with stylized Ionic capitals. The glass for this and the leaded stairway window on the east elevation was imported from Italy especially for this house. The entrance is very simply detailed with a plain surround. A bay window on the second floor of the front is positioned above the Palladian window. An arched attic window in the gable end is sixteen-over-one double-hung with a keystone architrave moulding. A small fixed window with diamond panes and arched surround is located on the second floor above the front door. The hipped roof is pierced by a dormer with a pronounced cornice and segmental pediment. Both east and west side elevations have a three-sided bay projection with arched attic windows in the gable ends, as well as side entrances. The front porch extends across approximately two-thirds of the east elevation. A fixed window on the first floor and a fixed diamond-shaped window with diamond panes on the second floor are the only two fixed windows on this elevation.

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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

Porches on each floor are located to the left of the east bay projection at the southeast corner of the house. The first floor porch is enclosed with lattice, whereas the one above is in the process of being restored to its original appearance of an open railed porch with an exposed back stair. The rear elevation consists of the two porches on the right, and a gabled wing with a kitchen on the first floor to the left.

The interior features fine quarter-sawn oak and mahogany woodwork and beautifully carved mantels and wainscoting. Pocket doors separate the rooms of the first floor. Fireplaces are classically detailed. Each has a tile face and two are topped with mirrored mantelpieces. A large entrance hall has paneled oak wainscoting, a window seat built into the bay window and a fireplace flanked by fluted columns with Corinthian capitals that support a cornice, beneath which a panel is detailed with foliated scroll applique. Located at the east end of the entrance hall is the open paneled stairway, the most outstanding feature of the house. The stairs rise to a landing, turn and curve to a second landing, at which point the balustrade curves gracefully outward. From the second landing, a short flight of stairs leads to the second floor. The stairs have a paneled face string and wall below, with a railing of turned balusters. Square newel posts are embellished with egg and dart detailing and dentilled cornice trim, ribboned laurels and garland appliques and fluted urn newel caps. The parlor, which is highlighted by the Palladian window, is located to the right of the entrance. This room has solid mahogany woodwork, and mantel, with pocket doors leading to the dining room. Paneled oak wainscoting and a fine mantel of quarter-sawn oak detail the dining room which is dominated by four large double-hung windows that form a bay. The original fireplaces remain in two of the four bedrooms upstairs, all of which still have their original ceiling fans. An upstairs bathroom has pressed tin wainscoting and its original fixtures.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1901 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The Keesee House in Helena provides an example of the transitional period in architecture at the turn of the century. The house reflects elements of both the Queen Anne and Classical Revival styles by combining an asymmetrical Queen Anne plan with Classical Revival detailing. The house was built for Thomas Woodfin Keesee in 1901. Thomas was the son of John William Keesee, a prosperous farmer in Phillips County, and was raised on a plantation outside of town. When the young Keesee decided to build his own home on Arkansas Street, he joined a fashionable neighborhood which was considered the showplace of this riverport community. Keesee was engaged in farming and cotton buying, both of which were major businesses in this highly agricultural area of eastern Arkansas. By the beginning of the 20th Century Helena had recovered from the damaging effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction. The production, brokerage, and shipping of cotton was truly "big business." Thomas Woodfin Keesee and his family actively participated in these enterprises, and his home reflects the success one could achieve.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Abstract of Titles, Hornor-Morris Abstract Co., 711 Walnut, Helena, AR
Historic Helena-West Helena, Arkansas, published by the Phillips County Chamber of
Commerce, 1973.
Allen Keesee - family member.
Helena, the Ridge, the River, the Romance; by George deMan, 1978.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one
Quadrangle name Latour, Ark.-Miss.

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

UTM References

A

1	5	7	2	1	0	5	0	3	8	2	2	4	5	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 1, 2, West 6 ft. of 3; Blk. 17; New Helena.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Annette Talbot Beauchamp, edited by Arkansas Historic Preservation Program staff

organization Phillips Co. for Historic Preservation date August 4, 1983

street & number 804 Columbia telephone 338-7401

city or town Helena state Arkansas 72342

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 8-5-83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

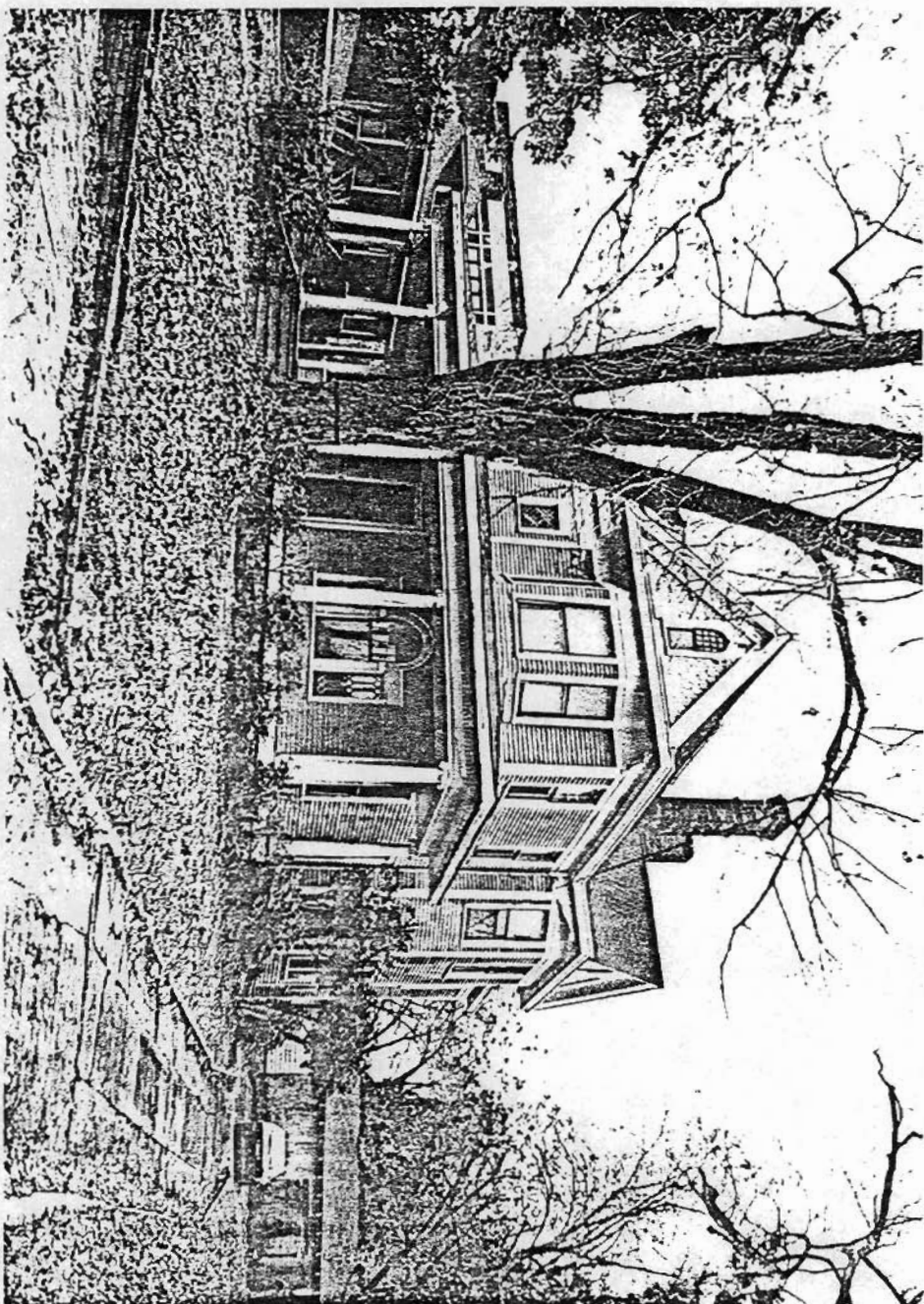
date

Keeper of the National Register

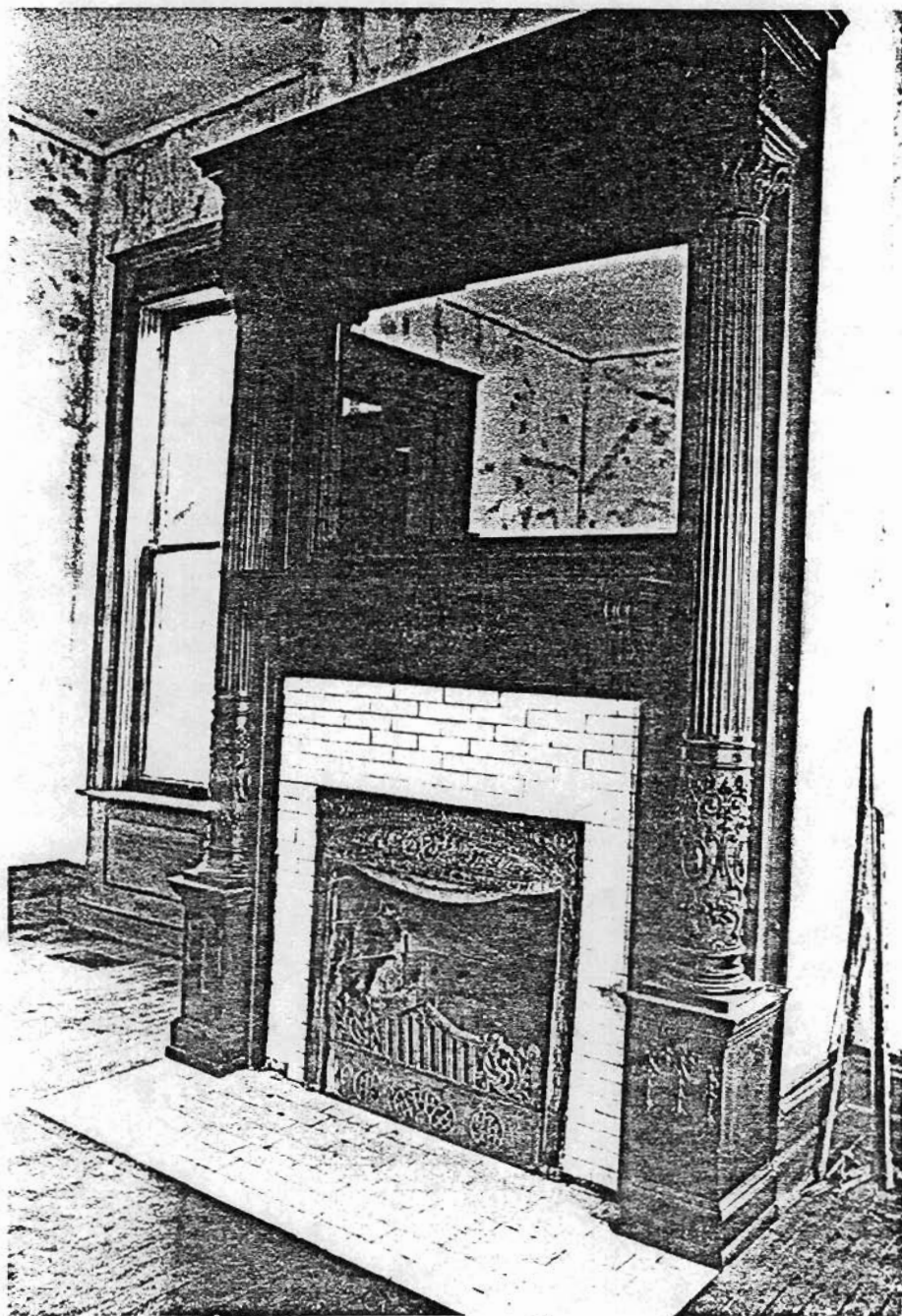
Attest:

date

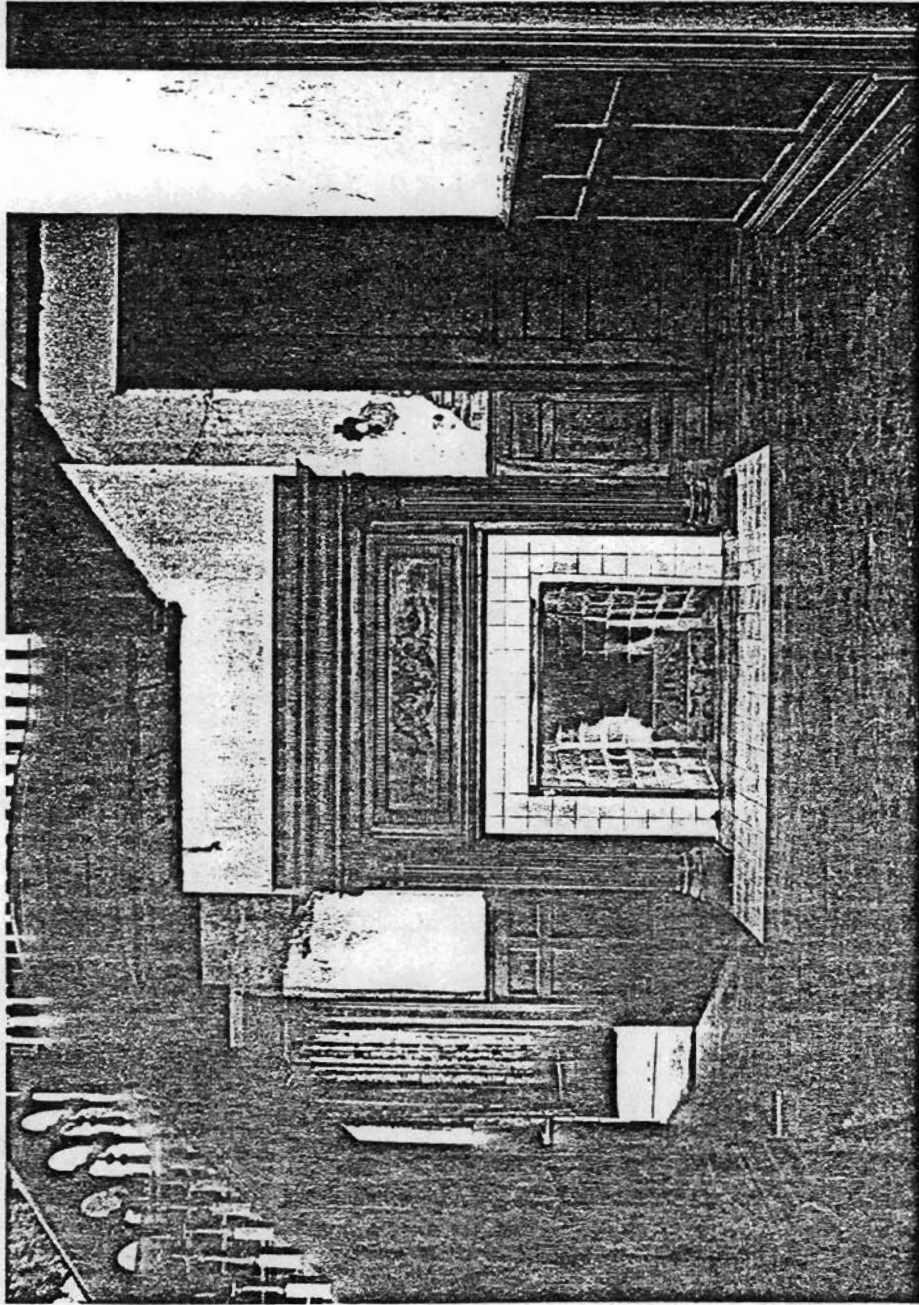
Chief of Registration



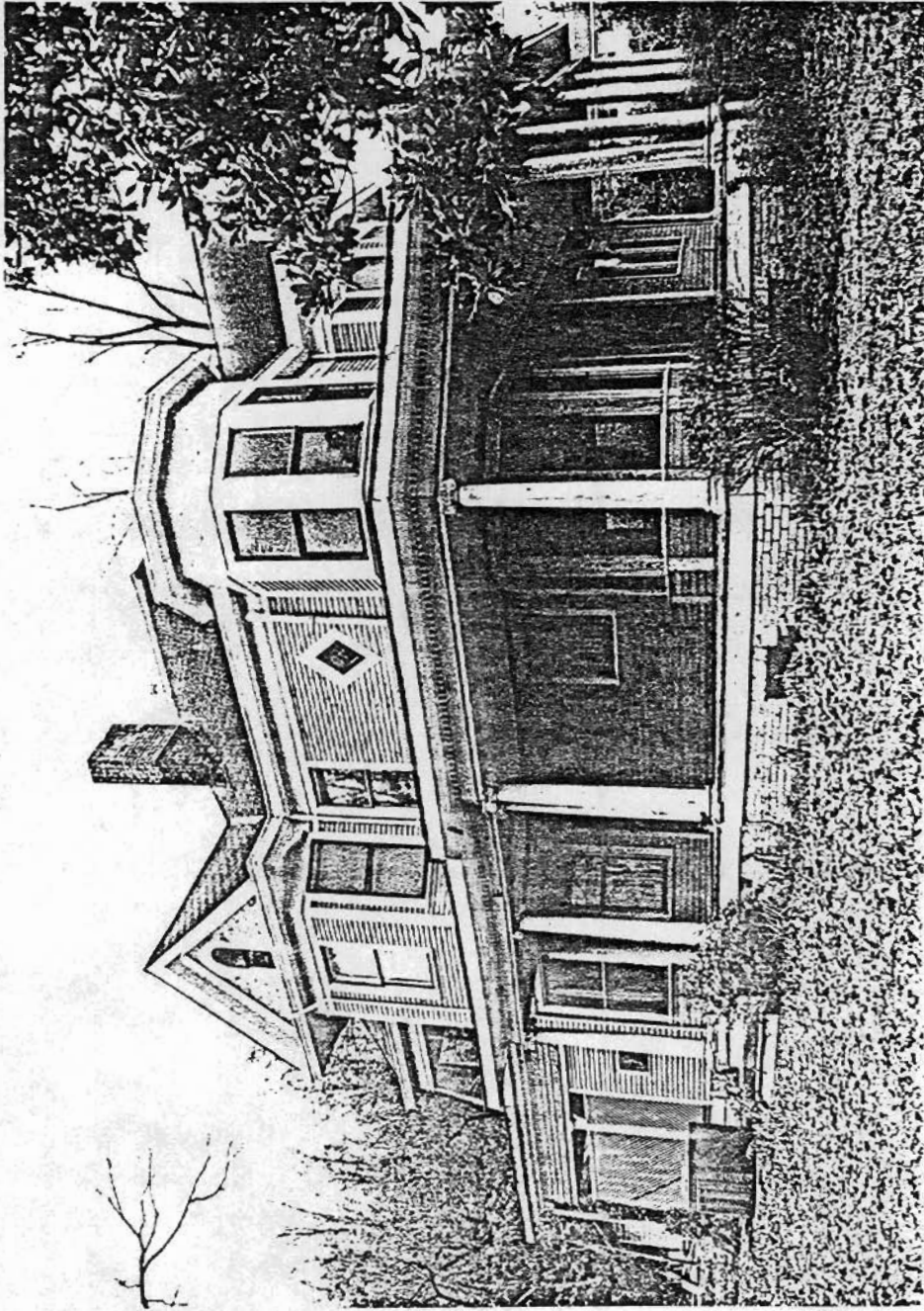
Keesee House
Helena, Arkansas
J. Carrfagno & A. Jones, photographers
November, 1982
Negative on file at AHPP
Viewed from the Northwest



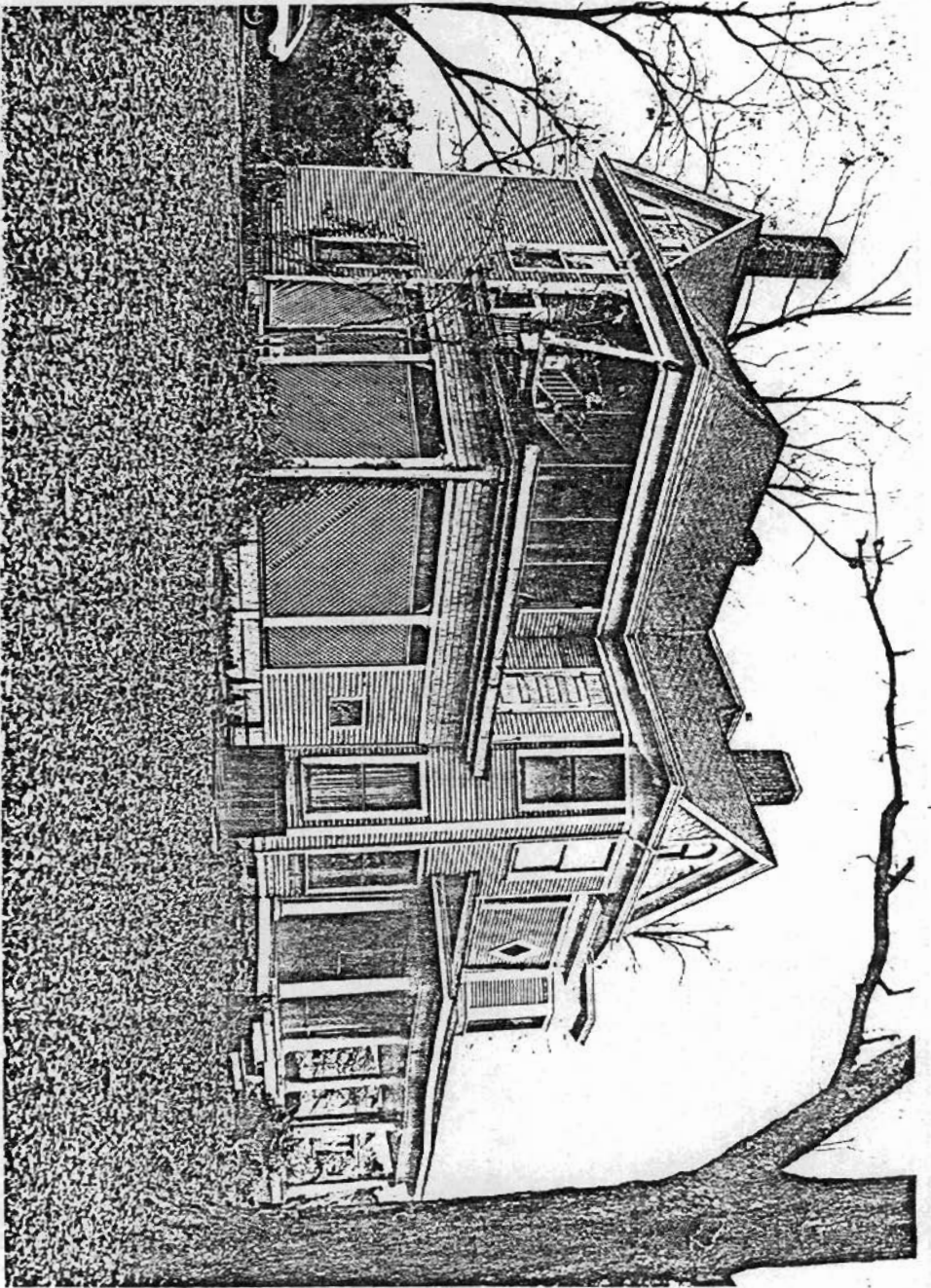
Keesee House
Helena, Arkansas
J. Carfagno & A. Jones, photographers
November, 1982
Negative on file at AHPP
Mantel



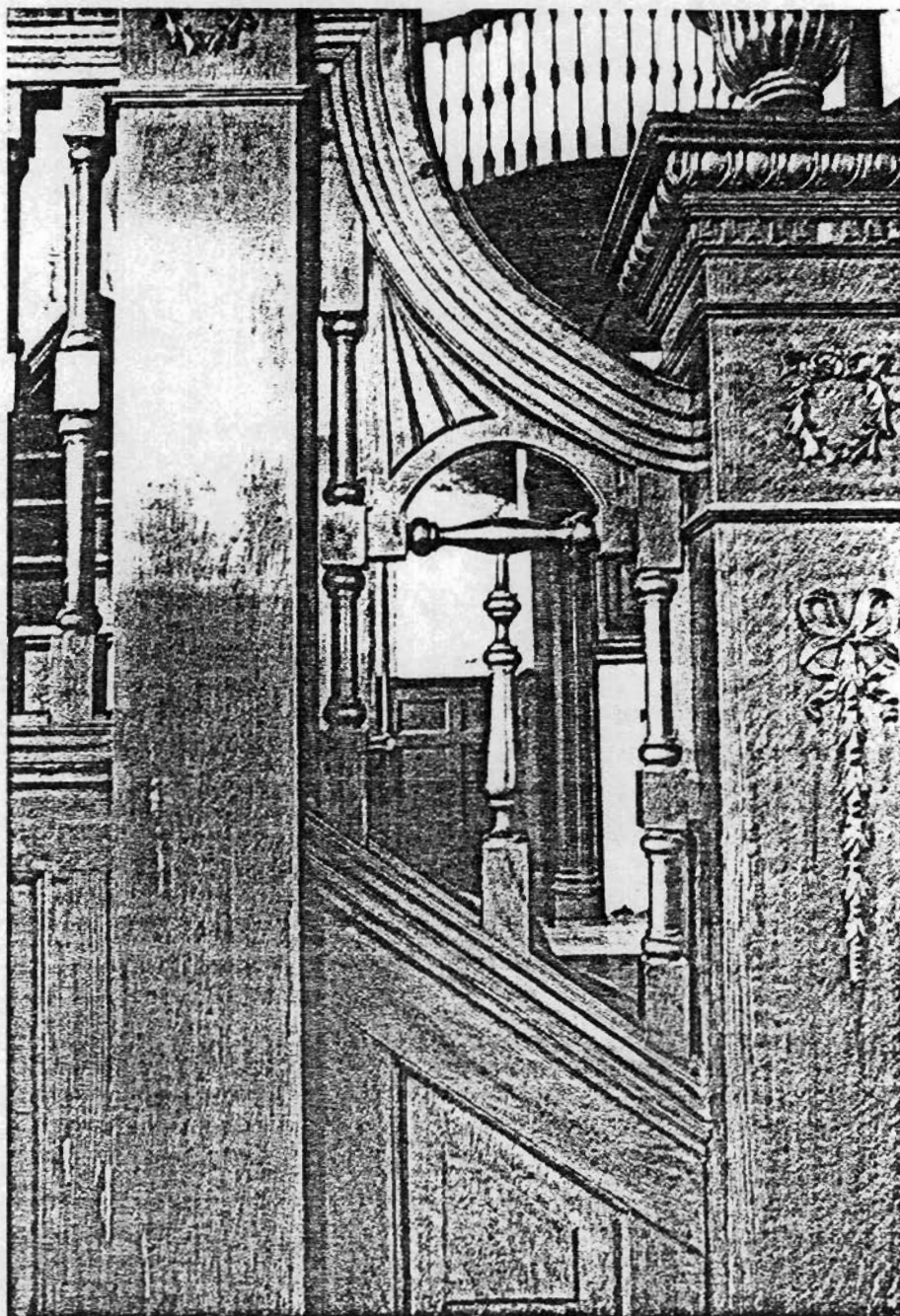
Keese House
Helena, Arkansas
J. Carfagno & A. Jones, photographers
November, 1982
Negative on file at AHPP
Entry



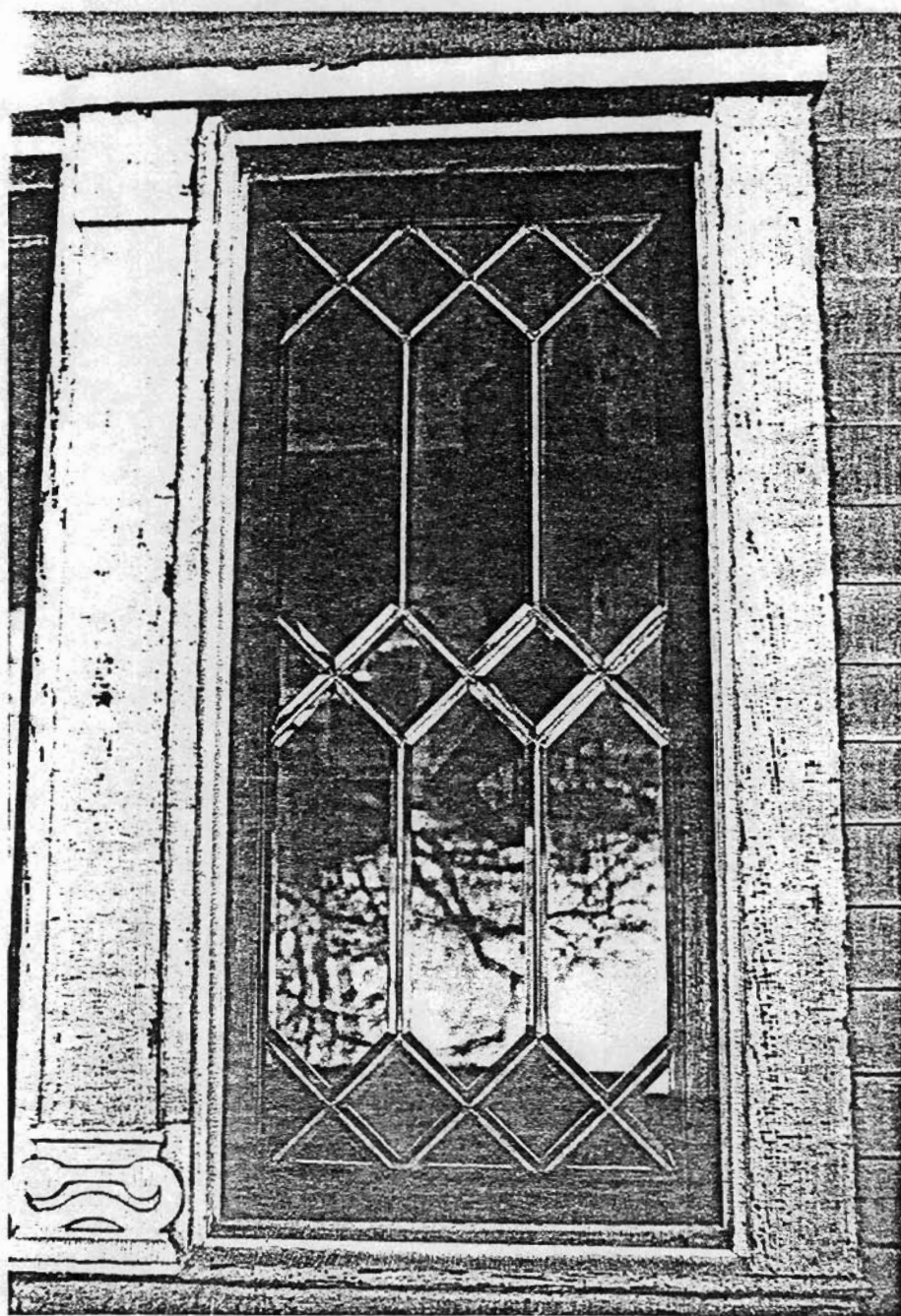
Keesee House
Helena, Arkansas
J. Carfagno & A. Jones, photographers
November, 1982
Negative on file at AHPP
Viewed from the Northeast



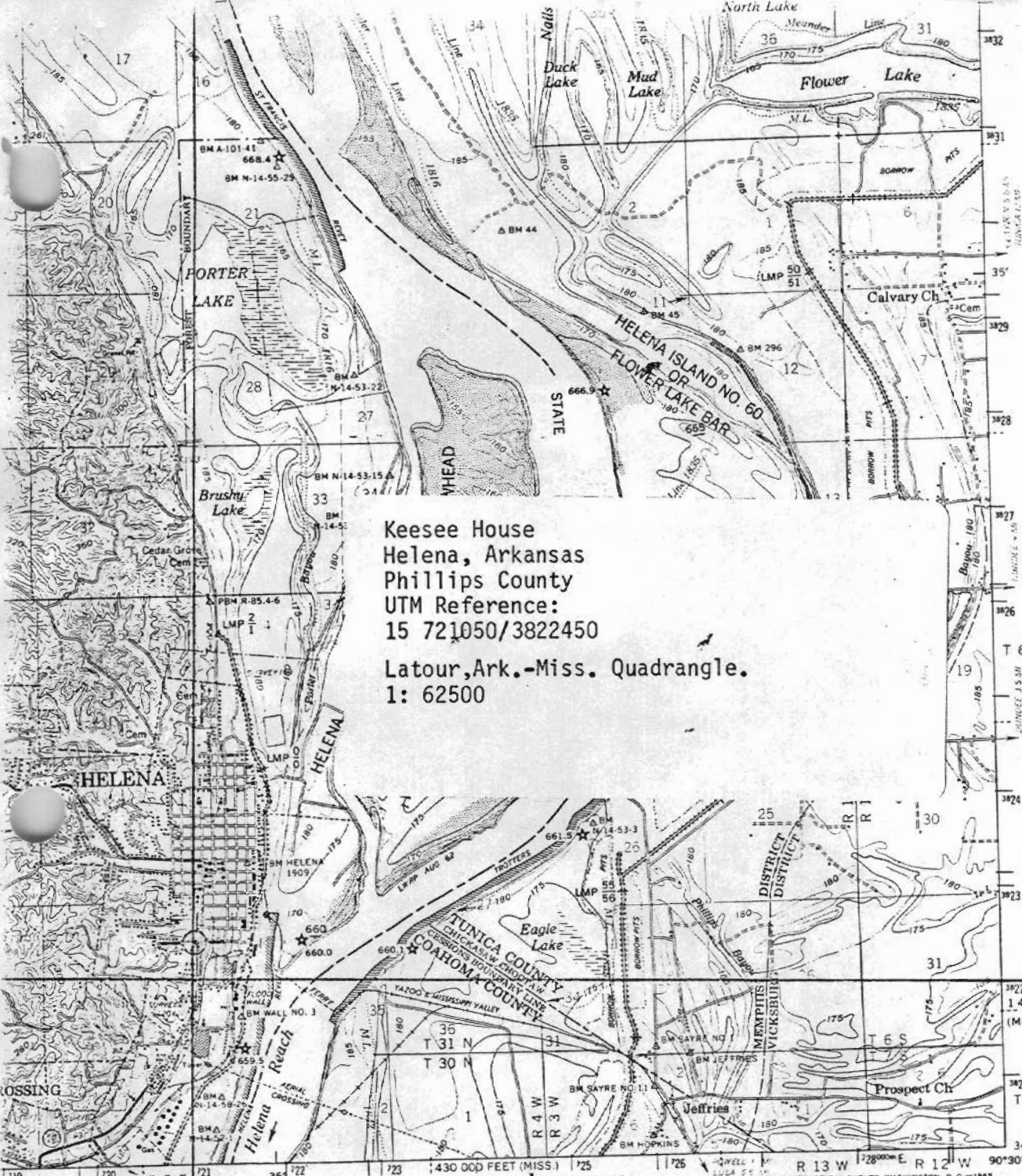
Keesee House
Helena, Arkansas
J. Carfagno & A. Jones, photographers
November, 1982
Negative on file at AHPP
Viewed from the Southeast



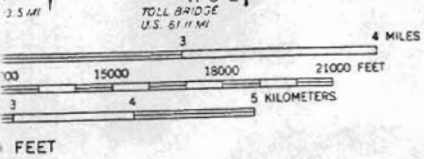
Keese House
Helena, Arkansas
J. Carfagno & A. Jones, photographers
November, 1982
Negative on file at AHPP
Stairway detail



Keesee House
Helena, Arkansas
J. Carfagno & A. Jones, photographers
November, 1982
Negative on file at AHPP
Window detail



Keesee House
 Helena, Arkansas
 Phillips County
 UTM Reference:
 15 721050/3822450
 Latour, Ark.-Miss. Quadrangle.
 1: 62500



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt

○ State Route

LATOUR, ARK.-MISS.
 N3430—W9030/15

1961

AMS 7853 II—SERIES V784

URACY STANDARDS
 O 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242,
 SIO... TLE ROCK, ARKANSAS,
 SB... MISSISSIPPI
 OL... AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

(MARKS)
 1962 (V)