

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NR 11/25/00

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 Willmering Tourist Cabins Historic District

other names/site number Silver Hill Canoe Rental

2. Location

street & number Highway 65

not for publication

city or town Silver Hill

vicinity

state Arkansas

code

AR

county

Searcy

code

129

zip code

72675

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.)

Cathie M. [Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

9/27/00
Date

Department of Arkansas Heritage/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

Willmering Tourist Cabins Historic District

Searcy Co., Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check 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

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

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

Arkansas Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Outdoor Recreation (Fisherman, Canoeist, and Tourist Cabins)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Plain/Traditional

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE, walls SANDSTONE, FIELDSTONE, roof METAL, other

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

SEE 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.
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

1946

Significant Dates

1946

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Architect/Builder: Harry Willmering

Builder: Homer Smith

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

SEE 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.)

Willmering, Harry. Pioneering the Ozarks. Compiled by Jim G. Fergusco. Harrison, AR: Searcy County Library, 2000.

Party Honoring Gladys Willmering, 24 August 2000.

Name of Property

County and State

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
Other State Agency
Federal Agency
Local Government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Marshall Public Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Table with 4 columns: Reference Number, Zone, Easting, Northing. Contains data for references 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Verbal Boundary Description

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

The point of origin for the southeast corner of the southern boundary is located approximately 90 feet west of Highway 65 and is located directly behind the center most point of the Silver Hill Canoe Rental building...

Boundary Justification

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

The selected boundary encompasses the six tourist cabins and cellar, all of which are associated with the Willmering Tourist Cabins and retain integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, workmanship, association, and materials.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kara Mills, National Register/Survey Coordinator
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
date 09/11/00
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.)

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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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Willmering Tourist Cabins Historic District is comprised six cabins and one cellar. The Tourist Cabins are constructed of local timber, concrete, native fieldstone, and larger pieces of sandstone. The tourist cabins are devoid of any architectural design that would associate them with a nationally known high style. Nonetheless, these cabins exhibit great craftsmanship and design as employed by the designer and builder Harry Willmering. Crafted out of local materials, they possess a vernacular style that is all their own. Since 1946 these cabins have served as a landmark for fishermen, canoeists, and tourists visiting or passing through the tiny Ozark community of Silver Hill in Searcy County.

ELABORATION

The Willmering Tourist Cabins Historic District is located in the Ozark region of North Arkansas, along Highway 65. The four walls (of each of the six cabins) rest on a continuous concrete foundation and support a shed roof that is hidden behind a parapet. Large pieces of sandstone decorate the front of each cabin, whereas, smaller fieldstones comprise the side and rear elevations of each building. The cabins all face east and each is identical with the exception being that some of the original windows and doors have been replaced and some of the wood trim surrounding the doors and windows are painted different colors. There is a cellar located on the property; it was constructed in the mid to late 1950s as a place to store food and drinks. Because it was not constructed in 1950 or before, it is considered a noncontributing resource to the district.

East/Front Elevations

Cabins one through six front east and display a façade sheathed in sandstone. The façade of each cabin presents a vertical plank door located just left of center. Each door has a diamond-shaped window located near the top. To the right of each door is a double-hung window.

On cabins one through three the windows have a different pane configuration. Cabin One presents a double-hung, one-over-one window; Cabin Two, a double-hung, two-over-two window; and the window on the façade of Cabin Three is covered with plywood. Cabins Four through Six display double-hung, three-over-six windows.

North/Side Elevations

The north elevation of each cabin is free of any doors, windows, or ornamentation. The western most edge of each cabin shows the continuation of a vertical band of sandstone as it extends from the top of the cabin to the bottom. The cabins display the exquisite use of fieldstone, as that is the main decorative element on the north elevation.

West/Rear Elevations

The west elevation of each cabin continues to present fieldstones as the primary decorative element. On the south end of the cabins there is a small, stationary, two-light window that provides light to the interior.

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South/Side Elevations

The south elevation is comprised primarily of fieldstone. However, the easternmost edge of each cabin's south elevation is trimmed with a vertical band of sandstone that extends from the top of each cabin to the bottom. Each cabin's south elevation is fenestrated with a three-over-one window. The only exceptions being Cabin One whose window is covered with plywood and Cabin Two whose window displays a double-hung, two-over-two window.

Integrity

The Willmering Tourist Cabins possess a strong sense of integrity as they have been altered little since their construction in 1946. They maintain their integrity of location and setting, as they are located in the small Ozark town of Silver Hill, Arkansas. They creatively display the workmanship, design features, and materials used by Harry Willmering at the time of each cabin's construction. The use of native materials such as sandstone and fieldstone further contribute to the character and integrity of these vernacular cabins.

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Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

Constructed in 1946, the Willmering Tourist Cabins Historic District is being nominated with **local significance** under **Criterion C** because these cabins display a vernacular style that reflects their surroundings – as they are constructed of native rock and sandstone – and because they are the only historic tourist cabins in Silver Hill designed in this manner. These cabins are significant for their architecture and for their association with transportation culture in Arkansas and are being submitted under the multiple property listing “Arkansas Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965” in conjunction with the historic context “Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965.”

ELABORATION

Searcy County was originally established 5 November 1835. It was incorporated by Marion County in 1836 and then reestablished out of Marion County on 13 December 1838. Located in the Ozark Mountains, Searcy County was surrounded by numerous rivers and streams. Buffalo Creek flows northeast to the Buffalo River, which is fed by hundreds of native streams. It is these rivers and streams that have attracted residents and tourists alike to the region since the mid to late 1800s. Silver Hill is a small community in Searcy County that is located along Highway 65, which has been a major thoroughfare through the county since the Civil War. As the name implies, the town of Silver Hill was named for legendary silver mine. By the 1940s, most of the people passing through Searcy County via Highway 65 were on their way to Missouri or on vacation to fish and float the Buffalo River. It was while visiting relatives that Gladys and Harry Willmering discovered Silver Hill, Arkansas.

Harry Willmering – architect and builder of the Willmering Tourist Cabins – and his wife Gladys first visited Silver Hill in 1943 while on a month’s furlough from the army. Because of the secludedness and beauty of the area Willmering and Gladys moved to Silver Hill in 1946 to be near family upon retirement from the army. Shortly after arriving at Silver Hill, Willmering, his wife, and his sister Alice and her husband M. F. Archibald decided to build some cabins along Hwy 65 to accommodate fisherman, canoeist, or those just passing through.

In the fall of 1946, Willmering, his family, and his friends began clearing some land in Silver Hill to build the cabins. It was while picking up rocks and cobblestones that the decision was made to construct the cabins out of fieldstones. Willmering and Homer Smith were responsible for obtaining the materials for the cabin. Because of the remoteness of Silver Hill it was decided to use native materials to build the cabins. Willmering and Smith felled all of the Oak trees that were to be used to build the cabins with a crosscut saw. The lumber was then hauled to a mill half a mile away where it was transformed into usable lumber. 10,000 lineal feet of lumber was then hauled back to the building site where it was left to dry before using it to make forms, scaffolding, and whatever else was needed to build the cabins.

Willmering decided that the cabins would all be twelve-by-sixteen and that the framework would be made of oak two-by-fours. The walls were to be eight-inch thick fieldstone walls and the roof was designed to be a shed roof hidden

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behind a false front. Sand and gravel were hauled up a large hill from a gravel bar along the river to use to make concrete. Willmering and Smith designed their own concrete mixer from a 55-gallon oil drum, the front axle, hub, and wheel from a wrecked car so that they did not have to compete with the big construction companies that were using concrete to build the damn at Bull Shoals. They also quarried native sandstone from nearby land using sledgehammers, steel bars, and metal wedges. The quarried sandstone was then taken to the building site and used in conjunction with fieldstones to cover the exterior of the walls. Gladys later joked that she would laughingly tell the tourists, "leave the rocks alone, we are producing them."

Willmering and several of his friends in the Silver Hill vicinity built the cabins. After they were built, four-by-eight sheets of sheetrock were used to finish out the interior of each of the cabins. Because the Rural Electrification Administration (R.E.A.) was planning on eventually bringing electricity to the area, Willmering put some No. 12 Romex and wiring in the walls before they put up the sheetrock. At the time the cabins' completion electricity was still not available in Silver Hill. After the cabins were finished, Willmering relinquished the job of furnishing the cabins to his wife Gladys. A year or two after the completion of the cabins, Willmering obtained permission from R.E.A. to make the cabins ready for electricity. Each cabin was wired so that it could support one fifteen-watt light bulb and one twenty-watt wall plug, and it was at this time that the cabins received electricity (ca. 1948). While staying at the cabins, tourists and fisherman alike could obtain guided tours from Harry Willmering or Homer Smith along the Buffalo River, Gladys was always nearby to do laundry, and tourists could eat at a nearby restaurant. Sometime after 1946 a restaurant was moved from ten miles up Highway 65 to the location of the present-day Silver Hill Canoe Rental which lies just outside of the boundary of the tourist cabins.

The Willmering Tourist Cabins were constructed along Highway 65 to primarily meet the needs of fisherman and canoeist visiting the area to float or fish the Buffalo River. Had there been no main thoroughfare (Highway 65) passing through this area, Silver Hill would have remained remote and inaccessible to fisherman, canoeist, and those just passing by, and it was for these tourists and sportsmen/women that the Willmering Tourist Cabins were constructed in 1946. For approximately eight years Harry and Gladys Willmering operated the tourist cabins. Old receipts show that the rooms rented for a mere \$3.00 per day. Circa 1954 the Willmerings sold the property to the Pattersons who continued to operate the restaurant and assume ownership of the cabins. Currently the cabins are used as storage for the Silver Hill Canoe Rental owned and operated by Mac McClain.

Significance

The Willmering Tourist Cabins Historic District is being nominated with **local significance** under **Criterion C** because these cabins display a vernacular style that reflects their surroundings – as they are constructed of native rock and sandstone – and because they are the only historic tourist cabins in Silver Hill designed in this manner. These cabins are significant for their architecture and for their association with transportation culture in Arkansas and are being submitted under the multiple property listing "Arkansas Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965" in conjunction with the historic context "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965."

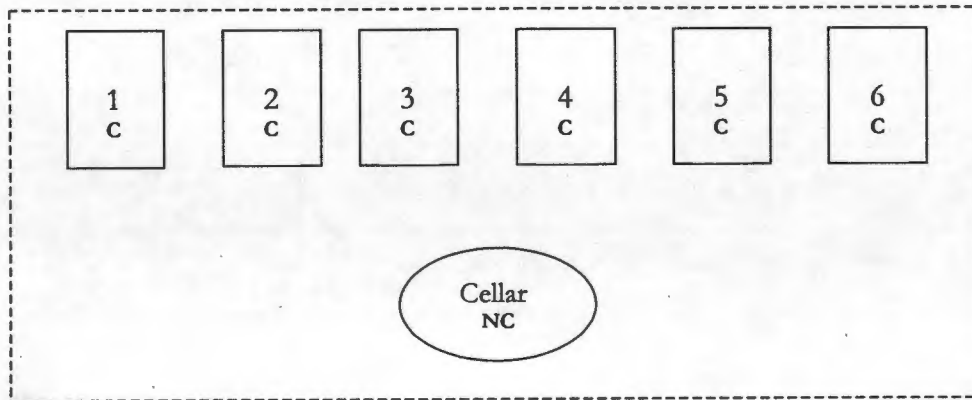
WILLMERING TOURIST CABINS HISTORIC DISTRICT

Silver Hill, Searcy County

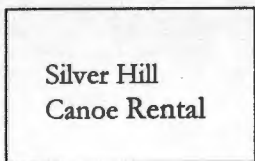


140 Feet

80 Feet



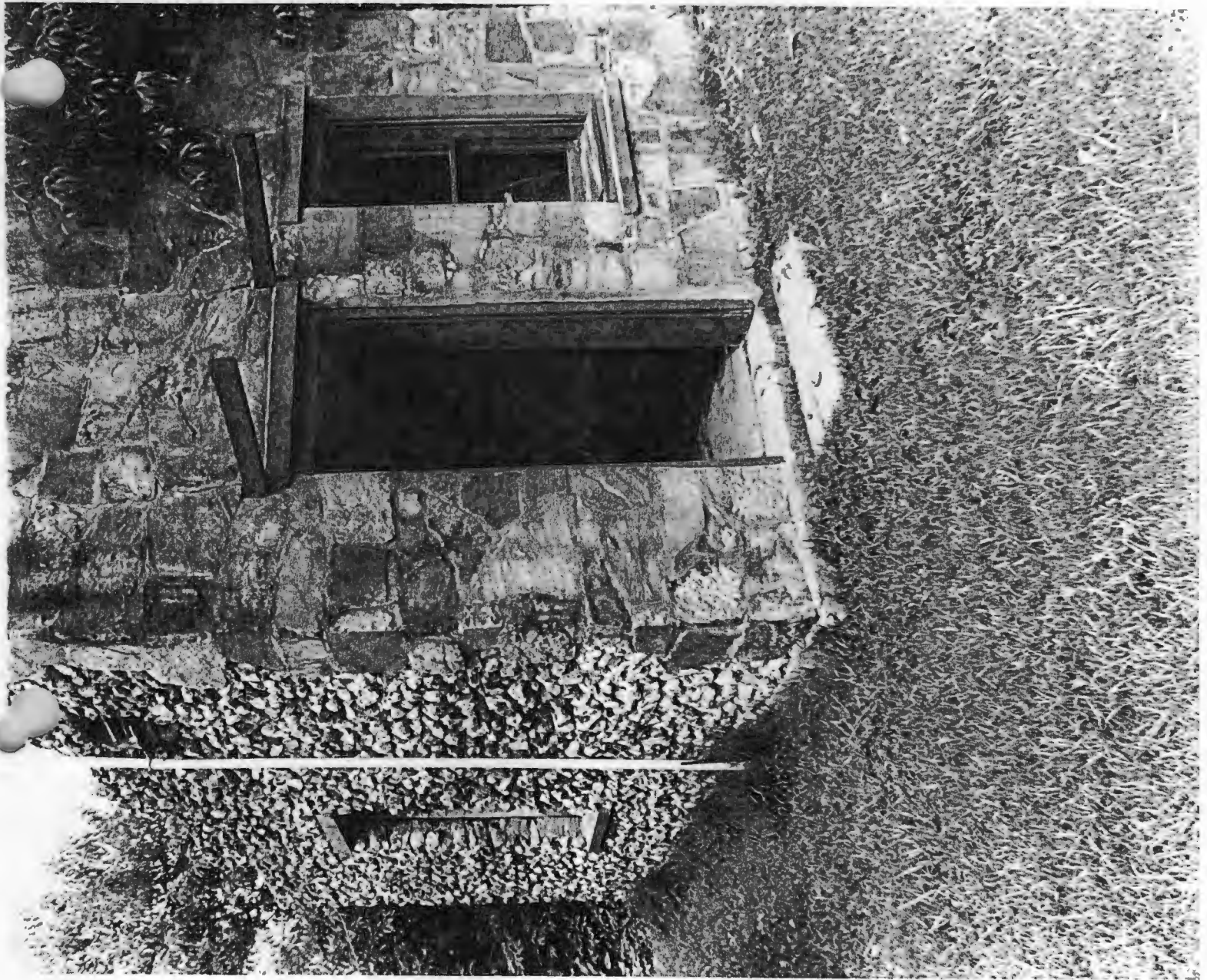
90 Feet



<u>LEGEND</u>	
C	Contributing Resource
NC	Noncontributing Resource
---	Boundary

Highway 65



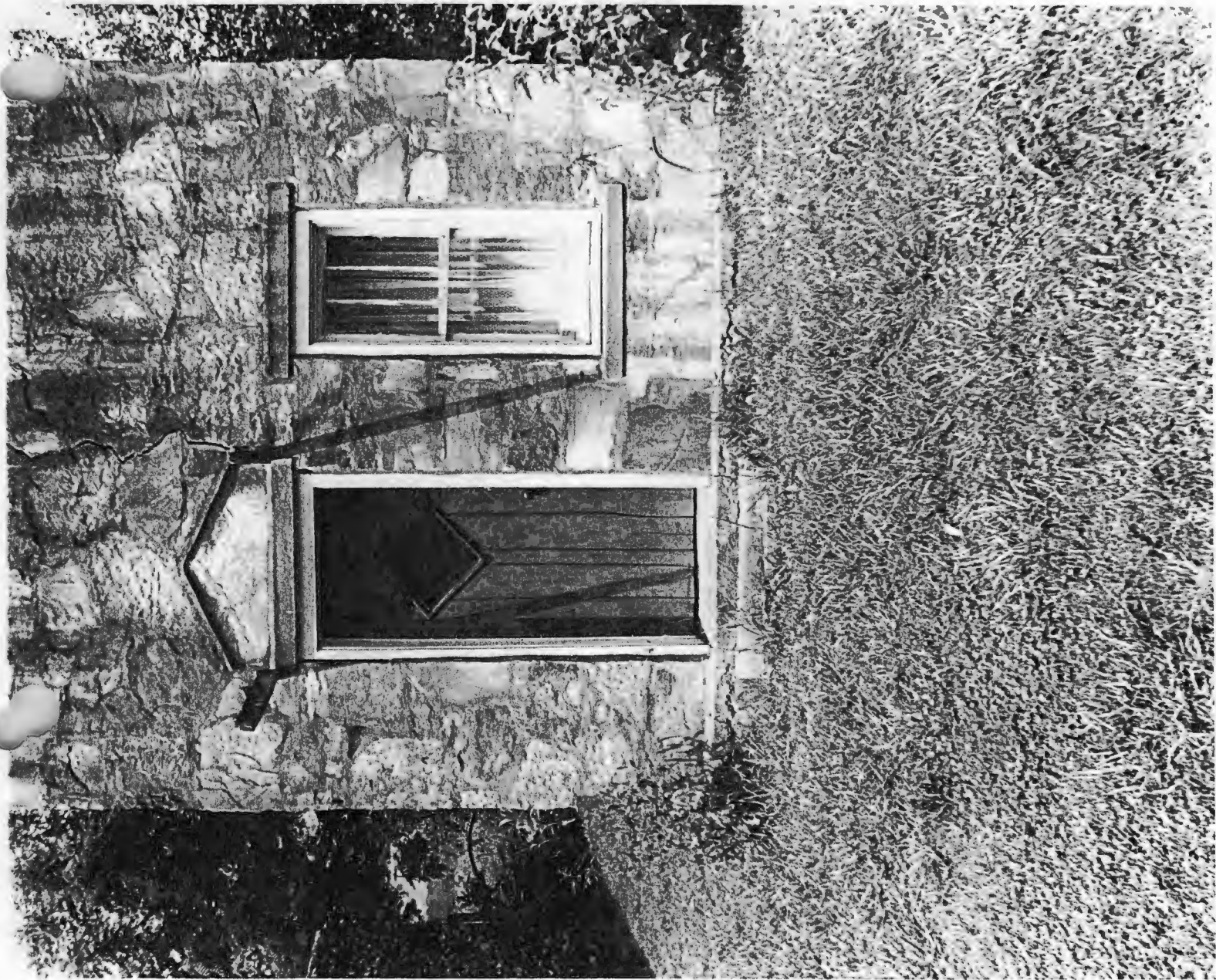












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(ST. JOE)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



Willmerna
Silver Hill, Ariz
15/522740/3980360
Historic District
Ray Co., Ariz