

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

historic name: Smith-McCurry House

other name/site number: N/A

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2. Location

street & number: 3 1/2 mi. e. of El Dorado on n. side of State Hwy. 15

not for publication: N/A

city/town: El Dorado

vicinity: X

state: AR county: Union

code: AR 139

zip code: 71730

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3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	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
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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. _____ See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A. Byford _____ Date 9-8-92
Signature of certifying official

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.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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5. National Park Service Certification
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I, hereby certify that this 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 Keeper Date of Action

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6. Function or Use
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Historic: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling

Current : Vacant/Not In Use Sub: _____

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification:

Greek Revival
Craftsman

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation Concrete roof Asphalt
walls Weatherboard other Brick

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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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
Industry

Period(s) of Significance: c. 1867-c. 1922

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): McCurry, Mamie Smith

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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X See continuation sheet.

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 -- Specify Repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: Five _____

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>538170</u>	<u>3675680</u>	B	_____	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ____ See continuation sheet.

Commencing at the Southeast corner of the Southeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 19, Township 17 South, Range 14 West, Union County, Arkansas, and run North 20 feet to the North line of State Highway No. 15; thence West along said line, a distance of 593 feet to the point of beginning; thence North, perpendicular to said highway a distance of 660 feet; thence West, parallel to said highway a distance of 330 feet; thence South 660 feet to the North line of said Highway No. 15; thence East, along said line, 330 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification: ____ See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with this resource that retains its integrity.

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Patrick Zollner, National Register Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 09/08/92

Street & Number: 225 E. Markham, Suite 300 Telephone: (501) 324-9346

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

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Summary

The Smith-McCurry House was constructed in 1867 as a single-story, four-room dog-trot residence. The frame house is clad with weatherboard and covered by a gable roof, which also covers the recessed, full-facade front porch that is bolstered by six box columns. Originally supported by brick piers, the house now rests upon a continuous concrete-block foundation. At some point after construction, a kitchen ell was constructed at the rear of the house, and two second-story rooms were added in the attic space. Around 1922, the house was altered to reflect the contemporary Craftsman style of architecture. The roof was shingled with composition shingles laid in a pattern to resemble slate. False decorative rafter ends were added to the front porch eave, and latticework was applied along the columns and underneath the entablature. Additional rooms were constructed on the eastern and northern elevations of the house, and an open trellis porch was attached to the western elevation.

Elaboration

The Smith-McCurry House was constructed in 1867 as a single-story, four-room dog-trot residence. The frame house is clad with weatherboard and covered by a gable roof, which also covers the recessed, full-facade front porch that is bolstered by six box columns. Originally supported by brick piers, the house now rests upon a continuous concrete-block foundation.

The house originally consisted of four rooms with two on each side of the open central hallway. Each of the four rooms are entered through a single-leaf door located in the hallway. Apparently, a fifth door existed at one time between the two windows on the front elevation of the western room (from examining the cuts in the flush boarding). The front or southern elevation was fenestrated by four asymmetrically placed six-over-six, single-hung windows. This elevation is currently composed of a mixed assortment one-over-one and six-over-one windows. Greek Revival detailing is found in the wide, full entablature spanning the front porch and the flush boarding on the front wall underneath the porch. Simple capitals adorn the columns, which have a stick balustrade connecting them. Although there is currently only one exterior brick chimney on the western elevation, there are two historic fireplace mantels in the house which reflect Greek Revival styling. The second mantel is presently attached to a wall in the eastern upstairs room.

A gable-roofed ell is located on the western end of the northern elevation. This kitchen ell was most likely added at some point after the construction of the house, but could possibly be the original detached kitchen that was later attached to the main house. In typical fashion, the owners constructed a shed-

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roof porch on the inside or eastern elevation of the ell which connects with the shed-roof porch built onto the rear of the house. The date of construction for both porches is unknown. Another alteration to the original structure appears to be the two second-story rooms, which are not thought to have been originally finished. Both rooms are sheathed with beaded-board siding and feature tray ceilings. The eastern room is lighted by two side-by-side windows placed in the center of the gable end, while the western room has two windows flanking the chimney. Like the front elevation, the pane arrangement is varied. The fenestration of the first story of the western elevation also has been altered since construction. There are two one-over-one windows flanking the chimney and two side-by-side, one-over-one windows lighting the rear or southern room.

Around 1922, following the discovery of oil in Union County, the house was more drastically altered with the Craftsman style providing the inspiration. The roof was shingled with composition shingles laid in a pattern to resemble slate, a common practice on Craftsman houses. False decorative rafter ends were added to the front porch eave, and latticework was applied along the columns and underneath the entablature.

A one-story hipped-roof addition was constructed along the eastern elevation and wrapped partially around to the rear of the house. The two additional rooms on the eastern side became a music room and an office, and the space at the rear of the house was utilized as a bedroom. A concrete stoop was laid at the front or southern elevation of the addition, which is accessed through double-leaf doors flanked by two narrow windows. Nine six-over-one, double-hung windows compose practically all of the eastern elevation of the addition. Since a six-over-one configuration is somewhat unusual, the owners may have utilized the bottom sashes of the six-over-six windows from the original dog-trot and purchased the single-pane sashes to produce a Craftsman pattern of multiple-panes-over-one.

The northern elevation of the wrap-around addition consists of three six-over-one windows and a single-leaf door. To the west of this bedroom addition, a portion of the rear shed roofed-porch was enclosed to form a bathroom. Instead of weatherboard, novelty siding was applied to the small exterior area, and a single rectangular window was placed in the center. The addition that most reflected the Craftsman influence is the open trellis porch that was added to the western side of the kitchen ell, which received two side-by-side, four-over-one Craftsman windows on the southern elevation at this time. This porch has since been covered and enclosed with corrugated tin.

Other than the enclosing of the open trellis porch, the only other exterior alterations since the Craftsman-izing of the early 1920's have been the enclosing of the front breezeway and the rear shed-roof porches with a lightly constructed framework of plywood and plastic sheeting.

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The interior is basically unaltered with the exception of modern imitation wood paneling covering the western front room. The four doors that lead into the original rooms are all historic; however, the front room doors are considerably taller than the rear room doors which has led to some speculation whether the doors were enlarged at a later date. Nevertheless, the door paneling and surrounding molding are consistent with the other two doors and the time period from when the house was constructed.

There are no surviving historic outbuildings.

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Summary

The Smith-McCurry House is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best known example of a Greek Revival-styled frame dog-trot in Union County. Under Criterion B, the Smith-McCurry House is locally significant for its association with Mamie Smith McCurry, El Dorado's foremost woman oil operator and a pioneer in the development of the oil industry in Arkansas.

Elaboration

The Smith-McCurry House is located approximately 3 1/2 miles east of El Dorado. It was constructed in 1867 for David Carroll Smith by his father, Lawson Smith. The elder Smith immigrated to Union County from Wilcox County, Alabama, in 1829 with his brother Joel Smith. The two brothers settled approximately five miles apart and built identical houses facing each other. Joel constructed his house a few miles south of El Dorado in what became the community of Smith. His c. 1840 house is currently listed in the National Register. Lawson Smith erected his home a few miles east of El Dorado, where a community likewise grew up around his homestead and was named Lawson in his honor (a community still exists in Lawson; the community of Smith is now virtually abandoned).

David Carroll Smith was born on September 16, 1851, and was the only son of Lawson Smith's third wife. David attended the University of Mississippi, where he met his future wife. They were married shortly after the end of the Civil War and returned to Arkansas. As he had done with his other sons, Lawson Smith gave David a plot of land, which was located closer to El Dorado than the community of Lawson (probably due to the fact that David was the last of Lawson's sons, and his older brothers had already received the land nearest to their father's house), and built the newlyweds a house. On his farm, David Smith raised cotton, corn, cane, cattle, chickens, and hogs as well as a vegetable garden and a fruit orchard. Smith was a deacon in the Old Union Baptist Church and served on the Board of the El Dorado Bank. Following his death on September 16, 1919, his only heir, Mamie Smith McCurry, returned to manage the farm.

Mamie Smith McCurry had been living in Little Rock where her husband, Dr. William Thomas McCurry, practiced medicine. They were married on August 14, 1898, and had their only child, Ruth, in November of the following year. After Mamie's return to her home place, her husband became ill. Spurred on by the necessity of caring for him and educating their daughter, Mamie Smith McCurry remembered her father's oft-mentioned belief that there was oil beneath their property and unearthed two government survey maps of the area which indicated

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the East field and the Rainbow field as oil-producing territory. One of the maps had been published in 1895 and the other in 1912, long before anyone in Arkansas dreamed about drilling for oil in Union County.

Bruce Hunt, a geologist from Tulsa, contacted Mrs. McCurry about oil exploration in Union County, and she subsequently invested in the Busey well, which came in as a gusher on January 10, 1921. McCurry then directed interest east of El Dorado and drilled a well on her property, which became known as the Old McCurry No. 1. Hensy and Zoda were the actual contractors for the drilling, and after the well was successfully completed as a gusher in May of 1921, the firm of Hunt, McCurry, and Zoda was formed to launch other operations in the area. Zoda was the drilling contractor; Hunt was responsible for leasing; and McCurry was the bookkeeper for the company. The Old McCurry No. 1 well was the third well drilled in Union county, the second producer in the county, and the first well drilled east of El Dorado. On its initial test, the well produced 75 barrels of oil and 25 million cubic feet of gas at 2149 feet in the Nachitoches sand.

Only one other well was ever drilled on her 280 acre farm, which was never leased to other companies. Neither well proved to be a perpetual producer. In a 1941 interview for the *El Dorado Daily News*, McCurry discussed the early days of the oil boom and commented on the drilling technology of that time period:

All we knew was to set casing and test. We had no conservation department and had never heard of a Schlumberger or a drill stem test. If we had, a great many wells of that period might have produced for a longer period of time.

The Hunt, McCurry, and Zoda Company was active for about four years and operated in a number of different fields. They drilled the discovery well in the Urania field in Louisiana and completed 15 producers in that field. The company's interests in that territory were sold to H. L. Hunt, another El Dorado oil operator. Mrs. McCurry also served on the board and as secretary-treasurer of the East Side Oil and Gas Company. Besides the development of the East field, McCurry was involved in developing the Rainbow field and the Shuler field in Union County. Before she retired, Mrs. McCurry had drilled in seven states: Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi. The last well she personally had charge of drilling was in Alabama near Bay Minnette. While there, McCurry was given a membership by the Mobile Chamber of Commerce and was voted a resolution of appreciation from the Bay Minnette Lions Club for arousing interest in the development of oil in that area. Mrs. McCurry sold her interests in the well before it was completed.

After the discovery of oil and the financial reward that accrued thereon, Mrs. McCurry expanded considerably the size of her house with additions that

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reflected the then-fashionable Craftsman style of architecture. When the Old McCurry No. 1 was being drilled, McCurry utilized her additional space to house up to 15 workers in her home. By having her workers within sight of their drill, McCurry greatly increased the efficiency of her operation, for housing was difficult to find in El Dorado, and what few roads existed at that time were practically impassable due to the increased traffic created by the oil industry.

In 1931, McCurry took a vacation from active involvement in the oil business and joined an International Universities group, which toured the world. On her return, she embellished her living room with exotic furnishings acquired from her travels. Mrs. Mamie Smith McCurry died on August 2, 1952, and was survived by her only child, Ruth McCurry Brown, and two grandchildren, Mamie Ruth Brown Williams and Claudia Ann Brown Willey.

The Smith-McCurry House is locally significant under Criterion C as the best known example of a Greek Revival-style frame dog-trot in Union County. Although the residence currently reflects the c.1922 Craftsman-style alterations and additions, the owner, W. L. Cook, plans to restore the structure to its original Greek Revival dog-trot appearance by using a historic photograph as his plan. Under Criterion B with local significance, the house is important for its association with Mrs. Mamie Smith McCurry, El Dorado's foremost woman oil operator and a pioneer in the development of the oil industry in Arkansas.

Smith McCurdy House
 El Dorado vic., Arkansas

UNITED STATES
 DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
 UTM: 15/538170

7480 I SW
 (SMACKOVER)



92°37'30"
 33°15'

360000E

37

R 15 W R 14 W

38

35' 39

40

3870000N

3876

THREE CREEKS 17 MI.
 NEWELL 9 MI.

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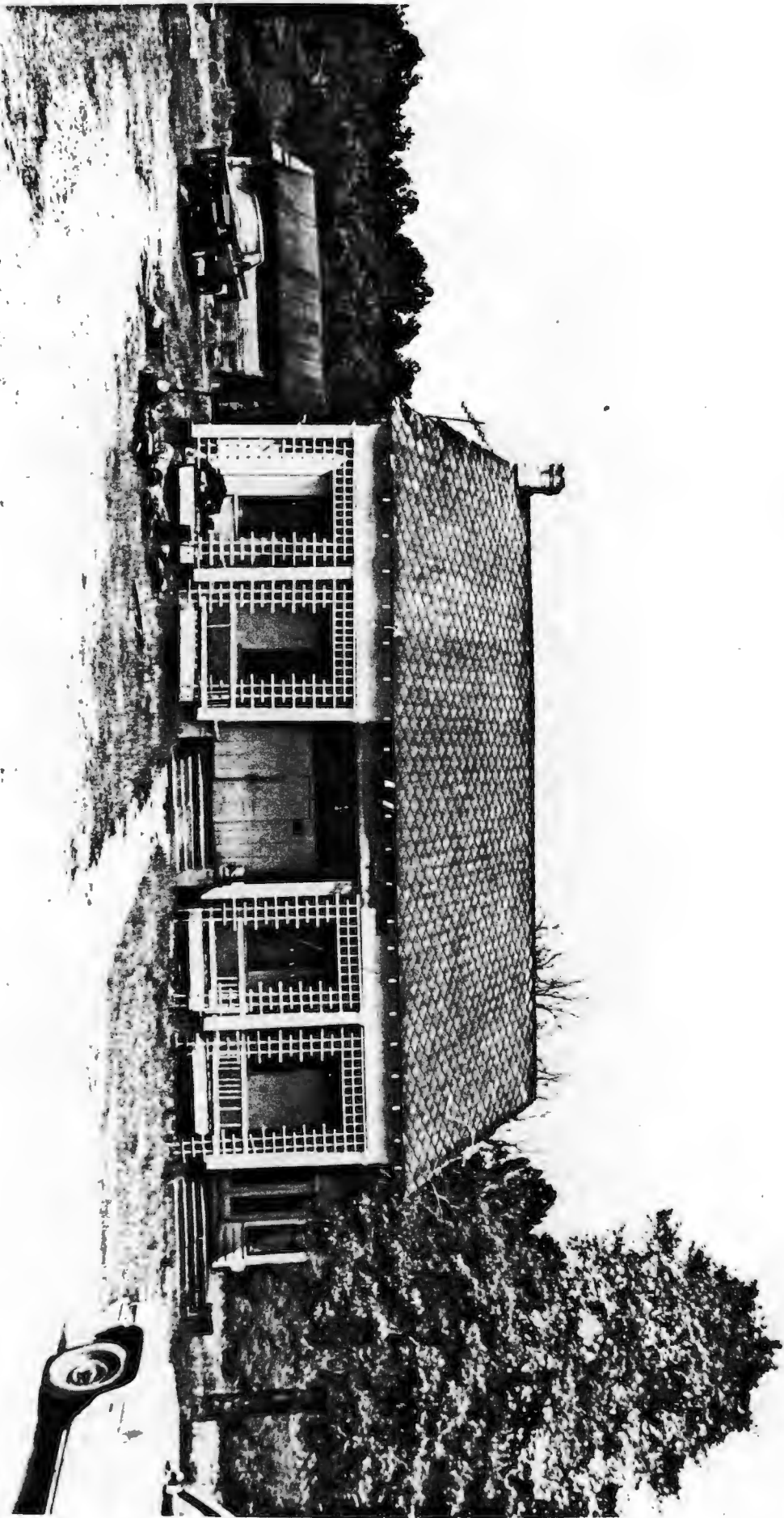
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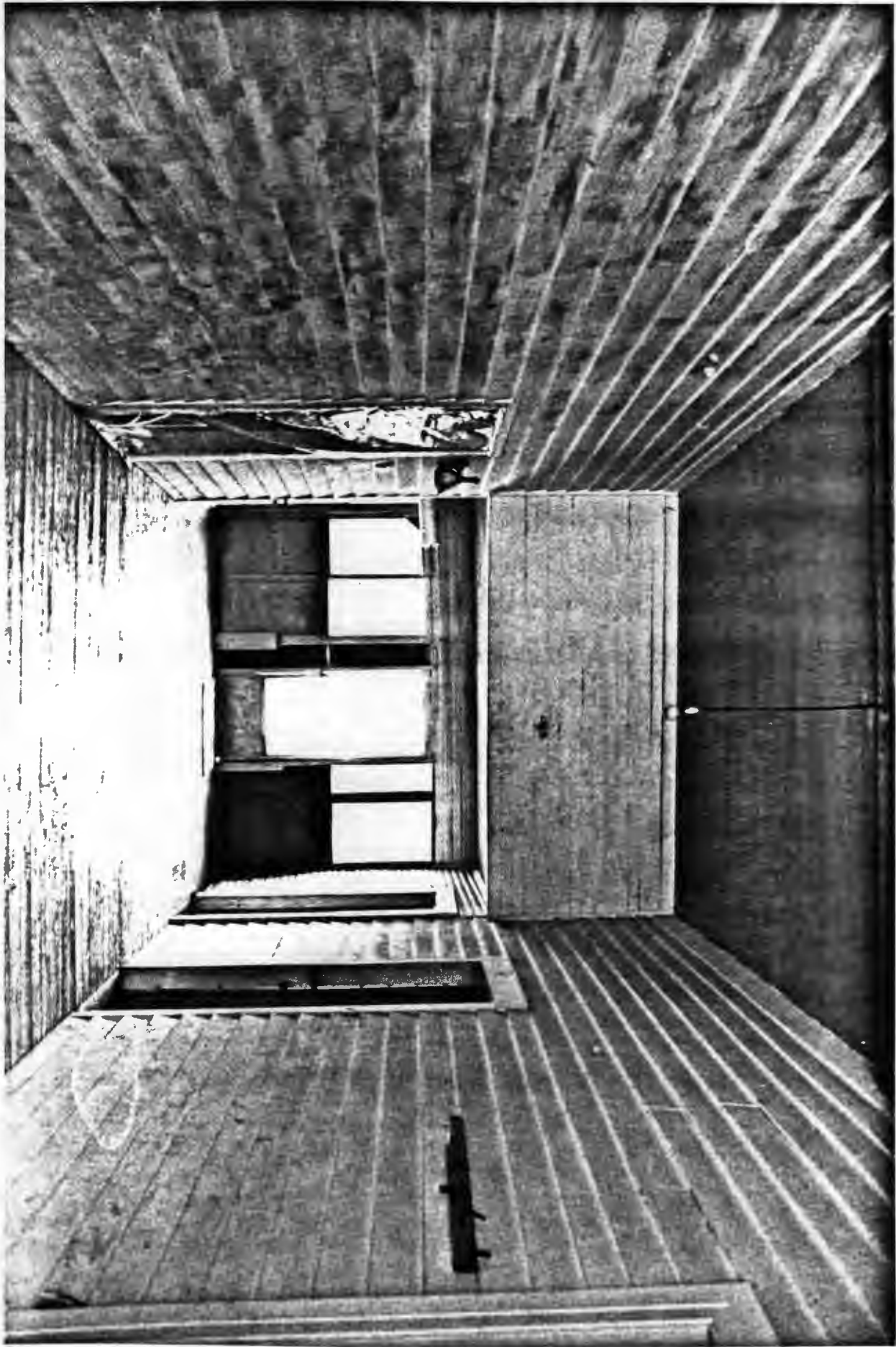
Bibliography

Information supplied by Mamie Ruth Brown Williams, April 1992.

"Mrs. Mamie Smith McCurry, El Dorado's Foremost Woman Oil Operator, Among First to Seek Oil in Union County." *El Dorado Daily News*. June 17, 1941.

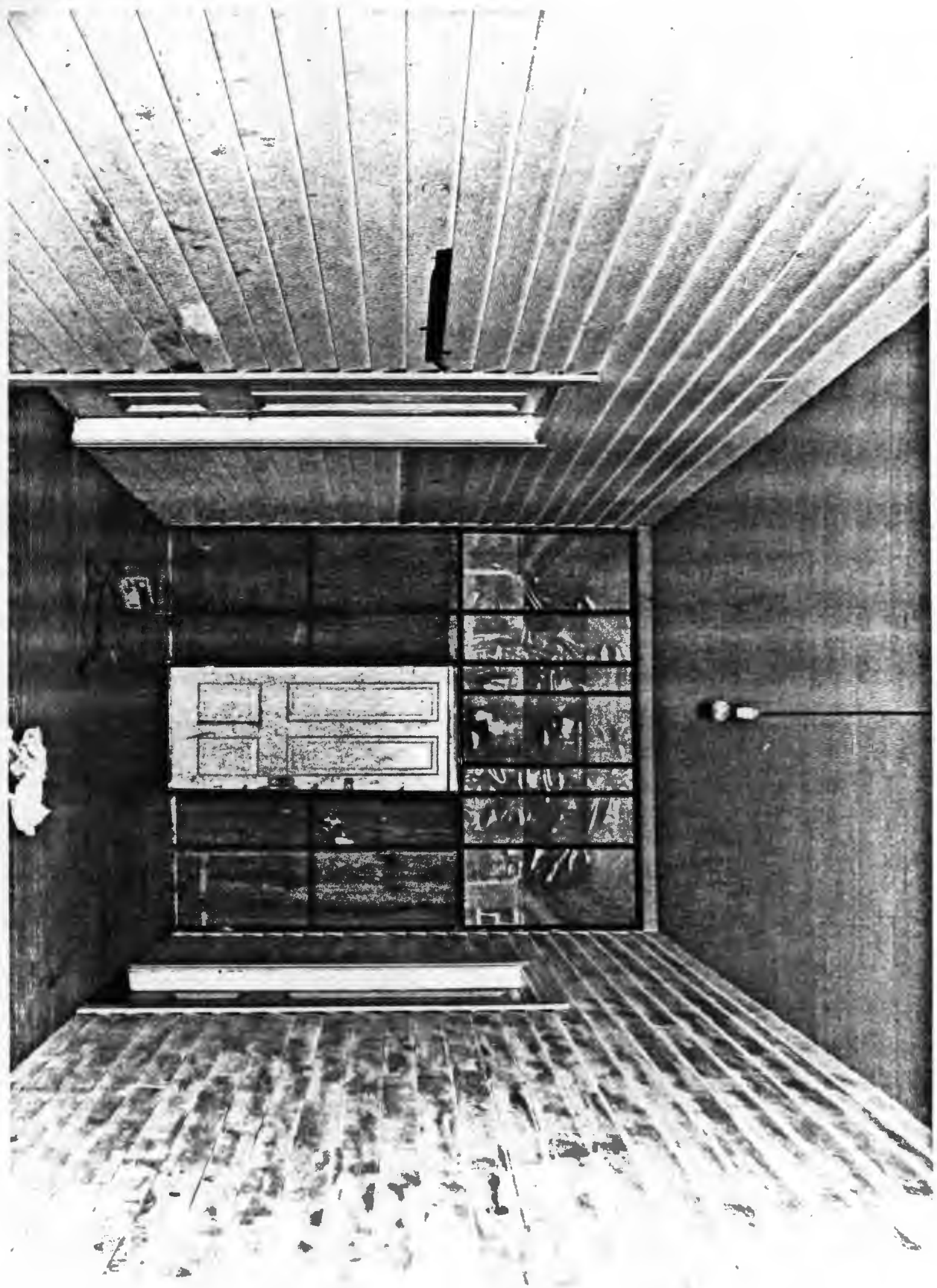


Smith-McCurry House
Union Co., Arkansas
Photographed by Patrick Zollner
April 1992
Negative on file at AHPP
View from the south

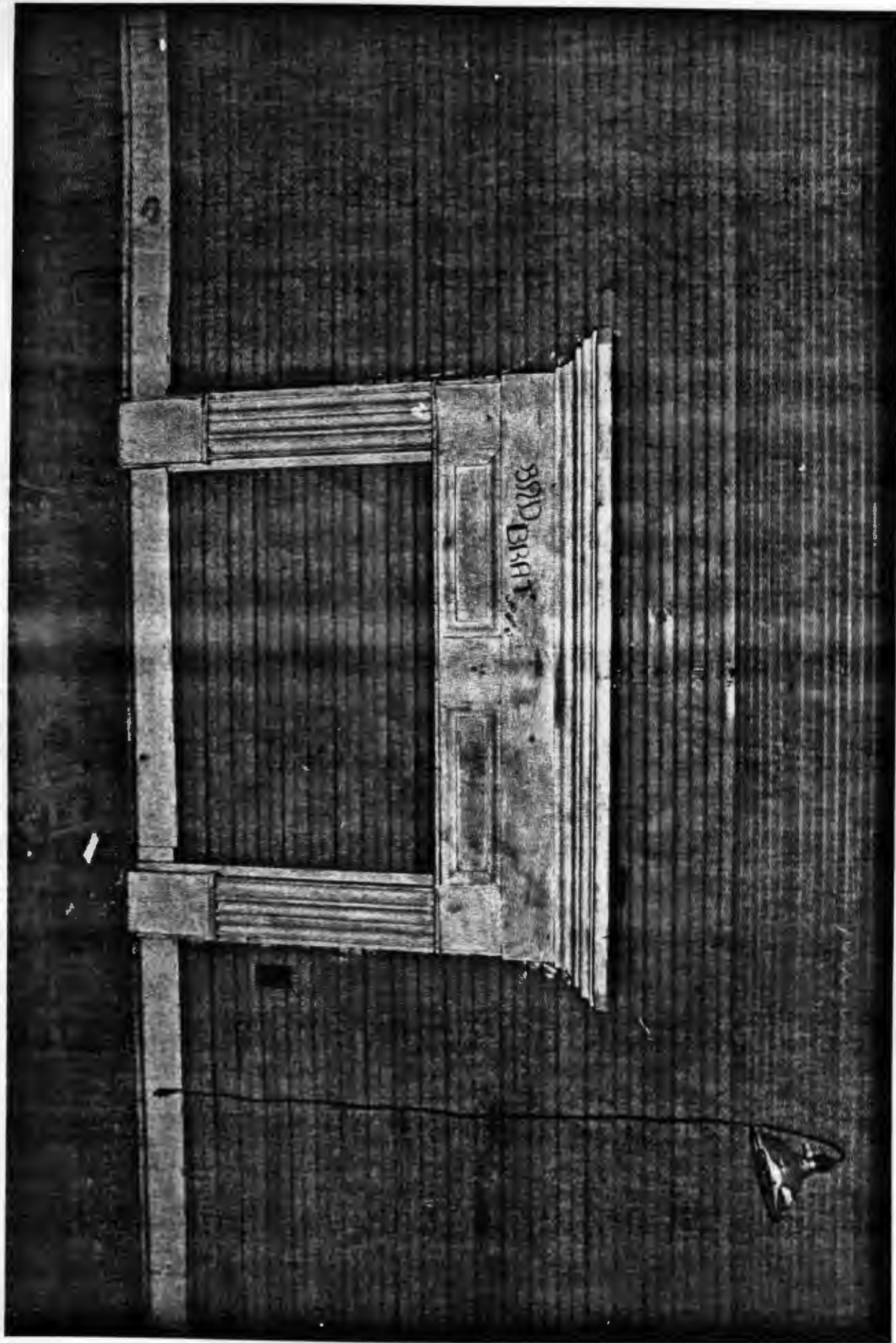


South - Mc Curry House
Union Co., Ar. Kansas
Photographed by Patrick Zollner
April 1992

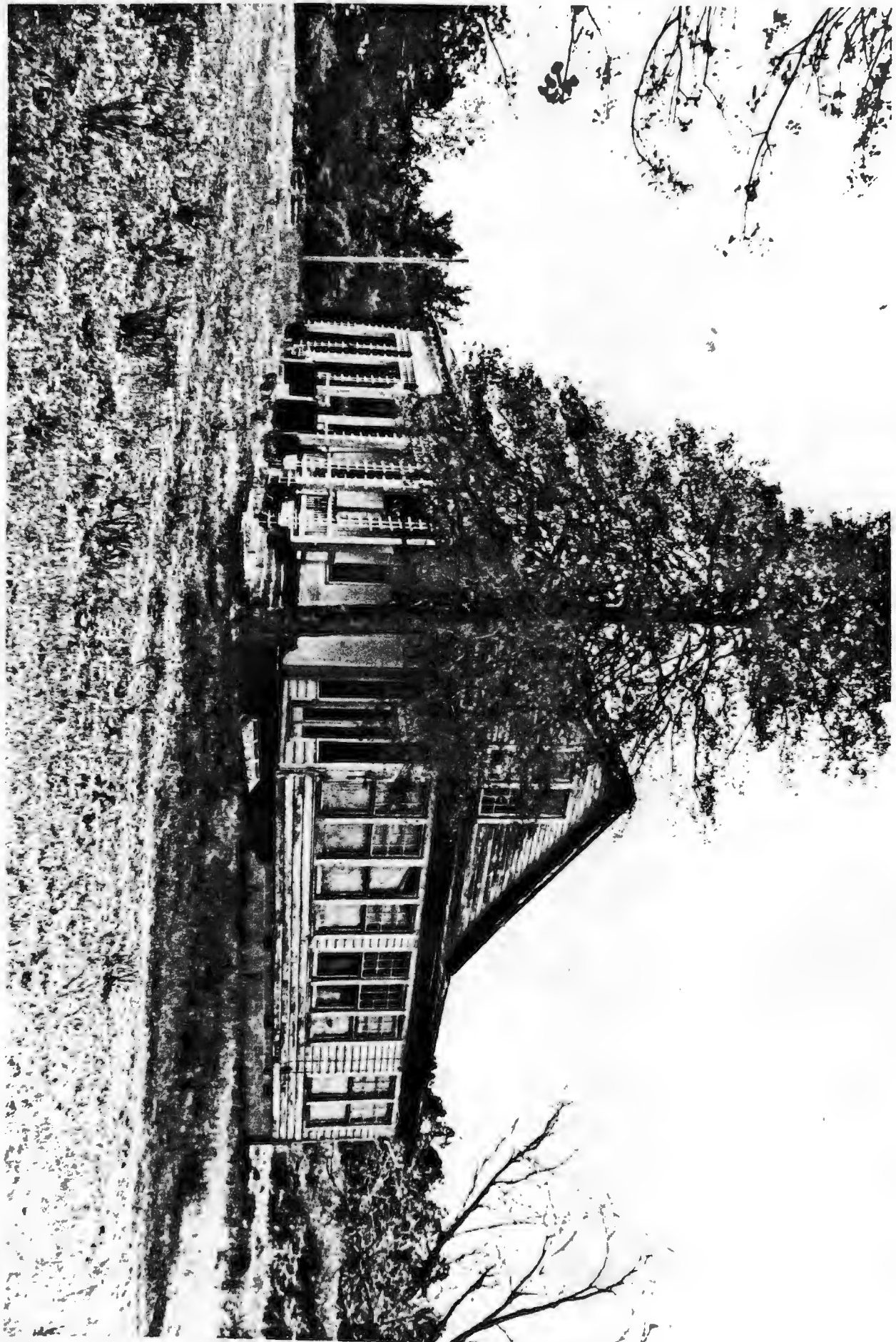
Negative on file at AHPP
View of dogtrot from the south



Smith - McCurry House
Union Co., Arkansas
Photographed by Patrick Zolner
April 1992
Negative on file at AHPP
View of dogtrot from the north



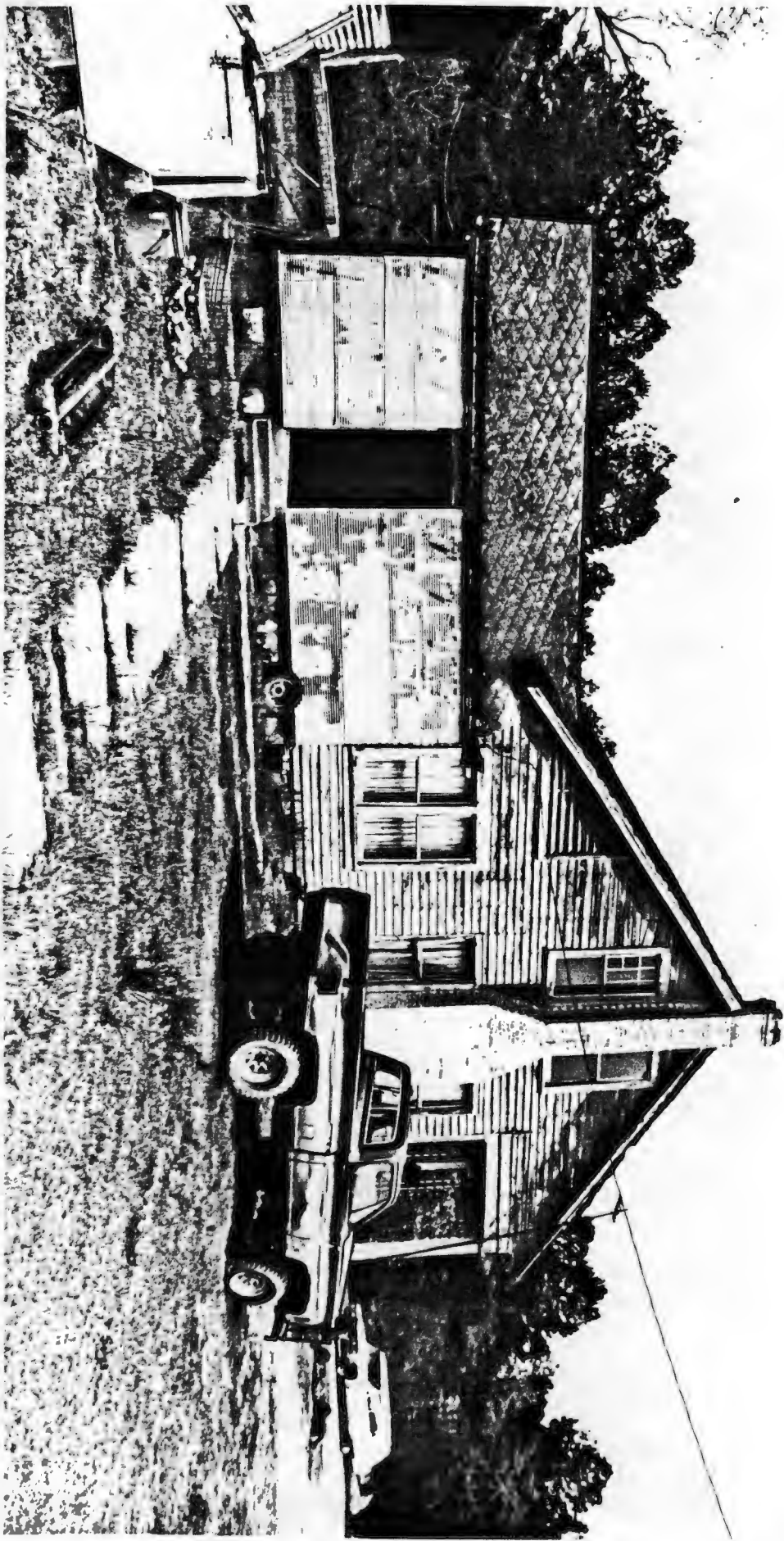
Smith-McCurry House
Union Co., Arkansas
Photographed by Patrick Zollner
April 1992
Negative on file at AHPP
View of upstairs mantel



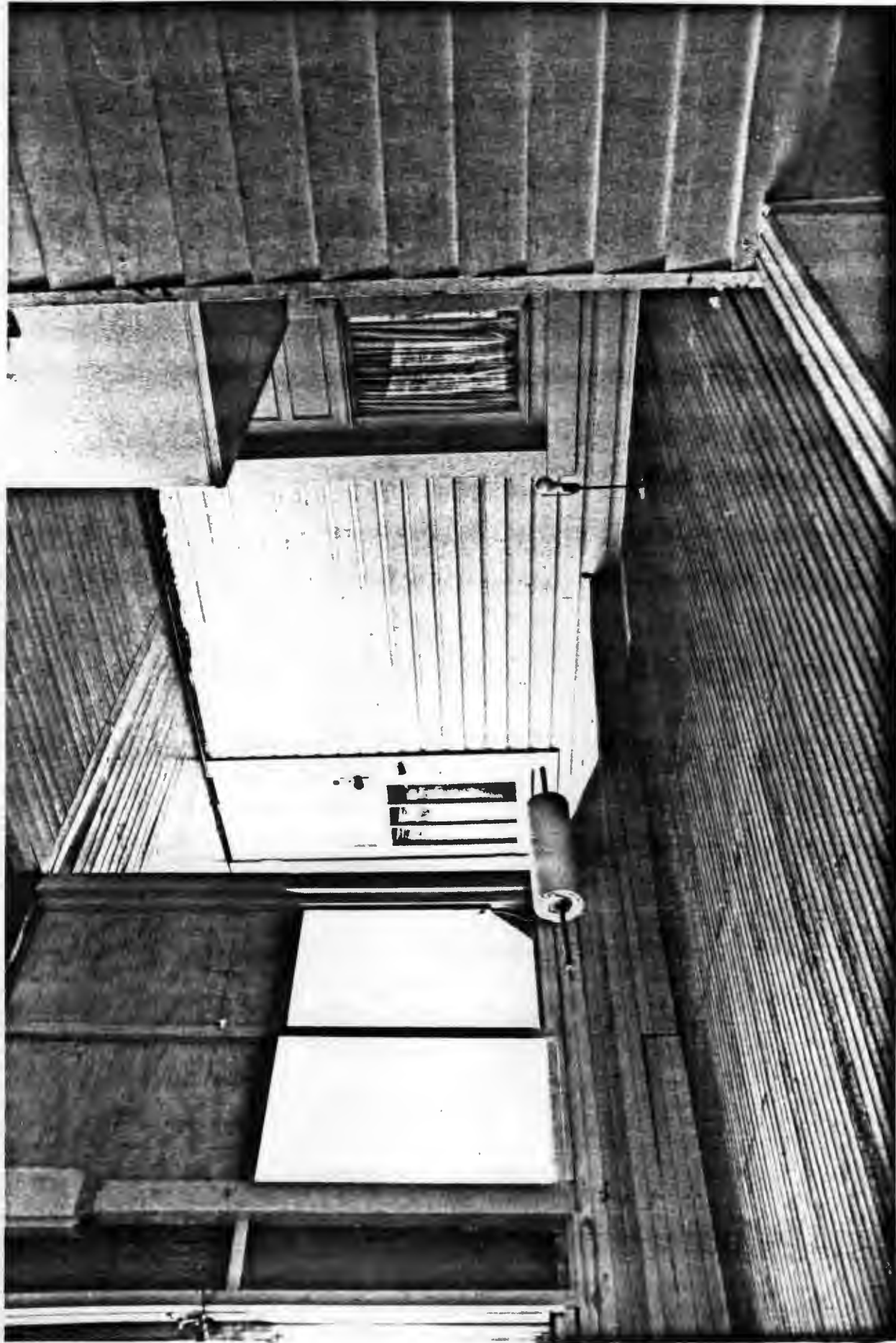
Smith-McCurry House
Union Co., Arkansas
Photographed by Patrick Zolner
April 1992
Negative on file at AHPP
View from the southeast



Smith - McCurry House
Union Co., Arkansas
Photographed by Patrick Zolner
April 1992
Negative on file at AHPP
View from the east



Union - McCurry House
Union Co., Arkansas
Photographed by Patrick Zolher
April 1992
Negative on file at AHPD
View from the west.



Smith-McCurry House
Union Co., Arkansas
Photographed by Patrick Zollner
April 1992
Negative on file at AHPP
View of rear porch