

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NR Listed: 9-12-02

# 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 J. H. McWilliams House

other names/site number Myrtelle's House / UN0178

## 2. Location

street & number 323 West Oak Street

not for publication

city or town El Dorado

vicinity

state Arkansas

code AR

county Union

code 139

zip code 71730

## 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 Matthews  
Signature of certifying official/Title

8/1/02  
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

J. H. McWilliams House  
Name of Property

Union 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.)

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/hotel

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Spanish/Mediterranean Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Ceramic tile

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.
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

1925-26

Significant Dates

1925-26

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Kolben, Hunter and Boyd, architects

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:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal Agency
Local Government
University
Other

Name of repository:

J. H. McWilliams House  
Name of Property

Union County, Arkansas  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of Property 0.34 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 531400 3674500  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_

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 July 31, 2002  
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 Richard H. Mason  
street & number 3737 Calion Road telephone (870)862-5155  
city or town El Dorado state AR zip code 71730

**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

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### SUMMARY

Located at 323 West Oak Street in El Dorado, Arkansas, the J. H. McWilliams House is a two-story buff brick Spanish/Mediterranean influenced house. Built in 1925-26 during the height of the oil boom in South Arkansas, this home is one of the last surviving "oil boom mansions" on Oak Street. Noteworthy features include Batesville limestone capitals, window lintels and sills, brick quoins, and a green Spanish tile roof with a boxed overhanging eave line. Arched transom windows and multiple French doors are featured in most of the first floor living area. The interior arched doorways framed in Red Gum and the Oak staircase are well preserved.

### ELABORATION

The J. H. McWilliams House is a two-story buff brick residence designed in the Spanish/Mediterranean style. The irregular plan is composed of several intersecting hipped roof components, which form a raised square dominating the center of the upper roof. Two chimneys pierce the roofline – one on the front north wall and one on the back south wall. The Ludowici-Celadon dark green glazed imperial Spanish tile roof has a wide eave overhang and pairs of decorative wood brackets situated at the corners help support it except where otherwise noted. The prominent two-story corners of the building are enlivened by a brick quoin pattern. The building rests on a continuous concrete and brick foundation.

### Front Elevation

The north elevation is asymmetrical with two classic fluted steel columns supporting a rectangular tiled porch. The arched wooden single panel door is offset from the center line of the porch columns. The single leafed arched front door is flanked by beveled glass sidelights. The door is oak with massive black hinges and a matching door knocker. Immediately to the right of the front door arch, a small 1'x2' arched leaded glass window lends balance to the façade.

Across the front of the house, six-by-six inch red quarry tile is used to form a classic veranda. The tile patio of square red quarry tiles extends ten feet out from the front and around the east side of the house allowing direct access from the sun parlor and the living room. The windows have limestone sills and lintels under a brick arched transom with a limestone keystone. A 2'6" decorative grillwork is in front of the three sets of French doors. The lower windows are all paned French doors that individually open. Above each set of doors is an arch made of brick with a limestone keystone. This arch encases a paned transom window. Originally, the windows had custom screens to allow for summer ventilation. During the renovation it was determined that the screens should be replaced with glass doors which would still have the same aesthetic effect, but would add safety and heating and cooling conservation to the building.

Centered above the porch within the interior stairwell are three smaller leaded glass windows that light the interior stairway. These windows are 2 ½"x3 ½" and have limestone lintels.

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Originally the home had two concrete driveways running north/south parallel to the house. One driveway was on the east side, which went to a garage/maids quarters in the rear and the other driveway went to a parking area south of the house. After consulting the renovation architect, it was decided to remove both driveways and to add a circle drive in the front of the house. In addition, the west driveway was replaced and a carport was designed to compliment the existing structure.

### East Elevation

The east elevation features an extension of the basic structure to form a columned tile portico with two sets of French doors allowing entry to both the living room and the sun parlor. The sun parlor and the east covered patio are extensions that give the home more livability and style. The sun parlor features five sets of French doors, which give the room an airy outside feeling. The transom windows above all of the sun parlor French doors are paned rectangular fixed windows. On the second floor above the sun parlor there is a 17'x13' open deck. The original occupants of the home used this deck and another on the south side of the house for sleeping decks during the hot South Arkansas summers. After air-conditioning was available, the decks were used for outdoor seating.

### South Elevation

The south elevation features double French doors on either side of the fireplace. These doors lead to the formal dining room. Both of the entryways are enhanced by brick arches capped with limestone keystones. The original walkways leading from the two south entryways have been integrated into the recent patio design while retaining the character of the house.

Centered in the east quarter of the south wall is the back door of the house. This entryway opens into the utility room, which leads into the kitchen. This small room is enhanced by the use of multiple rectangular windows that completely encase the south and west sides of the room. The windowsills and caps are Batesville limestone. The south elevation also features one of the two fireplaces in the house.

The second floor over the utility room is another of the "sleeping porches." This tiled area measures 23'x10' and is enclosed by a 3 ½' tall wrought iron railing. The wrought iron railing was crafted to match the lower window railings.

### West Elevation

The other side or west elevation features a striking grouping of three French doors with arched transoms. The center door is double-leaf and the flanking doors are single-leaf. A small wrought-iron rail further compliments the assemblage. The rest of the fenestration for this elevation is composed of six-over-six windows.

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### Interior

The interior of the house is well planned and charming in its decorations. Arched doorways of varying sizes are found throughout the downstairs, and create appealing views from one room to the next. One of them between the formal dining room and the living room contains an arched transom window. Among the most striking of the decorative details is the dramatic curvilinear staircase that rises from the front entry hall. The curving staircase features iron balusters and an oak railing. A lion-headed fountain is found in the tiled sunroom. The fountain has been restored and the only change is that the water is now recycled – not simply allowed to flow into the gutter. The dining room is detailed with picture frame molding, and a panel of the wall is devoted to a mural of a European country landscape. Highlighting the living room is a delicately carved marble mantelpiece.

The second floor has three bedrooms and a large modernized bath. The details in the section are understated: a telephone nook, wood floors, picture rail moldings and Red Gum doorframes are the entirety of original decoration.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### SUMMARY

The J. H. McWilliams House was built between May of 1925 and March of 1926. It is locally significant under Criterion C by virtue of being a noteworthy example of the Spanish/Mediterranean Revival style of the early twentieth-century. Significant features include a green Ludowici-Celadon tile roof with overhanging eaves, arched transom windows over French doors, and beveled inset glass windows. The lion fountain in the tiled sunroom completes the southern European theme.

### ELABORATION

After the South Arkansas oil boom reached its peak in 1925, the city, which was a sleepy southern town of 2,500, grew to over 35,000. This influx of people and the wealth of the oil boom created a building frenzy in El Dorado. Most of the significant buildings that are in El Dorado today were constructed during this period.

In mid-1924 J. H. McWilliams and his wife, Myrtelle, decided to build their house. The location on Oak Street, only two blocks from the center of the city, was one of the most fashionable neighborhoods in town. Today the J. H. McWilliams House is the last of what was once a row of oil boom mansions.

The house was occupied by the McWilliams family for over 50 years. After Myrtelle died in the early 1970s, the house gradually fell into a state of disrepair and was finally abandoned as living quarters in the mid-1990s. From 1970 until 2000 the house served as a restaurant, bakery, bicycle shop, and boarding house.

In 2000 the house and a much larger tract of land was purchased by First Baptist Church. After reviewing the structure of the house, the church decided to tear it down and make a parking lot. The present owner Richard H. Mason is of that church. After he and his wife, Vertis, walked through the house, they contracted Tommy Jameson, a restoration architect from Little Rock, to evaluate the house. The present owners believed the house had wonderful potential and the problems were mainly cosmetic. Tommy agreed with them and they then negotiated with the church to let them purchase the house. The church agreed and renovations started during the spring of 2000. Work on the McWilliams House was finished shortly before Thanksgiving of the same year.

### Significance

The McWilliams House is significant under Criterion C by virtue of being a locally noteworthy residential example of the Spanish/Mediterranean Revival style of the early twentieth-century. Significance features include a green Ludowici-Celadon tile roof with overhanging eaves, arched transom windows over French doors, and beveled inset glass windows. The lion fountain in the tiled sunroom completes the southern European theme.



J. H. McWilliams House

Name of Property

Union County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### Bibliography

Information supplied by Richard H. Mason .

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of El Dorado, 1929.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### Verbal Boundary Description

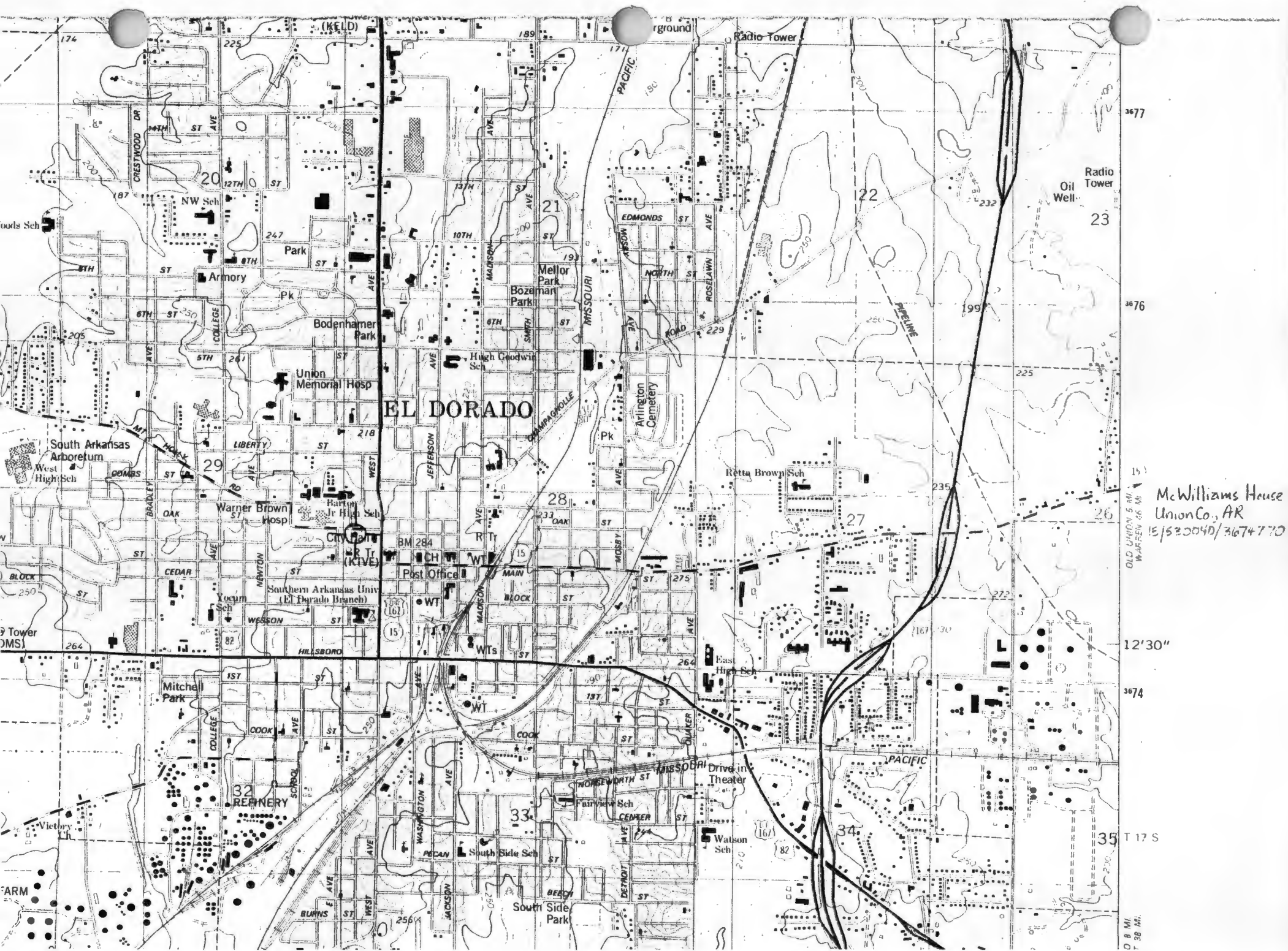
Parts of Lots 74 and 75, Johnston Subdivision, City of El Dorado, Union County, Arkansas.

SAID LOTS MAY BE MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

Beginning at the Northeast corner of Lot 75; thence run South  $01^{\circ}17'56''$  East 116.30 feet along the East line of Lot 75 to a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " iron pipe; thence leaving said East line South  $89^{\circ}22'55''$  West 127.34 feet to a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " iron pipe; thence north  $01^{\circ}17'56''$  West 116.30 feet to a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " iron pipe on the North line of Lots 74 and 75; thence North  $89^{\circ}22'55''$  East 127.34 feet along said North line to the Point of Beginning, containing 0.34 acres more or less.

### Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the J. H. McWilliams House.



**EL DORADO**

McWilliams House  
Union Co., AR  
151520040/3674770

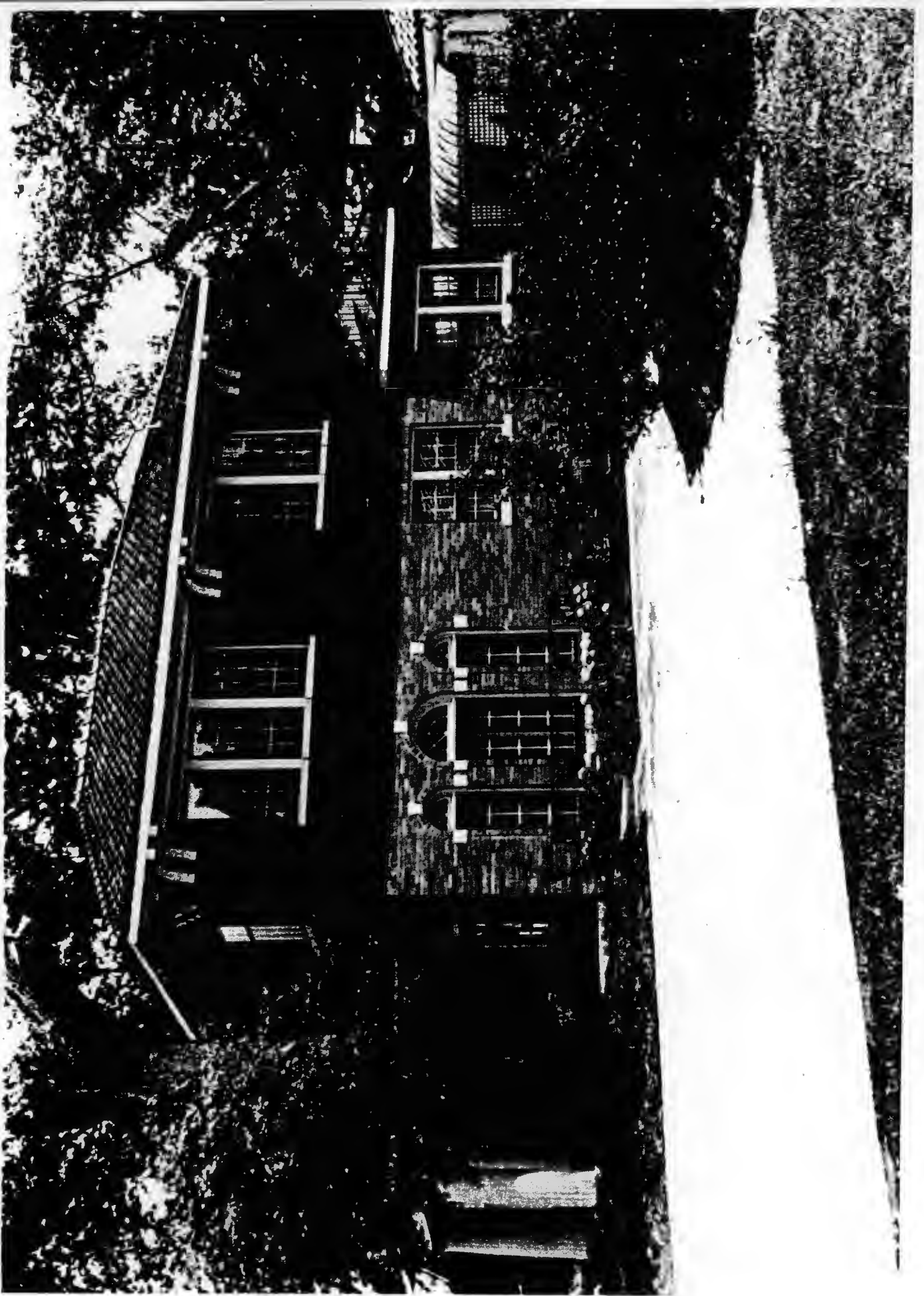
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WARREN 06 80

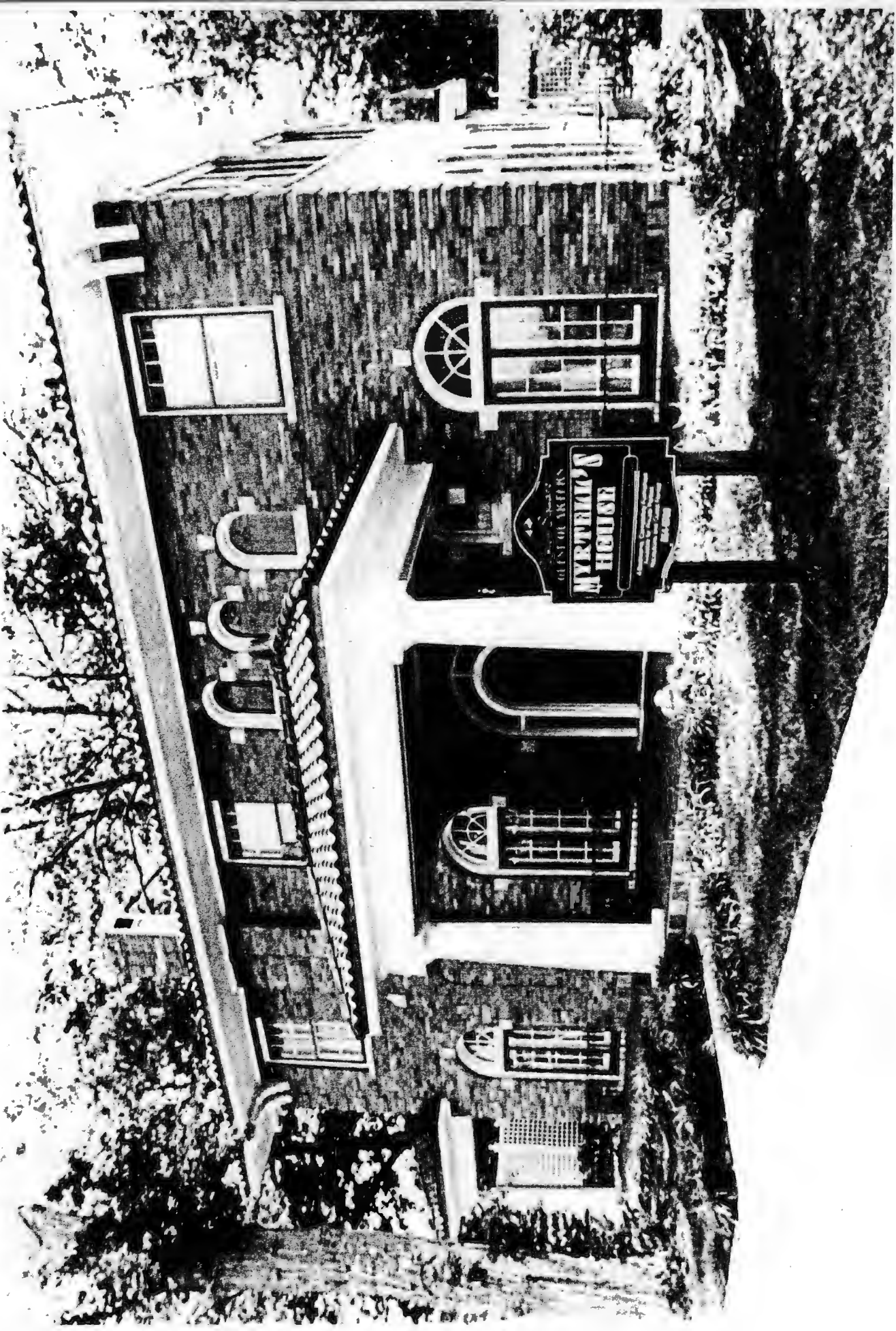
12'30"

3674

T 17 S

O 8 MI.  
T 38 MI.





Myrrhon House

GUEST QUARTERS  
MYRRHON HOUSE  
1914

