

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Van Buren Co. - Damascus
Chrisco, Melvin, House
237 Alvin Brown Rd.
NR 9/28/05

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 Chrisco, Melvin, House
other names/site number VB0161

2. Location

street & number 237 Alvin Brown Road not for publication
city or town Damascus vicinity
state Arkansas code AR county Van Buren code 141 zip code 72039

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.)

Robert Maeder 7/28/05
Signature of certifying official/Title 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

Chrisco, Melvin, House

Name of Property

Van Buren 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.)

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.)

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)

Late 19th & Early 20th Century American Movements: Craftsman

Other: Minimal Traditional

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls STONE: Sandstone

roof ASPHALT

other BRICK

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

1947

Significant Dates

1947

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Silas Owens, Sr., mason

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: _____

Chrisco, Melvin, House
Name of Property

Van Buren County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>552429</u>	<u>3914061</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 Beth Wiedower
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date May 19, 2005
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone 501/324-9880
city or town Little Rock state Arkansas 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 Doyce Brown
street & number 237 Alvin Brown Road telephone 501/355-7300
city or town Damascus state Arkansas zip code 72039

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 Melvin Chrisco House constructed in Damascus in 1947 is an example of the Minimal Traditional-influenced Mixed Masonry style executed by Silas Owens, Sr. The Mixed Masonry one-story structure is characteristic of Owens' herringbone pattern created from cut sandstone complemented by extensive cream brick detailing surrounding doors and windows and exhibits Craftsman architectural details in keeping with the era in which it was constructed.

ELABORATION

The front, eastern façade of the Melvin Crisco House is dominated by a double-arched, gabled porch at the northeast corner, with both arches lined with cream brick. Beneath the apex of the front-facing gable, a square louver is surrounded on three sides with Owens' three-three pattern of cream bricks resting on a brick ledge forming the fourth side of the square. Under the porch, a pair of double-hung two-over-two aluminum replacement windows is located to the north of the structure. Proceeding south, the main entrance to the house is via a single wood front door with a diamond-shaped window protected by a three-part aluminum storm door. Beyond the front door is an additional wood door. The front porch features vernacular folk art in the marbles set in concrete around the name of the original owner, Melvin Chrisco. On the southeast corner of the front façade is another pair of double-hung two-over-two aluminum replacement windows, again outlined in cream brick with the lower edge forming a brick window ledge. The gabled front porch joins the house at a larger front-facing gable covering the southern window pair.

The southern elevation is fenestrated east to west by two pairs of double-hung, two-over-two windows replicating the eastern façade, followed by a smaller single two-over-two, double-hung window. A rear room was added after the initial construction which features a matching double-hung, two-over-two window set in the vertical board-sided addition. The roofline features a cross-cut gable protruding from the hipped roof over the second pair of windows in the original structure. Above this pair of windows is a rectangular louver surrounded by cream brick detailing near the peak of the gable. Owens' trademark herringbone pattern created in the intricately cut and laid rock is visible on the southern wall to the west of the second pair of windows.

The rear, western elevation consists of a vertical board-sided rear room on a concrete block foundation. Two single-hung, two-over-two aluminum replacement windows flank the rear elevation which is capped by the hipped roof of the house.

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From west to east, the northern elevation of the house is partially shielded by a free-standing carport and storage shed addition to the property. The carport/shed structure is considered non-contributing due to its dropped ceiling, gabled end, and vertical board siding. A secondary single-leaf entrance to the house is located at the western corner of the northern wall, followed by a single-hung, two-over-two window surrounded by cream brick. A cross gable intersects the hipped roof at mid-point on the northern elevation under which two pairs of two-over-two, double-hung aluminum replacement windows exist. A rectangular louver, identical to that on the south elevation, is in the apex of the cross gable on the northern wall. The front porch wraps around from the front façade to the northern elevation featuring a cream-brick-lined arch that provides access to the front porch and main entrance to the house. Most notable about the northern elevation is the distinct herringbone pattern created from sandstone rocks that is a trademark of the masonry of Silas Owens, Sr.

Integrity

The Melvin Chrisco House in Damascus is a good example of Silas Owens, Sr.'s, trademark herringbone pattern created on his Mixed Masonry structures. Additionally, the Chrisco House retains its integrity due to the lack of alteration or visible additions. Original fenestration design remains, as well as the characteristic arched arcade utilized frequently by Owens in his construction.

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Section number 8 Page 1

Criterion C: Architecture, Local Significance

SUMMARY

The Melvin Chrisco House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C with local significance as a fine example of a Mixed Masonry residential structure built in the Minimal Traditional style by Silas Owens, Sr., an African-American mason in rural Van Buren County. The house, located in Damascus, was built in 1947 and exhibits several distinctive characteristics of the craftsmanship of Silas Owens, Sr. Cut sandstone interspersed with cream-colored brick trim surrounding doors, windows, and on chimneys are hallmarks of Owens' work, as well as arched arcades and a rough herringbone pattern within the laid stone. The Melvin Chrisco House is being nominated 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

Melvin Chrisco commissioned the construction of a Mixed Masonry house in rural Van Buren County in 1947. Silas Owens, Sr., was hired to build the residence in the Minimal Traditional style with Craftsman architectural detailing. When the cast concrete front porch was poured, Chrisco etched his name into the wet concrete with the date August 29, 1947.

Melvin Chrisco sold the house to Joe Brown of Damascus before moving from Arkansas to California. Joe Brown sold it to his brother, Doyce Brown. Mr. Brown and his family have occupied the house since the late 1940s. Upon moving in, according to Doyce Brown, the house had no running water. Plumbing and an interior bathroom were the first additions made to house after the Brown's acquired it from Chrisco. The rear room addition was built to house the bathroom and provide space for Brown's growing family.

In the 1970s, Doyce Brown replaced the original windows with aluminum-framed windows, but did not alter the fenestration patterns constructed by Silas Owens, Sr. Mr. Brown reports that the carport was extant when he purchased the house from Melvin Chrisco. He has since added a shed roof storage room onto the rear of the carport.

Doyce Brown was a dairy farmer until he retired. Brown's Dairy in Damascus is still a family-run business, operated by Mr. Brown's son, Robert Brown. The house is set to pass onto Robert when he retires from the dairy. The Brown's hope to keep the Melvin Chrisco House in their family into the future.

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Statement of Significance

The Melvin Chrisco House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** with **local significance** as a good example of Mixed Masonry constructed by Central Arkansas craftsman Silas Owens, Sr., in Van Buren County. The rural location of the structure on an auxiliary road in Damascus contributes to the overall significance of the structure which has not been affected by sprawl or shifting patterns of land use. The superb craftsmanship demonstrated in the stone coursing and arched arcade is complemented by the folk art detailing of glass marbled set in the front façade's mortar. The Melvin Chrisco House is being nominated under the multiple property context, "A Storm Couldn't Tear Them Down: The Mixed Masonry Buildings of Silas Owens, Sr., 1938-1955."

Chrisco, Melvin, House
Name of Property

Van Buren County, Arkansas
County and State

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Bibliography

Brown, Doyce. Damascus, Arkansas. Current owner of Melvin Chrisco House.
Telephone interview with author, 19 May 2005.

Brown, Robert and Judy. Damascus, Arkansas. Son and daughter-in-law of Doyce
Brown. Telephone interview with author, 31 May 2005.

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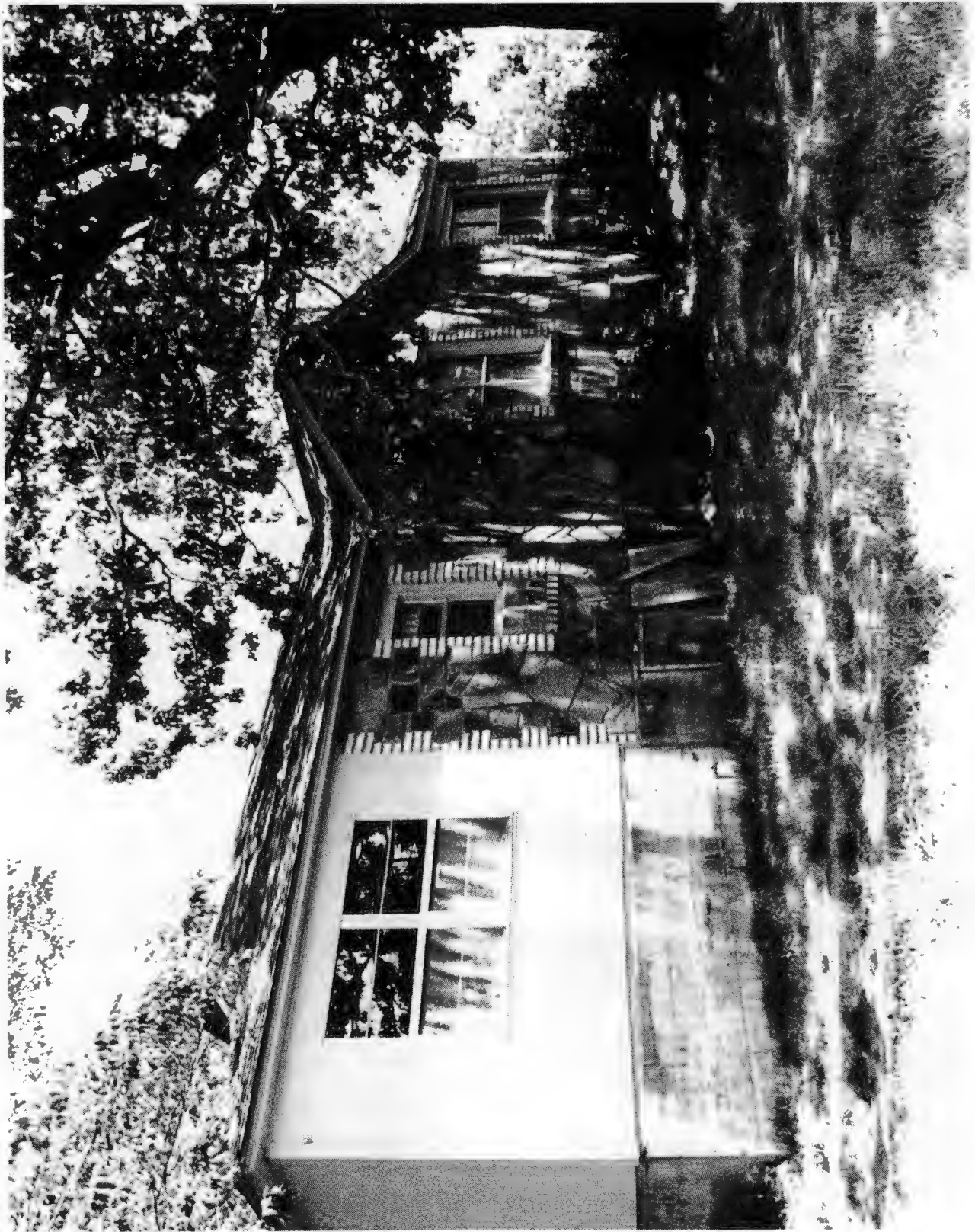
Verbal Boundary Description

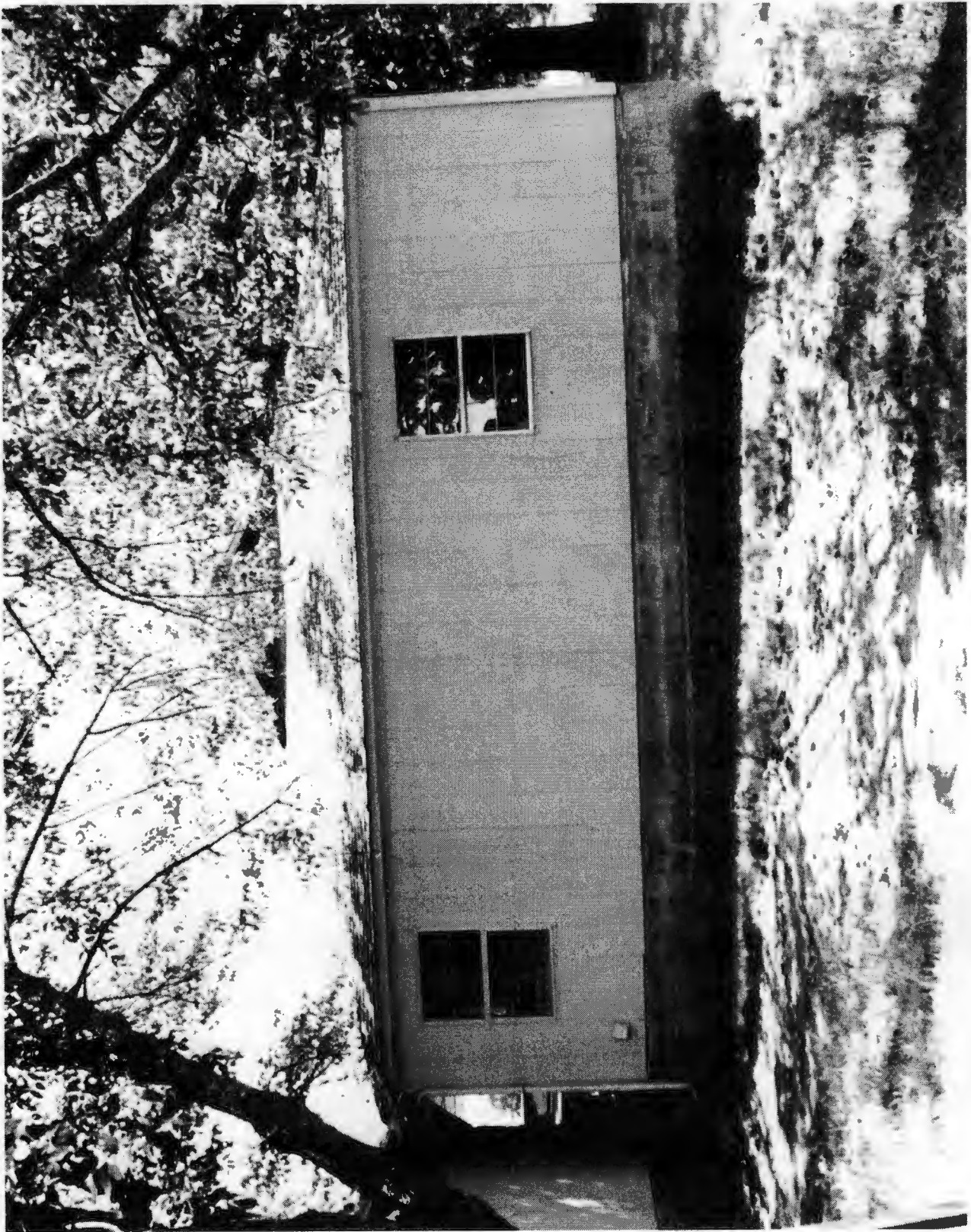
From the southwest corner of the intersection of Arkansas Highway 285 and Jack Hall Road, proceed west approximately 1,500 feet to the intersection of Highway 285 and Alvin Brown Road, the point of beginning. From the point of beginning, continue 413 feet south, then 83 feet westerly. From the southwest corner of the property, advance north 413 feet, then 83 feet easterly back to the point of beginning at the intersection of Highway 285 and Alvin Brown Road.

Verbal Boundary Justification

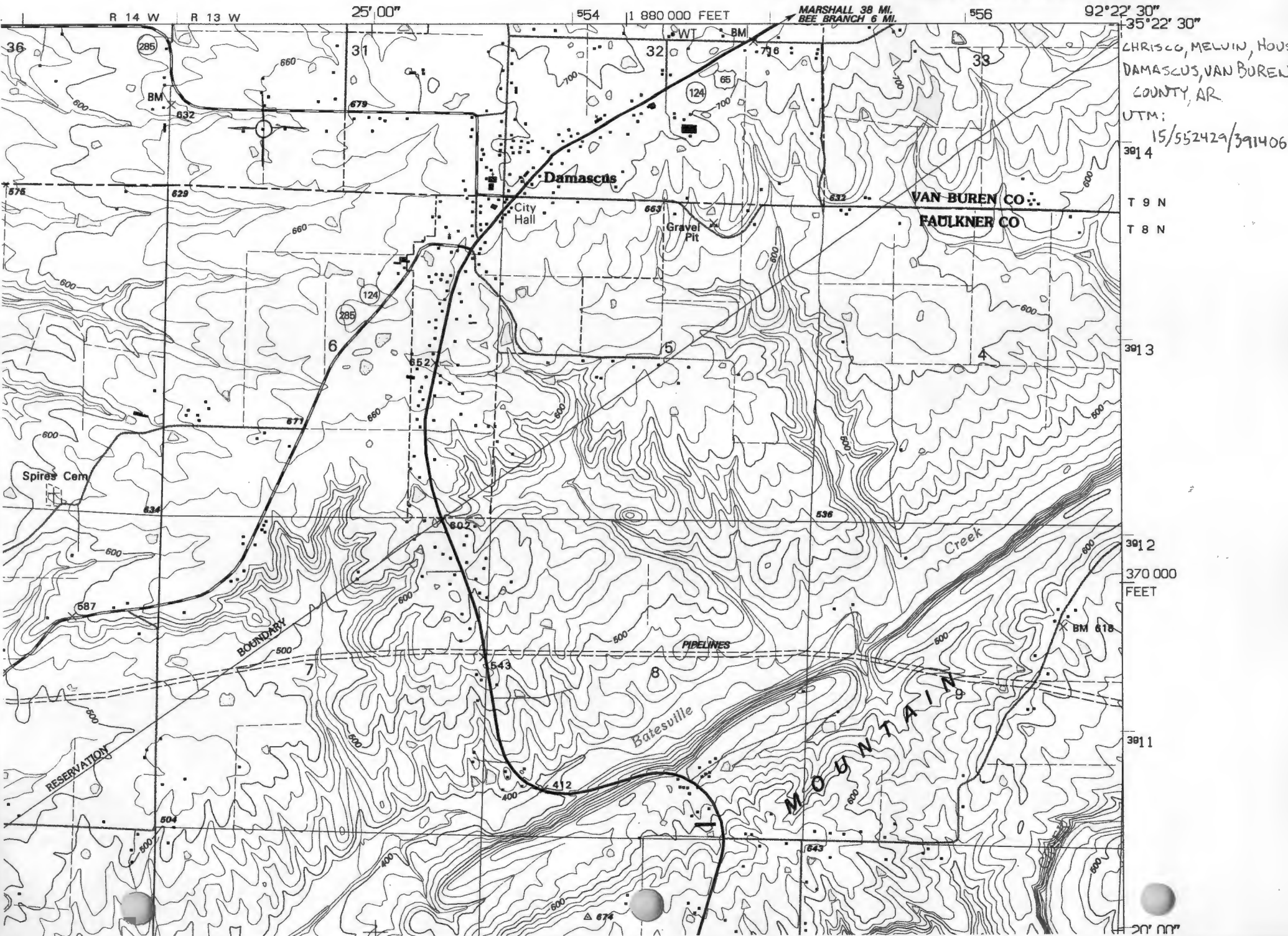
The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Melvin Chrisco House.











CHRISCO, MELVIN, HOUSE
 DAMASCUS, VAN BUREN
 COUNTY, AR

UTM:
 15/552429/3914061

T 9 N
 T 8 N

391 3

391 2
 370 000
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391 1

20' 00"