

NR listed 10/16/95

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Taylor Log House and Site

other name/site number: DR0100/3DR26

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2. Location

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street & number: State Highway 138

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Winchester

vicinity: X

state: AR county: Drew

code: AR 043

zip code: 71677

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u>2</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>3</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. Slater _____ 9-7-95
Signature of certifying official 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.

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:

Other

Other Description: Dog-trot _____

Materials: foundation Brick roof Metal
walls Log/weatherboard other Brick chimneys

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: Locally _____.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C, D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE
AGRICULTURE
ARCHEOLOGY/HISTORIC -
NON-ABORIGINAL

Period(s) of Significance: 1846-1943 _____

Significant Dates: 1846 _____

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: Euro-American _____

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:

- X State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
X Other -- Specify Repository: Arkansas Archeological Survey

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property: Approximately 4

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

Table with 4 columns: A, B, C, D. Row 1: 15, 634170, 3737370, B. Row 2: C, D.

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the southern edge of Bayou Bartholomew with a perpendicular line running parallel with the western elevation of the house and located approximately 50 feet to the west thereof, proceed southerly along said line for a distance of 400 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel with the house's southern elevation; thence proceed easterly along said line for a distance of approximately 400 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel with the building's eastern elevation; thence proceed northerly along said line for a distance of approximately 400 feet to its intersection with the southern edge of Bayou Bartholomew; thence proceed westerly along said line to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes all the property associated with the original residence that retains its integrity, including all the known archeological features for which the property is considered historically significant and which may reveal further information about the historic occupation of this site.

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

Name/Title: Kenneth Story, Architectural Historian
Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 08/31/95
Street & Number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500 Telephone: (501) 324-9880
City or Town: Little Rock State: AR Zip: 72201

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Summary

Located approximately two-and-one-half miles west of Winchester, between State Highway 138 and Bayou Bartholomew, the Taylor Log House and Site consists of an historic building and cemetery surrounded by a plantation farmstead site that featured a number of associated outbuildings and designed landscape features (now deteriorated or gone) dating from its entire period of significance, 1846-1943.

Elaboration

The Taylor Log House and Site consists of two standing resources -- the antebellum cypress log dog-trot residence and the Taylor family cemetery located just to the south -- and the surrounding site that contains such historic built archeological features as a brick cellar, a cistern, a driven well, and the brick bases for the c. 1880 front and rear porch piers. Oral history, extant physical evidence (both above and below ground) and photographic evidence indicate that during this property's period of significance -- 1846-1943 -- there also existed upon this site such other resources as a wood shed and smokehouse, a dog yard, a combination feed house and car shed, a hog pen, an outhouse, a garden surrounded by a pole fence, a chicken house and yard, a barn, a bell tower, another car shed, various farm and public roads (including that which ran past this property to the historic ford across Bayou Bartholomew to the north) and even a tree swing, in addition to the historic front porch, and rear kitchen ell and porch on the dog-trot that has since been removed.

The house is a two-story, cypress log dog-trot residence. It features the classic dog-trot floor plan, with the central open passageway being flanked by two single pens, all of which is covered by a single gable roof the extends the full length of the building without interruption (the central passageway is open on the first floor only, and separates the two-story log pens to either side with a wooden plank deck; it is enclosed on the second story). Single-leaf, central entrances lead from the passageway into each pen, and a wooden staircase, placed against the passageway wall of the western pen, provides access to the second story hallway. Two large brick chimneys rise through the gable peak at each end of the building. The standing-seam metal roof and the weatherboarded, square-notched log walls rest upon brick piers.

The northern and southern elevations of the log building are very similar. Each is anchored by the broad, open passageway on the first storey that is flanked by two symmetrically-placed, tall window openings in each of the log walls, the only exception being the first-storey, single-leaf entrance in the southern wall of the western pen. The second story is fenestrated with window

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openings placed directly above those below and a smaller central window above the passageway. The eastern and western elevations are blank except for the central brick chimney.

As it currently appears, there is little exterior detail of note. The exterior door and window trim is flat, and the sash is two-over-two on the first floor and six-over-six on the second floor. The square-notching and the hewing marks on the logs constitute the only other detail.

Each single pen is fenestrated with two windows on each side wall and heated with a large fireplace in the center of the end wall. Each of the second story rooms mirrors exactly the floor plan of the room below, and is likewise finished out with a flat wooden ceiling. The gable end fireplaces on the second floor have been fitted with flues to receive ductwork from wood stoves though they were originally small, wood-burning brick fireplaces. The upper rooms also feature the same window configuration as the rooms below. In fact, the only difference between the upper and lower floor plans is the enclosed upper hallway, which also contains a closet at its southern end.

There have been many changes to the house over time. The archeological investigation that has occurred around the house has substantiated the local oral tradition which holds that it was moved back from Bayou Bartholomew at least once (c. 1880). It was probably at that time that the original chimneys were removed and rebuilt with new brick. Though it is known that the porches on the house after c. 1880 were substantially rebuilt at the same time as the chimneys (as the remnants of the brick piers found on either side of the building and the chimneys were constructed of the same brick), it is not yet known whether or not the house had such porches on its original site. Remnants of square nails and furring strips on the exterior logs support the conclusion that the house was probably weatherboarded relatively soon after its construction, though the current weatherboarding on the house dates from significantly later. A substantial new kitchen ell and porch was added to the southern wall of the western pen at this same time, and was removed at some point in the relatively recent past, probably at the same time that the large tractor sheds were added (this section was removed and moved approximately one mile away for conversion into a tenant family residence, which it remains today). Ascertaining a firm date on the staircase within the passageway is more problematic. The vertical beaded board on the outside probably dates from the early twentieth century; however, hand-written script on the backs of the stair risers beneath the stairs (the word "Talliterre" and the initials "T" and "J A T") appears to be much earlier. It is clear that parts of it were either added or rebuilt, with other parts being original or at least historic, but the exact dates of these changes remain unknown.

Inside, what appears to be an original Greek Revival mantelpiece remains in the eastern pen on the first floor, but that in the western pen is a handsome, high-style Italianate mantelpiece that

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is stylistically quite different. The interior door and window facing trim throughout the building - upstairs and down -- is also of the Italianate style and resembles that of other Italianate structures in the state. Even the paint color on the trim is the grayish-green that was popular among Italianate designs. This trim is almost certainly a replacement as the walls above the first-storey pen entrances in the passageway contain voids directly above the side jambs that featured decorative corner blocks originally, but which are now filled with flat wood scraps (it should be noted that this door trim facing into the passageway is actually flat and unadorned, resembling that around the other exterior windows and doors; it probably dates from the early twentieth century at the earliest). The second-storey windows are six-over-six wood sash and, along with the surrounding interior wood trim, are probably original (based upon the discovery of a pre-1850 wood screw in one of the interior second storey door jambs). The first-storey windows are two-over-two wood sash -- a sash configuration that was also popular for Italianate buildings -- and doubtless installed at the same time as the other Italianate style details. Finally, the large modern tractor sheds were attached to the northern and southern elevations c. 1950. It should be noted, however, that in spite of their visual unattractiveness they are largely responsible for the preservation of the log structure as they have largely protected the exposed log walls from the elements for the past forty years.

The cemetery includes a total of six burials, all members of John Martin Taylor's family and including his own grave. Three of the headstones are relatively elaborate and apparently constructed of marble. The others are more simple. The earliest death date is 1852; it appears on a child's grave for Franklin Robertson Taylor, one of John and Mary's sons. The headstone for John Taylor's wife Mary has been stolen.

As noted above, recent historical and archeological investigation has produced evidence of several associated resources surrounding the house and cemetery. These resources -- and the information they may reveal -- are included within the boundary of the nomination. However, it should also be noted that both oral and written documentation survives which strongly suggests that the total site may be considerably larger than the area included within this boundary. Further investigation may substantiate this and necessitate enlarging these boundaries.

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1**Summary** Criteria C and D, local significance

The Taylor Log House (constructed by 1846) and its surrounding plantation and farmstead site is of statewide significance under Criteria C and D. It is eligible under Criterion C as the best known example in Arkansas's lower Delta region of an intact two-story log dog-trot residence, its alterations notwithstanding. Its square-notched, cypress log construction is intact throughout and the open breezeway on the first floor remains open. It is also eligible under Criterion D by virtue of the surrounding site's potential to reveal further information about the European occupation of the site -- possibly dating as early as 1819 -- but certainly dating from 1846, and extending through the late nineteenth century and into the first half of the twentieth century. The archeological investigation that occurred during the summers of 1991 and 1992 -- the first archeological fieldwork at an antebellum plantation headquarters in Arkansas -- produced sufficient preliminary data to support the assertion that further investigations could answer a number of important questions about the site's entire period of historic occupation and the various nineteenth and twentieth century cultural contexts of which it was a part.

Elaboration*A. General History and Architecture*

John Martin Taylor was born in Winchester, Kentucky on July 23, 1819. Apparently his family was fairly well-to-do, as by the time of his marriage in 1843 to Mary Elizabeth Robertson (the daughter of Martha Goodloe Robertson Arnold, a family relative by marriage) he was a practicing medical physician with large land holdings and a great number of slaves. He and his new bride began enlarging their agricultural land holdings in both his native Kentucky and Arkansas, and soon established homes in both places. He built a palatial mansion near the banks of the Kentucky River in Westport, Oldham County, Kentucky, that he named Mauvilla. A photograph of Mauvilla (taken in 1900) supports many of the traditional accounts of the building's opulence and style. It is a large Italianate building, complete with four-sided raised cupola and massive Classical portico; it must have been one of the finest residences along the Ohio River when it was built.

At about the same time Dr. Taylor also built a "plantation home" on the southern bank of Bayou Bartholomew in rural Drew County, Arkansas upon land he purchased from his wife's stepfather, Peter G. Rives (by some accounts Rives had settled on this land as early as 1819 and built a log residence there). The dendrochronology performed on the fourteen log corings taken from the Taylor Log House in 1991 substantiate the 1846 construction date attributed to the

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building by the local folklore and oral history.

Henceforth the Taylor Log House served as the headquarters for a large plantation complex that raised cotton with the help of a large slave labor force until the onset of the Civil War. After the cessation of hostilities Dr. Taylor attempted to continue his farming operation with free labor until his death, though with mixed results and at great personal cost. After his death in 1884 his children continued to run the farm, even regaining a good deal of the land lost immediately after the war and expanding the Taylor farm to as much as 11,000 acres. The Taylor farm operated in various forms through the first half of the twentieth century.

It was probably after their father's death that the Taylor heirs moved the log dog-trot back from the banks of Bayou Bartholomew, purportedly due to the collapsing of the river bank from erosion. It was probably at this time also that a number of the interior changes occurred, including the changing of the interior door and window trim, the replacement of the first-storey windows with the two-over-two sash, and the installation of the Italianate fireplace mantel. Other changes to the main house were almost certainly made in the early twentieth century, such as the enclosure of the upstairs fireboxes and the insertion of metal flues for wood stoves. Virtually all of the outbuildings known to have existed around the main residence necessarily date from after the 1880's, and some date from the early- to mid-twentieth century. Yet, in spite of these changes, the log construction of the 1846 log dog-trot remains, and in relatively good condition (the only substantial change of any kind was the replacement of two of the bottom logs in the 1880s, probably due to the deterioration of the original logs). The massive, hewn logs remain throughout the building and have not been substantially altered in any way. These same log walls support the gable roof as they always have, and without the aid of any reinforcement or rebuilding.

B. Archeological Potential

The archeological record at the Taylor Log House has the potential to answer questions relating in particular to three Activity Periods in the *State Plan for the Conservation of Archeological Resources in Arkansas* (Davis, ed. 1982). These are Maximum Occupation 1840-1930, Plantation 1800-2000, and Tenant Farm 1870-1950 (Stewart-Abernathy and Watkins 1982). As background, it should be noted that the archeological fieldwork at the Taylor Log House represents the first time that test excavations have been carried out at a pre-Civil War plantation headquarters complex anywhere in Arkansas. Only a few post-war plantations have been examined archeologically. Even at Taylor, only 20 square meters have been excavated, all in close proximity to the house itself.

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Test excavations carried out at the Taylor Log House by the Arkansas Archeological Survey and the Arkansas Archeological Society in 1991 and 1992 have demonstrated the presence of at least three intact archeological deposits. There are at least three such deposits identified so far, a filled basement, plow scars, and sheet midden strata.

The first and most important intact deposit is Feature 4, a large pit feature with brick masonry perimeter wall(s) interpreted as a basement. This basement was probably constructed in the 1840s, perhaps as part of the house or an ell. The basement was filled in the 1880s or 1890s based on the manufacturing date range of artifacts included in the fill. The basement was identified in excavation units under the north tractor shed, but it probably extends west and north beyond the shed perimeter. It should be noted that at least some of the stratified sheet midden discussed below lies atop the fill of the basement.

Feature 4 is significant for a variety of reasons including both its presence as an elaborate subsurface entity and the contents of the fill. Although large basements are known from a variety of contexts and time periods in the United States, the common assumption in Arkansas is that no one had any basements. This assumption turns out to be not entirely valid. The understanding of basements and cellars in 19th century Arkansas has come a long way in the last 15 years, but it remains incomplete. Full scale basements are known from both the early part of the century and the last decades, but the former examples are few. For example, in Arkansas County, two houses with large cellars were built in the latter 1700s or very early 1800s and thus associated with the French. Neither house is still standing. One is the "Dobe" House at St. Charles (3AR___), the other a house built on an Indian mound at Moore Bayou (3AR___). The Ridge House (3WA209), built of logs in 1834 in Fayetteville, had a large basement under the main house and a larger cellar under an outbuilding in the rear yard (Jurney 1973). The Ashley Mansion (3PU256) in Little Rock apparently had a rock-walled basement in its earliest form in the late 1820s, with a much larger brick-walled basement added in the 1840s or 1850s (Stewart-Abernathy 198?). The larger brick basement, complete with a fireplace, was apparently used as a slave quarter. By the late 1800s and early 1900s three-quarter to full basements are not uncommon in urban Little Rock to contain coal furnaces (Roy, Witsell, and Nichols 1984).

However, it was apparently much more common to have small root cellars or storage pits underneath the house, as for example a root cellar used 1830s-1840s at the surviving Block House (3HE236-19) in Washington (Stewart-Abernathy 1989), the 1870s-1930s Spencer Polk Homestead (3HO96) in Howard County (Patterson 1985), and the 1870s-1919 Moser Farmstead (3BE311) in Benton County (Stewart-Abernathy 1984). The latter had small root cellars under both a log smokehouse and the frame kitchen ell to the house although they were not in use at the same time.

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The construction and use of the basement at the Taylor Log House represents a unique example to date of a large basement associated with a rural antebellum plantation anywhere in the state. Full excavation of the basement would thus document a largely unknown architectural feature, and perhaps even discover evidence of how it was used.

The basement is also significant because of the cultural material in the fill including ceramic and glass tablewares, food bones, and hardware. The easiest path to understanding past events, behavior, and values through archeology is through the analysis of artifacts belonging to an assemblage sealed in a protected place. The act of filling the basement, for whatever purpose, also created a set of artifacts bound together through association of being taken from a living context at the same time and in the same place. Some of the manufactured goods were new during the antebellum period when the Taylor House was the center of a growing slave-based plantation. On the other hand, some of the objects may have been made within a few years or months of their deposition in the 1880s. The animals represented by the food bone may even have been killed and butchered within days of disposing the waste bone. Because these artifacts were thrown into the basement fill along with the soil, analysis of them individually and as a group can have much to say about lifeways at the Taylor House.

Many questions can thus be asked of the basement artifact assemblage. These questions range from point of origin for manufactured goods, to the use history of those goods, to the species of animals eaten and how those animals were butchered and prepared for consumption. The answers will help to understand two very important phases of Arkansas experience, the transition from slave plantation to tenant plantation in the 1850s and 1860s, and plantation life 1870s-1880s, Reconstruction and the years immediately thereafter in the Delta.

The second deposit consists of intact plow scars dating apparently 1840-1880. These are located underneath the north and south tractor sheds and presumably under the house itself. At least three episodes of plowing are present, distinguishable by the differing direction of parallel scars. The scars excavated out so far contain only bits of hand made brick, but others may contain fragments of ceramics or other artifacts representing other activity. These scars are significant because they document land use and some spatial planning, apparently between 1840 and 1880, within the immediate footprint of the current log structure at some point prior to the location of the house in that exact place. The plow scars survive only because they were protected by the house and porches on the north and south facades as shown in the 1914 photograph.

The third deposit consists of intact stratified sheet midden strata dating approximately 1880-1950. These are located underneath the north tractor shed north of the north margin of the porch shown in the 1914 photograph. These strata are significant because they reflect

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microdevelopments in the front yard of the house, including decisions about decorative landscaping (for example, the tiny postholes associated with a trellis), as well as the deposition and erosion of soil in a relatively limited time. These sheet midden strata were preserved only as a result of laying down the clay floor for the north tractor shed. Their preservation is almost unique given the fragility of soil layers around a structure as a result of normal cultural and natural processes. These strata were briefly explored during test work in 1991. Unfortunately, in order to excavate the 2x2 unit that eventually reached the floor of the Feature 4 basement, it was necessary to destroy the strata in the north half of the unit. Examination of the walls of that unit indicate the strata did continue into unexcavated areas still sealed beneath the clay tractor shed floor.

One additional subsurface feature is known, but its contents and value are uncertain. This is the cistern, possibly constructed in the 1800s in close association with the original house or related ell or outbuilding. Informants indicate the cistern continued in use at least as a cooler for milk and other products with a "summer house" gazebo standing overhead. Informants also indicate the cistern was filled in the 1940s after the gazebo had collapsed. However, the contents of the cistern are unknown beyond the brick rubble and sterile clay reported to have been used in the fill. At any event, since the cistern was apparently used in some fashion at least through the 1920s and perhaps into the 1930s, it may contain some trash from the early decades of the 20th century. It is also likely that household trash was a part of the fill process in the 1940s.

C. Archeological Field Work

The multiple perspectives of historical archeology were brought to bear on the Taylor House as part of the Arkansas Archeological Society Training Program in 1991 and 1992. This was essentially an initial evaluation and testing effort. As part of this evaluation, the major research questions addressed were (1) when was the house built, (2) was it built on its current location or moved and from where, (3) what did the house look like when it was built, (4) what did the variety of styles and techniques of architectural detailing mean for the chronology of renovations of the house, (5) what was the archeological potential of the site, and (6) what other sources of data existed that were as yet untouched including additional photographs and informants. Research perspectives employed included architectural history, dendrochronology, oral history, and photographic history, as well as standard archeological survey and excavation.

1991 Fieldwork

The examination of the Taylor House began with field archeology that focused particularly on trying to answer questions 1, 2, and 5. Fieldwork was carried out by a small crew of Society

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volunteers from 9-16 June, 1991. Two test units 2 meter x 2 meter (6.6' x 6.6') in size were dug under the north/front shed. A third the same size was dug under the south/rear shed on the other side of the house and approximately 11 meters away, select surface collection was done in the plowed field adjacent to the house, and outbuilding locations reported by informants were mapped.

As part of this initial fieldwork, architectural survey by Ken Story accomplished the thorough documentation of the structure. Potential oral history informants were identified and taped interviews were conducted. Historic photos from the 1940s were copied.

The 1991 fieldwork established the extent of disturbance at the site, providing at least part of the answer to question 5 above. The archeological record around the house has been damaged by agricultural activity dating since at least the 1950s. Plowing has reached to within a meter (3') of the margins of the house as defined by the tractor sheds. However, within the protection of the tractor sheds, the archeological record of the site up to the time the sheds were built is in remarkably good condition. This is because several tons of clay were brought in to create a floor under the tractor sheds that would be resistant to weather and equipment. This layer of sterile red and buffy gray subsoil clay, about 25 cm (9.8") thick, sealed the site immediately adjacent to the house on the north and south. Anything that might have survived in the ground within the margins of the tractor sheds is thus still there. The blanket of clay protected such fragile evidence as the postmolds of a trellis that stood just north of the front porch on the northwest corner of the house. Outside the perimeter of the house with sheds, there is still uncertainty as to preservation of subsurface evidence, although numerous artifacts are visible on the surface when disked. There may also be a narrow zone along the top of the bank of the bayou protected from agriculture by a narrow treeline choked with vines.

The 1991 archeological work suggested that there had been changes in site organization perhaps associated with a move of the house, thus answering question 2 above. First, plow scars from at least three episodes were discovered in test units underneath both the front and rear sheds, indicating that the immediate area of the house had been row cropped at some time before the house was located there. Some of the plow scars in the units are parallel, suggesting they represent the same plowing episode that presumably extended what is now underneath the west room and open central hall of the first floor. These plow scars contained brick bits, interpreted as part of a sheet midden created by occupation very close by at the same time or even prior to cropping.

Second, the contents of the sheet midden tested by those units do not reflect the entire occupation range of 1840s-1950s. These units produced very few artifacts manufactured before

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the 1880s. Many were recovered from then on, and from the entire range of household activity including ceramic and glass table and storage vessels, faunal remains, fragments of personal possessions, and architectural debris including window glass, cut and wire nails, and fragments of factory brick. The almost complete absence of pre-1880s artifacts is surprising if an antebellum structure was located on the current exact spot, as if for example the location had been occupied by a previous structure employing brick masonry, then cropped, and then reoccupied by the construction of the existing house. One would expect the sheet midden so close to the house to contain artifacts all the way back to the construction of the house. A simpler explanation would be that the house was nearby and later moved onto this location.

Third, an area of brick rubble visible on the surface 18 meters (24') northwest of the house was confirmed by oral history as the location of the cistern seen on the 1914 photograph. Cisterns can be located in the front yard but they still must be within easy access by gutter from the roof, since a cistern is little more than an oversized rain barrel placed conveniently to gather rain water draining from a roof. The location of a cistern more than a couple meters from a building is extremely unusual, suggesting three possibilities. One, this feature could have been a well or even an enclosed spring and not a cistern. It thus might have been a water access tool not so amenable to convenient location as a cistern. However, oral history indicates it was in fact a cistern. A second possibility is that the cistern is located beside a previously unsuspected building, but this is considered less likely because it was also unusual to have any building in the front yard of a rural house. Third, and more likely, this may mark the former location of a rear or side porch of the house under which cisterns are usually placed. The house could be moved but the cistern could not. Informants indicate this cistern was filled in the 1940s with clay dug from the river bank.

Fifth, one of the test units under the north shed encountered a subsurface pit or depression pit, Feature 4, filled with rubble of hand made bricks. The pit was not fully explored, but it clearly lay partly underneath the north margin of the north porch shown on the 1914 photograph and thus predated the porch. Its proximity to the house suggested the pit predated the house as well, or at least was associated with a house not in the current location.

Sixth, the extensive presence of factory bricks in intimate contact with this antebellum structure suggest a major rebuilding. For example, in the same unit as the Feature 4 pit was found a porch pier still in situ. It was made of factory brick with cement mortar. The brick is impressed "Dickinson/Little Rock". The other north porch unit contained a fragmentary part of a brick pier in situ with the same mark. The current piers and chimney columns in the house are also made with factory brick and cement mortar, though no other makers names were recorded. That the piers well under the house are also factory brick, in the absence of evidence (such as access

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trenches) that the piers were installed with the house in-place overhead, suggests the rebuilding occurred simultaneous with the structure being moved.

The probable construction date for the house was established through analysis of 14 tree ring samples by Dr. David Stahle that he took from the cypress logs of the house. Cut dates for logs from both the first and second floors range from 1844-1846, providing a conservative earliest build date of 1846. However, four samples from the lowest wall logs showed cut dates of 1879 and 1880. These were apparently replacements of logs that had suffered damage.

1992 Fieldwork

Since the 1991 fieldwork suggested that indeed there had been activity within the immediate footprint of the house, perhaps associated with a move, it was decided to return to the site to try to determine if evidence existed as to the original location, as well as examine the apparent pit, Feature 4. Fieldwork was carried out again by a small crew of Society volunteers from 6-14 June, 1992.

To see if any evidence remained along the treeline on the edge of the bank of the bayou, one 2 meter x 2 meter unit was placed as close as possible to the edge of the bank northwest of the house. However, this unit produced only minor sheet midden and a possible if fragmentary pier of hand made brick.

Principle work focused on Feature 4. It was explored in two adjacent 2 meter x 2 meter test units dug as a four meter long test trench extending outward from the north/front facade of the log house. This work found a substantial brick wall, the highest surviving course at 70 cm (2.3') below current ground surface though the wall was not relatively intact until 95-100 cm (maximum 3.3') below surface. The wall is interpreted as the south wall of a cellar or basement that extended to the north, west, and east, perhaps encompassing the full size of a room rather than just a small root cellar as is commonly found associated with 19th century domestic structures in Arkansas. The total size of this subsurface feature is unknown, though it does not extend more than four meters east because it would have been located in the second test unit dug under the north tractor shed in 1991. Minimal attempts to trace the pit feature further using a soil corer and bucket auger were blocked by the presence of brick bats throughout the soil underlying the clay floor of the tractor sheds and the sheet midden outside the north shed.

The masonry wall is four courses wide and survives to a total of 16 courses, 105 cm (3.4') high. Based on comparative wall widths and 19th century builders recommendations, the wall could have supported as much as a two story brick building with basement. The floor of the basement,

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of which only about four square meters (43 square feet) was exposed, is at 165 cm (5.4') below present ground surface, about 140 cm (4.6') below approximate original ground surface relative to the nearest pier on the north facade wall of the house. The basement floor consists of a thin layer of white lime-based plaster or mortar, put down on top of a layer of mixed brick rubble and subsoil clay. The floor is 20 cm (7.8") thick and buried the lowest three courses of the brick wall.

The fill in the basement was distinctly stratified with each stratum containing historic artifacts generated by household activity as well as demolition of masonry. From bottom up the fill layers consisted of dark brown topsoil with household trash and brick rubble, red orange clay subsoil with some trash and rubble, and gray clay subsoil with some trash and rubble. At the top was a smear of brick rubble and mixed soils apparently used to level out the surface before construction of the new porch on its new piers.

These strata are in reverse order from their normal position in the ground in the region. This suggests that at the same time the basement was being filled, another large pit was being dug. Since the digging of large pits solely for fill material is an enormous effort, the new pit may have been for a cellar or well as yet unlocated. The spoil was thrown into the basement along with household trash and brick rubble, perhaps from the demolition of the original chimneys of the house.

The historic artifacts found in the basement fill strata include 199 fragments of ceramic table and storage vessels, 286 fragments of glass table and storage vessels, faunal remains from butchering and preparation of meals from cow, pig, and poultry, metal tablewares and personal items, iron hardware, and architectural debris including brick rubble, lime mortar and/or plaster, cut nails, and 301 fragments of window glass. Specific artifacts of interest include: a silver plated spoon with the makers mark "Peabody" and the letters "JMT" in a monogram, likely standing for John Martin Taylor himself; an undecorated ceramic white ware saucer with a manufacturers mark including a royal seal and "Stone China/Warranted/Anthony Shaw/Burslem", a mark used 1851-1882; the ceramic whiteware base to a plate or bowl with manufacturers mark "Wood, Son &.../Cobridge, probably the Wood, Son & Co., Villa Pottery, Cobridge, Staffordshire, England, who were using this mark 1869-1879; the ceramic whiteware base to an oil lamp marked "Ironstone China/J.Venables & Co", a mark only used 1853-1855; a lice comb made of bone; two intact brown glass snuff bottles dating from the mid to late 1800s; a British brown and white stoneware ale or ink bottle made between 1850 and 1890; a mid 1800s blue green glass condiment or pepper sauce bottle in the "gothic cathedral" shape; fragments of clear glass tumblers and stemmed glasses; the white metal top to a salt shaker; and fragments of U.S. made 19th century redware and stoneware storage vessels including jars and jugs.

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Probable manufacturing dates for the entire assemblage from the fill of the basement range from about 1825 to as late as about 1910, with a minimum range of about 1850-1890. Manufacturing dates for the artifacts in the fill of the basement are approximately consistent with the construction of the current house at the early end, and with the hypothesized date for the move of the house as being around the time of the replacement of the lowest logs about 1880.

D. The Move

The house has been moved at least once, probably sometime in the 1880s or 1890s. The evidence comes from several sources taken together. First, the Taylor family cemetery is much closer to the house than normal with family cemeteries. Second, the plow scars discovered underneath the north and south tractor sheds correspond to agricultural activity conducted precisely within the perimeter of the house and porches. Third, the absence of a sheet midden that includes artifacts dating back to the probable construction date of 1846 in the immediate vicinity of the house is unusual, unless the house and accompanying sheet midden were originally elsewhere. Fourth, the south wall of the basement to a substantial structure only 1.5 meters (4.9') from the north facade of the house is far too close to the front wall of the house according to common 19th century patterns of vernacular architecture and spatial planning unless the basement was under the house in its original location or at least a rear ell of that house. Fifth, it is unusual and in fact unlikely to have a cistern in the front yard that far from the front of the house. Finally, of course, family legends say the house was moved back/south at least once from the collapsing bank of the bayou.

An approximate date of 1880s for the move comes also from several sources. Dendrochronology indicates the lowest logs were cut in or near 1879 and 1880, indicating replacement in 1880 at the earliest or not long after. It was not uncommon to replace damaged logs, particular in the lower courses, in advance of a move to mitigate the attendant stresses on those logs. The artifacts so far recovered from the sealed deposit in the basement suggest that the feature was filled in the 1880s, because none had to have been made after the 1880s. Filling in the basement might have been part of site preparation in the 1880s prior to the move of the two story log house. Of course, manufacturing date ranges are not necessarily related to the usage date range or disposal date. Finally, the death of John Martin Taylor in 1884 provided the kind of generational or ownership transition that is often associated with architectural changes in buildings as well as changes in spatial arrangements in the surrounding landscape (his wife Mary Elizabeth Robertson had died in 1868). Reconsideration of the property by the Taylor sons could have included the decision to relocate the structure.

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The house was not taken apart and moved, because original lime and hair wall plaster is still in place over the fireplace opening in the west room of the second floor. Therefore the house must have been moved as unit, not that difficult a task when one has 100 or more mules available as were on the plantation.

It should be noted that the kitchen ell to the Taylor House, visible in the 1914 photo, was itself moved in the 1950s to elsewhere on the plantation. It is still standing, an extraordinary frame structure with board and batten exterior siding (nailed on with wire nails) masked under rolled asphalt sheathing, two or three 19th century windows, and 11 foot ceilings.

By virtue of the architectural and construction significance of the cypress log residence, and of the substantial potential of the site to reveal further information about the various periods of occupation, the Taylor Log House and Site is eligible under Criterion C and D with local significance.

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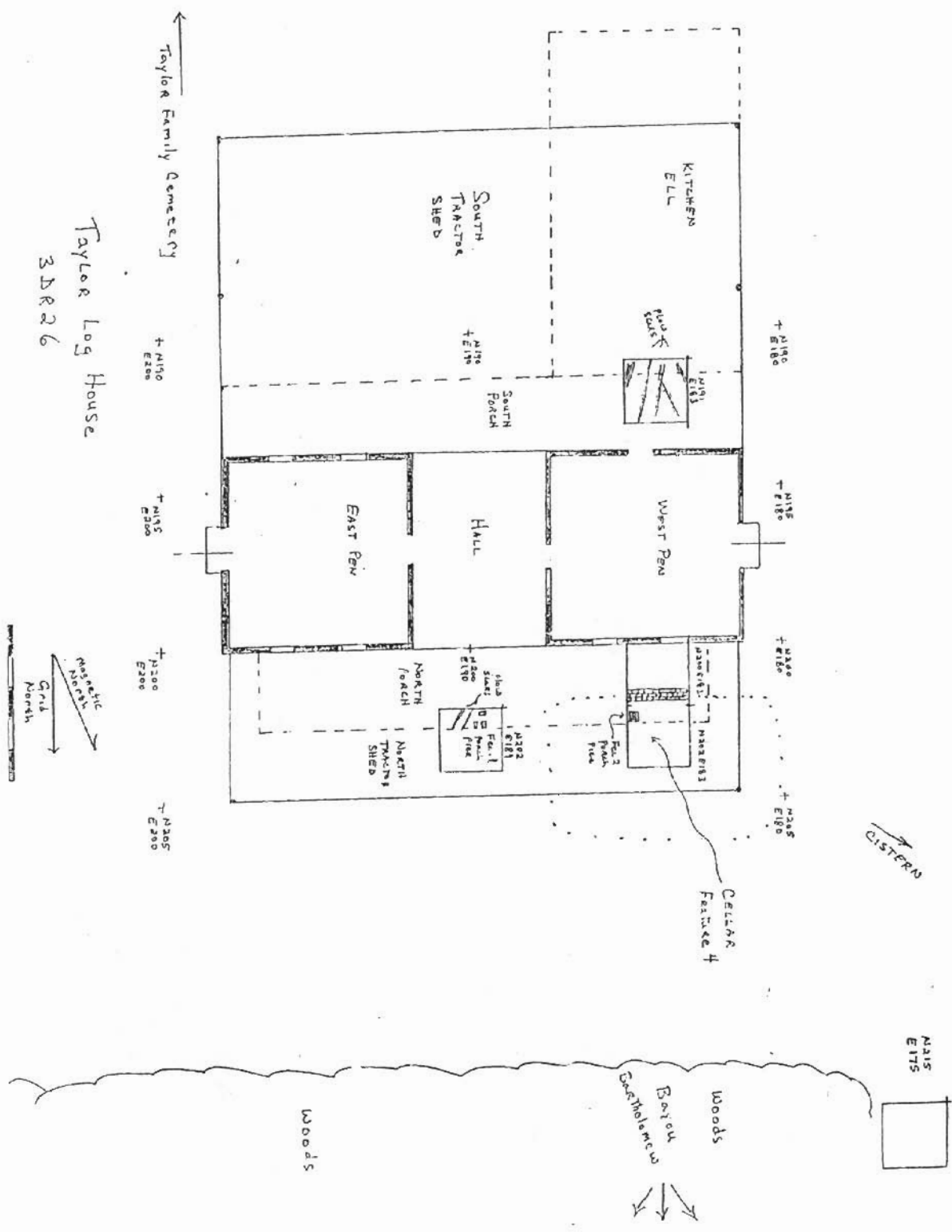
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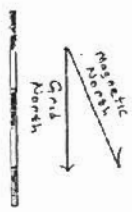
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3DR26

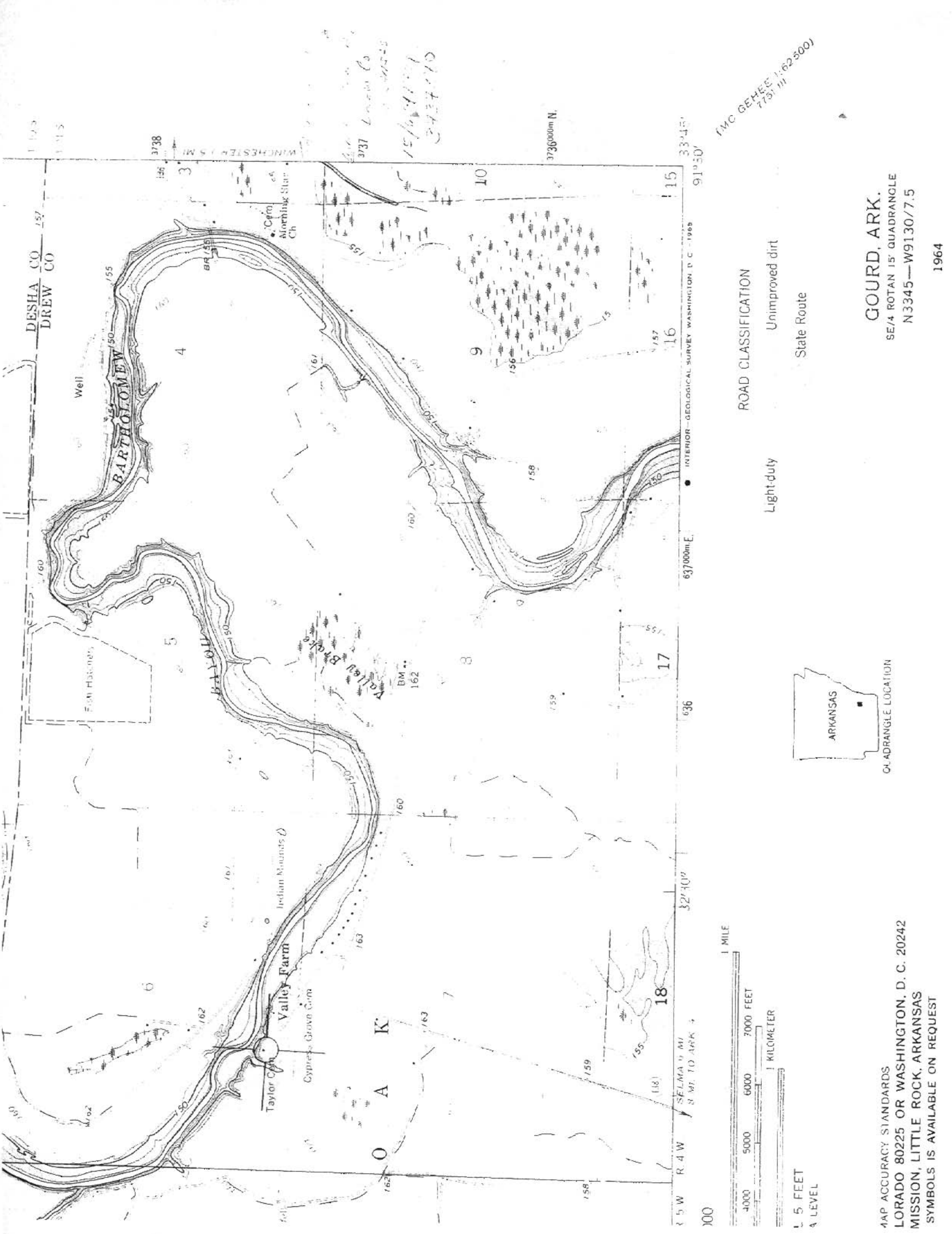


CISTERN

Mats E175

Woods

Woods
Barren
Escalante



DESHA CO 157
DREW CO

1 19 3
1 15 5

3738

WINCHESTER 1.5 MI

3737
15/16/91/10
3437/10

3736000m N

33-41
91°30'

IMC GEHEE 1:62-5000
7759 III

637000m E
636
32°40'

1 5 W R 4 W SELMA 1/4 MI
N MI. TO ARK

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Light-duty
Unimproved dirt
State Route

1 MILE
7000 FEET
1 KILOMETER

1 5 FEET
A LEVEL



GOURD, ARK.

SE/4 ROTAN 15' QUADRANGLE
N3345—W9130/7.5

MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
LORADO 80225 OR WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
MISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS
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