

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



927

# 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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Pratt, Wallace E., Residence

other names/site number Ship on the Desert

### 2. Location

street & number Pratt Drive at McKittrick Road, Guadalupe Mountains National Park  not for publication

city or town Salt Flat  vicinity

state Texas code TX county Culberson code 109 zip code 79847

### 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 forth 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

   national  statewide    local

Robert K. Matton, Chief Historian/Designated 12/17/2011  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
National Park Service  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

Mark Wolfe 10/24/11  
Signature of commenting official Date  
SHPO Texas Historical Commission  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Jon Edson H. Beall 12.15.11  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert), Salt Flat vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Page 2

**5. CLASSIFICATION****OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY**

	private
	public - Local
	public - State
x	public - Federal

**CATEGORY OF PROPERTY**

x	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

**NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY**

contributing	noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
1	0	sites
4	0	structures
0	0	objects
7	0	<b>total</b>

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

**6. FUNCTION OR USE****HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:**

DOMESTIC / single dwelling, secondary structure

AGRICULTURE / animal facility, storage, irrigation facility

**CURRENT FUNCTIONS:**

LANDSCAPE / park

DOMESTIC / single dwelling, secondary structure

**7. DESCRIPTION****ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:** MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style

**MATERIALS:**

FOUNDATION	CONCRETE
WALLS	STONE
ROOF	ASPHALT
OTHER	STEEL, GLASS, STUCCO

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION** (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-13)

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)

Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Section 7 Page 5

### **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

The Wallace E. Pratt Residence, also known as "Ship on the Desert," is located within Guadalupe Mountains National Park, 55 miles south of Carlsbad, New Mexico. Designed in 1941 by the New York City architecture firm Milliken & Bevin and completed in 1943, the International Style house with attached garage is built of locally-quarried stone with steel trusses, walls of stucco on metal lath, and large expanses of glass. The residence sits near the center of a 20-acre tract which encompasses a number of landscape features, including a stone entry gate, a tack building and attached horse corral, gardens, a stone garbage incinerator, an irrigation system, and two stone water tanks. Together with the main residence, these features characterized the property throughout Pratt's tenure from 1941 to 1959, when the site was transferred to the National Park Service. Today, historic character is maintained, and integrity to the period of significance remains high.

### **Spatial Organization of the Site**

The Pratt property is situated on the eastern foothills of the Guadalupe Mountains, to the northwest of Lamar Canyon and to the southwest of McKittrick Canyon. The spatial organization of the site is mainly clustered around the Wallace E. Pratt Residence. The house is the primary focus of the area, sited on a prominent high point that juts out from the base of the mountain front. The top of the landform where the house is sited is fairly level with gently to steeply slopes in all directions. This purposeful positioning affords panoramic views that extend more than 100 miles to the east, south, and southwest across a desert sea. Views to the north are more restricted by the Guadalupe Mountains. This location on a prominent rise also created purposeful views of the residence from the surrounding drives, which are sited at lower elevations. Additionally, the materials and form of the house were carefully chosen to allow views to and from the house. The use of large glass windows brings the outdoors to the interior of the residence—an important concept in blurring the lines between indoors and outdoors.

Surrounding the house are a number of landscape features. To the north and east are planted garden spaces. To the south, a loop turnaround drive provides access to the house and garage. Farther afield, a former wildlife fence that encompassed the property is marked with fence posts, and a dirt road loops around the house, providing access to the former airstrip and modern RV pads. To the northwest, a spur road links to stone water tanks, a well head, and to the southeast, the entrance drive links to McKittrick Canyon Road. The surrounding vegetation is comprised of cholla, agave, juniper, scrub oak, opuntia, grasses, sotol, typical Chihuahuan Desert vegetation except for the protected and moist canyons where vegetation includes bigtooth maple and maidenhair fern. Although construction of the Pratt residence aimed for little disturbance to the site to preserve the existing native vegetation, the topography changed somewhat through the construction of retaining walls to provide level yard and garden areas.

### **Wallace E. Pratt Residence**

The main residence was designed in 1941 by the New York City architecture firm Milliken & Bevin and constructed under the guidance of Newton P. Bevin and his wife, Elizabeth Hopkins Bevin, between 1941 and 1943. The single-story residence is 16 feet wide and 110 feet long, and it lies transverse to the prevailing winds from the southwest. The house is constructed of six transverse walls of locally-quarried stone, tied together with steel trusses, and filled in with walls of stucco on metal lath and large expanses of glass. Each stone bearing wall is 16 feet long, 22 inches thick, and rises nine feet above grade. The Pratt Residence has a low, flat deck roof with iron railings on each side. In the middle of the structure is a very small second story—a glassed in room not unlike a ship captain's bridge, accessible from the ground floor by a circular staircase of metal with maple wood treads.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)

Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Section 7 Page 6

One enters the long, low building through a covered porch that extends the entire length of the house on its western side. Originally this porch was left open to the elements, with a concrete floor and six stone columns. The harsh winds quickly proved to be too much for the Pratt family, however, and they enclosed the porch by filling the spaces between the columns with matching stone to a height of approximately four feet, and then installing storm windows from the top of the stone infill to the roof. This enclosed porch is covered by the same flat, built-up roof as the house, with metal flashing, gutters, and downspouts.

Once inside the porch, visitors enter the house through a flush-panel door, which is centrally-located on the western façade and painted deep purple; the door features a whimsical door knocker resembling a rock hammer, which reflects Pratt's career as a geologist. The door provides passage to an entrance hall, with built-in cabinets with zebrawood counters to the right and the metal circular staircase to the left, against a wall of glass that allows expansive views of the landscape to the east. Immediately to the left of the front door is a wall, behind which are a coat area and a small half-bathroom.

Moving to the right, or to the southeast, the visitor descends two short steps through the arched portal and enters a large living room, with a fireplace on the northern wall, and vast built-in maple bookshelves and cabinets along the other walls and under the large windows that face to both the east and west. The floors are covered with a neutral-tone linoleum tile and the walls are stucco painted white. In historic photographs the original linoleum tile appeared to be laid throughout the house in contrasting shades that created various basketweave patterns on the floor.<sup>1</sup>

To the south beyond the living room is the master bedroom suite. Immediately to the left, in the northeastern corner of the suite, are a dressing area with large closets and a bathroom featuring its original yellow ceramic tile and white porcelain fixtures. Built-in cabinets with zebrawood counters and shelves line the west wall under the windows, and there is a door that leads to the enclosed porch on the west side of the house. Unlike the living room, the bedroom's east wall is not entirely glass, but is instead mostly stucco on metal lath, with a single window at the southern end. The window is currently fitted with an evaporative cooler. On the south wall of the bedroom is the house's second stone fireplace, marking one end of the building. Outside the south end of the building is an underground rainwater cistern fed by a series of roof downspouts.

From the central entrance hall, as visitors move to the left (towards the northwest), they pass the sculptural, curving staircase and enter the kitchen and its related utility spaces. The kitchen's cooking area is to the left, along the west wall, and is comprised of both wood and metal base cabinets partially covered with a custom-built stainless steel countertop with backsplash; the other countertop surface is a wood butcher-block. The integral stainless steel sink faces west, and the entire western wall above the sink is of glass, with only two operable windows—a hopper surmounted by an awning—centered between larger fixed metal sashes, and a large fixed sash on top. Wood wall cabinets are hung on the northern and southern walls on either side of the sink area. On the eastern side of the kitchen is a small dining area, where the Pratts ate their meals at a built in dinette for four under a stack of fixed windows with a metal hopper window at its base. As on the western side of the kitchen, this eastern dining area also has upper and lower cabinets of wood on its southern wall, and upper metal cabinets with sliding glass doors on the northern wall making the seating area feel small.

Partition walls screen the utility areas to the north of the kitchen and dining room, and they include a pantry, a laundry area, a storage room, and closet for the heating system and water heater. The kitchen pantry is on the east side of the

<sup>1</sup> According to a 1943 journal article, "the choice of patterned tile layouts for the floors seems curiously out of harmony." *The New Pencil Points*, vol. 24 (May 1943), 63.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)

Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Section 7 Page 7

house and has a window in it. The room for the heating system is to the north of the pantry, with its entry door on the room's chamfered southwest corner, and a window on the east wall at the southeast corner. The mechanical room and the storage room are separated by a partition wall, and the storage room has a window on the west wall at its northwestern corner. The laundry area is open and bright, with windows on the west wall at the southwest corner, and a door on the west wall that leads out to the enclosed porch. This door to the porch is the only way to access the final room of the house on the ground floor, a small bedroom with private bath.

The placement of this bedroom at the northern end of the house, without any access from inside the residence, suggests that the Pratt family used this bedroom either for visitors or for a servant. The room is large enough for two twin beds or a full-size bed and small side tables. Entering from the enclosed porch on the west side of the house, a closet is immediately to the right. In the southeast corner of the bedroom is the bathroom, which includes its original fixtures and a shower stall; a window is on the east wall of the bathroom and two more windows are on the east wall of the bedroom, allowing for views of the landscape to the southeast of the house.

To the northwest of the bedroom and connected to its northern-most stone bearing wall is a two-car garage of stone, with another small mechanical room to its west, which contains electrical equipment and a one bedroom apartment attached to the north wall. Underground fuel tanks are on the north side of the main building, outside the bedroom and east of the garage.

The second floor of the house, accessible by the metal circular staircase, is what the architects imagined as a "deck room" to a ship. After climbing the narrow, twisting stair in the northeast corner, visitors find themselves in a glassy room with expansive views of the spectacular setting on both the west and east sides; the north and south walls are of stone. In the southeast corner of the room, opposite the staircase, is a fireplace. Bookshelves line east and west walls below the windows. To the south of the room is a door that leads to the roof deck, which is partially covered by a projecting flat roof supported by two steel columns. At the very south end of the roof, the chimney of the master bedroom fireplace rises up from the first floor. To the north of the deck room is a hallway that leads to the northern roof deck, which is uncovered. On the east side of the hallway is a closet, and on the west side of the hallway is a small bathroom with a shower stall; a small window is on the northern wall at the sink area.

The roof was originally covered with thin, irregularly shaped stone pavers to create the floor of the roof deck, but these stones were removed to repair roof leaks and the roof is now covered with a built-up, asphalt material. The original stone from the roof deck is believed to have been hauled away from the site by the contractor who made the roof repairs.<sup>2</sup> Of course Pratt, as a geologist, was very interested in rocks, and some he prized for their interesting forms, colors, and textures. He placed rocks as sculptural forms throughout the area immediately surrounding the house, and these rocks, as located by Pratt, are part of the cultural landscape.

<sup>2</sup> Status of original stone roof deck materials obtained from personal communication with Roger E. Reisch, retired NPS employee and first ranger to live at Ship on the Desert in 1965 after park acquisition from the Pratt Family (January 14, 2009). Flagstones in the back yard and dry-laid, rubble-filled walls in the front yard were all original to the Pratt landscape. The NPS added the stone walls to conceal the surface propane tanks when the structure was converted from fuel oil to propane.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 8

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

### **Ancillary Buildings and Structures**

In addition to the main residence, a number of smaller buildings and structures were built throughout the period of significance, including the tack building and horse corral, greenhouse, powerhouse, stone garbage incinerator, stone entry gate and cattle guard, dry-laid stone windbreaks and stone retaining walls, wildlife fence encircling the hilltop, and metal pole shade ramada, and metal pole clothesline. Today, the majority of these buildings and structures remain, although the greenhouse and powerhouse have been removed, leaving only the foundations. Additionally, only the wood posts of the wildlife fence remain. A contemporary (nonhistoric) stone wall surrounds the southern-most propane tank.

### **Roads and Paths**

Circulation features dating to the period of significance mainly include a number of roads. The site is accessed from Highway 62 and 180 by McKittrick Canyon Road, which leads on a northwest angle from the main highway. The driveway to Ship on the Desert intersects with McKittrick Canyon Road at a right angle at approximately the 2-mile mark. From there the drive leads to the southwest and then turns northwest to the house. The entrance road is 1.2 miles in length from the intersection with McKittrick Road to a stone entrance gate with cattle guard. At the entrance gate, the current road bypasses the stone entrance, allowing vehicular traffic to go around the gate, which cannot accommodate the width of larger, contemporary vehicles. From the entrance gate, a .6-mile triangular loop road connects to the former airstrip and encompasses the house and grounds leading to the corral and tack room, the greenhouse and powerhouse foundations, and the non-contributing RV pads for housing park volunteers. An additional .8-mile spur road leads to two stone tanks, a former water well and the current water well beyond the historic property. Though the primary use of these roads is for vehicular access, they are also used for walking, jogging, and wildlife watching. With the exception of the widened drive at the entrance gate and the RV pads, all of these road segments date to the period of significance and are contributing features. Other circulation features within the area include flagstone stepping stones, pavers, and stone paths around the house, several gravel parking areas, a loop turnaround south of the house, and spur drives to the garage and service buildings.

### **Constructed Water Features**

Many water features were constructed during the period of significance, including an irrigation system to water the ornamental vegetation on the property, two stone water tanks, a stone water trough, water wellhead adjacent to the stone tanks, water trough at the horse corral, and underground rainwater cistern. All of these features remain today. The underground cistern collects rainwater from the roof and channels it into a cistern on the southeast edge of the house. This system is still operative but currently not being utilized for the water supply. Additionally, an earthen water catchment tank, referred to by the Pratts as the "cane patch tank," was also present during the period of significance, probably acquired as an existing feature of the Green McCombs Ranch. However, there is no indication that this tank was used as a water supply for livestock by the Pratts.

### **Small-Scale Features and Objects**

Historically, a number of small-scale features were present throughout the Ship on the Desert landscape and many of those remain today. Small-scale features dating to the period of significance include stone benches, a stone table in backyard, and a stone bird bath and feeder. These features remain today; however, the stone table top in the backyard is missing. Other small-scale features have been added to the landscape over time, mostly related to utility upgrades. Today, the site also includes modern, buried septic tank, leach field and leach field covers in backyard, utility connections near

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)

Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Section 7 Page 9

powerhouse slab for RV use, upgraded propane tanks, and fire hose connections/boxes in the yard at each end of the house and near the corral.

### Gardens and Planted Vegetation

The use of vegetation at the Ship on the Desert was equally important to the character of the site during the period of significance. Although no planting plans or site plans have been found to date regarding the landscape design for Ship on the Desert, the design intent can be pieced together through historic correspondence, historic images, and vegetation remaining on-site today.

According to oral history, Pratt first named the property "Manzanital" under the mistaken impression that the madrone trees which intrigued him were manzanita trees (The Worlds of Wallace Pratt, W.L. Copithorne, The Land, Vol. 53, No. 3, Fall 1971). Regardless, construction efforts aimed for as little ground disturbance as possible, which aided on the retention of much native vegetation. Some existing trees were pruned, as seen in historic photographs. Others may have been transplanted to different areas, although direct evidence in support of this has not been located.

Several letters between Newton Bevin, Wallace Pratt, and Iris Pratt note various types of vegetation, both native and planted around the site. Mescal trees, also known as Texas laurel, and "Manzanitos" are noted in undated correspondence. In a letter to Iris, dated June 2, 1942, the unknown writer states,

"The red berries on long stems which you admired so, continued with a shrub which apparently had gone to seed forming little putty colored powder puffs of soft paint brushes all along the stems. These pod things have opened since I put them in water, and I'm sure if Walt Disney was here, he'd have ballet dancers dropping out of each piece of fluff right on my blotter. Your barrel cactus which you potted has flowered furiously. Three gorgeous yellow blooms – more beautiful than the ones we saw that the "café" on the way from Carlsbad. The little cluster of four grayish cactus, also in a pot – has flowered, a most vivid magenta, not my favorite color. The pink oleanders are nearly out and shows promise of many blooms."

Shortly thereafter, in a letter to Iris dated June 14, 1942 the writer continues, "About glass gardens – I don't know of any publications really but I rather think that, as in Bermuda and lower California, a slat garden would be preferable here; to reduce sun and evaporation."

Vegetation discussions between Bevin and the Pratts continued into early 1943 when Newton Bevin planned for "the gallery boxes" in January 12, 1943, "...The holly-like shrub is called Agarita and to quote from "Texas Wild Flowers" "Agarita mixed with amoor privet makes an excellent and artistic combination hedge. Small agarita plants are easily obtained from underneath the older plants."

Other references have been found in historic photographs to a "hanging garden of cactus at Horseshoe Spring" (likely outside of the CLI boundary) and an extensive cactus garden south of the driveway and garage, as noted by Pratt's grandson, Ed Reid. Reid also noted upright stones in the cactus garden and a Japanese-style garden with camel bells in the trees in the backyard.

Today, a number of trees and vegetated areas remain from the period of significance. As one enters the stone entry gate with cattleguard, three irrigated madrones (*Arbutus texana*) flank the driveway. Continuing toward the house, two Siberian elms (*Ulmus pumila*) mark the entry to the loop turnaround and a windbreak of 24 Arizona cypress (*Cupressus arizonica*) and pinyon pine lines the south side of the loop turnaround. Within the island of the loop turnaround is a gray

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)

Section 7 Page 10

Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

oak (*Quercus grisea*)—a native specimen that was incorporated into the design of the residential complex. Adjacent to the garage is a mandrone (*Arbutus texana*), while firethorn (*Pyracantha coccinea*) and Texas laurel (also known as mescal bean, *Sophora secundiflora*) mark the main entrance to the house. In the backyard to the east of the house, two gray oaks, sumac, more firethorn and Texas laurel, Mexican buckeye and an apricot stump remain.

The majority of these trees are in good health; however, some decline has been noted in particular specimens—Siberian elms, the Arizona cypress and pinyon pine windbreak, some gray oak, and the apricot. Of the Siberian elms flanking driveway, one of the trees has died and the other is disfigured and weakly branched. These trees were widely planted in west Texas because of their rapid growth and their drought tolerance; however, trees at Ship on the Desert were severely pruned in the past (prior to 1989), likely to remove limbs overhanging the driveway that limited park maintenance truck access. Similarly, the windbreak of Arizona cypress and pinyon pine shows decline presumably due to the lack of routine irrigation. Planted by Pratt, these trees were closely spaced in an alternating pattern of pinyons between every two Arizona cypress, presumably to provide the most rapid wind and sun protection. Seven of the Arizona cypress trees at the southern end of the row have died, leaving dead trees between the surviving pinyon pines.

At the center of the loop turnaround south of the house, the gray oak has also died. The combination of a compacted root zone, lack of supplemental water in drought years, and mistletoe infestation contributed to the demise of the tree. The tree now shows signs of rot and weakened limbs. Similarly, in the backyard the apricot tree (now a stump) died and has been removed. The apricot tree was planted at the far northeast edge of the cultivated yard at the edge of the flagstone pavers. The tree survived into the early 1990s, and likely declined from lack of water shortly thereafter. Since that time, the dead tree was removed at some unknown point in time, leaving only a stump to mark its location. In the near term, the park plans to replace the dead and declining vegetation in-kind.

Other vegetation noted on site during a 2007 inventory included prickly pear (*Opuntia phaeacantha*), sotol (*Dasyliirion leiophyllum*), Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*), firethorn (*Pyracantha coccinea*), mescal bean (*Sophora secundiflora*), gray oak (*Quercus grisea*), aromatic sumac (*Rhus aromatic*), ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*), banana yucca (*Yucca baccata*), redberry juniper (*Juniperus pinchotii*), desert willow (*Chilopsis linearis*), netleaf Hackberry (*Celtis laevigata* var. *reticulata*), catclaw acacia (*Acacia greggi*), Texas mandrone (*Arbutus texana*), soap tree yucca (*Yucca elata*), Mexican buckeye (*Ungnadia speciosa*), Evergreen sumac (*Rhus virens*), apricot stump (*Prunus armeniaca*), prairie sumac (*Rhus lanceolata*), and bear grass (*Nolina micrantha*).

### Summary of Contributing Features: Counted individually per NRHP Guidelines

- Wallace E. Pratt Residence, with attached guest quarters and garage (1 building)
- Tack Building and Corral (1 building with attached structure)
- Stone entry gate and cattle guard (1 structure)
- Stone garbage incinerator (1 structure)
- Stone water tanks (2 structures)
- Designed landscape associated with the Pratt House (1 site)

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 11

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

### **Historically Significant Components of the Landscape:**

#### **Contributing to the overall site but not counted apart from the site, per NRHP Guidelines**

- Dry-laid stone windbreaks and stone retaining walls
- Greenhouse foundation
- Powerhouse foundation
- Wildlife fence
- Metal pole shade ramada
- Metal pole clothesline
- Entrance drive to Ship on the Desert
- Triangular loop road to the former airstrip
- Spur road to stone tanks, water well and RV pads
- Loop turnaround south of main residence
- Spur drives to the garage and service buildings
- Gravel parking areas
- Flagstone stepping stones, pavers, and stone paths around the house
- Irrigation system, including valves and pipes
- Stone water trough
- Water wellhead adjacent to the stone tanks
- Water trough at the horse corral
- Underground rainwater cistern
- Earthen water catchment tank (cane patch tank)
- Stone benches
- Stone table in backyard
- Stone bird bath and feeder
- Gardens and planted vegetation, including native species and patterns

#### **Noncontributing features of the overall landscape identified in the CLR**

- Contemporary stone and mortar wall surrounding propane tank (1 non-contributing structure)
- Widened drive at entrance gate (1 non-contributing structure)
- RV pads (1 non-contributing structure)
- Modern, buried septic tank, leach field and leach field covers in backyard (1 non-contributing structure)
- Utility connections near powerhouse slab for RV use (1 non-contributing structure)
- Upgraded propane tanks (1 non-contributing structure)
- Fire hose connections/boxes at each end of the house and near the corral (1 non-contributing structure)

### **ANALYSIS OF INTEGRITY**

The Wallace E. Pratt Residence and site contains a multitude of features that were added and built during the period of significance. Additional landscape features were important in determining the location of the residence. While exact details about landscape features are somewhat limited due to limited historic documentation that focuses mainly on the construction of the building, analysis and evaluation of integrity reflects the degree of change in the character of the landscape over time.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 12

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

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## Location

Designed in 1941 and constructed shortly thereafter, the Ship on the Desert has remained in its original location, set on a high point projecting from the front of the Guadalupe Mountains. Other landscape features, such as the entrance road, gardens, stone walls, and outlying service buildings have also remained in their original locations with minimal alterations. As a result, the property retains integrity of location.

## Design

The Ship on the Desert was designed by Milliken & Bevin, an architecture firm based out of New York City, while the construction was carried out by local labor supervised by Newton P. Bevin and his wife, Elizabeth Hopkins Bevin. Design significance is evident in the spatial organization of the area, building form, and use local stone materials. The main residence is the focus of the designed plan with simple rectilinear and horizontal forms of stone, glass, and steel. Clustered around the main house are outdoor living spaces, gardens, circulation features, and support structures that are arranged functionally and aesthetically. Landscape features reflect the style of the main residence through the use of stone and simple forms. Native and planted vegetation complements the form and design of the site. Since the end of the period of significance, few changes have been made to the design of the Ship on the Desert landscape. The most notable change in design has been the decline and removal of some historic vegetation, which has somewhat altered the character of the site. Nevertheless, the design of the building and landscape remain true to the original site plan. Overall, integrity of design is retained.

## Setting

Overall, the setting surrounding the Ship on the Desert appears much as it did during the historic period. The district is set on the eastern edge of the Guadalupe Mountains overlooking desert in nearly all directions. Topographic features and the positioning and arrangement of buildings and structures in relation to the neighboring landforms has remained unchanged, and are significant in terms of the setting of the property. Views from the area to the mountains and desert remain distinct and unchanged from the period of historic development. The surrounding vegetation has also remained relatively unchanged, though the density of species has likely increased since grazing ended in the mid 20th century. Neighboring lands within view are still used for cattle ranching. Very few features have been added since the end of the period of significance. Those that have been added include utilitarian features, such as stone wall screening around the propane tanks and RV pads for park volunteers. Planted vegetation within the Ship on the Desert landscape remains, though it has declined since the end of the period of significance, leaving dead and dying trees throughout the landscape. However, the park plans to replace these trees in-kind in the near term. Native shrubs tend to re-colonize portions of the maintained landscape and are periodically removed for fire protection and to maintain the setting. Overall the physical elements and character of the property have remained the same as the major spaces have not dramatically changed; thus, integrity of setting is retained.

## Materials

Overall, historic and natural materials of the Ship on the Desert landscape remain. The use of native, local stone materials in the construction of the main residence, support structures, and landscape features is a distinguishing characteristic of the area. Use of McCombs and Radar limestone reflects Wallace Pratt's passion for geology and also creates a modern residence that blends with the indigenous landscape. Stone placed in thin, horizontal lines continues to serve as an identifiable design element within the Ship on the Desert landscape. Materials associated with the landscape include the asphalt/gravel entrance drive, stone pavers and paths, stone water tanks, stone walls, stone structures, and wood and metal

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 13

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

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fences. All retain integrity of materials. Additionally, some vegetation from the period of significance has survived, and also retains integrity.

## Workmanship

Expressions of workmanship during the period of significance for the Ship on the Desert are limited to built features—the main residence, support structures, walls, garden areas, etc. Nearly all buildings and landscape features from the period of significance remain, though the greenhouse and powerhouse were removed at an unknown date. The features that remain have withstood decades of use and more recently, limited maintenance, which indicates a level of high quality craftsmanship. Integrity of workmanship is retained.

## Feeling

The integrity of feeling is retained throughout the Ship on the Desert. Throughout the entire area, the physical features that comprise the site, including the main residence, structures, vegetation patterns, views, and circulation features create a feeling of a modern, mid 20th century residence. Additionally, the use of stone throughout the area gives the landscape a unique character and identity that unifies the individual elements into a residential site. Overall, integrity of feeling is retained.

## Association

The site retains integrity to the Wallace Pratt period in specific elements and in overall character. Pratt's knowledge and passion for geology greatly contributed to the design and construction of the main residence and several stone features throughout the landscape. The retention of the stone features within the residential complex greatly enhances the site's association with Pratt. Integrity of association is retained.

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert), Salt Flat vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Page 3

**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE****APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA**

Property:

- A** is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** 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** has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS:** N/A**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:** Architecture, Industry**PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:** 1941-1959**SIGNIFICANT DATES:** 1941, 1943, 1959**SIGNIFICANT PERSON:** N/A**CULTURAL AFFILIATION:** N/A**ARCHITECT / BUILDER:** Milliken & Bevin, Architects (Elizabeth Hopkins Bevin and Newton P. Bevin)  
Edward Birdsall, General Contractor**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE** (see continuation sheets 8-14 through 8-23)**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES****BIBLIOGRAPHY** (see continuation sheets 9-24)**PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS):** N/A

- 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 (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency (*National Park Service, Guadalupe Mountains National Park*)
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 19

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wallace E. Pratt Residence, also called the "Ship on the Desert," is an early modernist house in an astonishingly dramatic and remote high desert landscape. The New York-based architecture firm of Milliken & Bevin designed the long, low, stone-and-glass house in 1941, and it was completed by Newton P. Bevin and his wife, Elizabeth Hopkins Bevin, between 1941 and 1943. The house incorporates locally-quarried stone and wide expanses of glass to blend into the surrounding landscape, and it is tied together with steel trusses that allow for a flat roof. As an outstanding example of early 20th-century high-style modernism in the Trans-Pecos region, the house is nominated to the National Register under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, at the state level; and under Criterion B, at the state level, for its association with Wallace E. Pratt, a petroleum geologist who pioneered in the techniques of scientific oil exploration and who subsequently became vice president of the Humble Oil & Refining Company and later of the Standard Oil Company.

### Wallace E. Pratt (1885 - 1981)<sup>3</sup>

Wallace Everette Pratt was born on March 15, 1885, in Phillipsburg, Kansas. After graduating in 1908 with a bachelor's degree in geology from the University of Kansas, the 22-year-old Pratt began his career as an assistant with the Kansas Geological Survey. From 1909 to 1916, he worked in the Philippines—then a territory of the United States—becoming chief of its Division of Mines in 1912. In 1916 Pratt returned to the U.S., first moving to Houston to work for the Texas Company (Texaco), and in 1918 he joined the Humble Oil & Refining Company as its first staff geologist.

Before that time, Humble Oil approached the search for oil using a "hit or miss" methodology that lacked scientific basis. In the year after Pratt joined the company, it added 10 more geologists who demonstrated that successful oil exploration was dependent upon a strong understanding of geologic science. Early in his career with Humble Oil, Pratt and his team of geologists correctly interpreted the structure of the enormous Mexia field in East Texas, which was discovered in October 1920. Based upon information collected in Pratt's studies of the region, the company bought leases on the structure and developed its production, claiming substantial oil reserves. This work on the Mexia field and at another large, productive leased site in Powell, Texas, in 1923 established the success of the Humble Oil & Refining Company.

Pratt was interested in the progress of the scientific field of geology and was always pushing for Humble Oil to incorporate the latest technologies in its explorations. In 1922, when he studied the results obtained by the use of geophysical instruments to locate salt domes on the Texas Gulf Coast, Pratt introduced these methods to Humble Oil's practice. Following Pratt's recommendations, in 1924 Humble Oil set up a research group for geophysics and established a Houston location for geophysics research and development, and the manufacture of a refraction seismograph recording in the field. He also persuaded Humble Oil to lease oil and gas rights on the King Ranch at a time when South Texas was thought to have little or no oil; by 1972 the King Ranch had nearly 600 producing oil and gas wells, and it was the site of the largest natural gas processing plant in the world.

Pratt served as Humble Oil & Refining Company's chief geologist and later director, eventually becoming its vice-president. In 1937 he joined the staff of Humble's parent company, the Standard Oil Company, in New Jersey, quickly rising through the ranks to become its director, then a member of its executive committee, and, finally, its vice-president. Pratt retired from Standard Oil in 1945 and embarked on a long career as a consulting geologist in private practice. During

<sup>3</sup> Information for this section adapted from the Guadalupe Mountains National Park website, accessed on 14 November 2008 at: <<http://www.nps.gov/gumo/historyculture/pratt.htm>> and from Martin Donell Kohout, "Pratt, Wallace Everette," Handbook of Texas Online website, accessed on 11 December at <<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/PP/fpr21.html>>.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 20

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

his retirement he served for two years on the National Security Resources Board and one year as a consultant to the Atomic Energy Commission. He returned to Texas permanently in 1949.

Pratt was widely recognized among geologists for his publications, including more than one hundred papers and the book *Oil in the Earth*. He was a founder of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists and in 1920 was elected its fourth president. The association awarded Pratt its first Sidney Powers Medal in 1945, and a 1972 Human Needs Award. He was the director of the American Petroleum Institute for several years and was awarded its Gold Medal for Distinguished Achievement in 1954. The American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers awarded Pratt the Anthony F. Lucas Medal in 1948. The Permian Basin Petroleum Museum inducted Pratt into its Hall of Fame in 1969, and the directors of the International Petroleum Exposition named Pratt the "Grand Old Man of Exploration" in 1976. Wallace E. Pratt died at his home in Tucson, Arizona, at the age of 96 on December 25, 1981.

### Pratt and Guadalupe Mountains National Park<sup>4</sup>

In 1921 Wallace E. Pratt traveled with two West Texas oil-lease brokers to Pecos, Texas, in order to purchase leases for the Humble Oil and Refining Company. While waiting for a meeting with local landowners, a Pecos attorney, J.A. Drane, offered Pratt an opportunity to visit what he called "the most beautiful spot in Texas." The attorney took Pratt through arid scrub desert and high mountains in West Texas until they reached the hidden woodland deep within McKittrick Canyon, which sheltered a free-flowing stream that ran its entire length. A succession of miniature waterfalls formed when travertine deposits created dams along the watercourse. Maple, walnut, oak, and madrone trees grew near desert plants like cactus and agave, all enclosed by steep walls formed when the creek cut through the limestone of the Capitan Reef. On the return to Pecos, Drane told Pratt that the McCombs Ranch—containing part of McKittrick Canyon—was for sale.

With two partners, Pratt purchased the ranch for a summer vacation spot; the partners had wanted a place to entertain clients with deer hunts and quiet relaxation, but Pratt appreciated the canyon for its unique geology. After the stock market crash of 1929, Pratt bought out his partners and owned a major portion of the canyon by 1930. Pratt engaged Houston architect John Staub to design a home for him in McKittrick Canyon, and construction began during the winter of 1931-32.<sup>5</sup> The "Stone Cabin," as it came to be called, or "Manzanital," as Pratt had named it, was only four rooms and made of locally-quarried stone selected by Pratt himself; always a geologist, he looked for "silty limestones, thin-bedded and closely jointed by clean, vertical fractures." The Pratts lived in the stone cabin during the summer months, but a flood in the canyon led them to rethink their plans to live there full-time. Pratt decided to build another house on higher ground. He hired the New York-based architecture firm of Milliken & Bevin in 1941 to design a rather modernist, more contemporary house as compared to the "park rustic" style of the Staub cabin.

Constructed shortly thereafter, Pratt and his wife lived in the house for nearly 15 years. The retired geologist, still actively involved with various consulting projects, would often fly a small plane between this relatively isolated house and an office in Carlsbad, New Mexico. The couple enjoyed the quiet of this desert home without a telephone, but as they grew older their health concerns required that they give up the solitude of this retreat, and so they moved permanently to Arizona in 1963. Pratt's concern for this West Texas property prompted his decision to donate the land to the National Park Service in 1959. The initial acquisition was 4,942 acres which formed the nucleus of what was to become the

<sup>4</sup> Information for this section adapted from the Guadalupe Mountains National Park website, accessed on 14 November 2008 at: <<http://www.nps.gov/gumo/historyculture/prattcabin.htm>>; also Judith K. Fabry, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park: An Administrative History* (Santa Fe: Southwest Cultural Resources Center, Southwest Region, Division of History, 1988), accessed on December 11, 2008 at: <<http://www.nps.gov/archive/gumo/adhi/adhi.htm>>.

<sup>5</sup> "Wallace Pratt Lodge" was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 21

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Guadalupe Mountains National Park, and an additional 690 acres were acquired from Pratt, his wife and children between 1960 and 1961. Although Congress authorized the purchase of additional lands in 1966, the Guadalupe Mountains National Park was not officially established until 1972.

## Architectural Significance of the Wallace E. Pratt Residence

Architects Henry O. Milliken and Newton P. Bevin were known for their lavish residences for New York's elite, and much of their work followed the École des Beaux Arts tradition of symmetry and classically-inspired ornamentation. Bevin graduated from Princeton University in 1917 and earned his architectural degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1922.<sup>6</sup> By this time, Milliken already had established his architectural practice among New York City's elite patron. In 1920 he designed a 5-story home in the Georgian style for Dr. Foster Kennedy at 14 Sutton Square, in an enclave of large urban estates sharing a private walled garden along East 57th Street. The Kennedy House contributes to the Sutton Place Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.<sup>7</sup> In 1927 Bevin joined in partnership with Milliken, and their firm Milliken & Bevin was dissolved in 1944, one year prior to Milliken's death. In 1930-31, the firm designed an enormous teak trellis for the formal terraced gardens of "Clayton," the Roslyn, Long Island estate owned by Childs Frick, son of the industrialist Henry Clay Frick.<sup>8</sup> The firm of Milliken & Bevin also rehabilitated an 18-story building at 359-375 Madison Avenue, turning it into a hotel and shops in 1933.<sup>9</sup> It is not clear how Wallace Pratt came to know the architects or their work, but as an important member of both the Humble Oil and Standard Oil companies, it is likely that the connection was established through the social networks of New York and Washington.

Letters from Wallace Pratt in the archives of the national park reveal that the house was begun in 1941, but that construction had to be stopped due to material shortages during World War II. According to Pratt's memory, construction resumed in 1945, but the May 1943 issue of *The New Pencil Points*—showing photographs of the completed building—suggest that Pratt's recollections of the building's completion is faulty. The journal article credits the design of the Pratt Residence to the firm of Milliken & Bevin, yet Pratt's letters to Mr. and Mrs. Newton P. Bevin and to the park's superintendent both state that it was the Bevins who designed this house together. According to Pratt's letters, Elizabeth and Newton Bevin came to live at the Staub-designed cabin in the canyon during the construction of the Ship on the Desert, which was directed by building contractor Edward Birdsall of Carlsbad, New Mexico. As Pratt wrote in 1974: "Being on the ground, they could guide the contractor and closely supervise the operation. Equally important to us, they could personally direct the selection of the 'natural building blocks' being gathered up along the base of the adjacent mountain front."<sup>10</sup>

In May 1943, the Pratt Residence was featured in the architectural trade journal *The New Pencil Points*. During this period, the publication was known for its lively musings on the definition of "modern" and "modernism." The article provided photographs of the house under construction and upon completion, as well as plans of both floors and a

<sup>6</sup> Obituary for Newton P. Bevin, *New York Times* (October 11, 1976), 30.

<sup>7</sup> Merrill Hesch, New York State Department of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, "Sutton Place Historic District" National Register Nomination (1985).

<sup>8</sup> Robert R. MacKay, Anthony K. Baker, and Carol A. Traynor, eds., *Long Island Country Houses and Their Architects, 1860-1940* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 112-114. Frick named the property, which had once belonged to the poet and journalist William Cullen Bryant, after his parents' estate in Pittsburgh, and today it is home to the Nassau County Museum of Art. Also see Ellen K. Popper, "Renovation Revives Opulent Roslyn Garden," *New York Times* (September 12, 1993), 718.

<sup>9</sup> "Sales in New Jersey...Manhattan Alterations," *New York Times* (December 6, 1933), 44.

<sup>10</sup> Wallace E. Pratt, "Memorandum for Mr. Donald A. Dayton, Superintendent, Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Park: On Historic Structures in Guadalupe Mountains National Park," June 13, 1974. GUMO archives.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 22

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

fascinating description of the architects' design. While on the one hand the article lauded the technology necessary to create the building and even to inhabit it, it also focused on the beauty of the natural setting and the building's ability to fit integrally with the site:

About a mile west of the house the Guadalupe Mountains rise nearly 10,000 feet. To the east is the open Texas plain. Wherever water runs there is dark green foliage; the hills are gray gypsum; and the masonry walls of the house are of local limestone of a tawny color, in a wide range of shades varying from almost white to almost black. The stone cleaves nicely, with one edge naturally almost as perfectly square and true as though dressed. The stucco used on the steel walls is adobe color, the sash and doors warm white, and the principle door prune color.<sup>11</sup>

The Pratt Residence, very forward-thinking for its time—especially in far west Texas—has its precedent in the work of the French architectural theorist LeCorbusier, who stated in his 1923 manifesto *Vers une Architecture* ("Towards an Architecture") that a "house is a machine for living." He also had a wide appreciation for the design of automobiles and large ocean liners, and his buildings were often likened to ships or other mechanical marvels. LeCorbusier's minimalist, industrially-inspired residential machines usually stood in stark contrast to their surroundings, which were often large, pastoral estates. His houses perched on delicate columns, barely touching the ground, hovering over the landscape like viewing pavilions, yet they provided more than a passive interaction with nature. At the Villa Savoye, which Le Corbusier designed and constructed in suburban Paris between 1928 and 1931, the garden flows under the house, and a roof garden allows the landscape to cover it, as well. Large expanses of glass allow views of the pastoral surroundings to flow throughout the house, and the Wallace E. Pratt Residence, though low and ground-hugging, follows this example.

*The New Pencil Points* article described the contrast between site and structure, and the garden and the machine, without fully embracing the nautical theme: "A long, low house seemed to fit the terrain best, and afforded the opportunity of designing a structure consisting of transverse masonry bearing walls with light steel joists and steel studs between. The result is rather ship-like; but the problem stopped short of complete analogy and, the architects being honest, so did the solution. For the best air, light, and view each room has east-west exposure. Winds come from the southwest."<sup>12</sup> For the author of this *Pencil Points* article, it was the technology of the airplane, more than that of a ship, that influenced the home's design:

Here are forcibly demonstrated the possible effects of travel by air on some homes of the future; the owner, a scientist, works in a far distant metropolis and commuted to this desert home by private plane. This example is obviously a solution for the man who is at least well-to-do.... The house is 50 miles from the nearest town, though a state highway is close by; it is most accessible by air and has its own landing field and hangar. The property is a cattle ranch, with a ranch house a mile or more distant; little human help—to say nothing of machines or the conventional amenities—is available.<sup>13</sup>

*The Machine in the Garden*, a 1964 book by cultural historian Leo Marx, analyzes an acutely American phenomenon of the industrial age: the longing for the lush, unexplored "garden" or "wilderness," and the anxiety over its loss due to technological advancements. In Marx's thesis, the "machine" necessarily overwhelms the "garden" as it works to transform raw "nature" into products for consumer consumption. The railroad—its distant sound an unnerving disturbance in Henry Thoreau's Walden idyll—unified the vast garden of North America, and was instrumental in transporting

<sup>11</sup> "Architects: Milliken and Bevin," *The New Pencil Points* (May 1943), 61.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

United States Department of the Interior  
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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 23

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

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resources from coast to coast. Other technologies and machines worked to harness the power of nature, moving tons of rock in search of oil, coal, gold and other metals, or transforming trees into lumber, and turning water into steam or electricity. While the machine might seem to some, like the transcendentalist Thoreau, to be out of place in the garden, in the eyes of others the machine makes wild nature into something familiar, understandable, comfortable, and even profitable.<sup>14</sup> For Wallace Pratt, the geologist turned oil magnate, this was especially true.

The house is mostly glass on its east and west sides, allowing for wide views of the surrounding landscape, and the second story room, which Pratt used as a "music room,"<sup>15</sup> was the perfect, sheltered perch or observation deck from which to keep a safe distance from "wild" nature. The "Ship on the Desert" incorporates local stone and a flat roof in order to maintain an unobtrusive presence, and it functions as a viewing pavilion for the dramatic show of the Guadalupe Mountains. The Pratt Residence illustrates the geologist's interest in and concern for the aesthetic qualities of the area and in the preservation of this environment. Although designed in a modernist style, the house reveals Pratt's conservationist leanings in its long, low profile and its careful arrangement of stone colors and shapes to blend harmoniously with its surroundings.

Today the Pratt Residence is utilized by the National Park Service to house researchers visiting the park for extended periods, and it is not generally open to the public. The house and its cultural landscape retain a good degree of its physical integrity, and its setting and feeling have not been compromised. Designed before U.S. involvement in World War II and initially completed before the war's end, the house is an unusually early example of modernist architecture within the rural Trans-Pecos region of Texas, therefore the Wallace E. Pratt Residence is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture at the state level of significance. It is also eligible under Criterion B, at the state level of significance, for its association with the pioneering geologist and oil explorer Wallace E. Pratt, as his last home in the state of Texas. The house served as Pratt's home during the pinnacle of his career as an executive with Standard Oil, and during the early phase of his retirement through 1959, as he continued work as a consulting geologist. As such, it remains the Texas property that is most closely associated with his productive life.

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<sup>14</sup> Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

<sup>15</sup> Wallace E. Pratt interview with William C. Griggs, Texas Tech University, 1974. GUMO archives.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 24

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

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**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert), Salt Flat vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Page 4

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA****ACREAGE OF PROPERTY:** 20 Acres**UTM REFERENCES** (see continuation sheet 10-25)

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:** Located within the Guadalupe Mountains National Park, 55 miles south of Carlsbad, New Mexico, the Ship on the Desert property sits near the center of a 20-acre tract of land. The site boundary follows the looping perimeter road around the structures, swelling to include the water tanks and access road to the northwest, elk fence poles and windbreak vegetation to the southwest of the loop road, and extends down around the cattle guard and access gate in the southeast corner. To the east, the boundary expands to include the cane patch tank and then swells again to the west around the loop road to include the tack room, corral, and greenhouse foundation. The loop road serves as the site's northeast and southeast boundaries. The east boundary follows the perimeter road and connects back into the main access road at the stone entry gate, while the northwest boundary continues up canyon to include the stone water tanks and trough.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:** The boundaries of the property include the main residence, outbuildings, historic plantings, windbreaks, stone walls, fencing, access drives and other structures historically associated with the ownership and occupation of the property by Wallace E. Pratt.

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

**NAME / TITLE:** Fred Armstrong, Chief of Natural and Cultural Resources; with Carrie Mardorf, CLI Coordinator, NPS; Rachel Leibowitz, Ph.D., Texas Historical Commission; and Gregory Smith, Texas Historical Commission

**ORGANIZATION:** Guadalupe Mountains National Park**DATE:** June 2, 2011**STREET & NUMBER:** 400 Pine Canyon Drive**TELEPHONE:** (915) 828-3251**CITY OR TOWN:** Salt Flat**STATE:** Texas**ZIP CODE:** 79847-4755**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION****MAPS** (see continuation sheet Map-26 through Map-33)**PHOTOGRAPHS** (see continuation sheet Photo-43 through Photo-45)**ADDITIONAL ITEMS** (see continuation sheets Figure-34 through Figure-42)**PROPERTY OWNER****NAME:** Guadalupe Mountains National Park**STREET & NUMBER:** 400 Pine Canyon Drive**TELEPHONE:** (915) 828-3251**CITY OR TOWN:** Salt Flat**STATE:** Texas**ZIP CODE:** 79847-4755

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 25

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

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## UTM REFERENCES

Zone 13

	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>
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B	523102	3536067
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D	522952	3535709

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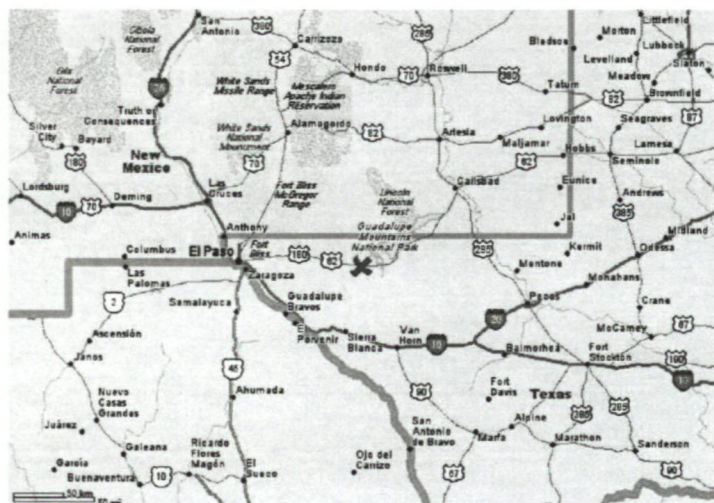
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)

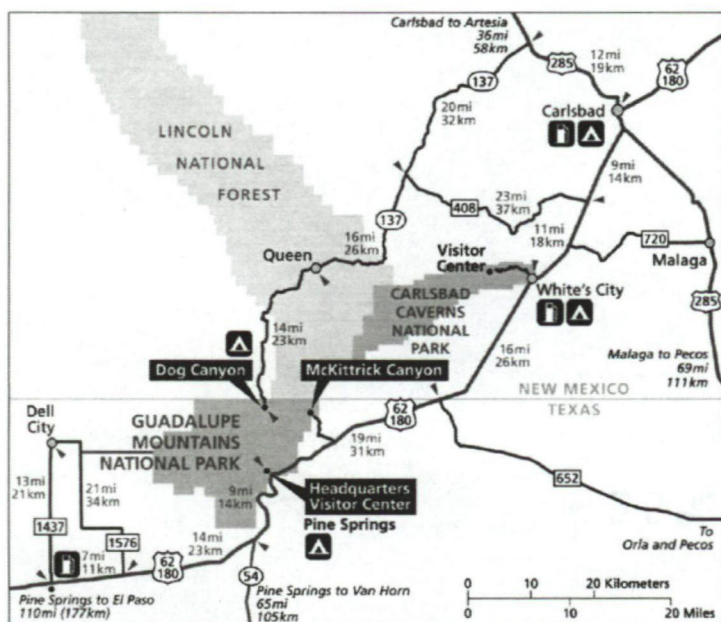
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Section MAP Page 26

Area map of West Texas showing Guadalupe Mountains National Park, relative to El Paso, TX and Carlsbad, NM



Location of Guadalupe Mountains National Park, relative to Carlsbad Caverns National Park and the Lincoln National Forest in New Mexico



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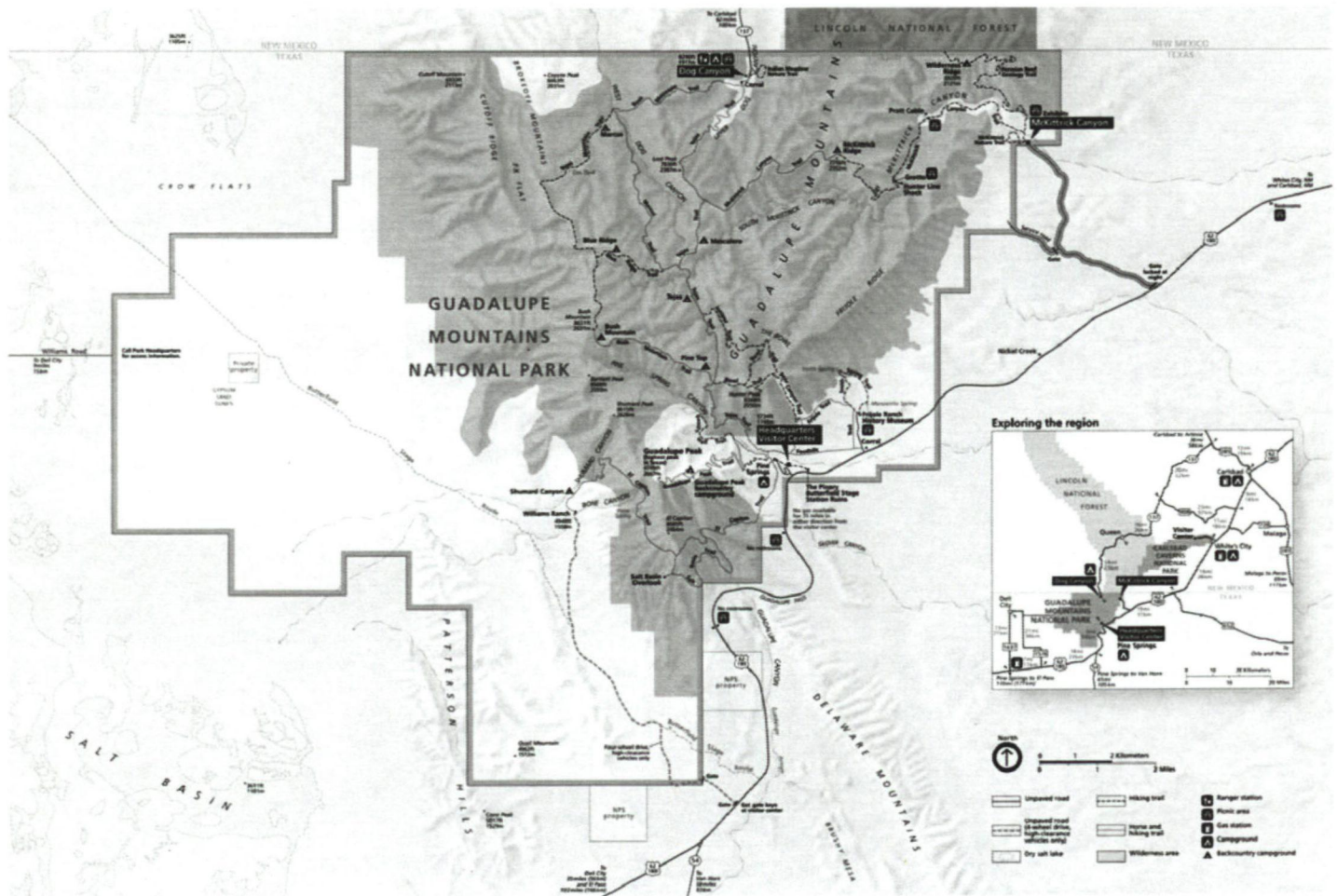
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)

Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Section MAP Page 27

Guadalupe Mountains National Park. The Wallace E. Pratt Residence, not open to the public, is not marked.



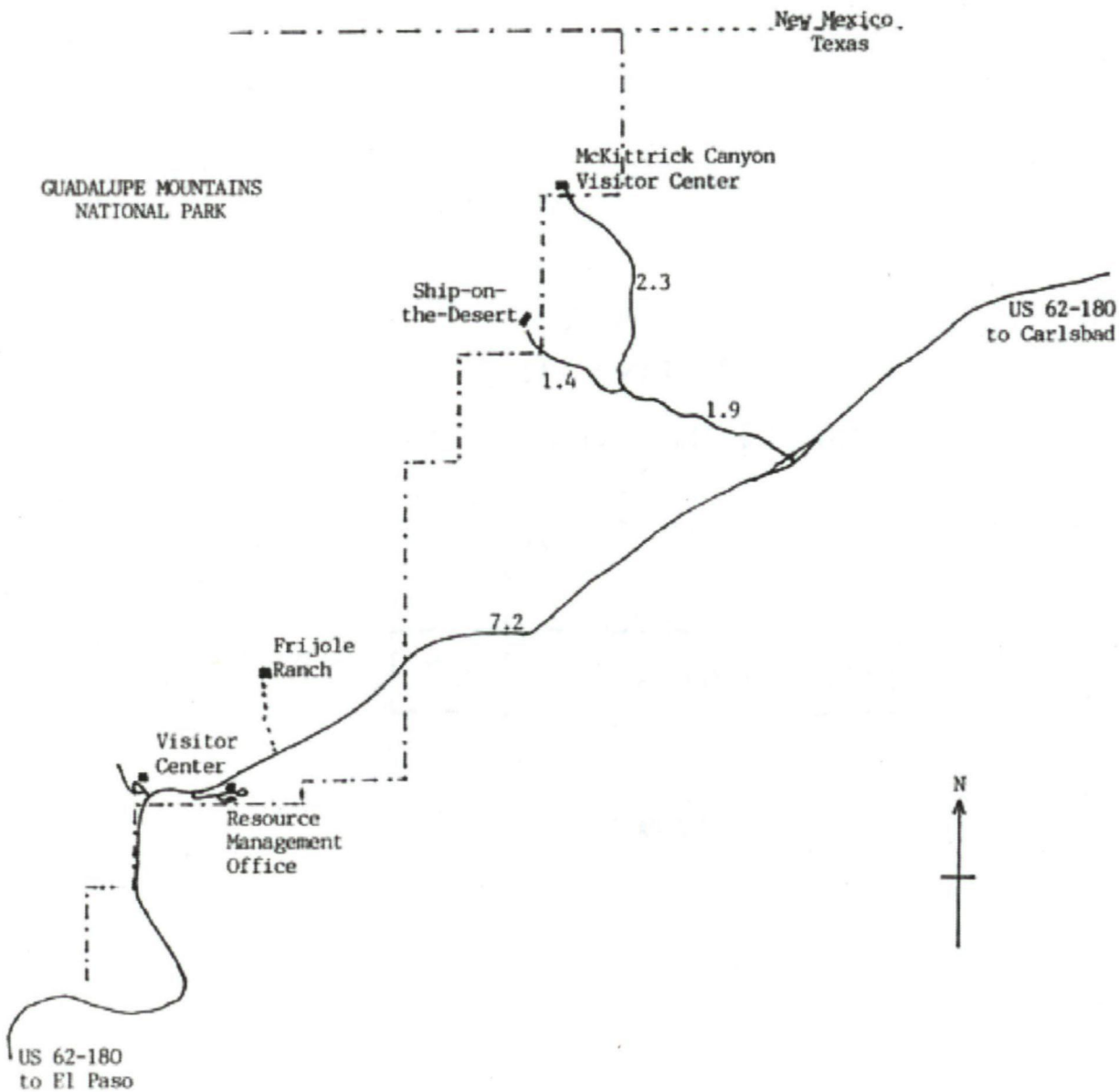
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section MAP Page 28

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Location of the Wallace E. Pratt Residence ("Ship on the Desert") within the park



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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section MAP Page 29

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Boundary of Wallace E. Pratt Residence / Ship on the Desert. Source: GUMO GIS files, May 5, 2011.



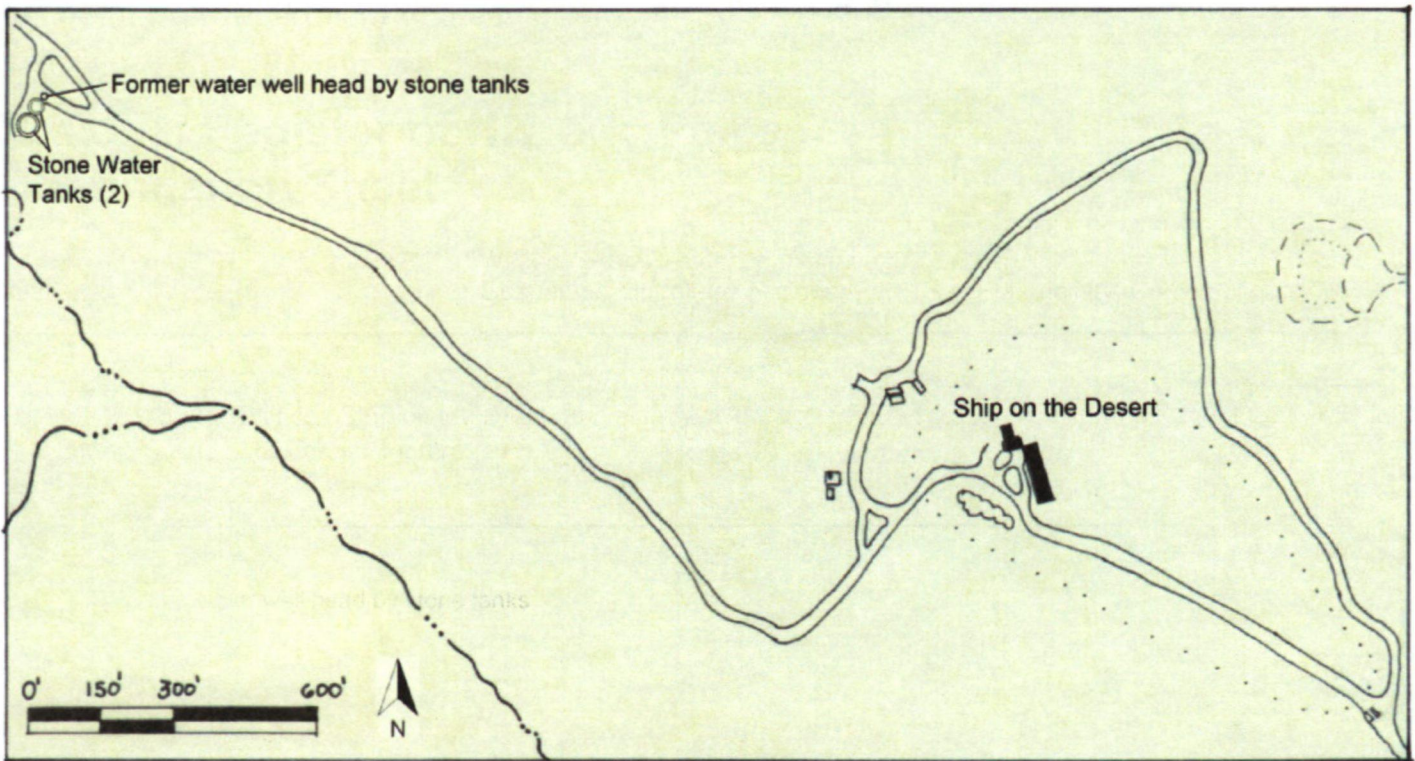
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section MAP Page 30

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Wallace E. Pratt Residence / Ship on the Desert site plan showing contributing resources within the entire CLI area, 2011.  
Drawn by Michele Schuster, CLI intern, NPS.



Guadalupe Mountains National Park  
Ship on the Desert Research Facility  
Michele Schuster, NPS

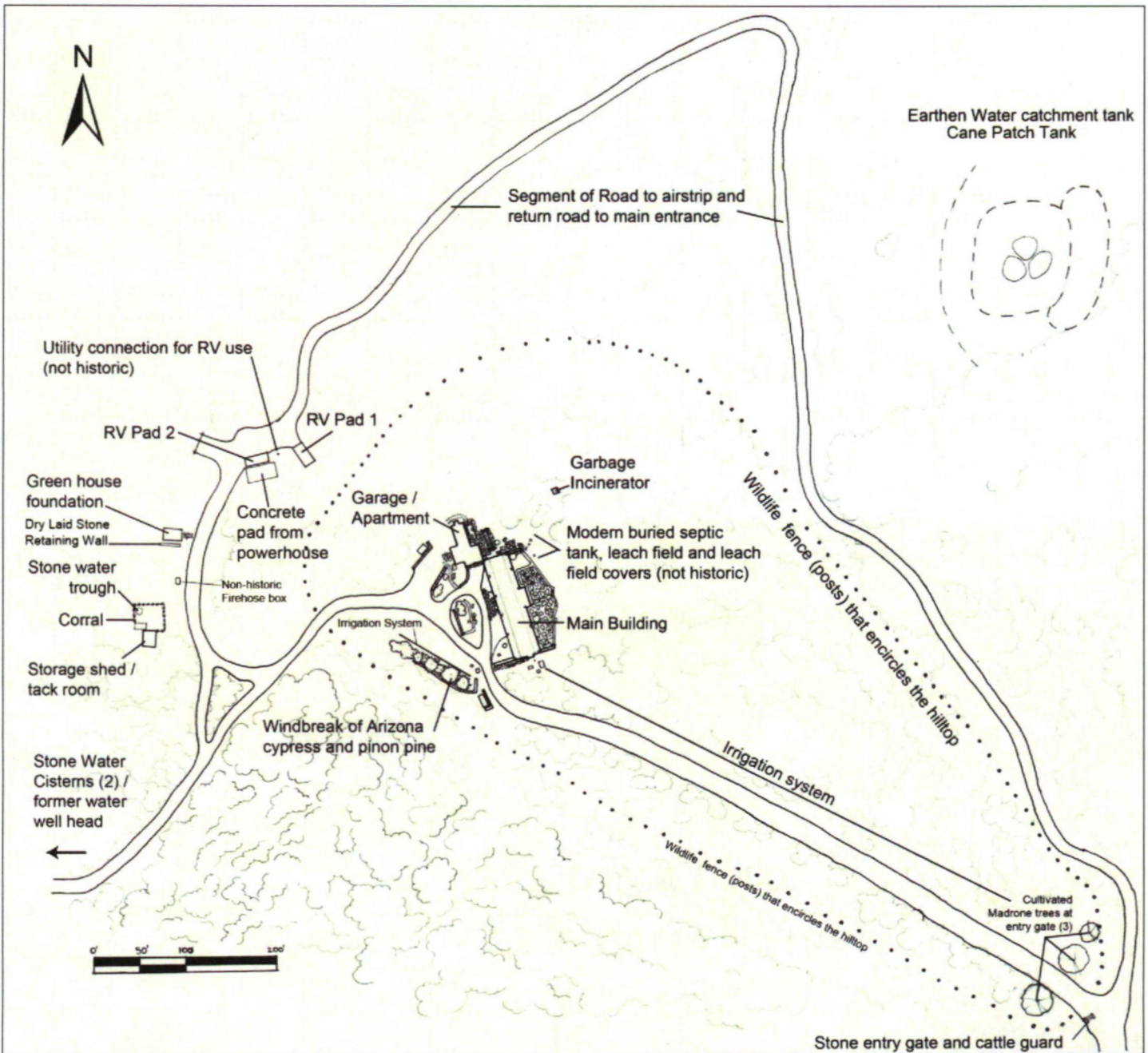
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section MAP Page 31

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Wallace E. Pratt Residence / Ship on the Desert site plan showing contributing resources, 2011. Drawn by Michele Schuster, CLI intern, NPS.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

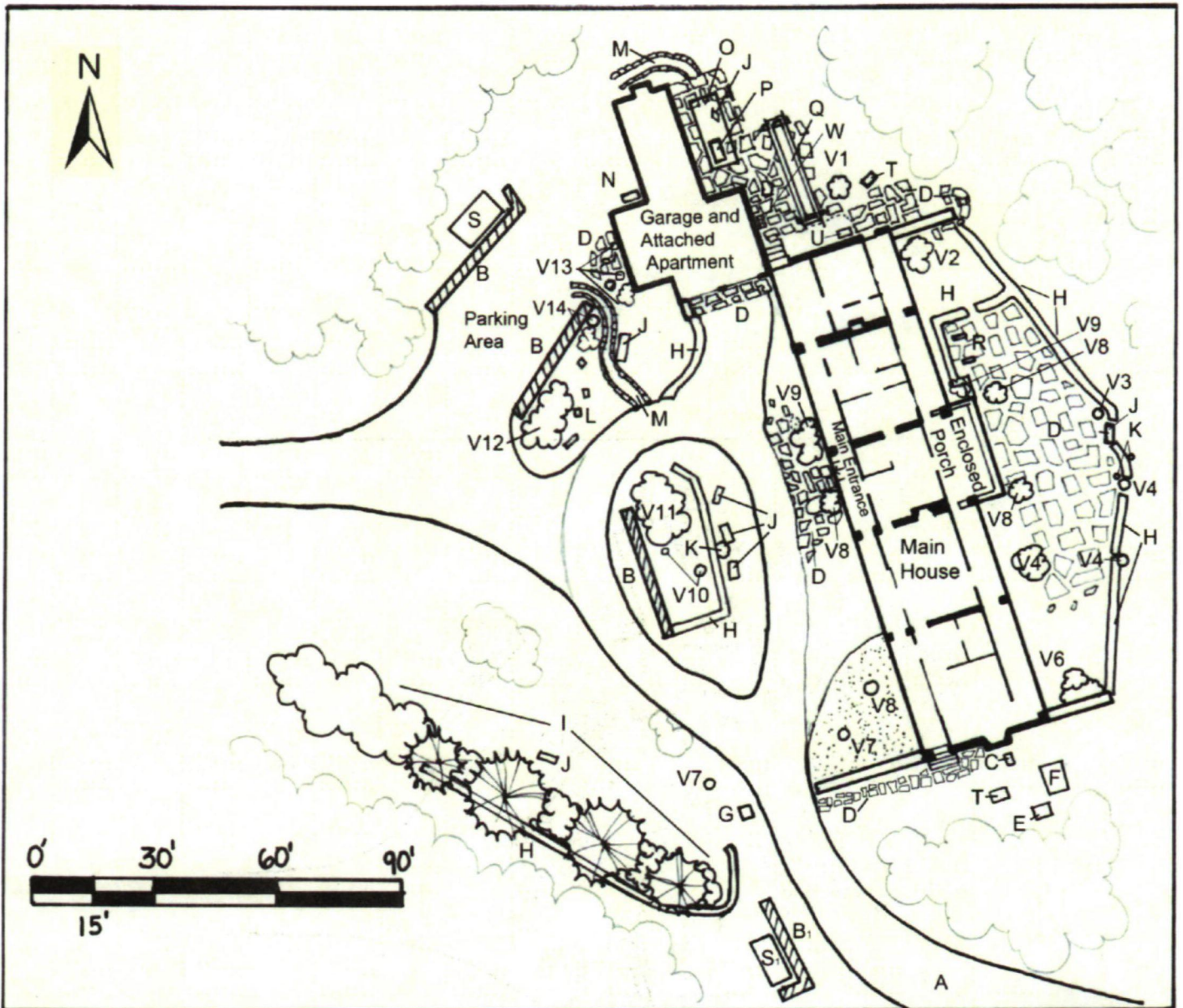
Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)

Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Section MAP Page 32

Wallace E. Pratt Residence / Ship on the Desert detailed site plan showing contributing features, 2011. (Key on following page). Drawn by Michele Schuster, CLI intern, NPS.

(Map key on following page)



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section MAP Page 33Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

## Map Key

<b>Historic Features</b>	
A	Paved Entrance Road
B	Dry Stacked Stone Walls, 5' High
C	Valve at Southeast end of house for irrigation system
D	Irregular Flagstone Paving
E	Cistern Cover
F	Underground rainwater cistern
G	Stone Gate Post
H	Low Stone Retaining Wall, Dry Stacked
I	Windbreak of Arizona Cypress (decadent) and pinon pine
J	Stone Bench
K	Natural Stone Bird Bath Feature
L	Decorative Upright Stone Garden
M	Cobble lined path
N	Utility Box
O	Metal Pole and Canopy Shade Structure
P	Stone Table
Q	Clothesline
R	Stone Table (top damaged and missing)
S	LPG Tank (year stamped 1957)
U	Utility crawlway access door
W	LPG Tank Valve Box
<b>Non-historic Features</b>	
B1	Stone block and mortar wall
S1	Propane Tank
T	Fire hose connections and boxes in the yard at each end of the house
<b>Incorporated or Cultivated Vegetation List</b>	
V1	Gray Oak
V2	Flameleaf Sumac tree with Texas Laurel shrubs beneath
V3	Stump of deceased apricot tree
V4	Gray Oak
V6	Mexican Buckeye hedge against wall, Evergreen Sumac shrub in front
V7	Siberian Elm; western-most deceased, eastern-most decadent
V8	Pyracantha
V9	Pyracantha and Texas Laurel
V10	Desert Willows
V11	Vegetation cluster of Gray Oak (deceased specimen tree), sotol, and prickly pear
V12	Vegetation cluster of Gray Oak, Banana Yucca, Prickly Pear
V13	Texas Madrone, Gray Oak, Redberry Juniper, Skunkbush Sumac, and Prickly Pear
V14	Ocotillo and Banana Yucca

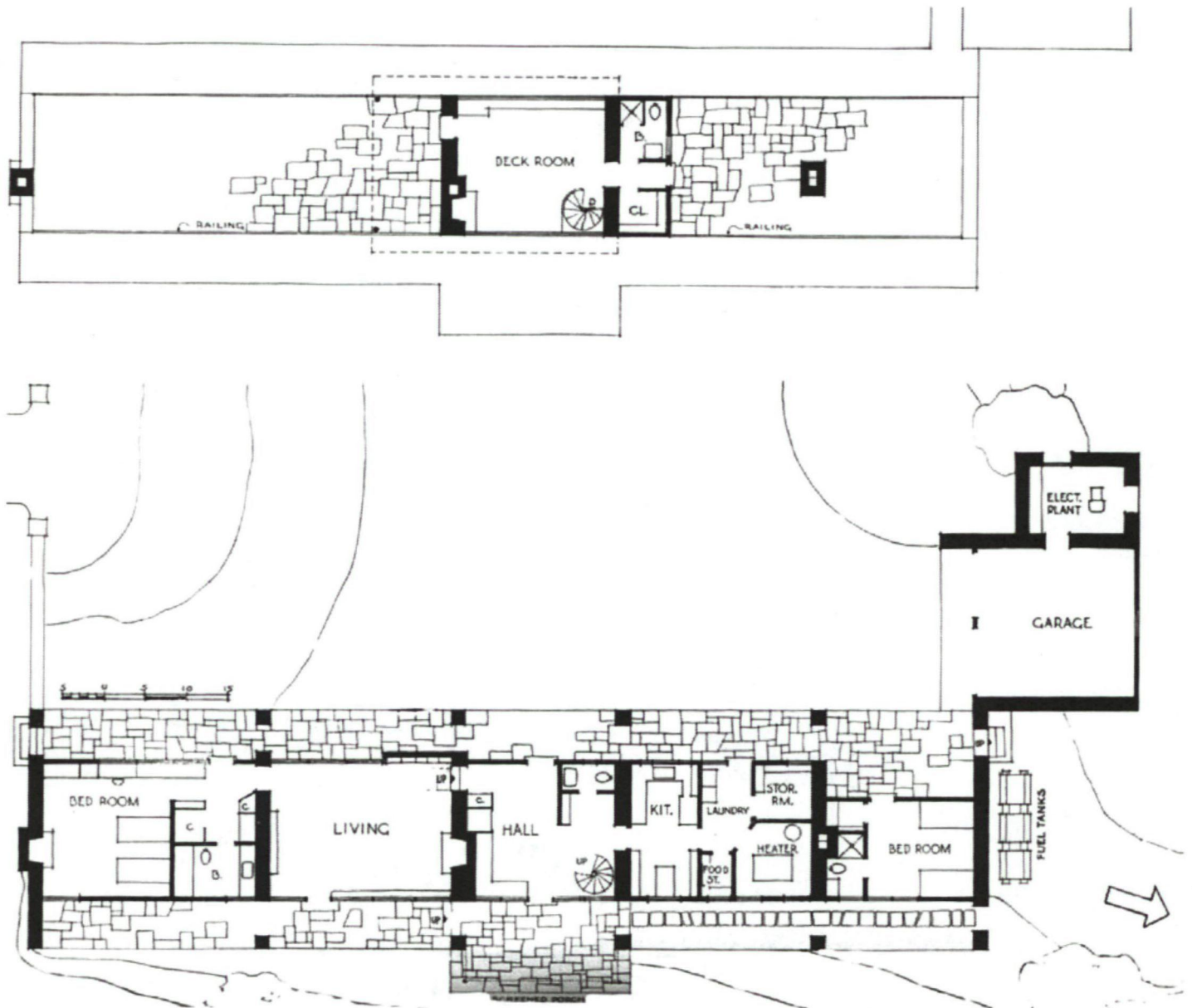
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Section Figure Page 34

Plan of the Wallace E. Pratt Residence as it appeared in *The New Pencil Points*, May 1943.



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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Figure Page 35

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Elevation drawings of the Wallace E. Pratt Residence, drawn by the National Park Service.



WEST ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION

PRATT RESIDENCE FRIJOLE CANYON  
GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

1 0 5 10 15 20 25  
graphic scale feet  
drawn by: james a. white aia-architect  
august 1973

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

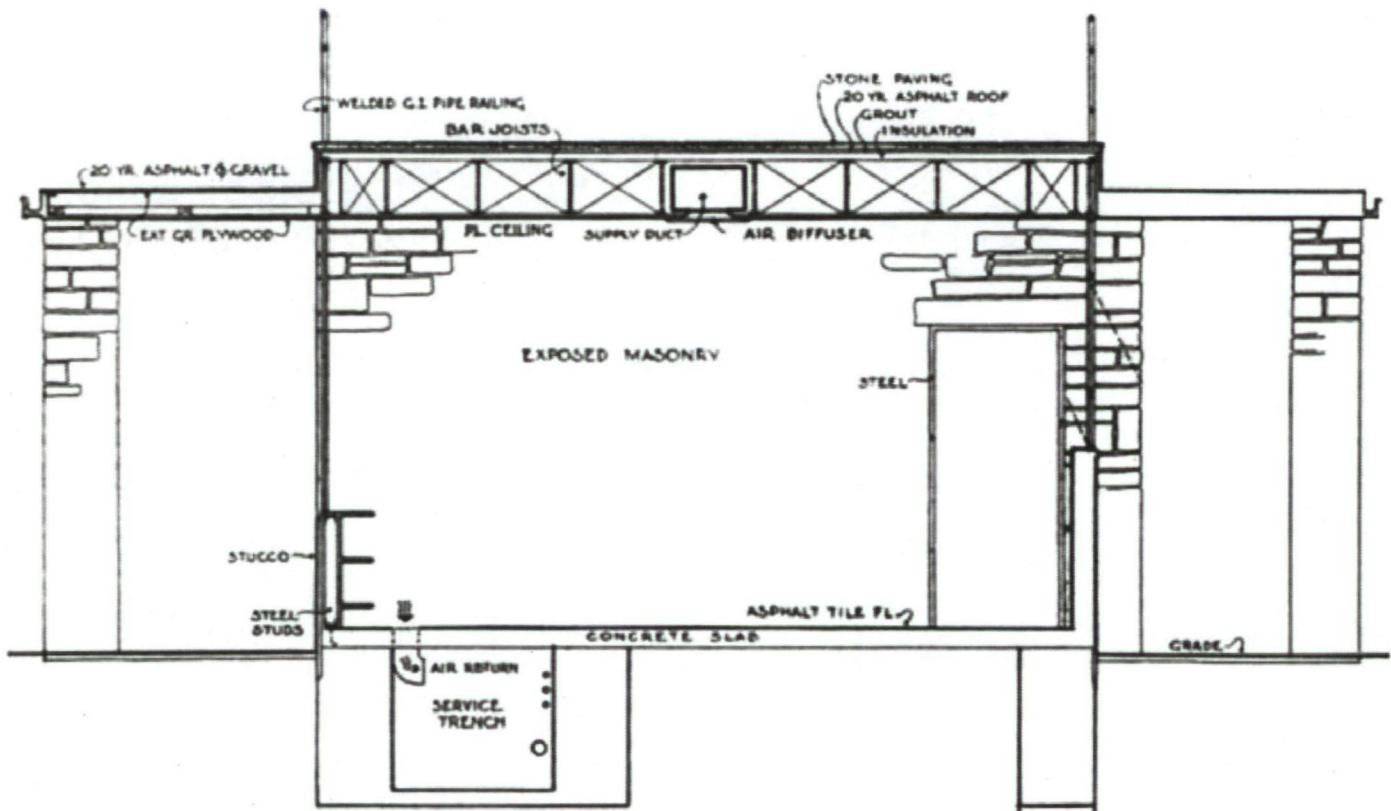
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)

Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

Section Figure Page 36

Section of the Wallace E. Pratt Residence in *The New Pencil Points*, May 1943.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Figure Page 37

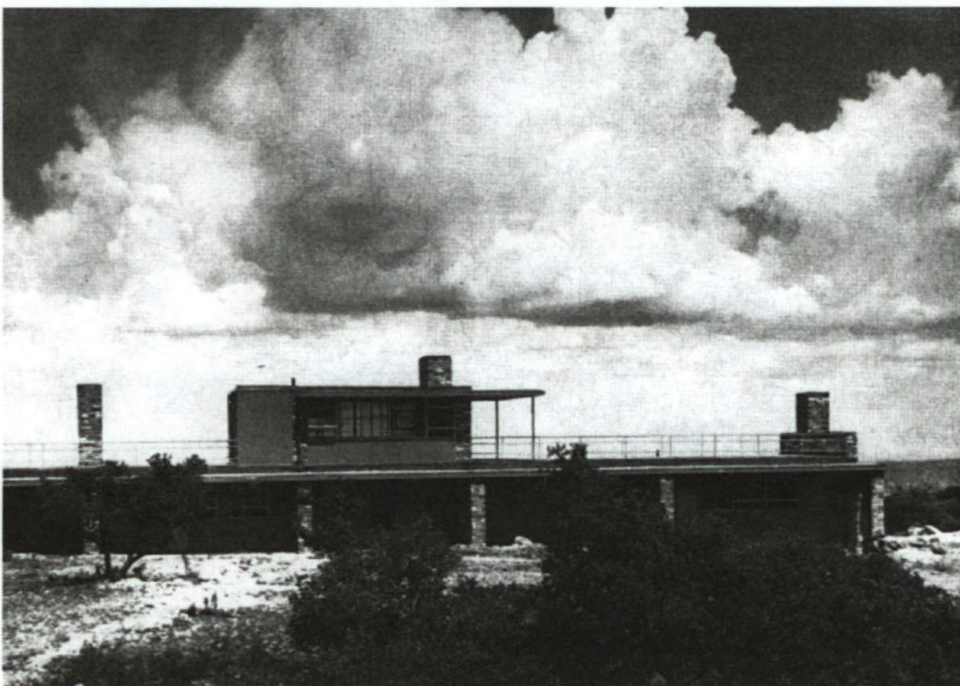
Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

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Wallace E. Pratt Residence, east façade. *The New Pencil Points*, May 1943



West (entrance) façade, the covered porch has not yet been enclosed. *The New Pencil Points*, May 1943.



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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Figure Page 38

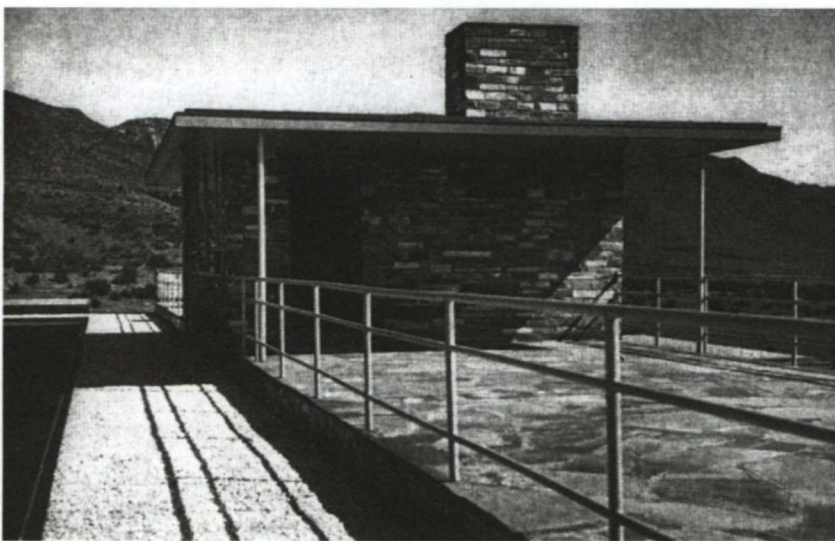
Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

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Detail of the west (entrance) façade. The porch has not yet been enclosed with storm windows, but the deep overhang clearly protects against the desert sun. From *The New Pencil Points*, May 1943.



Detail of the roof deck showing the stone floor, since removed. From *The New Pencil Points*, May 1943.



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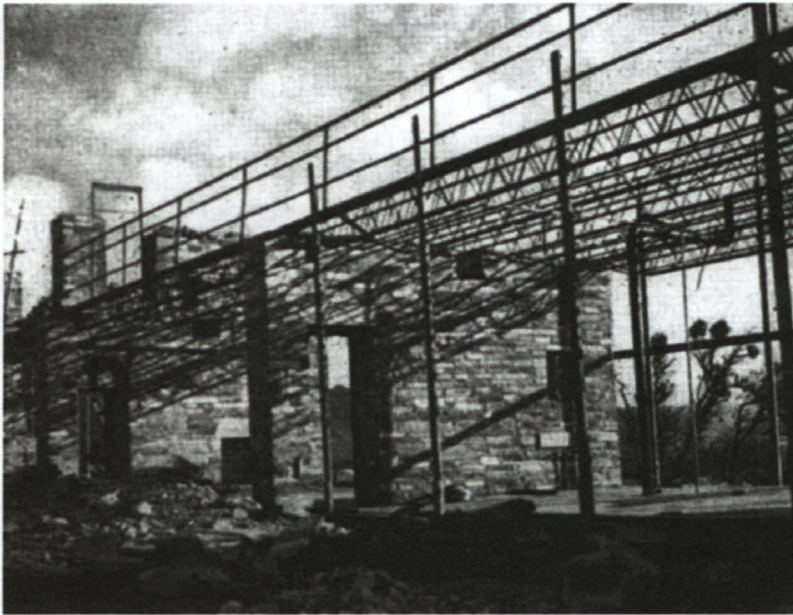
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Figure Page 39

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

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Construction photos revealed the simplicity of the stone and steel structure.  
*The New Pencil Points*, May 1943.



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National Park Service

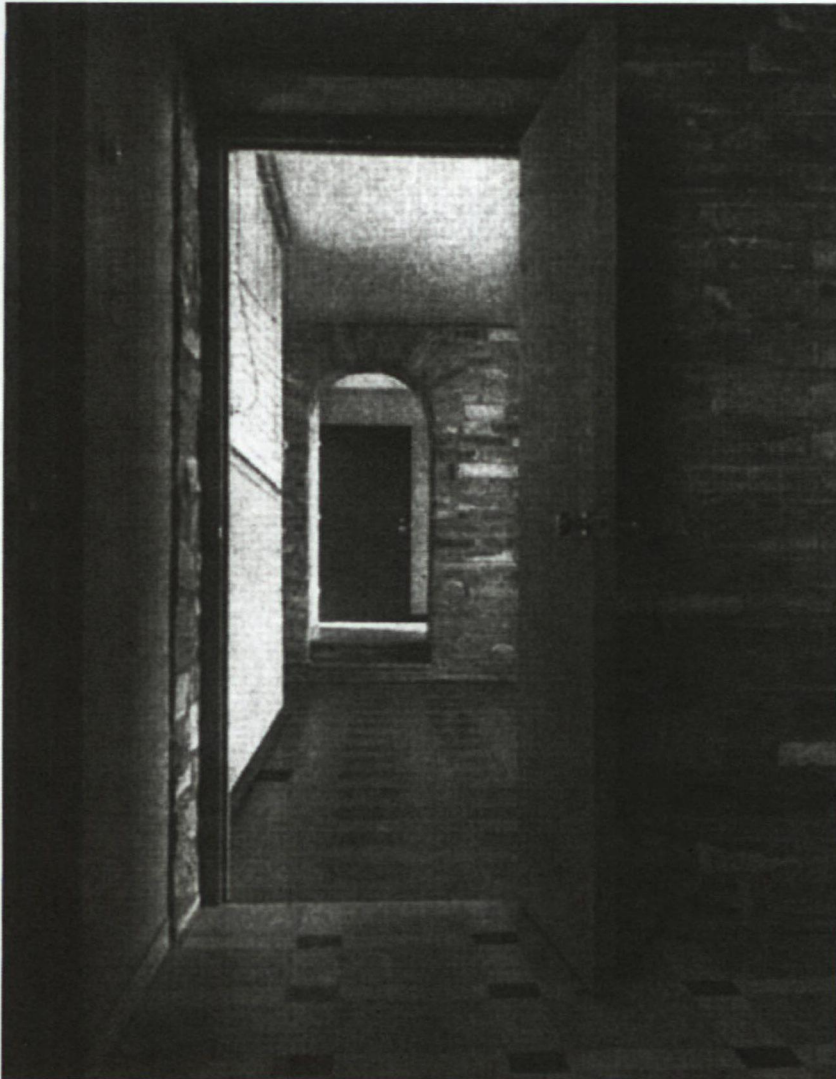
## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Figure Page 40

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

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From the master bedroom looking north toward the living room. The patterned arrangement of multi-colored linoleum floor tiles has been removed and replaced with more neutral linoleum tiles. *The New Pencil Points*, May 1943.



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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Figure Page 41

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

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Upstairs in the "captain's bridge" or "music room," facing south. The patterned linoleum has since been replaced. *The New Pencil Points*, May 1943.



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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Figure Page 42 Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

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Half-bathroom, first floor. *The New Pencil Points*, May 1943.



Kitchen with steel awning and hopper windows. *The New Pencil Points*, May 1943.



**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

Section PHOTO Page 43

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

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### PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park Salt Flat vicinity, Culberson County, Texas  
Photographed by Fred Armstrong, October 2011  
Digital files at the Texas Historical Commission

Photo 1

Contributing features, stone entry and planted madrone trees  
Camera facing northwest

Photo 2

Ship on the Desert, southwest elevation  
Camera facing northeast

Photo 3

Ship on the Desert, southwest elevation and garage  
Camera facing north

Photo 4

Ship on the Desert, southwest elevation, front entry, contributing vegetation and flagstone elements  
Camera facing northeast

Photo 5

Stone garden from front entry  
Camera facing west

Photo 6

Garage apartment (left) and garage (right), northwest elevation and contributing vegetation  
Camera facing southeast

Photo 7

Garage (right) and garage apartment (left), northeast elevation; contributing features of propane control box (l), pole clothesline, metal ramada, stone table  
Camera facing southwest

Photo 8

Ship on the Desert, northwest elevation, contributing flagstone and vegetation  
Camera facing southeast

Photo 9

Ship on the Desert, northwest elevation, non-contributing fire hose box (left), contributing pole clothesline  
Camera facing southeast

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section PHOTO Page 44

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

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Photo 10

Garbage incinerator, contributing feature  
Camera facing the south west

Photo 11

Ship on the Desert, northeast elevation; contributing vegetation, flagstone and remaining stone table legs  
Camera facing the south west

Photo 12

Ship on the Desert, northeast elevation, southeast portion  
Camera facing west

Photo 13

Ship on the Desert, southeast elevation; non-contributing fire hose box, contributing cistern covers and irrigation system;  
Camera facing west

Photo 14

Entrance breezeway along southwest elevation  
Camera facing southeast; main house entrance on left

Photo 15

Entry door (color, prune, as original) with rock hammer door knocker

Photo 16

Great room, southeast wall; original Pratt furnishings, wooden blinds, maple bookcases, piano.

Photo 17

Great room, southwest and northwest walls; original Pratt maple bookcase

Photo 18

Entry hall, northwest wall and northeast windows; wall sconce and spiral stairs  
Camera facing kitchen

Photo 19

Kitchen, west half; original metal base cabinets, stainless steel and butcher block counter

Photo 20

Upstairs music room (deck room) southeast wall with fireplace and door to partially covered deck; original Pratt table and chairs, once located at the Stone Cabin (Pratt Cabin) in McKittrick Canyon

Photo 21

Screen porch and backyard from entry hall  
Camera facing northeast

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section PHOTO Page 45

Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Desert)  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Salt Flat Vicinity, Culberson County, Texas

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Photo 22

Screen porch and northeast elevation  
Camera facing northwest

Photo 23

Tack room and pole corral, east elevation  
Camera facing west; buried water valve (foreground)

Photo 24

Corral stone water trough  
Camera facing west

Photo 25

Tack room, north elevation  
Camera facing south

Photo 26

Stock trough and stone water tanks, east sides  
Camera facing south

Photo 27

Ship on the Desert, southwest elevation and windbreak in foreground  
Camera facing northeast from road to stone tanks

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Pratt, Wallace E., House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Culberson

DATE RECEIVED: 11/04/11      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/29/11  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/14/11      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/20/11  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000927

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: Y    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    12.15.11 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 1



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 2



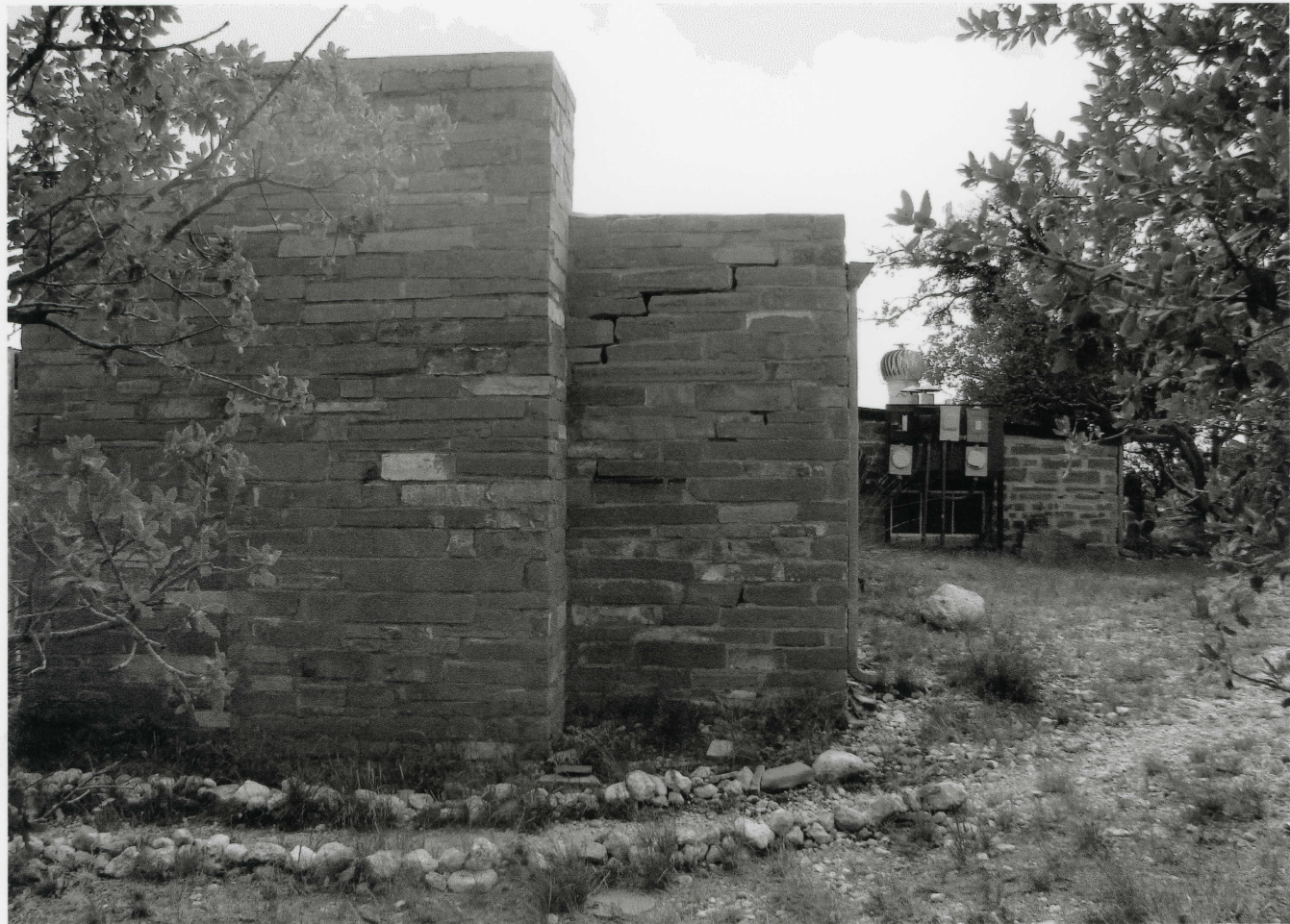
Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co TX  
photo 3



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Colberson Co. TX  
photo 4



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Colberson Co. TX  
photo 5



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 6



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 7



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 8





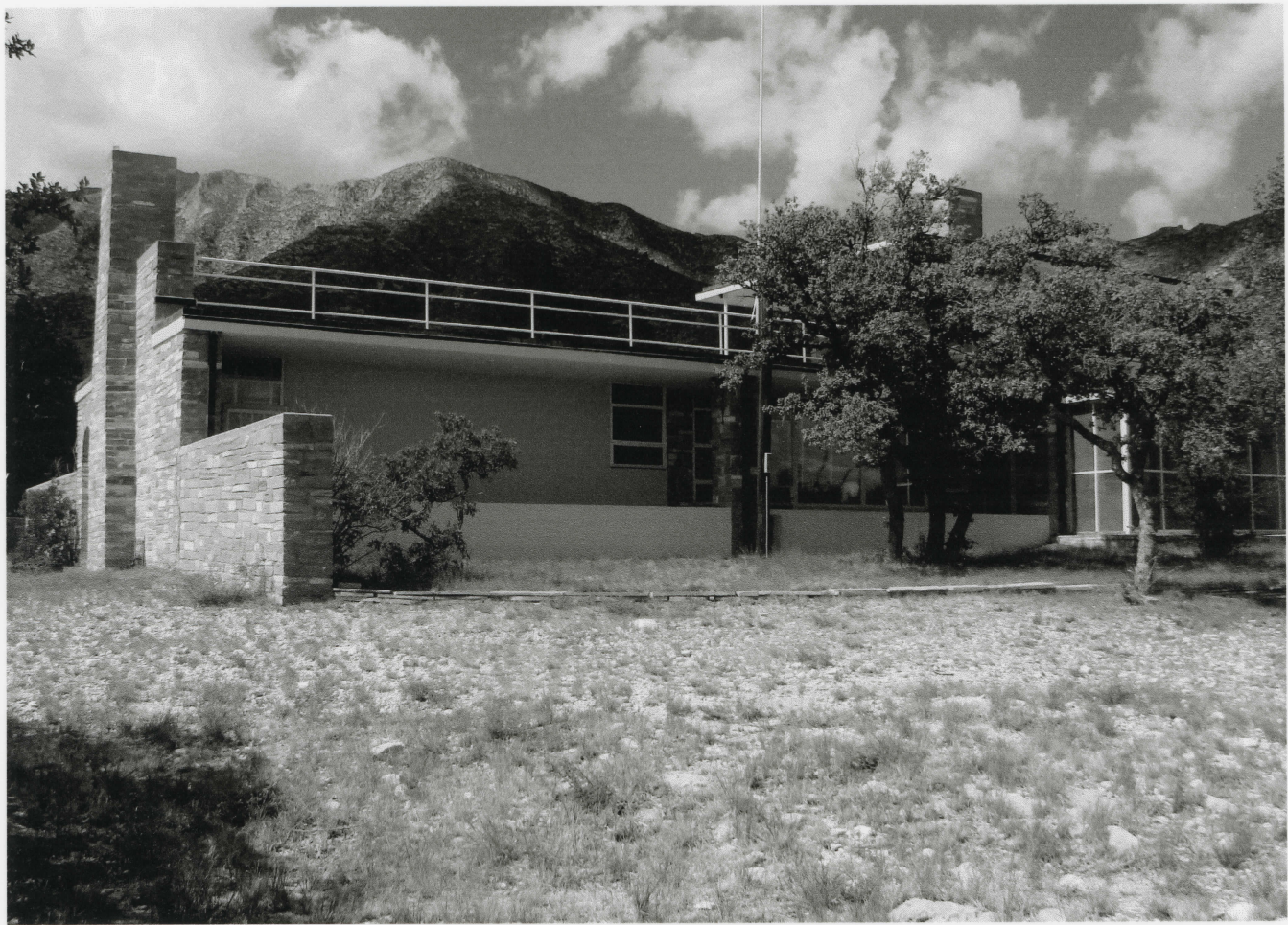
Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 9



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Colberson Co. TX  
photo 10



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 4



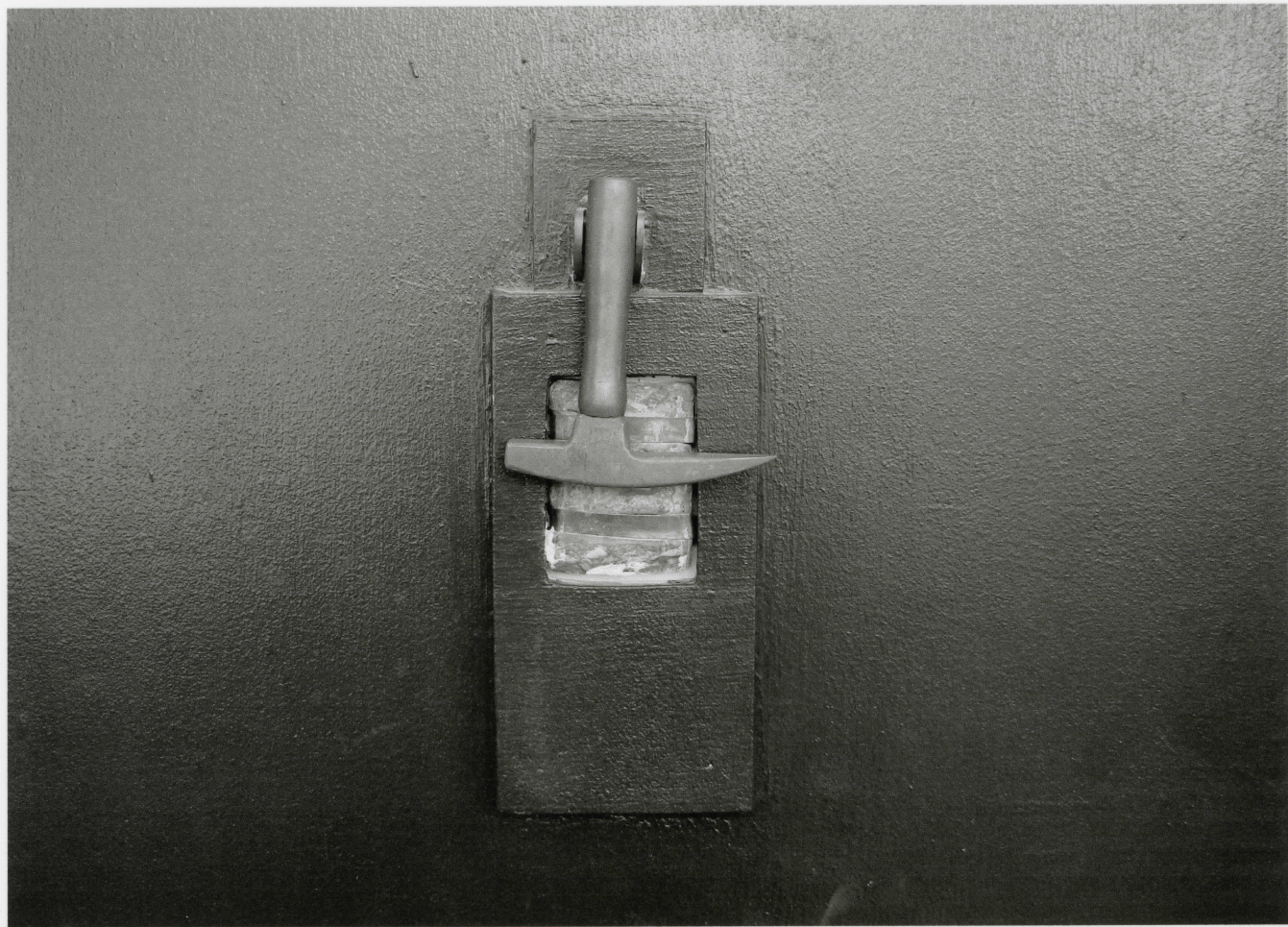
Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
Photo 12



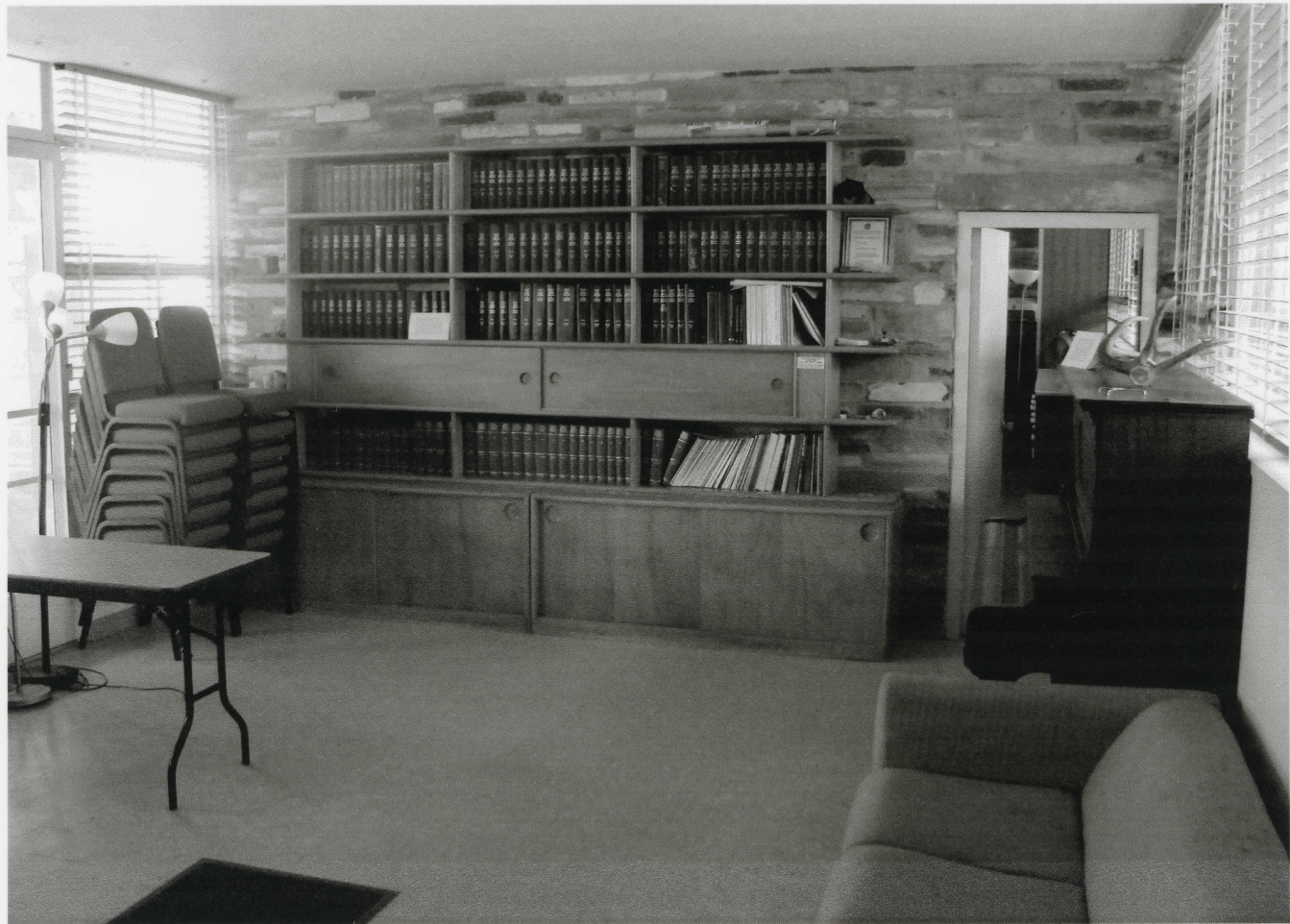
Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Colberson Co. TX  
photo 13



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 14



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Colbertson Co. TX  
photo 15



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 16

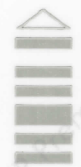


Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 17



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 18





Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 19



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 20



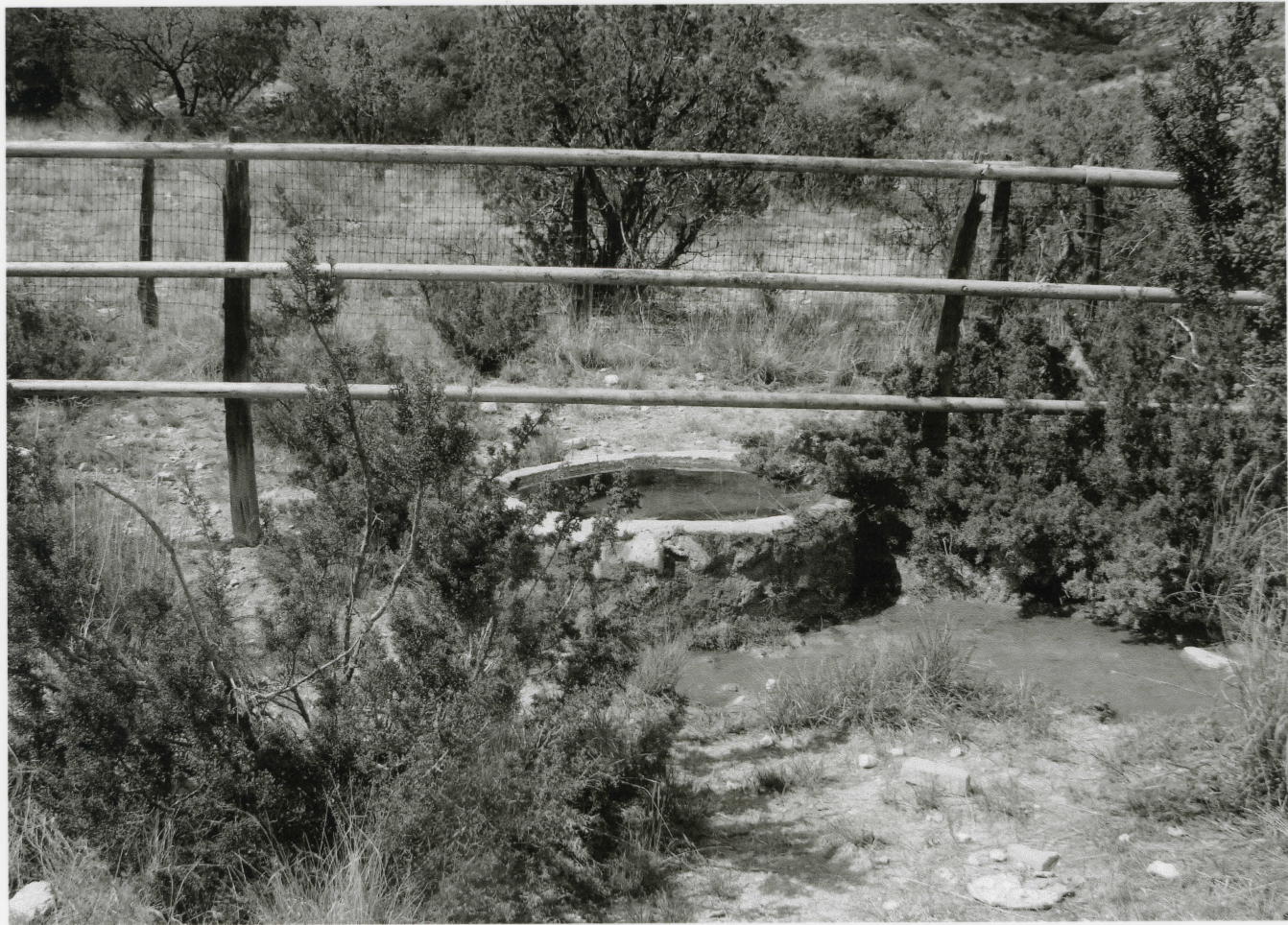
Pratt Residence  
Gundalope Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 21



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 22



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
Photo 23



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 24



Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 25



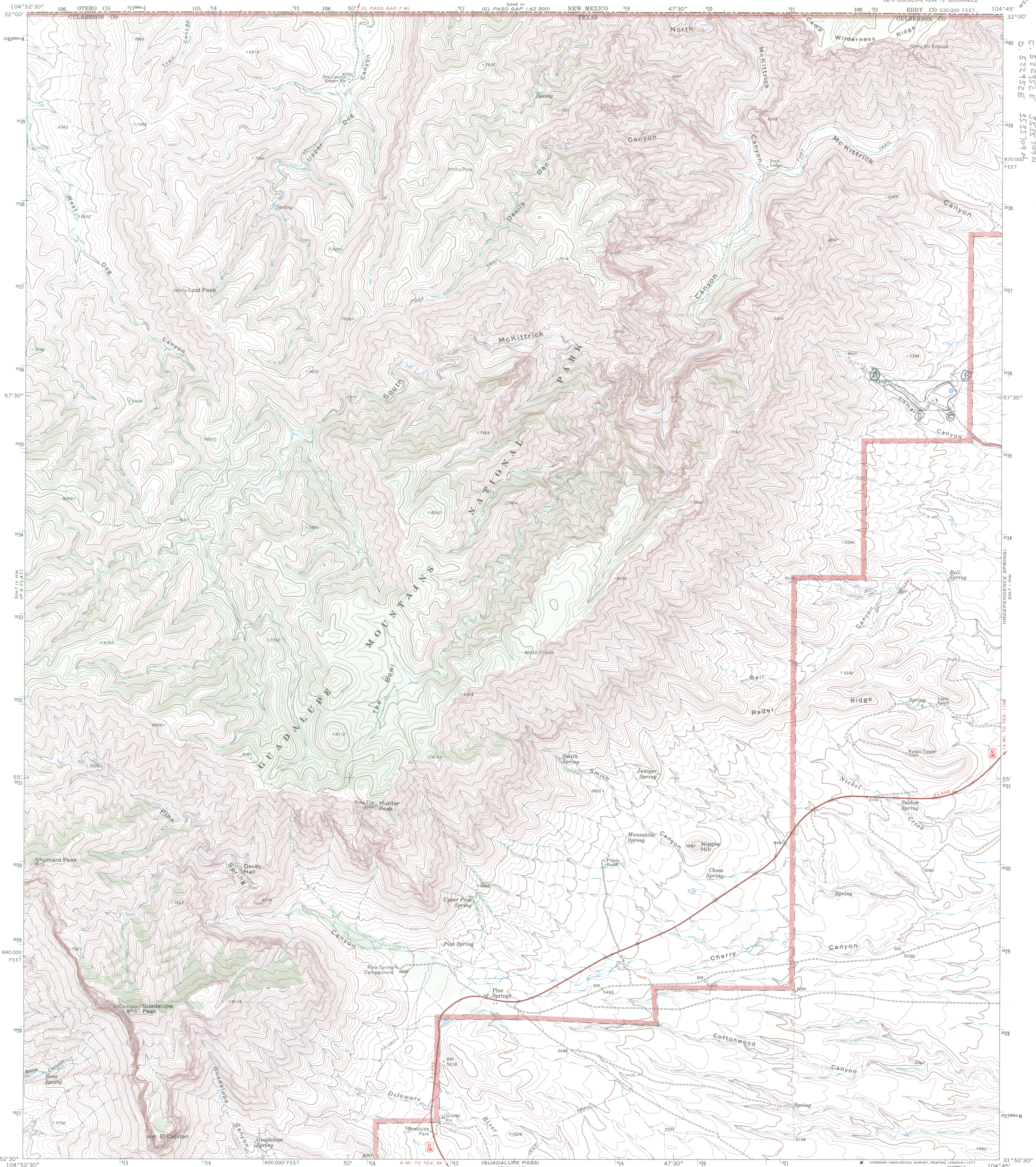
Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 24





Pratt Residence  
Guadalupe Mts NP  
Culberson Co. TX  
photo 27

ZONE 13  
A. 522 02 E 353 067 N  
B. 523 02 E 353 067 N  
C. 524 02 E 353 067 N  
D. 525 02 E 353 067 N

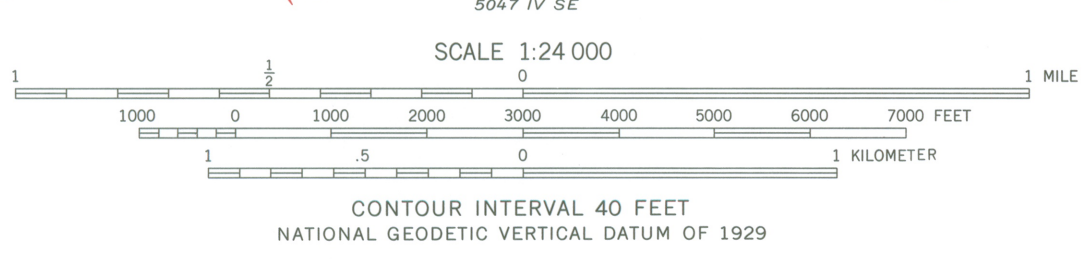
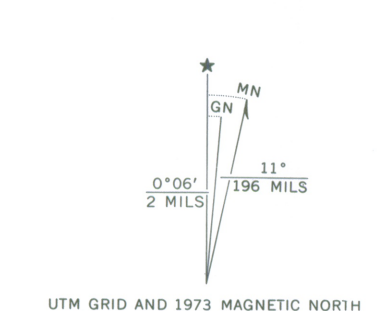


32° 00' N  
31° 59' N  
31° 58' N  
31° 57' N  
31° 56' N  
31° 55' N  
31° 54' N  
31° 53' N  
31° 52' 30' N

104° 52' 30" W  
104° 52' 00" W  
104° 51' 30" W  
104° 51' 00" W  
104° 50' 30" W  
104° 50' 00" W  
104° 49' 30" W  
104° 49' 00" W  
104° 48' 30" W  
104° 48' 00" W  
104° 47' 30" W  
104° 47' 00" W  
104° 46' 30" W  
104° 46' 00" W  
104° 45' 30" W  
104° 45' 00" W

32° 00' N  
31° 59' N  
31° 58' N  
31° 57' N  
31° 56' N  
31° 55' N  
31° 54' N  
31° 53' N  
31° 52' 30' N

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1972. Field checked 1973  
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Texas coordinate system, central zone (Lambert conformal conic)  
1,000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 13, shown in blue. 1927 North American datum  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines



CONTOUR INTERVAL 40 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface —————  
Secondary highway, hard surface ————  
Unimproved road —————

Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

GUADALUPE PEAK, TEX.  
NE/4 GUADALUPE PEAK 15' QUADRANGLE  
N3152.5-W10445.7.5

**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
*real places telling real stories*



TO: Dr. Stephanie Toothman  
 FPO/Associate Director  
 Cultural Resources  
 National Park Service  
 1849 C Street, NW  
 Room 3128 MIB  
 Washington, DC 20240

FROM: Gregory Smith  
 Texas Historical Commission

RE: Wallace Pratt Residence (Ship on the Dessert), Culberson County, Texas

DATE: October 25, 2011

- The following materials regarding Wallace Pratt Residence are submitted:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Original National Register of Historic Places form
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resubmitted nomination
<input type="checkbox"/>	Multiple Property Documentation form
<input type="checkbox"/>	_ Resubmitted form
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Photographs printed from digital files
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gold CD with TIFF photograph files
<input type="checkbox"/>	Photographs printed from negatives
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	USGS map
<input type="checkbox"/>	Correspondence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

COMMENTS:

- SHPO requests substantive review (cover letter from SHPO attached)
- The enclosed owner objections (do ) (do not ) constitute a majority of property owners
- Other:

