

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received JUL 7 1982  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Grierson-Sproul House

and/or common Sproul House

2. Location

street & number Court Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Fort Davis N/A vicinity of congressional district

state Texas code 048 county Jeff Davis code 243

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Anita Bassham

street & number P.O. Drawer 1008

city, town Alpine N/A vicinity of state Texas 79734

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jeff Davis County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Fort Davis state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Texas Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date July 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Texas Historical Commission

city, town Austin state Texas

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>      N/A      </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Grierson-Sproul House is a one story, early twentieth century, vernacular residence located on four acres of land at the western edge of the city of Fort Davis. Built of quarry-faced, limestone and granite blocks, the structure features an ell-shaped plan. The house was completed in 1908, but a fire in 1912 severely damaged the house. Two years later, it was extensively remodeled and since that time, has remained virtually unaltered. The structure stands in fair condition and is in the process of being restored to its 1914 appearance. The house and its associated outbuildings retain much of their historic character.

Although incorporating the structural elements of its original design, the Grierson-Sproul House appears much as it did when remodeled in 1914. With an ell-shaped plan, the one story residence has a gray granite foundation/water table and pink limestone walls laid in random ashlar pattern. The corner blocks are slightly larger than the wall infill and present a quoin-like effect. Segmental arch openings with stone voussiors pierce the exterior walls; most of these openings frame a single, one-over-one light, wood sash window with smooth-faced, stone sill. Corbeled brick chimneys appear at each end of the ridge, and a wood shingled, hip roof covers the southernmost section of the house. A smaller hip roof covers the rear, ell wing.

The exterior detailing is a simple vernacular expression with minor Bungalow influence. The front (south) facade features a shed roof porch which extends across the front. Tapered, box columns of Bungalow style support the five-bay porch. The house's three-bay front wall has a central main entrance and paired, one-over-one light windows at each end. The entry bay includes a single door with large glass panel; narrow, single-paned sidelights on either side of the door; and a small transom which extends the width of the door. Two window openings pierce the east elevation. The west wall includes the rear, ell wing and features an inset side entrance with a segmental arch, as well as a date stone inscribed with "1908". The rear (north) elevation has an ell-shaped, shed roof porch and a back entrance almost identical to the front entry.

The interior, entirely reconstructed in 1914, features a central hall plan, two rooms deep, with a bedroom and bathroom addition onto the west side of the north (rear) wall. The central hallway allows ventilation from cooling breezes, but is partitioned with a bookcase/room divider. Doorways opening onto the central hall have transoms to increase air circulation in the rooms. Pine wood plank flooring and beaded wood ceilings are in each room. The oak mantel in the living room (at the southeast corner) displays a Mission Style influence, while the front bedroom (southwest corner) mantel is a simple Classical Revival design.

The one story, board and batten garage stands northeast of the house. Like the carriage house, the water tank tower with its wood platform is original to the complex; both structures escaped the fire which ravaged the house in 1912. The garage and water tower have remained virtually unaltered.

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Excellent pre-1912 photographs depict the house's original appearance. With an ell-shaped plan, the house featured an unusual five-sided entry porch with slender Doric columns and turned wood balustrade. A double door front entrance with sidelights and transoms opened onto the porch. In 1914 the entrance was partially enclosed. A single door side entrance which pierced the east wall was completely enclosed during the 1914 reconstruction. A low pitch shed dormer extended from the hip roof.

The Grierson-Sproul House and its associated outbuildings stand on level, semi-arid land just south of the Davis Mountains State Park. The complex is accessible by way of an unpaved road which approaches from the southeast.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1908 & 1914 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Grierson-Sproul House is a good example of a stone masonry vernacular residence of the early twentieth century in Fort Davis. B. H. Grierson, Jr., a well-known local investor and rancher, built the house in 1908 during Fort Davis' single construction boom. After another brief ownership and a near disastrous fire in 1912, county sheriff and prominent rancher Franklin Lee Sproul bought and rebuilt the house in 1914. During his occupancy, the house was an important hub of local social activity, at a time when a small closely knit group of families worked ranches of thousands of acres each, in a desolate and sparsely populated region.

The Grierson-Sproul House is located on the western end of Fort Davis, a town steeped in the military and pioneering history of West Texas. The town, established concurrently with the military outpost in 1854, became the major supply headquarters in the area for army personnel as well as for the newly established large ranches. As such, Fort Davis was an extremely important township in the Trans-Pecos area of Texas.

The town never expanded much, due to the lack of surface water, but it did experience a brief building spree in the early 1900's when Fort Davis became the county seat of Jeff Davis county. The period left an indelible mark on the appearance of the town. Many important buildings, both public and private, were constructed in a characteristic, vernacular style with rusticated native pink limestone finishes. These structures include the Limpia Hotel, the bank building, the Oddfellow Hall, the County Courthouse and several private residences, as well as the Grierson-Sproul House.

The Grierson-Sproul House is one of a very small number of early twentieth century, stone residences in the town of Fort Davis. When originally completed in 1908, the house was built in the tradition of the military architectural style of the fort itself, (a National Historic Landmark), and the house closely resembled several buildings in the compound. Therefore, the Grierson-Sproul House represents an important link in the close association of the city with the fort.

B. H. Grierson, Jr., son of a military commander at Fort Davis and a large property owner in his own right, built this stone house in 1908. He was something of a local anomaly. Besides being a noted marksman with both pistol and rifle, Grierson also made fine musical instruments and had a local reputation as an artist. However, he sold the house with its windmill water tank and garage to Claude Smith in May 1912.

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Soon after Smith's purchase of the house, a fire destroyed much of the wood structure, and in 1914 it was sold to Franklin Lee Sproul, a prominent local rancher and apple grower. Sproul directed the repairs and is responsible for the changes in the original structure. For nineteen years, from the time he was elected sheriff of the county in 1914 until his murder in 1933, Sproul and his family lived in the house. Both Mr. and Mrs. Sproul were vital parts of the small coterie of ranching families of the county, and their lives were closely woven into the area's social and political life. Mrs. Sproul participated in many local social activities, including reading and cultural clubs, some of which met at the Sproul home. Even after Mr. Sproul's death in 1933, Mrs. Sproul filled out his term of office as sheriff and was elected for another term in 1934.

The house, though unoccupied for a number of years, remained in the Sproul family until 1979 when it was purchased by the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Elbert F. Bassham, who are actively involved in preserving the house.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

National Register nomination prepared by Mrs. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale on March 25, 1981, and filed at the Texas Historical Commission in Austin.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3.93 acres

Quadrangle name Fort Davis

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	3	6	0	5	0	2	0	3	3	8	4	5	4	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title David Moore / Historian

organization Texas Historical Commission

date April 20, 1982

street & number P.O. Box 12276

telephone (512) 475-3094

city or town Austin

state Texas 78711

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

date 14 May 1982

title State Historic Preservation Officer

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Entered in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register

date 8/11/82

Attest:  
Chief of Registration

date

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Page 1

Metes and bounds description of a survey of 3.93 acres out of a 41.7-acre tract recorded in Volume 18, Page 24 Deed Records of Jeff Davis County said tract is out of Section 734 Tyler Tap Ry. Co. Jeff Davis County, Texas and more particularly described as follows:

BEGINNING at a ½-inch rebar with plastic cap markes "BASSHAM LSLS," set in the common line of said Section 734 and Section 733 Tyler Tap Ry. Co. to mark the South-southeast corner of this tract and the Southwest corner of a one-acre tract recorded in Volume 73 Page 402, said Deed Records, from which a 3/8 inch rebar set by W. J. Richmond in August 1979 bears South 80°21' East 2.51 feet, a "⊥" mark, chisled on the Northwest side of a large boulder at the re-located South common corner of said Section 734 and Section 315, Calvin Robinson bears South 84°34'30" East 226.39 feet from said mark, a ½-inch rebar with a plastic cap marked "BASSHAM LSLS," set at the re-located common corner of said Sections 315 and 733 and Section 148, Pedro Guano and Section 61, Whitaker Keesey in the center-line, intersection of Court Avenue and Front Street, Fort Davis, bears South 84°34'30" East 2638.89 feet, an "X" mark, found on the North side of said boulder, set by W. J. Richmond bears South 84°34'30" East 2.33 feet, an older "X" mark found on the Southwest side of said boulder bears South 23°35' West 4.3 feet.

THENCE North 84°34'30" West along the common line of said Sections 734 and 733 and the North line of a 40-foot wide road at 233.89 feet past the Southeast corner of a 30-foot wide road easement; on in all 2638.89 feet, to a ½-inch rebar with plastic cap marked "BASSHAM LSLS," set South 23°23' West 1.7 feet from a fence corner post to mark the South common corner of said 41.7-acre tract and a 47.3-acre tract described in Volume 46, Page 81, said Deed Records and the Southwest corner of said 30-foot wide road easement, from which a rock mound at a fence corner bears North 84°34'30" West 2638.89 feet;

THENCE North 05°25'30" East 438.06 along the common line of said 41.7-acre tract and said 47.3-acre tract and the West line of said 30-foot wide road easement to a ½-inch rebar with plastic cap marked "BASSHAM LSLS," set South 14°11' East 1.9 feet from a fence corner post to mark a common corner of said 41.7-acre tract and said 47.3-acre tract, the Northwest corner of this tract and said 30-foot wide road easement;

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Page 2

THENCE South  $84^{\circ}34'30''$  East at 30.00 feet past the Northeast corner of said 30-foot wide road easement, at 489.28 feet past a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rebar with plastic cap marked "BASSHAM LSLs," set as a reference point, on in all 490.28 feet to a point on a rock wall, in the common line of said 41.7-acre tract and a 9.86-acre tract described in Volume 73, Page 259, said Deed Records, the Northeast corner of this tract;

THENCE South  $05^{\circ}25'30''$  West 245.67 feet along said rock wall and along the common line of said 41.7-acre tract and said 9.86-acre tract to a point on said rock wall, the East common corner of said 41.7-acre tract and said one-acre tract;

THENCE North  $84^{\circ}34'30''$  West along the common line of said 41.7-acre tract and said one-acre tract at 1.00 feet past a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rebar with plastic cap marked "BASSHAM LSLs," set as a reference point, on in all 226.39 feet to a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rebar with plastic cap marked "BASSHAM LSLs," set to mark a common corner of said 41.7-acre tract and said one-acre tract, from which a  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch rebar, set by W.J. Richmond bears South  $76^{\circ}17'$  East 2161 feet;

THENCE South  $05^{\circ}25'30''$  West 192.39 feet along the common line of said 41.7-acre tract and said one-acre tract to the POINT OF BEGINNING and containing 3.93 acres.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Grierson-Sproul House, Jeff Davis County, TEXAS,

Working No. 7/7/82-1912

Fed. Reg. Date: 2.1.83

Date Due: 8/4/82 - 8/21/82

Action:  ACCEPT 8/11/82

RETURN

REJECT

Entered in the  
National Register

Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for:  technical corrections cited below  
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

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## **8. Significance**

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- \_\_\_\_\_ summary paragraph
- \_\_\_\_\_ completeness
- \_\_\_\_\_ clarity
- \_\_\_\_\_ applicable criteria
- \_\_\_\_\_ justification of areas checked
- \_\_\_\_\_ relating significance to the resource
- \_\_\_\_\_ context
- \_\_\_\_\_ relationship of integrity to significance
- \_\_\_\_\_ justification of exception
- \_\_\_\_\_ other

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## **9. Major Bibliographical References**

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## **10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UMT References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

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## **11. Form Prepared By**

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## **12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_\_ national \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

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## **13. Other**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Maps
- \_\_\_\_\_ Photographs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: 202 272 - 3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



GRIERSON-SPROUL HOUSE  
Court Avenue  
Fort Davis, Jeff Davis County, Texas

Photo by Joe R. Williams, July, 1980  
negatives on file at the Texas Historical  
Commission

Photo #1 of 7

VIEW: southeast oblique, camera facing northwest



Grierson-Sproul House, FORT DAVIS, TX

Taken

17 May 1980

GRIERSON-SPROUL HOUSE  
Court Avenue  
Fort Davis, Jeff Davis County, Texas

Photo by Anita Bassham, May 1980  
negatives in possession of Bassham, P.O. Box 863,  
Alpine, Texas

Photo #2 of 7

VIEW: southwest oblique, camera facing northeast

altered after 1912 fire c. 1914



GRIERSON-SPROUL HOUSE  
Court Avenue  
Fort Davis, Jeff Davis County, Texas

Photo by Anita Bassham, March 1980  
negatives in possession of Bassham, PO Box 863,  
Alpine, Texas

Photo #3 of 7

VIEW: northwest oblique of house and carriage house,  
camera facing southeast



GRIERSON-SPROUL HOUSE  
Court Avenue  
Fort Davis, Jeff Davis County, Texas

Photo by Anita Bassham, March 1980  
negatives in possession of Bassham, PO Box 863,  
Alpine, Texas

Photo # 4 of 7

VIEW: oblique of west elevation, camera facing  
southeast



GRIERSON-SPROUL HOUSE

Court Avenue

Fort Davis, Jeff Davis County, Texas

Photo by Anita Bassham, March 1980

negatives in possession of Bassham, PO Bos 863,  
Alpine, Texas

Photo #5 of 7

VIEW: West elevation of carriage house, water tank,  
and windmill



Grierson-Sproul House, Fort Davis, TX.  
1908 photo showing East side of house.

taken from SE side

GRIERSON-SPROUL HOUSE  
Court Avenue  
Fort Davis, Jeff Davis County, Texas

Photographer unknown, ca 1908  
copy of photo from collection of Mrs. Pansy Epsy,  
Fort Davis, Texas

Photo #6 of 7

VIEW: southeast oblique, camera facing northwest

~~1908~~  
before fire (1912) ; alteration (1914)



GRIERSON-SPROUL HOUSE  
Court Avenue  
Fort Davis, Jeff Davis County, Texas

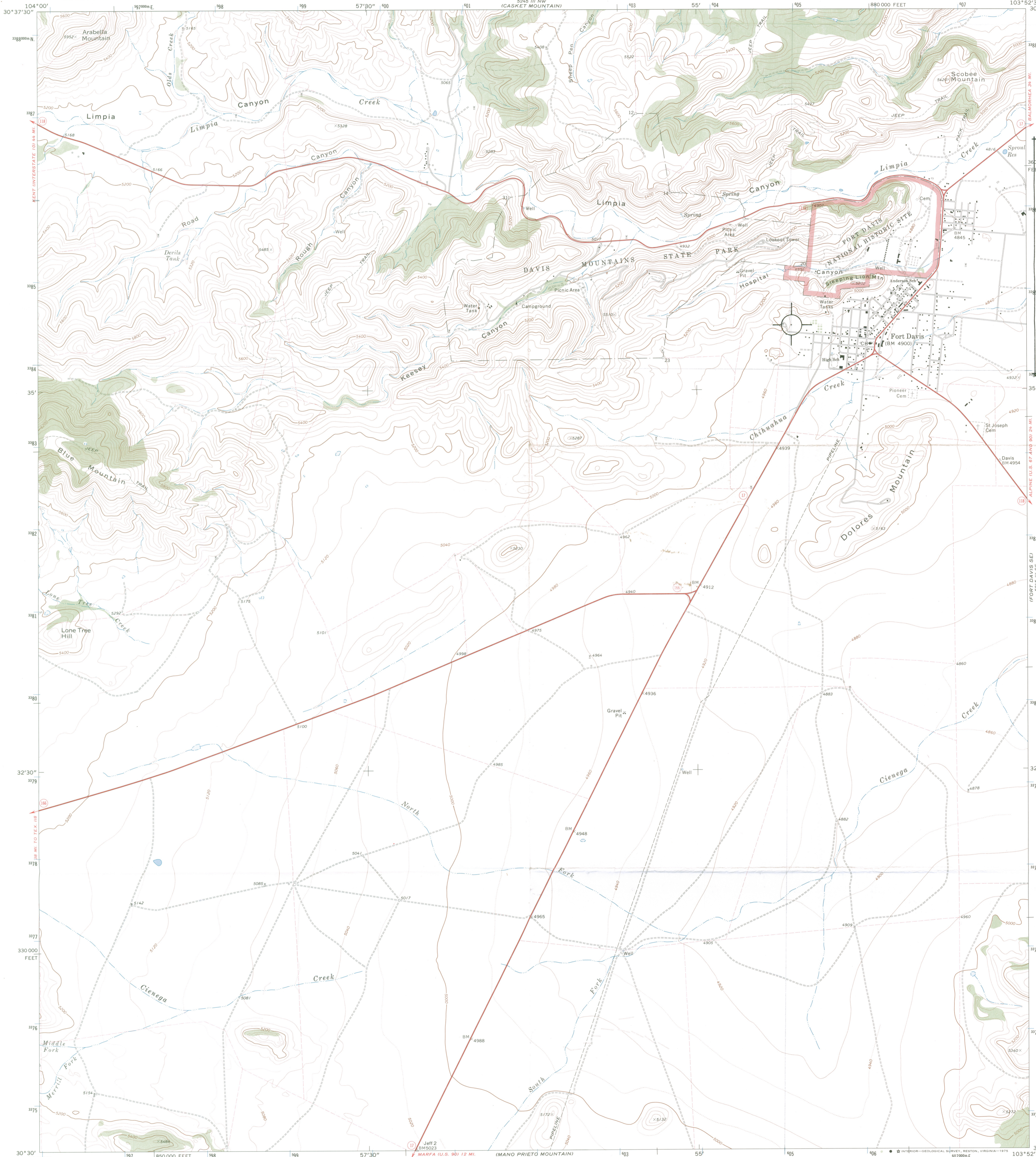
Photographer unknown, ca 1915  
negatives of copy in possession of Anita Bassham,  
PO Box 863, Alpine, Texas

Photo #7 of 7

VIEW: southeast oblique, camera facing northwest

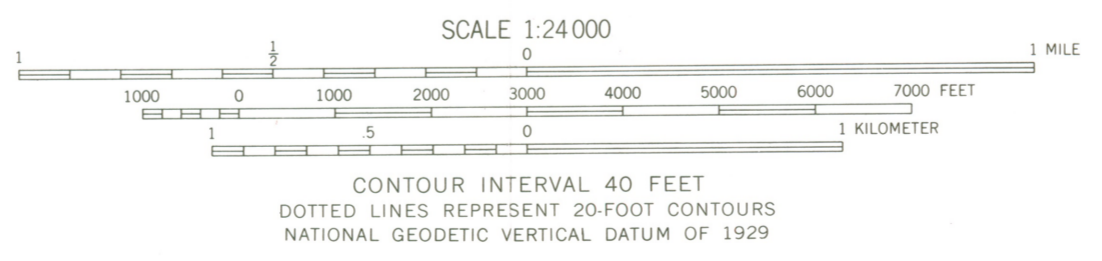
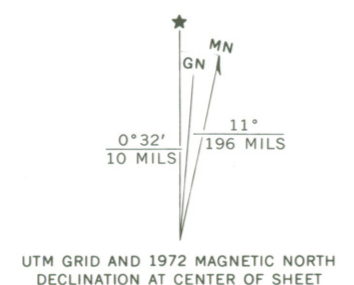
*Grierson-Sproul House, Fort Davis, TX*

*SE elevation - altered after 1912 fire c. 1914*



GRIERSON-SPROUL HOUSE  
COURT AVENUE  
FORT DAVIS, JEFF DAVIS CO., TEXAS  
UTM REFERENCE:  
13 / 605020 / 3384540

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and USC&GS  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial  
photographs taken 1971. Field checked 1972  
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Texas  
coordinate system, central zone (Lambert conformal conic)  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 13, shown in blue. 1927 North American datum  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved 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

3003-322

FORT DAVIS, TEX.  
N3030—W10352.5/7.5  
1972  
AMS 5245 III SW—SERIES V882

RECEIVED  
JUN 14 1982

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Mr. Curtis Tunnell  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Texas Historical Commission  
P.O. Box 12276  
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Mr. Tunnell:

This will confirm that I am fully aware of the effects of listing a property in the National Register of Historic Places. I understand that, under the National Historic Preservation Act, I am entitled to object to the listing of my property by a notarized, written statement. If I am the sole owner and object, my property will not be listed. If there are multiple owners of this property and a majority of owners object, the property will not be listed.

Following is the name and address of my property:

John W. Tomason House  
1207 Avenue J  
Huntsville Texas 77340

As owner or legally authorized representative, I waive my right to object to the proposed listing and notify you that I request my property be listed in the National Register at the earliest possible date.

Yours truly,

Thomas C. Cole Jr  
Signature(s)

Thomas C. Cole Jr  
Printed Name(s)