

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service



National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

2-12-80 (1)

1. Name

historic Armstrong House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 315 North Street not for publication

city, town Ripley vicinity of Third congressional district

state West Virginia code 54 county Jackson code 035

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Miss Anne King

street & number 315 North Street

city, town Ripley vicinity of West Virginia state 25271

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jackson County Courthouse

street & number Court Square

city, town Ripley vicinity of West Virginia state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Armstrong House stands on a large tree-shaded lot at 315 North Street in Ripley, the county seat of Jackson. The house site is important because it faces North Street, the principal nineteenth century thoroughfare of Ripley, at a point slightly east of the old Mill Creek Ford. The prominent siting of the house is further evidenced by its proximity to the courthouse square located one block to the east. A tranquil air surrounds the Armstrong House at the west end of North Street - an apparent dead end - as the result of a shift in twentieth century traffic movement over a highway bridge one block to the south (U. S. Route 33).

The Armstrong House is a single-pile, two-story brick rectangle with a two-story ell (modified "T"). This well-preserved and locally distinguished example of Greek Revival architecture presents at the center of its five-bay front a trabeated doorway with rectangular transom (7 lights) and sidelights. A center hallway bisects the residence from front to rear on the first and second floors.

Kitchen and dining areas are contained in the two-story brick ell at the rear (north) elevation. The height of the ell is slightly lower than the ridge of the gable-roofed main block, although the age of the two components is the same. A two-story brick shed-roofed addition, of late construction, accommodates a space at the rear of the ell and main block.

A single interior chimney at each end of the house rises above the flush-eaved gables and separates rectangular traditionally paired gable-end openings. Of particular interest in the eaves of the front and rear elevations is the presence of a vernacular style Greek Revival dentil row comprised of projecting brick headers in a four-course corbeled brick cornice.

Window openings of the Armstrong House hold double-hung sash with six lights per sash. Smooth stone lintels and lugsills exhibit a feature of overall solidarity in the simple and symmetrical plan of the front elevation fenestration. Ornamentation in the form of a hammered finish in the sandstone ashlar foundation and stone lintels and sills of the end windows record the care and energy expended by the nineteenth century housebuilder for a commission of above average expense. This inclination toward quality, or pretension, is reflected in the element of front elevation Flemish bond brickwork as opposed to the ordinary stretcher bonding of the end walls, and in the refined but simple woodwork of interior mantelpieces and door casings.

Few changes have impaired the integrity of the house, built c. 1848. A single bay, one-story pedimented wooden front porch was removed some time after 1913. The addition of front facade window shutters and the covering of the brick surfaces with white paint are the primary alterations. Two interior changes occurred when the stairway in the ell was removed, and the kitchen fireplace opening was bricked up. The house has apparently been covered by a standing-seam tin roof throughout most of its history.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c.1848	Builder/Architect	Local History	Community Development
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Armstrong House is significant because it is the oldest house in Ripley, county seat of Jackson, and because it retains much of the character that distinguishes it as a locally significant example of Greek Revival architecture. The residence's first owner, James Armstrong, became an important citizen of mid-nineteenth century Ripley when he promoted several small industries favorable to the town's development. The Armstrong House, built c. 1848, is owned (1979) by Miss Anne King, great-granddaughter of James Armstrong, and thus assumes the distinction of having returned to family hands in recent years (1970). Evidence of family history in the form of Armstrong family furnishings, including the portraits of James and Katherine Armstrong, grace the various rooms.

When James Armstrong arrived in Ripley, Virginia (West Virginia), from Beverly, Randolph County, in the early 1830's, he soon encountered one Jacob Starcher who owned much of the land in the Ripley locale. Starcher laid out much of the town of Ripley and in 1833 donated to the county property for a courthouse square. It was from Mr. Starcher that James Armstrong purchased his Ripley townlots (No. 51, 1843; no.49, 1837) upon which a substantial two-story brick house was built c. 1848.

The Armstrong House is the earliest known brick house to have been erected in Ripley. Its construction and siting reflect upon Armstrong's emergence as a community figure of means. The building's location, a stone's throw east of Mill Creek Ford on North Street, the primary thoroughfare of the town in the nineteenth century, and one block west of the courthouse, gave it a special status in the slowly maturing county seat.

James Armstrong established a tannery on property to the north of his townlots in the vicinity of Sycamore Creek near the point of its confluence with Mill Creek. His interest in the Ripley area was influenced by its development potential following the creation of Jackson County in 1831 and the declaration of Ripley as the county seat in 1833. By 1847, Armstrong had purchased Jacob Starcher's water-powered sawmill and operated it until 1866. In 1870, Armstrong bought a steam sawmill from H. R. Hassler. These small industrial activities were significant in the rising prosperity and development of the village of Ripley.

Late examples of brick Greek Revival architecture in West Virginia frequently display similar characteristics. Among these are: center hall entrances with simple front-pieces embellished with ribbed or fluted piers or pilasters; rectangular transoms; gables with nearly flush eaves rising to meet an interior end chimney; and brick cornices configured in dogtooth or open brick fret work simulating dentil rows. These attributes, in addition to simple but outstanding interior woodwork, are found in the Armstrong House. The presence of hammered stone surfaces and front facade Flemish bond brickwork point to additional refinements.

HR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Armstrong House, Ripley, Jackson County, West Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

The Armstrong House is significant architecturally for its presentation of a vernacular Greek Revival form once commonplace, but now rapidly disappearing, in West Virginia's rural and small town environments.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Correspondence and Records of the Jackson County Historical Society (Historic Preservation Unit, W. Va. Department of Culture and History), 1979.
 Hardesty's West Virginia Counties. Vol. 4, Richwood, W. Va. : Jim Comstock, 1973, pp.2,5,
 "The Armstrong House: A Return for New Owner". Jackson Herald. April 10, 1970.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1/4 acre

Quadrangle name Ripley, W. Va.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification The Armstrong House is located on city lot no.51 on the north side of west North Street (315 North Street).

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rodney S. Collins, Architectural Historian

organization Historic Preservation Unit
West Virginia Department of Culture and History date October 23, 1979

street & number The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex telephone 304/348/0340

city or town Charleston, state West Virginia 25305

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Clarence Morrow

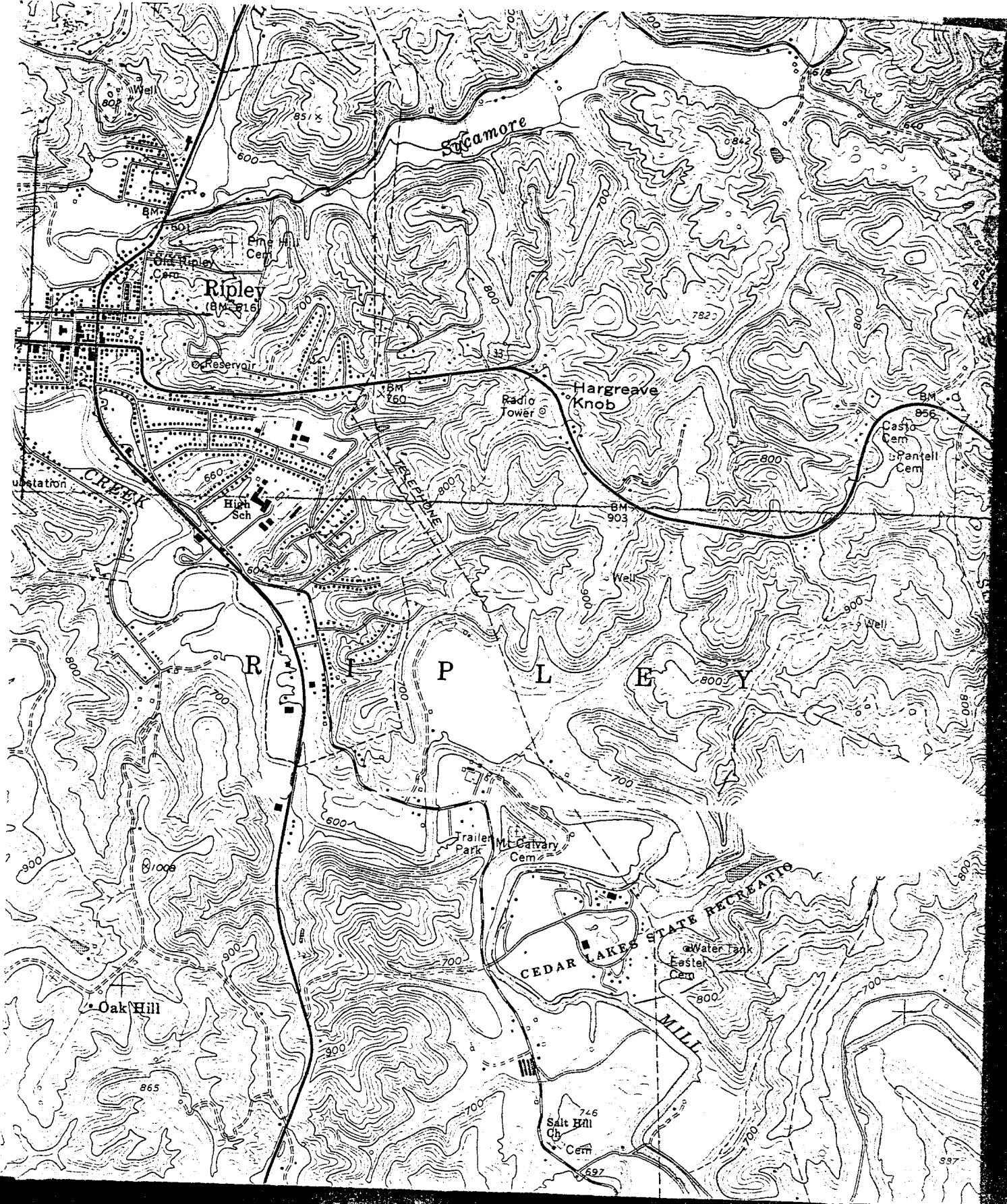
title State Historic Preservation Officer date December 5, 1979

For HCRS use only Clarence Morrow
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.
 date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration



Ripley
(BM 716)

Hargreave Knob

Radio Tower

R I P L E Y

CEDAR LAKES STATE RECREATION

Oak Hill

Salt Hill
Cem

Casto Cem

Pantell Cem

Water Park

Easter Cem

Trailer Park

Mt. Calvary Cem

Reservoir

High Sch

BM 760

BM 903

BM 856

Well

Well

897

Sacamore

GREEN CREEK

WELLS CREEK

WELLS CREEK

WELLS CREEK

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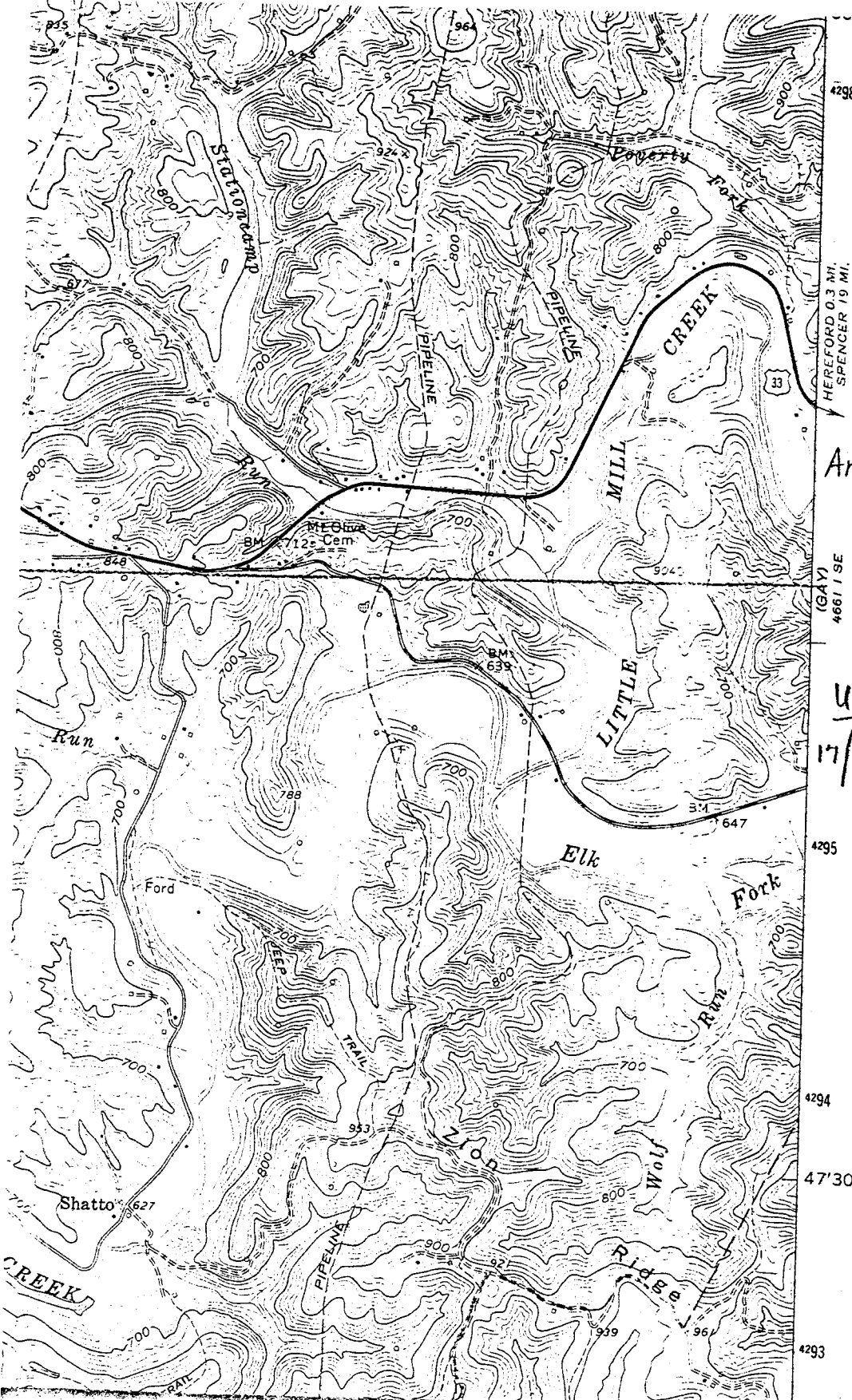
WELLS CREEK

WELLS CREEK

WELLS CREEK

WELLS CREEK

WELLS CREEK



HEREFORD 0.3 MI.
SPENCER 19 MI.

Armstrong House
315 North Street
Ripley, Jackson Co
West Virginia

UTM
17/437980/4296840

4298
4295
4294
47'30"
4293

