

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property
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historic name: McNeer House

other name/site number: N/A

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2. Location
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street & number: U.S. Rt. 219

city/town: Salt Sulphur Springs not for publication: N/A vicinity: X

state: WV county: Monroe code: 063 zip code: N/A

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3. Classification
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Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of relate property listing: N/A

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Neo-Colonial Revival

Other Description: Neoclassical

Materials: foundation Concrete roof Slate
walls Wood other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: State.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1919 - 1930

Significant Dates : 1919

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: E. Grier Kendell, Builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

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The McNeer House, one of the most beautifully situated in Monroe County, stands within a level meadow bisected by a vigorous stream of water with sycamore and willow trees at its water's edge. This meadow is at the head of an upland valley drained by a small stream of water called Gin Run. At the meadow's edge land lifts quite rapidly. Placed within the eastern portion of the meadow is a frame two-and-one-half story house of Colonial proportions and style. The approach to the house from US Rt. 219 is a gravel road through a short allee of spruce trees terminating in a circular drive just in front of the house and which returns through the spruce allee. The inner periphery is bordered by boxwood cut in spheres of approximately five feet in diameter. Boxwood cut in spheres is also placed at the foundation of the house. In the western portion of the meadow and across the stream of water from the house is the site of the original McNeer bank-barn. All that remains of the barn is the beautiful curved cut native blue limestone wall which is approximately eight feet high and forty feet long. (The nominated area contains this one unevaluated foundation and this will not be included in the resource count.) There are two springs near the house. One erupts a mere ten feet from the northwest corner of the house. Its water, along with the Gin Run, joins the bold and vigorous water erupting from a spring in a cave some twenty-five yards northwest of the house. These waters flow under US RT. 219 and join Indian Creek in the Salt Sulphur Springs Historic District. Behind the house is a noncontributing stable of fairly recent origin.

The McNeer House presents itself with a sharp symmetry of massing which is evidenced by the placement of a two-story flat-roofed portico across the central bay of the front elevation. The portico has four columns in the front plane and one on each of the two side planes resulting in a cluster of three columns at each corner. The facade has large windows with cornice heads which are all tripartite in design with principal parts which have double-hung twelve over twelve lights per sash. The entrance is framed by a two-third length sidelights a semi-elliptical overlight. The sidelights and overlight are constructed of leaded glass. Three gabled dormers with partial return cornices pierce the front plane of the expansive slate roof. There is one gabled dormer on each of the side planes of the roof. The main ridge of the roof at the hips meets two chimneys evenly spaced that feature pierced openings below the caps. Semi-circular one-story porticos grace the east and west side elevations. Their four smooth hollow wood columns correspond to the Doric style, two-story columns carrying the front portico. The cornices of the two-story portico and the main block are detailed with modillions. The west side portico presents a longitudinal projection to the rear and is also graced with Doric columns.

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The house is divided into a rectangular formal front and a rear service area which features a two-story, U-shaped wing with a one-story rear portico with Doric columns between the arms of the U. The first-floor reception areas feature an unusually large entrance hall that has often been used as a small ballroom. Leading from the hall are four evenly spaced Roman arch recessed entryways to a library, small parlor, large parlor and a formal dining room with its large butler's pantry. At the rear of the hall is a graceful stairway with an interrupted landing. All rooms in the house are decorated with wainscoting which is panelled to the chair rail, crown molding and semi-panelled walls. All woodwork is oak except the library which is native black walnut. The oak woodwork has been painted white by a later owner. All lumber was cut from trees on the original property. Various style fireplace fronts are used such as the Chippendale style in the library and the Federal style used in the large parlor. All flooring is oak. First-floor service area includes a kitchen with three pantries and an exceptionally large black walnut dining table from the pre-Civil-War days at the Salt Sulphur Springs Hotel. The table had rounded ends, one of which has been cut; and it is related that this particular table was used by General Albert G. Jenkins of the Confederate Army when he used the hotel as winter quarters. The story is that General Jenkins placed the flat end against the wall and his staff officers gathered about him seated at the remaining rounded end. Other first-floor service areas are a back hall and stairway to the upper back hall along with a family dining room. Second-floor service areas include: three bedrooms, hall, large nursery and various bathrooms and closets. There are elsewhere in the formal areas of the second-floor six bedrooms and various bathrooms and closets along with the hall. The central front bedroom opens onto the balcony of the front portico by a bay extension. Each of two side bedrooms open onto the terrace balconies of the side porticos by bay extensions. All second-floor balconies are edged with a balustrade. The third-floor is left undeveloped. The entire house covers a vast basement measuring approximately fifty-two feet by sixty feet.

The McNeer House is painted white and sparkles as an architectural jewel set in southern West Virginia's crown of hills.

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The frame two-and-one-half-story Neo-Colonial Revival house built in 1919 by Lewis Caperton McNeer is one of the most significant examples of its style in southeastern West Virginia. It is the largest residential building in Monroe County and is exceeded in overall style, locally, only by the ca. 1835 Jeffersonian Classical Revival "Elmwood" at Union. The house is located quite near the Salt Sulphur Springs Historic District and is approximately two miles southwest of the town of Union. The house is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C.

The house was built at the closing of World War I when there was a return to the architectural styles of the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. The house exhibits the Neoclassical style along with the closely related Colonial Revival style that was prevalent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The two styles are blended harmoniously in both interior and exterior aspects resulting in a very pleasing appearance.

The McNeer family was settled in what is now Monroe county as early as 1785 and their early farms bordered on Indian Creek near Greenville. According to tradition, a McNeer, an ancestor of the Greenville McNeers, had been with Andrew Lewis in 1754 when he explored large areas of what is now Monroe County. By 1919 Lewis C. McNeer was the owner of a large farm of approximately 752 acres between Union and Salt Sulphur Springs. He had become financially comfortable from farming and cattle trading. He, along with several partners, bought and sold cattle and shipped to all parts of the United States. The house Lewis McNeer built represents the best of early twentieth-century architecture in Monroe county, a county with several great houses associated with agricultural wealth in the nineteenth century.

Lewis Caperton McNeer was born in 1853 and died in 1930. He is buried in the family plot in Greenville. Lewis McNeer never married and lived with his sister, Mrs. Florence Jennings, her three sons and husband, in the old McNeer home which stood directly behind the present house. Through local tradition, it is said that Lewis McNeer built the house for his sister, Florence. It is said that they traveled the South gathering ideas for a great house and presented those ideas to an architect who in turn planned the formal house we see today. Mr. McNeer engaged the local builder, E. Grier Kendell, to construct the house. Mr. Kendell lived at Hunter Springs near Greenville and was the builder of many of the larger and finer homes of early twentieth century Monroe county. He was reputed to be the finest carpenter and also the most expensive in Monroe County during this period of time. The house is typical of the styles loved and used by the important southern West Virginia architect, Alex Mahood. It is quite possible McNeer engaged the architect since Mahood located nearby in Bluefield, West Virginia. Alex Mahood worked in this area and was the

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architect of the old Union High School built in 1921. It is believable that such a house would be planned and built in this area for it was built during the last revival of the Salt Sulphur Springs as a hotel. The Salt Sulphur Springs was an area where style and gracious entertaining had been prevalent and fashionable since the early nineteenth century.

For a short time after World War II, the McNeer House became the "Lotus Club," perhaps Monroe County's only night-club. For the past thirty-one years it has been owned by Isobelle Walter and her son, David "Skip" Gourley. It is their summer home and has been summer home to their harness race horses that can range over the property's tow hundred acres.

The intricate, but well organized, plan of the McNeer House indicates the planner was a gifted and well trained man in his profession. The McNeer House majestically overlooks a park-like setting of formal lawn, meadow land, streams and wooded hillsides. The House with its formal symmetry, stately facade and organized appearance has become a source of pride for Monroe county residents.

The McNeer House property remains as it was originated, a home of great style and a place for gracious entertaining.

9. Major Bibliographical References

X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): X

- 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
- X recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # WV 117
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- X State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 8 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>17</u>	<u>538200</u>	<u>4158400</u>	B	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
C	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	D	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

The boundaries are roughly a square containing eight acres with the southern boundary being U.S. Rt. 219. The west, north and east boundaries are property lines of tax parcel #32 found in the Monroe County Assessor's Office in the courthouse at Union, W.V. The map is dated 12-27-63 and revised 7-1-88.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

The boundaries are drawn to include the springs, the creek, the barn site, and all of the small level meadow land that is the formal lawn and part of the pasture land of the house proper.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Dr. Ronald L. Ripley

Organization: Monroe County Historical Soc Date: December 12, 1990

Street & Number: P.O. Box 193 Telephone: (304) 772-5539

City or Town: Union State: WV ZIP: 24983

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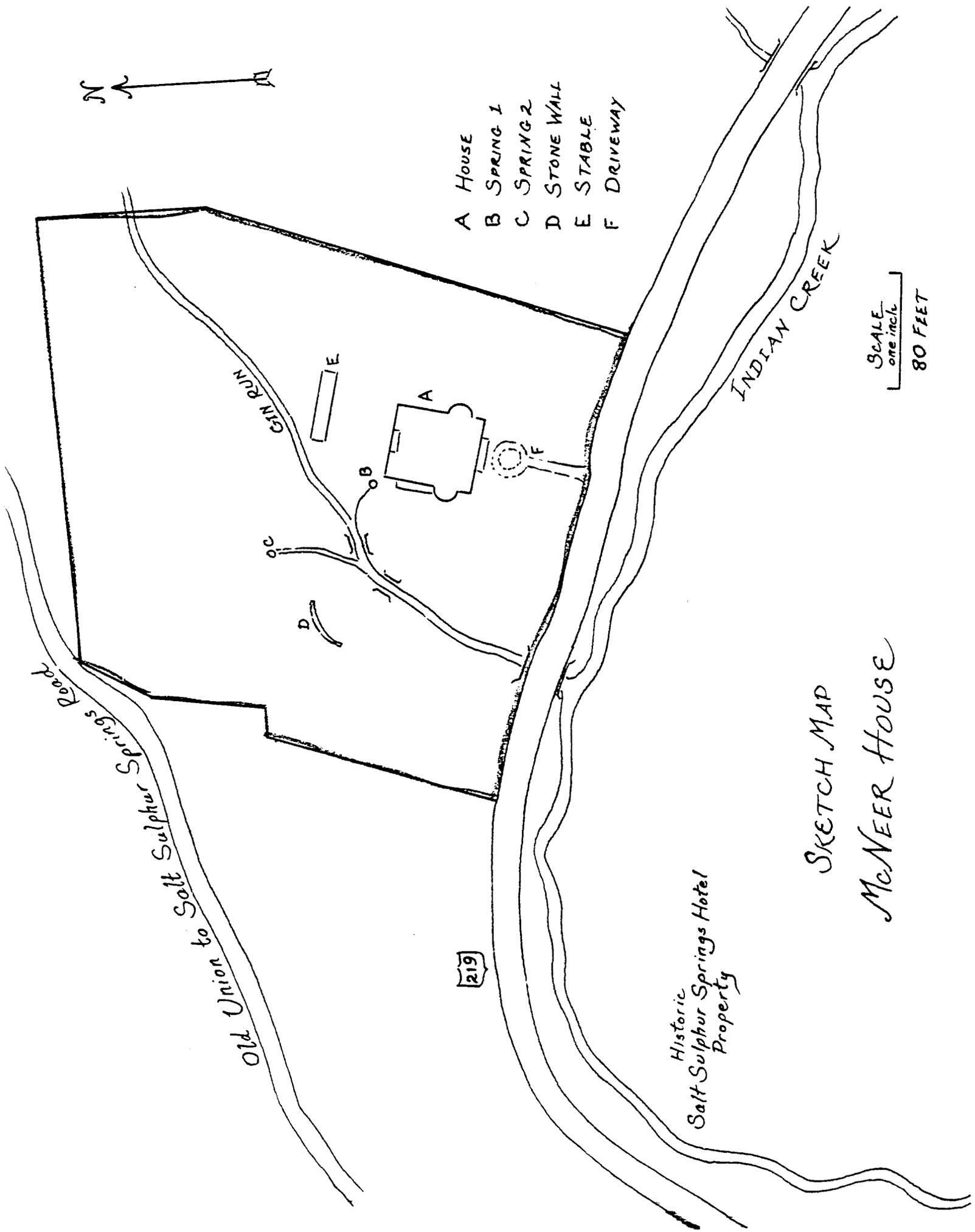
B I B L I O G R A P H I C A L R E F E R E N C E S

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- A HOUSE
- B SPRING 1
- C SPRING 2
- D STONE WALL
- E STABLE
- F DRIVEWAY

SCALE
one inch
80 FEET

SKETCH MAP
McNEER HOUSE

Historic
Salt Sulphur Springs Hotel
Property

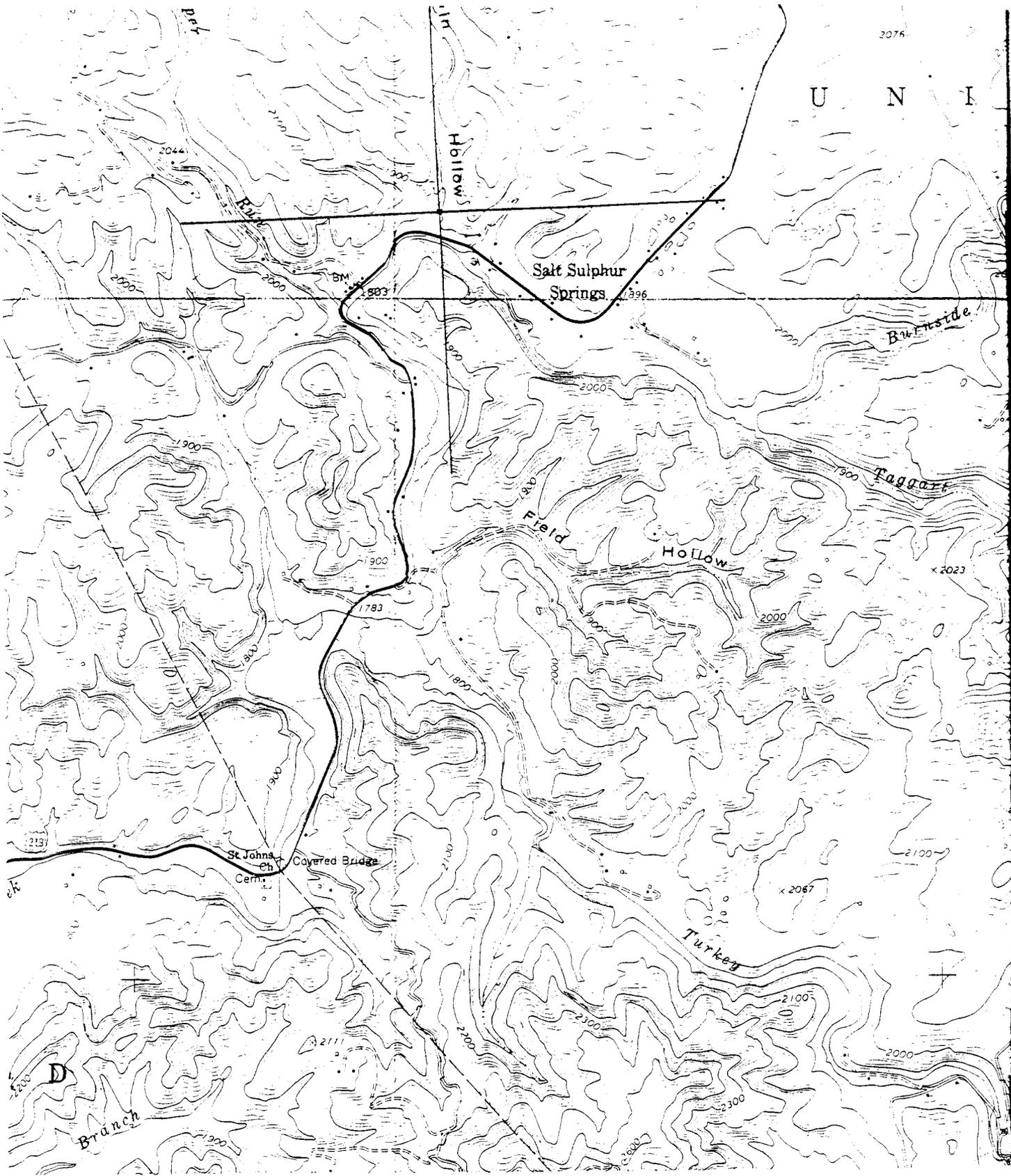
219

Old Union to Salt Sulphur Springs Road

GIN RUN

INDIAN CREEK

U N I



MC NEER HOUSE
U.S. RT. 219
SALT SULPHUR
SPRINGS
MONROE CO.,
WEST VIRGINIA

UTM

17/518200/415840

