

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Damascus CCC Camp, Co. #3781 Historic District

historic name Camp Damascus

other names/site number VB0237

2. Location

street & number Camp Hill Road

not for publication

city or town Damascus

vicinity

state Arkansas

code AR

county Van Buren

code 141

zip code 72039

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 for 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 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cathie Matthews
Signature of certifying official/Title

11/20/02
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Name of Property
Damascus CCC Camp, Co. #3781 Historic
District

County and State
Van Buren, AR

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

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

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C moved from its original location.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1935-1936

Significant Dates

1935-1936

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Civilian Conservation Corps

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
- # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Name of Property
Damascus CCC Camp, Co. #3781 Historic
District

County and State
Van Buren, AR

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.25 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>555204</u>	<u>3914263</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Holly Hope/ Special Projects Historian
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 11/19/02
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center St. telephone 501 324-9148
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Dan Dipert, Jr.
street & number 4709 El Salvador Court telephone 817 543-3733
city or town Arlington state TX zip code 76017

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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SUMMARY

Damascus Civilian Conservation Corps, Camp 3781 Historic District is located in Van Buren County just across the Van Buren/Faulkner county line on Camp Hill Road east of U.S. Highway 65 N. The area remains largely rural with a few modern houses dotting CCC Road, which leads west from Hwy. 65 N to Camp Hill Road. Two eligible masonry objects and one masonry structure remain to mark the site of the 1935 Civilian Conservation Camp. The district consists of a stone well, a stone entry arch and an arched stone object for placement of the camp bulletin board and menu of the day's meals. In the center of the boundaries is a noncontributing 1951 Ranch house. The menu board, entry arch and house are enclosed within a modern wire and wooden post and beam fence. The well stands outside of the fence about 80 feet to the west.

LABORATION

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

ENTRY ARCH

The entry arch built in 1936 is located east of Camp Hill Road and north of the noncontributing Ranch house in a large grassy lot. The arch is composed of field stones and features two arched entries in the center. Raised concrete mortar in the grapevine style surrounds the stones. In the upper center of the arch on the north side are raised rounded concrete numbers and letters reading "CO-3781" – the number of the Damascus company. Directly beneath this line raised concrete letters read "V-CCC", designating it as a veteran's camp.

The dimensions of the entry arch are 25 feet wide from buttress to buttress. It is approximately 14 feet tall and approximately 2 feet deep.

MENU BOARD

The ca. 1935 arched stone menu board stands east of Camp Hill Road and southeast of the Ranch house. The menu board also features grapevine concrete mortar and is constructed of field stone. The center of the arch is open with a shallow concrete indentation holding two metal pipes, which served as bases for the interchangeable camp menu board and bulletin board.

The menu board is 2 feet deep and is 6 feet, 1 inch wide. It is 7 feet, 4 inches tall and the open arch is 3 feet, 2 inches tall and 2 feet, 11 inches wide.

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WELL

The well completed in 1935 stands west of the fence that encloses the other resources and is located northwest of the house. The well itself is built of cut stone and is coursed with grapevine mortar. It stands 2 feet 7 inches tall and is 2 feet 2 inches square. The top of the well is covered with a square concrete cap containing a round metal cover for access to the water. A metal apparatus consisting of cranks, hooks and pulleys for pulling up buckets is located on top of the cap.

The well is surrounded by a four-pronged arch of stone buttresses that reach an apex directly above the center of the well. North to south, buttress to buttress measures 13 feet, 10 inches wide and east to west, buttress to buttress measures 14 feet, 3 inches wide. A metal hook protrudes from the top intersection of the buttresses above the well access.

NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCE

RANCH HOUSE

The noncontributing 1951 Ranch house marks the center of the district. The house is a one-story irregular plan, hipped roof structure constructed of buff brick laid by Twin Groves stone mason Silas Owens, Jr.

The front or south, façade from west to east features a ribbon of three vinyl six-over-six windows. The front entrance door is set back from the southwest corner of the house and a small concrete stoop is covered by an integral hipped roof supported by a single metal square post reached by four concrete steps. East of the paneled door is a second ribbon of three windows. The southeast corner of the house features two screened panels atop a short half-wall of vinyl siding leading to a small screened-in porch.

The eastern elevation at the southwest features four screened panels above the vinyl half-wall on the porch. The exterior wall of the house within the porch features a large brick chimney. The house wall then steps back slightly to a fifteen-light, single leaf French door beneath a metal roofed overhang supported by two square metal posts. The house wall steps back again to double-leaf, fifteen-light French doors reached by two buff-brick steps. A ribbon of three short windows fenestrates the northeast corner of the house.

The northern elevation from east to west consists of a single screened panel and metal entry door to the screened porch. A short window fenestrates a wall stepped back significantly from the center wall of the north elevation, which features a pair of centered windows. A small wall set southwest of the center portion is lit by a single short window

The western elevation is fenestrated by a single short window at the north end of the house. The wall then protrudes to the west and is lit by two evenly spaced single windows at the southwest end of the house.

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SUMMARY

Damascus Civilian Conservation Corps Camp, Company 3781 Historic District is located in Damascus, Van Buren County and consists of two contributing stone objects, one contributing stone structure and one noncontributing house. The district is situated in a rural, privately owned tract of woods and open fields with a few scattered modern homes lining CCC Road and Camp Hill Road. U.S. Highway 65 and the business center of the town of Damascus lie to the west and southwest. The camp is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion C with local significance as a contributing resource to the historic context, *The Civilian Conservation Corps in Arkansas, 1933-1942*.

ELABORATION

The town of Damascus began to see a small concentration of settlement in the late 19th century. A post office was established in the Hutto community in 1887, which was then renamed "Damascus" by settler William Hutto, "because it was found in the Bible." The main access road from Little Rock to Damascus, U.S. Highway 65 N, was completed to the Faulkner County line by 1924. By 1933 the highway was diverted to the east of Damascus and it was paved by 1935. This caused a shift in the center of the town to the new, improved eastern road.

Farming was the main occupation of the earliest settlers of Damascus and this agricultural tradition continued into the 20th century. The main crops were corn, cotton, wheat and oats but some families raised cattle and sheep for meat and wool. After the introduction of the improved state highway the location of primary markets shifted as farm families began to take the new route south to Conway and Little Rock rather than Morilton and Plumerville to the west.

The intensive agricultural use of the land in the area led to a deterioration of the soil, which was a factor in the decision of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to locate Junior Company 3781, SCS-5 east of U.S. Highway 65 N and northeast of Damascus's city center in the summer of 1935. The camp encompassed forty acres on land owned by William A. Brown, who leased the property for \$1.00 a year to the CCC. Brown was the first rural mail carrier in Damascus and was the owner of a local grocery store that provided supplies to the camp.

The Damascus camp was one of 500 under the control of the Soil Conservation Service that was engaged in training men and boys ages 18 to 25 in the reconstitution of worn-out farmland. The camp was administered by the regional soil erosion service headquarters in Conway. Farmland improvement efforts included terracing the damaged land, planting trees for use as fence posts, sodding pastures and instructing local farmers on the transition from row crops to cattle farming.

The first to arrive at the campsite, Dan Dipert, Sr., of DeValls Bluff was transferred from Camp Moore in Lurton, Arkansas, to Damascus in the spring of 1934. Dipert, who now resides in Damascus, enrolled in the CCC in 1933 and during his tenure worked as a cook and an orderly and completed Cooks and Bakers School. Before the

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arrival of the enrollees he was instructed to go to Damascus and organize the field kitchen for the camp, where he served as mess sergeant for approximately six months.

Construction on the buildings began in June of 1935 and, after a delay of fifteen days due to flooding of the East Cadron River, the first building was completed on July 1. The men of the camp resided in tents prior to the completion of the barracks. With the arrival of First Lieutenant William P. Havens, Inf-Res. and a cadre of twelve boys from Camp Moore on June 25, 1935, the camp was occupied. By the first of July the first recruits arrived from Texarkana, Arkansas, and the camp reached its full enrollment of 200 men on August 1, 1935.

In October of 1936 Camp Damascus was changed over to a veterans company and the new enrollees took up the soil conservation work of the junior company. In that month some of the juniors were farmed out to other companies while a large number remained behind for two weeks to train the incoming men. Veterans of World War I had been allowed to join the Civilian Conservation Corps in the earliest days of mobilization, when the project was officially titled Emergency Conservation Work. Such men, usually farmers in their 30s and 40s, occupied special camps with less stringent operations and were chosen for enrollment by the Veterans Administration instead of the Labor Department. Out of 250 veteran applicants, 207 were chosen to take their place at Company 3781-V. There was an attempt to place men in camps close to home but the enrollment of men from other areas resulted in a doubling of the population of Damascus as families moved to town to join the veterans.

The men in Company 3781 did not participate in the construction of state park facilities, working solely toward soil erosion prevention, but they did take classes in carpentry and masonry. The campsite still retains vestiges of the rockwork done by the junior company and the veterans. Other than the well the contributing masonry objects in the historic district could be considered "busywork" or practice work for the men at the camp. However, the style exhibited by the objects display the same prevailing Rustic flavor of those resources constructed in the state parks by other companies. Structures and objects found in the National Parks and Adirondack retreats were thought to have provided the inspiration for CCC facilities, but the local embodiment would be flavored by traditional designs found in individual areas of available materials like natural stone and timber.

The skill level and limited education of the men who constructed the objects would influence design also as methods of construction would need to be simple enough for the inexperienced to follow, resulting in work that displayed a decided vernacular slant. A limited budget that did not provide for equipment would also contribute to the rusticity of those camp objects. Local craftsmen who taught classes in the camps and those enrollees with previous construction experience in the later veterans companies would bring individual design techniques to their projects, making each resource unique.

Camp Halsey in Centerville, Faulkner County, was the closest CCC camp to Camp Damascus. The Halsey campsite retains a masonry menu board and masonry fireplace along with various concrete foundations and steps. The menu board is similar in shape and size to the one at Damascus and displays grapevine mortar but it seems to

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show less finesse in the way the stones are laid up. The placement of the rocks is not as meticulous and less care seems to have been taken in the choice of stones. The double sided fireplace was constructed using recessed mortar courses. The only other CCC camp in Van Buren County, at Lost Corner near Scotland, is said to retain a single concrete building in a state of deterioration with no masonry objects or structures remaining.

By 1941 the CCC was languishing. With drops in enrollment and the practical eradication of unemployment it was felt that following Pearl Harbor any projects that were not considered crucial to the war effort should be shut down. Although the joint committee of Congress did not formally recommend that the CCC be abolished until 1942 the camp at Damascus closed in 1941. The barracks and offices were sold to the highest bidder, many of them being dismantled and the materials recycled in other structures. William Brown, who still retained ownership of the campsite land, was given the officers' quarters. Brown sold the portion of his land encompassing the historic district to Margaret Crawford, a retired nurse from Stanton, Virginia. Crawford lived in the officers' quarters until construction was completed on a ranch house in 1951 at which time the quarters were demolished.

William Dan Dipert, Jr., son of Dan Dipert, Sr., and Vernelle Brown (daughter of William Brown) bought the land within the district from Tommy Hutto who had purchased it from Crawford. Dipert also purchased adjacent acreage south of the district boundaries from Jay Spurl that contains further remains of the CCC camp as well as surrounding property totaling 309 acres. Mr. Dipert has constructed private walking trails on the land adjoining the district that are open for educational and recreational purposes to local school groups and guests of the family.

Those camp features to the south of the district include a stacked rock wall approximately fifteen feet long that lines Camp Hill Road, a road remnant approximately 25 feet long that is lined on both sides with stacked rock walls and punctuated with three small rock culverts and a metal oil drum atop a concrete cap that was possibly used for burning trash. A two-story house constructed in 1949 was built by George Smith over the concrete foundation of the camp garage. The boundaries of the district do not extend to these remnants as they do not retain enough integrity to be considered contributing. The loose rocks in the walls have been displaced over the years and replaced in a nonhistoric manner. The culverts were simple stacked rock configurations that are not considered to display a high degree of workmanship in comparison to other CCC culverts in the state. Due to the compromised integrity of these resources this area was not included as part of the historic district boundaries.

SIGNIFICANCE

Though the Damascus CCC Camp, Company 3781 was built for the purpose of eradicating soil erosion the men were taught other skills such as woodwork and masonry work in order to prepare them for employment after their tenure at the camp was over. The three contributing objects that remain on the campsite display the Rustic construction style for which the CCC was famous. The well, menu board and entry arch of Camp Damascus were the result of masonry techniques influenced by the regional design skills of local men and available materials and equipment, all of which convey a sense of the sparse, make do environment that produced the need for the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Damascus CCC Camp #3781 Historic
District

Name of Property

Van Buren County, Arkansas

County and State

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Out of the two Soil Conservation Service CCC campsites in Van Buren County, Camp Damascus is the only one to retain Rustic resources that demonstrate the workmanship and skills of the men who were educated in the program. The Damascus CCC Camp, Company 3781 Historic District is the best example in Van Buren County of the type of Rustic stone architecture that the enrollees were educated in. For this reason it is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion C, with local significance as a contributing resource to the historic context, *The Civilian Conservation Corps in Arkansas, 1933-42*.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Brown, William. "Damascus..." *Faulkner Facts and Fiddling*, Vol. VI, Spring, 1964, #1.

Burggraf, Frank and Rollet, Karen. "Manmade Elements in Natural Settings; the CCC in Arkansas." (Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR, 1989).

Dipert, Dan Sr. Damascus, AR. Telephone interview 10/07/02 by author.

Hall, Lillian. "Civilian Conservation Corps." *Van Buren County Historical Society Journal*, Summer, 1998.

Information submitted by Dan Dipert, Sr., Damascus, Arkansas.

Leake, Fred E., and Carter, Ray. "Roosevelt's Tree Army; A Brief History of the Civilian Conservation Corps." (National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni, Manassas, Virginia, 1982).

"New CCC Camps Will Open Soon." *Log Cabin Democrat*, Vol. 27, #200, May 15, 1935.

Turney, Wanda. Scotland Vic. Telephone interview 10/09/02.

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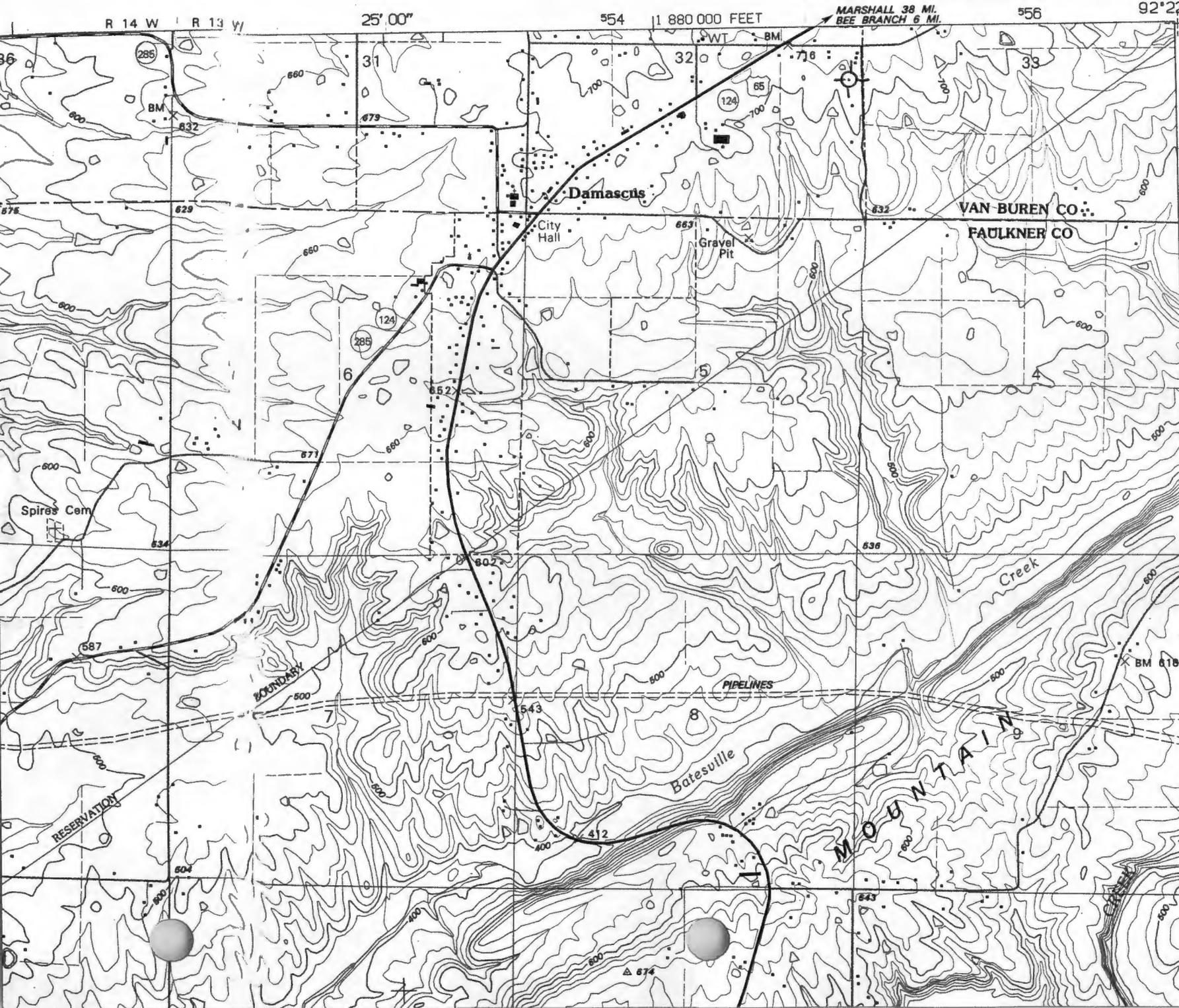
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point on the east side of Camp Hill Road proceed east along a wire fenceline 99 feet to a point 80 feet from the eastern terminus of the fenceline. Then proceed south 10 feet, turning west 20 feet back to fenceline. Then proceed south 58 feet to the southeast intersection of the fence, turning west 71 feet along wire fence to intersection with wooden rail and stile fence. Then proceed north 69 feet along wooden fence to point of origin.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the menu board, entry arch and well that have historically been part of the Damascus CCC Camp, #3781 and that maintain historic integrity. Resources to the southwest and southeast of the historic district boundaries have been excluded because they do not retain sufficient integrity and do not display exemplary characteristics associated with the architecture of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

ARIZONA
DAMASCUS QUADRANGLE
ARKANSAS
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



DAMASCUS CCC
Camp #3781 HD
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