

PH0046 779

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Arkansas
COUNTY:	Pike
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE:	JAN 18 1973

#### 1. NAME

COMMON:  
CRATER OF DIAMONDS STATE PARK

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Crater of Diamonds

#### 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Near Murfreesboro

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

STATE: Arkansas

CODE: 05

COUNTY: Pike

CODE: 109

#### 3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

#### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: State of Arkansas

STREET AND NUMBER: Department of Parks and Tourism

CITY OR TOWN: Little Rock

STATE: Arkansas

CODE: 05

#### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Pike County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Murfreesboro

STATE: Arkansas

CODE: 05

#### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

DATE OF SURVEY: August 1971

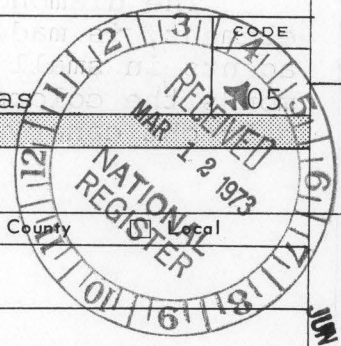
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Arkansas History Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: 300 West Markham

CITY OR TOWN: Little Rock

STATE: Arkansas

CODE: 05



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: COUNTY: ENTRY NUMBER: FOR NPS USE ONLY

P 55 2400149

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Two and a half miles south-southeast of the town of Murfreesboro, Arkansas, lies a phenomenon not found elsewhere on the North American Continent - a peridotite pipe containing diamonds. This pipe was thrust up from the depths of the earth during the Cretaceous era about 70 million years ago. Volcanic action on an island just off the coast of the then existing land mass neighboring on the prehistoric sea which covered a considerable portion of central North America during that era caused the unusual occurrence.

The eruption forced the volcanic core or pipe of diamond bearing material up through the overlying layers of rock. These layers were topped by water-worn chunks of jasper and other durable rocks which are to be found today mixed in the breccia that fell back into the crater after the eruption. It is not uncommon to find chunks of the peridotite or kimberlite, as it is known in South Africa. Intermixed with the peridotite are all types of water-worn pebbles of various materials including: jasper, novaculite, quartz, black spinel, amethyst, barite, limonite, magnetite, pyrite, hematite and other iron minerals. A few small, but brilliant, pyrope garnets and brown peridots have been found also in the matrix of the kimberlite breccia.

The 72-acre, somewhat triangular-shaped, peridotite dike is bounded on the northwest by three low hillocks which are formed of the intrusive peridotite making up the main mass of the pipe. Immediately south of these three hillocks there is a band of peridotite consisting of tuff and fine grained breccia of a grey-blue color where it has been exposed and altered by the elements. Elsewhere in the pipe the prevailing material on the surface is a greenish-colored volcanic breccia but, at times, the color varies to an almost yellowish hue.

The diamond, our only gemstone composed of a single element, is made up of pure carbon with occasional coloring agents in small trace quantities. At the Crater of Diamonds the colors of the diamonds vary greatly from black to a bright canary yellow, as well as, the quite rare pure white.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century  
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Science  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture         | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture        | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications      | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation        |   |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Arkansas Diamond Mine was discovered on August 8, 1906, by John Wesley Huddleston, a farmer and the owner of the land on which the volcanic pipe lies. He found two diamonds the first day, noticing one glittering as it rolled from his plowshare in a field, the other beside the road. The first weighed 1 3/8 carats and the other 2 3/8 carats. He suspected what he might have and took them to Charles S. Stiff and Company, a leading jeweler of Little Rock, Arkansas. They were further examined by Mermod, Jaccard and King Jewelry Company of St. Louis, Missouri, who found them to be genuine diamonds. For further examination of the stones, they were submitted to the noted gemologist, Dr. George F. Kunz, an authority on American gemstones, had been keenly interested in the occurrence of diamonds in America and had been paying considerable attention to the Arkansas area where several barren peridotite pipes were known to be located.

Samuel W. Rayburn, a former Arkansas banker and President of Bankers Trust Company of Little Rock, Arkansas organized a syndicate known as the Arkansas Diamond Company and purchased the Huddleston's property for the sum of \$36,000.

The Huddleston property did not contain all of the area of the diamond pipe. The Austin Miller property on which the Ozark Diamond Mine Corporation built a modern plant in 1912 contained approximately 9.3 acres, most of it lying within the diamond bearing area of the pipe.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

American Guide Series. Arkansas-A Guide to the State.  
New York: Hastings House, 1941.

Brinkman, Grover. "A Brief History of the Arkansas Diamond Fields," Texas Metro Magazine, April, 1971.

Arkansas Gazette, March 15, 1972.  
Times, El Dorado, March 15, 1972.  
News, Hot Springs, March 23, 1972.

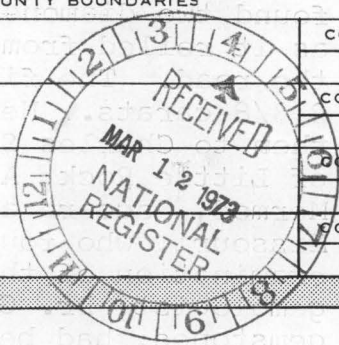
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	34° 01' 13"	93° 41' 10"		°	'	"
NE	34° 01' 13"	93° 39' 33"				
SE	34° 02' 52"	93° 39' 33"				
SW	34° 02' 52"	93° 41' 10"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 72

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

H/3  
 15 / 439150 / 439130 / 43660 / 436700  
 3767560 / 3764330 / 3764340 / 3767560

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Gene Richardson, Research Historian

ORGANIZATION: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET AND NUMBER: 1023 West Third Street

CITY OR TOWN: Little Rock STATE: Arkansas CODE: 05

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: William E. Henderson  
Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: March 7, 1973

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

Robert H. Utley  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 6/18/73

ATTEST: William E. Henderson  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 6/12/72

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Arkansas	
COUNTY	
Pike	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
JUN 18	1973

(Number all entries)

8. Significance Continued:

At first the operations of the Arkansas Diamond Company consisted mainly of gathering the surface breccia, its washing and concentration by screens and the hand-sorting of the remaining gravels for diamonds. The first primitive plant built in 1907 was equipped with a form of the cone-shaped washing pan that was in general use in the South African diamond mines. At no time was any deep excavating done. This first plant was used until 1916 when it was destroyed by fire.

Following the destruction of the Arkansas Diamond Company's plant in 1916, it was replaced by a large plant which operated from 1917 to 1929. No reports are available as to the annual recovery of diamonds from this operation, but is known to have been considerable. Stories are told of "fruit jars full of diamonds sitting on the windowsill of the office of the manager of the plant." It is estimated that more than 60,000 diamonds have been recovered from the Murfreesboro diamond mine operations since that first day in August, 1906.

The Arkansas Diamond Company continued production until 1932. At the outbreak of World War II, members of the Arkansas Congressional delegation and the Governor of Arkansas visited President Franklin D. Roosevelt in an attempt to secure an R.F.C. loan and certain construction priorities since the War Department was interested in American sources for diamonds essential to industry and the manufacture of gun barrels, etc. Although the President was interested, the matter was referred to the War Production Board, however, the U.S. Geological Survey determined that it would not be feasible to mine the diamonds for wartime production.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Arkansas	
COUNTY	
Pike	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUN 18 1970

(Number all entries)

8. Significance Continued:

Glen L. Martin, the aircraft manufacturer, became interested in the project and through a loan to finance mining operations, he advanced approximately \$400,000, according to record files with the Arkansas Department of Revenue. He formed a corporation which leased the Wilkinson property and purchased the remainder of the Mauney property for \$25,000. A recovery plant was set up and operations with surface earth-moving equipment were started in September 1948. The work continued for about a year.

During the early days of the Arkansas Diamond Company many fine stones were discovered, among them the famous "Uncle Sam" diamond of 40.23 carats discovered in 1924. According to "The Diamond Dictionary," this is the largest gem diamond ever discovered on the North American Continent. It was cut into a 12.42 emerald cut stone by the firm of Schenck and Van Galen of New York who cut a great many of the early Arkansas stones.

During President Truman's administration, a large coffee-brown Arkansas diamond was presented to him embedded in a plastic paper-weight and is at present in the Truman Library at Independence, Missouri. In November, 1950, a portion of the crater area was leased to a new corporation called "Diamond Preserve of the United States, Inc." The purpose of the Diamond Preserve of the United States, Inc., was to operate a tourist and sightseeing attraction at the site of the diamond-bearing peridotite so that all interested persons may see in North America the place where diamonds occur in their matrix.

In 1952, Howard A. Miller, son of one of the previous mine operators, opened the Crater as a tourist attraction.



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Arkansas
COUNTY	Pike
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
JUN	18 1973

(Number all entries)

8. Significance Continued:

General Earth Minerals Corporation, a subsidiary of G. F. Industries, bought the property in February, 1969 for \$1,100,000 with the intent of exploring the possibilities of commercial mining but very little was done to the property, although it continued to operate as a tourist attraction.

An average of 200 diamonds a year are being found by visitors and just recently a tourist from Missouri picked up a stone weighing in excess of six carats.

The Crater of Diamonds State Park became a reality when the State of Arkansas purchased slightly over 867 acres, including the 78-acre volcanic pipe from G. F. Industries of Dallas for \$750,000. The park which fronts on the Little Missouri River is ideally suited for recreational development as one of Arkansas' newest and America's most unusual State Park - The Crater of Diamonds.



PROPERTY

Crater of Diamonds State Park

STATE

Ark

P. RE CO.

73000386

WORKING NUMBER

3.12.73. 2532

1/20/73

TECH REVIEW

Photos \_\_\_\_\_

Maps \_\_\_\_\_

CONTROL REVIEW

#10 ~~Adresge is missing.~~ ~~Controlled~~

cm  
4-19-  
73

OK

HISTORIAN

Believe adresge is the 72 mentioned in nomination. Tell you for sure, I'm going to this mi to hunt for diamonds!

Accept  
4-20-  
73  
skull

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Love the photo - ~~let's put it in the N Register for them.~~ Poor form - as written reflects natural phenomenon NOT historic.

REJECT  
4-23-73

AREMEKOGIET HAER



I would go ahead and accept this nomination <sup>because</sup> the site is unquestionably a geologic phenomena as indicated by checking "Science" as an area of significance. The other areas checked-Commerce, Engineering, Industry, & Military- are indeed marginal, but, historically valid even though

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF



none of the mining operations apparently survive. It may be worth a query to establish this fact since it is not mentioned in the form. Please note also that the site was considered by the "Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings", NPS, under the theme of "Commerce & Industry" in 1966, but not designated a Nat'l. Hist. Lnd'mk.

BRANCH CHIEF

END, 5/11/73

accept call  
5-15-73

O/S/B/T/24/73

KEEPER

Wm  
6/12

National Register write-up \_\_\_\_\_

Send-back \_\_\_\_\_

Federal Register entry 8-7-73

Re-submit \_\_\_\_\_

Entered \_\_\_\_\_

JUN 18 1973



NPS Number 6/18/73

Title: Crater of Diamonds State

Park

Loc

FORM 10-301 A  
(6/72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**  
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

1. NAME

COMMON

CRATER OF DIAMONDS  
STATE PARK

AND/OR HISTORIC

Crater of Diamonds

NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)

JUN 18 1973

2. LOCATION

STATE

Arkansas

COUNTY

Pike

TOWN

Murfreesboro

STREET AND NUMBER

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Department of Parks and  
Tourism

DATE

1972

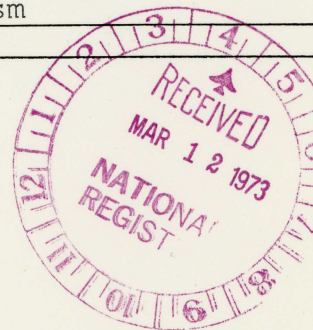
NEGATIVE FILED AT

Department of Parks and  
Tourism

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

This photograph was taken from the east looking west.



D  
6

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

*(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)*

**1. NAME**

COMMON

CRATER OF DIAMONDS  
STATE PARK

AND/OR HISTORIC

Crater of Diamonds

NUMERIC CODE *(Assigned by NPS)*

JUN 18 1973

**2. LOCATION**

STATE

Arkansas

COUNTY

Pike

TOWN

Murfreesboro

STREET AND NUMBER

**3. MAP REFERENCE**

SOURCE

USGS 7.5' Series  
Murfreesboro Quadrangle

DATE

1970

SCALE

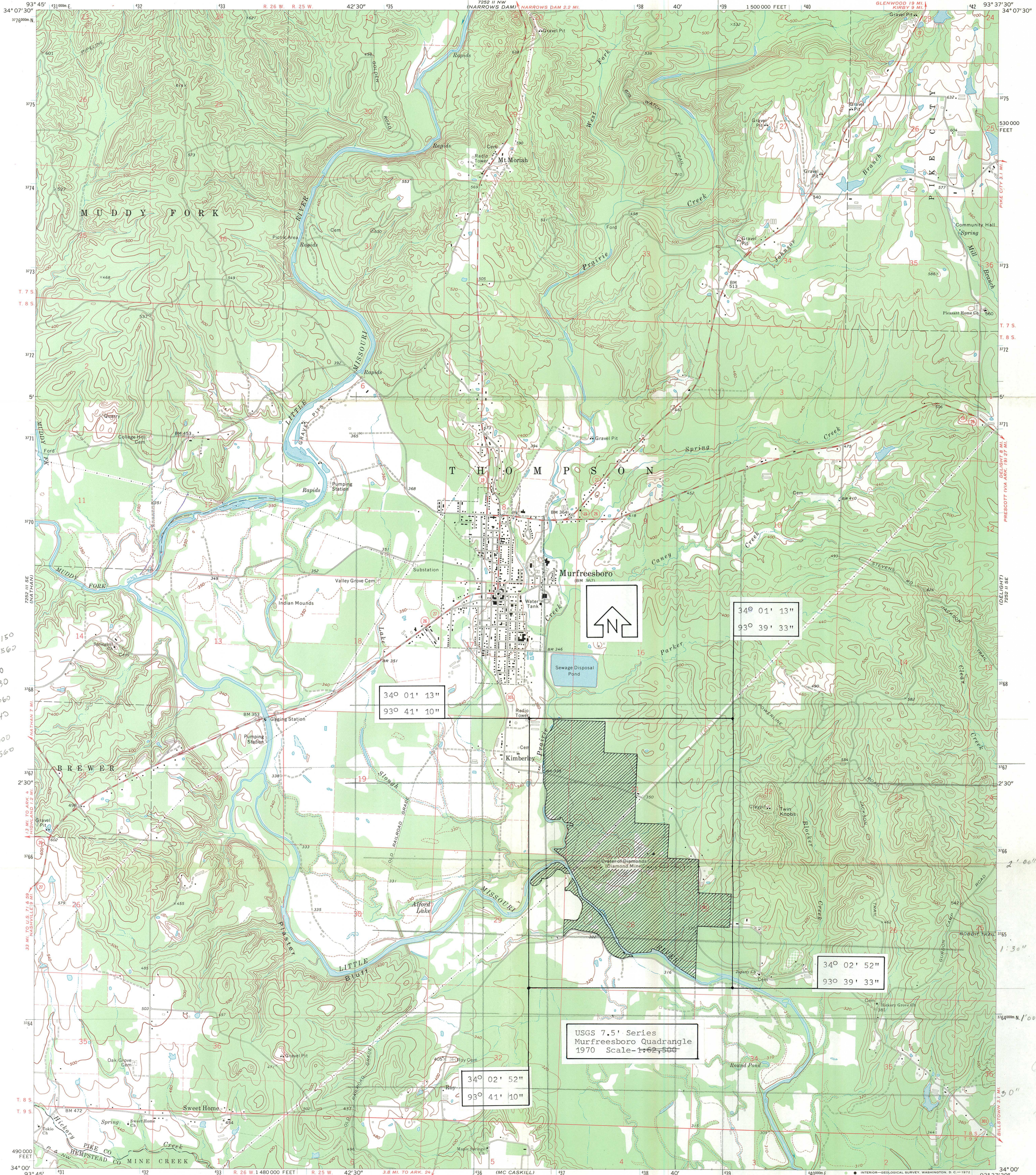
~~1:62,500~~

REQUIREMENTS: PROPERTY BOUNDARIES, WHERE REQUIRED, AND NORTH ARROW:



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

MURFREESBORO QUADRANGLE  
ARKANSAS  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Handwritten notes on the left margin:  
 15/439150  
 13767360  
 439130  
 3764330  
 436660  
 3764340  
 436700  
 3767560

34° 01' 13"  
93° 41' 10"

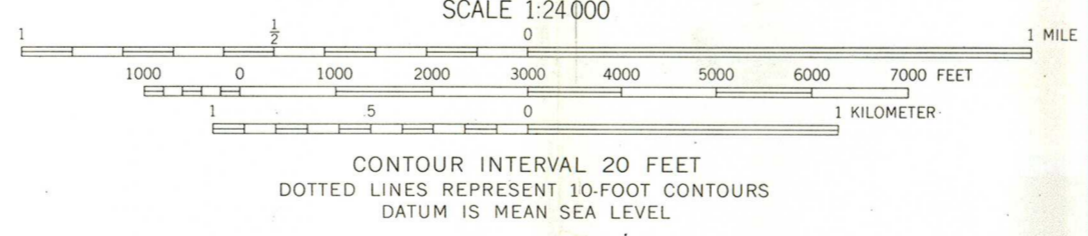
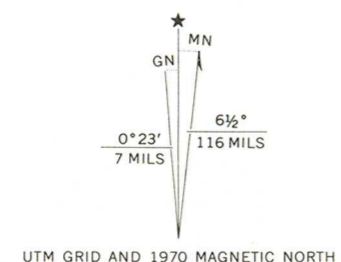
34° 01' 13"  
93° 39' 33"

34° 02' 52"  
93° 39' 33"

34° 02' 52"  
93° 41' 10"

USGS 7.5' Series  
Murfreesboro Quadrangle  
1970 Scale-1:62,500

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
 Control by USGS and USC&GS  
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1968. Field checked 1970  
 Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Arkansas coordinate system, south zone  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue  
 Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
 FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242  
 AND BY THE ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
 Secondary highway, all weather, Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface  
 Unimproved road, fair or dry weather  
 State Route

MURFREESBORO, ARK.  
 N3400-W9337.5/7.5

# ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

1023 WEST THIRD STREET

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201

501 374-0375



March 6, 1973

Dr. William Murtagh  
Keeper of the National Register  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
801 - 19th Street Northwest  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Dr. Murtagh:

Attached are National Register Nominations for the following properties:

1. Crater of Diamonds State Park
2. Allin Home
3. Pillow-Thompson House
4. Old Post Office and Custom House
5. Cadron Settlement
6. Moore-Hornor House
7. Tappan -Pillow House
8. Old Davidsonville State  
Historic Monument

These nominations have been approved by a majority of the State Review Committee.

Sincerely,

William E. Henderson  
State Liaison Officer

WEH:bjf

Enclosure



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Arkansas	
COUNTY	
Pike	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUN 18 1973

(Number all entries)

9. Major Bibliographical References Continued:

- Daily News, Jacksonville, March 27, 1972.
- Mountain Wave, Marshall, March 23, 1972.
- Headlight, Salem, March 20, 1972.
- Democrat, Morrilton, Marcy 23, 1972.
- Democrat, Mammoth Springs, March 23, 1972.
- Advance Monticellonion, Monticello, March 30, 1972.
- The Nashville News, Nashville, March 23, 1972.
- McGehee Times, McGehee, March 30, 1972.
- Southern Standard, Arkadelphia, March 30, 1972.
- Gazette, Texarkana, March 15, 1972.
- Daily Bonner News, Magnolia, March 15, 1972.
- Arkansas Democrat, Little Rock, March 15, 1972.
- Express, Charleston, March 15, 1972.
- Greenwood Democrat, Greenwood, April 6, 1972.
- The Gurdon Times, Gurdon, March 23, 1972.
- Clay County Democrat, Recotr, March 30, 1972.
- World, Helena, March 15, 1972.
- Pine Bluff Commercial, March 15, 1972.
- Democrat, Lonoke, April 6, 1972.



ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE ARKANSAS

Date Entered JUN 18 1973

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Crater of Diamonds State Park	Murfreesboro vicinity Pike County

Also Notified

Hon. John L. McClellan  
Hon. J. W. Fulbright  
Hon. John P. Hammerschmidt  
Director, Southwest Region

State Historic Preservation Officer  
Mr. William E. Henderson, Director  
Arkansas Department of Parks &  
Tourism  
State Capitol, Room 149  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

## COLLECTING

# Diamonds in the Rough

By Lindel Hutson

Associated Press

MURFREESBORO, Ark. In these hard economic times, Mrs. L. E. Owen says collecting diamonds sure beats fishing as a hobby.

She and her husband have found about 200 diamonds in the past 10 years at the Crater of Diamonds State Park.

"We used to go fishing a lot, but now we'd rather look for diamonds than fish," she said.

The couple's largest find was 7.85 carats. But they haven't sold any of the gems, preferring to make jewelry out of some of the diamonds and storing the rest in a bank safe deposit box.

Mrs. Owen won't estimate the value of the diamonds, but park officials say that a Texas woman found a diamond at the park that recently sold for \$85,000.

The Owen couple own a farm at Des Arc, about 80 miles from this southwestern Arkansas community. More and more the couple spend their time here, prospecting.

"We used to dig and sift and wash," she said. "Now, I sit down on a boat cushion and just look. You just have to look slow. I look for a glitter in the sun.

"I know what I'm looking for now," she added. "New people . . . should look for

what shines, and if they see something, pick it up and have it checked."

Since the first of the year, 325 diamonds have been found at the park.

Jim Cannon, park superintendent, said the average size is about 40 or 50 points, which would have a value of \$40 to \$100, depending on quality.

He said one in 10 diamonds found are of gem quality, while the others are the industrial type.

Park officials say the 80-acre Crater of Diamonds is the only site in North America where diamonds are found in the natural matrix—where, somehow, diamond-forming rocks were pushed to the surface of the terrain.

The area was a commercial diamond mine off and on from 1906 until 1972, when the state bought the land some 70 miles southwest of Little Rock for \$750,000.

Cannon said park officials help tourists determine the quality of any diamonds found. The state doesn't ask for a share of the findings.

Some people, Cannon said, "come thinking they're going to make money" prospecting. "But most people just come to enjoy themselves."