

ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS AND HERITAGE NOMINATION FORM

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY - DATE ADDED: 2/6/98 _____

1. NAME

Historic: James Wallace Mason House

and/or Common: Mason House

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Alabama Highway 5 (five miles south of intersection of AL 5 and U.S. 82)

City, Town: Brent

---Vicinity of:

State: AL

County: Bibb

Zip: -

3. CLASSIFICATION

Category

District

Building(s)

Structure

Site

Object

Ownership

Public

Private

Both

Public Acquisition

In process

Being considered

Status

Occupied

Unoccupied

Work in progress

Accessible

Yes: restricted

Yes: unrestricted

No

Present Use

Agriculture

Commercial

Educational

Entertainment

Government

Industrial

Military

Museum

Park

Private residence

Religious

Scientific

Transportation

Other:

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name: B & C Leasing, L.L.C.

Telephone: () -

Street & Number: Route 1 Box 335-AA

City or Town: Brent

State: AL

Zip: 35034-

5. FLOOR PLAN & SITE PLAN

(Use space below to sketch floor plan and site plan or attach additional sheet.)

Attached

6. DESCRIPTION

(See attached instructions for specific guidelines on completing the description.)

CONDITION

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |

CHECK ONE

- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered |

CHECK ONE

- | |
|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moved Date Moved |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE.

The James Mason House is a one story, wood frame, T-plan farmhouse dating from around 1889 and located on Alabama Highway 5, at the southwestern outskirts of the Bibb County community of Brent. Once the nucleus of a prosperous farming operation, the house was maintained as a residence until the late 1970s. For over 20 years it stood vacant and deteriorated, until its acquisition and subsequent restoration in 1995 by the B & C Leasing Company. The nominated property includes 0.72 acre immediately surrounding the house, a portion of the 4.5 acres owned by the company. It is the only structure situated on the nominated property and is surrounded by pine timberland.

Facing east, the house features a side-T-shaped intersecting gable, with the top of the "T" forming the south side of the structure. A hipped porch extends across the north side of the facade and is supported by 4"x4" turned posts and ornamented with a 2"x2" turned spindle railing which was originally located in the balcony of the Centreville Presbyterian Church. The original brick foundation piers have been replaced with a continuous brick-faced concrete foundation of the same height. Brick ventilators provide circulation. A circular attic vent was cut into the front-facing gable during the 1995 renovation. Original wood lap siding covers the exterior walls, and replacement five v crimp metal roofing replaces an earlier tin roof. Windows are original 2/2 wood sashes, with the exception of two 6/6 wood sashes at the rear. Three original chimneys remain, an exterior chimney on the end of the north gable and interior chimneys along the ridge of the front-facing gable and the gable of the rear ell. Additional porches include a shed roof porch (enclosed during the 1995 renovation) extending from the center hall toward the rear, along the side of the rear ell, and a small shed roof porch across the rear-facing gable. There are three exterior doors, all period replacements, and including a 4-panel main entry door flanked by 2-paned sidelights, a back door leading from the small open porch to the enclosed porch (featuring a wood panel in the lower portion and a single glass pane above), and a 4-panel wood door on the north side of the rear kitchen.

On the interior, the house remains very much intact. The plan features three principal rooms of the side-facing "T," two in the gable-front section at the top of the "T" and a center hall and room (with exterior chimney) forming the base of the "T". A rear ell containing three additional rooms extends from the single room which forms the base of the T. The three chimneys accommodate five fireplaces, four of which have mantels. Three of these are original pine, with the fourth being an oak mantel dating from the same period. Doors and windows are trimmed with 1"x6" pine and ornamented with corner rosettes. During the 1995 renovation, original 1"x4" pine tongue and groove wall and ceiling boards were sandblasted with walnut shells to remove paint and expose the natural wood. Where termite and water damage had occurred in the rear of the house, boards were replaced and stained to match the natural color of the original walls. A sanding sealer was applied to preserve the finish. The original 1"x4" pine flooring was sanded and treated with an oil finish. The floor of the enclosed porch and of two rooms of the rear ell were covered with linoleum. When the house was purchased in 1995, lighting was provided by single bulbs dropped from the ceiling. The renovation included the installation of ceiling fans with attached light fixtures. Original hardware includes black iron rimlocks and hinges and white porcelain knobs on interior doors, black iron pulls and wooden latches on closet doors, and blank iron sash lifts and wooden latches on windows. Central heating and air conditioning were added during the 1995 renovation project.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

(See attached instructions for specific guidelines on completing the significance.)

PERIOD

- Prehistoric
- 1400-1499
- 1500-1599
- 1600-1699
- 1700-1799
- 1800-1899
- 1900-

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE-CHECK AND EXPLAIN BELOW

- archeology-prehistoric
- archeology-historic
- agriculture
- architecture
- art
- commerce
- communications

- community planning
- conservation
- economics
- education
- engineering
- exploration/settlement
- industry

- landscape architecture
- law
- literature
- military
- music
- philosophy
- politics/government

- religion
- science
- sculpture
- social/humanitarian
- theater
- other (specify)

SPECIFIC DATES: _____

BUILDER/ARCHITECT: _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The James Mason House is eligible for listing on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage under Criterion C in the area of architecture. The building is a good example of a late-nineteenth century Victorian period farmhouse, and it possesses a high degree of architectural integrity. Maintained on its original site in a currently semi-rural setting, it was once the nucleus of a thriving farming operation and the home of the prominent Bibb County residents J.R. Mason and, later, son James Wallace Mason. It was maintained as a private residence into the 1970s. With the exception of a new foundation; period replacement exterior doors, porch rail and one mantel; and a varnish applied to the interior walls; the house retains its historic fabric. It has withstood a devastating tornado in 1973 and deterioration resulting from twenty years of vacancy. In 1995, the B&C Leasing Company acquired the property for restoration and commercial use.

Historical Summary:

Believed to date from around 1889 and to have been constructed as the home of prominent Bibb County farmer J.R. Mason, the James Wallace Mason House stands as a good example of a Victorian period farmhouse. Deeds suggest that no structure existed in 1878 but that a house appeared by 1889. Further research indicates that it was likely constructed by the carpenters Mayfield and Fawcett, as their names were found stamped on several pieces of lumber uncovered during restoration. Though other resources attributed to them have not been documented, the J.E. Mitchell House (on Highway 25 in the Pondville community) is strikingly similar in appearance to the Mason House and might have been constructed by the same builders or at least by the same vernacular plan.

J.R. Mason and son James Wallace Mason were among Brent's most prosperous late-19th and early-20th century families. The elder Mason owned and farmed several hundred acres of land surrounding the house and is credited with the founding of the Bethel Baptist Church in Brent. Son James Wallace Mason, born in 1871, acquired the house in 1896. Like his father, he was well-respected for his dedication to his church and community. He served as a deacon and long-time Sunday School Superintendent at the Brent Baptist Church. In the business community, he became a charter stockholder in the Brent Banking Company which was organized in 1912 and a partner in the Brent Mercantile Company, then Bibb County's largest mercantile enterprise. He also was a partner in both the Superior Lumber Company, which owned and operated the cotton gin and cotton warehouse in Brent, and the M & W Gas Company.

The Mason family maintained the home until 1944, when it was sold to W.W. and F.F. James in April, 1944. Through inheritance, the property passed to F.W. Fawcett, in 1978, and to Mrs. Ruth Dailey in

1982. B & C Leasing, L.L.C., purchased the home in 1995 and restored it to its present condition by carpenter Donald Ray Perry. Reflecting the quality of workmanship of many rural farmhouses, the structure is noted for having withstood the devastating tornado of 1973, which touched down less than two miles away and destroyed much of the community of Brent, and recently survived over twenty years of neglect.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Brent Demolished by Tornado," The Centreville Press, 31 May 1973, p. 1.
Ellison, Rhoda Coleman. Bibb County Alabama: The First Hundred Years, 1818-1918. University of Alabama
Interview with Ruth Dailey, Citizen of Brent, Brent, Alabama, 12 May 1996.

9. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of nominated property: 0.72
Quadrangle name: Centreville West 1:2400

Enclose map showing location of property. (city or county map, state highway department map, or USGS map)

10. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/title: <u>Sally Moore (AHC) and Stephen Barry Jones, Manager</u>	
Organization: <u>B & C Leasing, L.L.C.</u>	Date: <u>1/14/98</u>
Street & Number: <u>Route 1 Box 335-AA</u>	Telephone: <u>(205) 926-6689</u>
City or Town: <u>Brent</u>	State: <u>AL</u> Zip: <u>35034-</u>

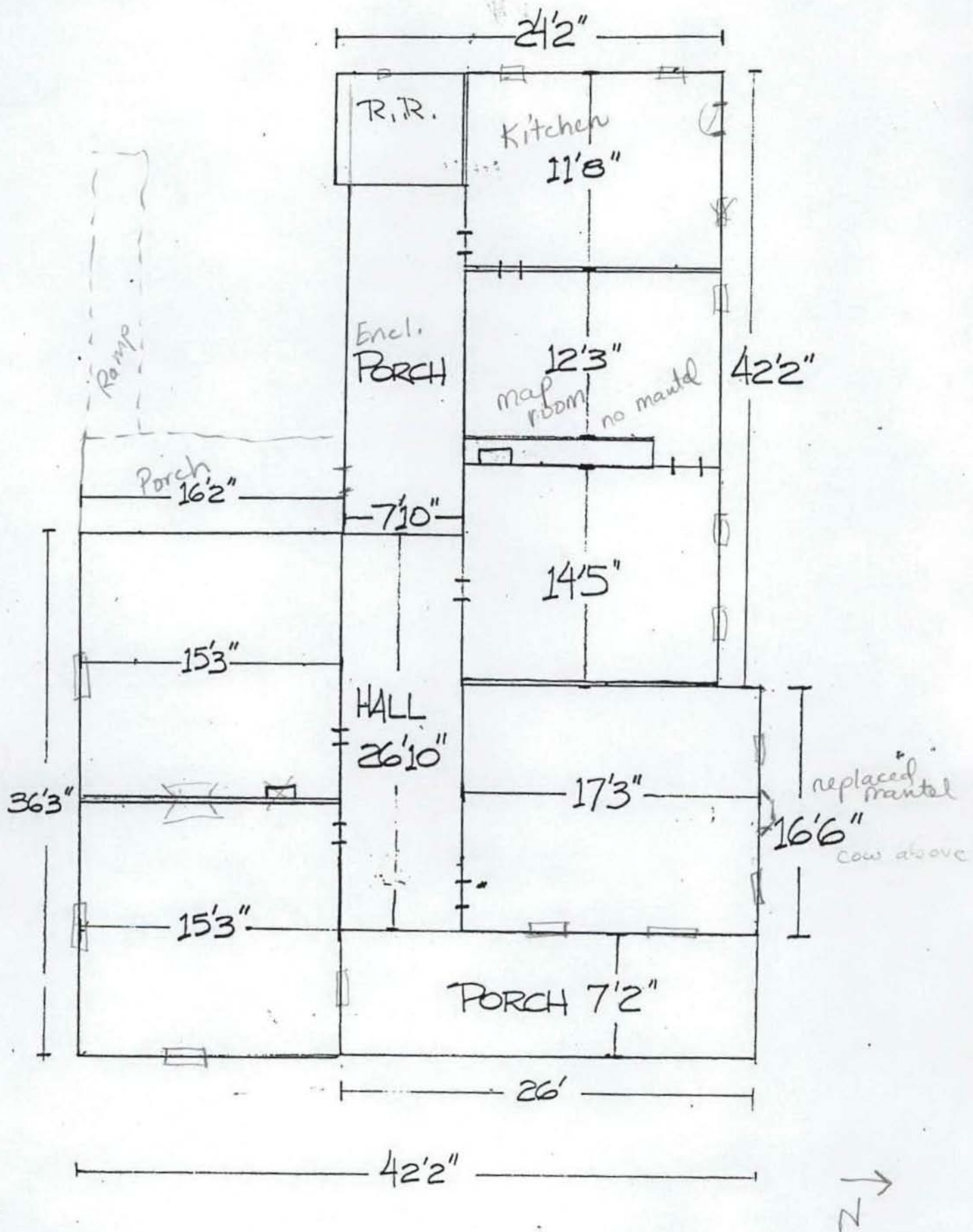
11. PLEASE SUBMIT COLOR SLIDES OF THE PROPERTY WITH THIS FORM:

Color slides are essential to the review process.

12. PLEASE RETURN NOMINATION FORM AND DOCUMENTATION TO:

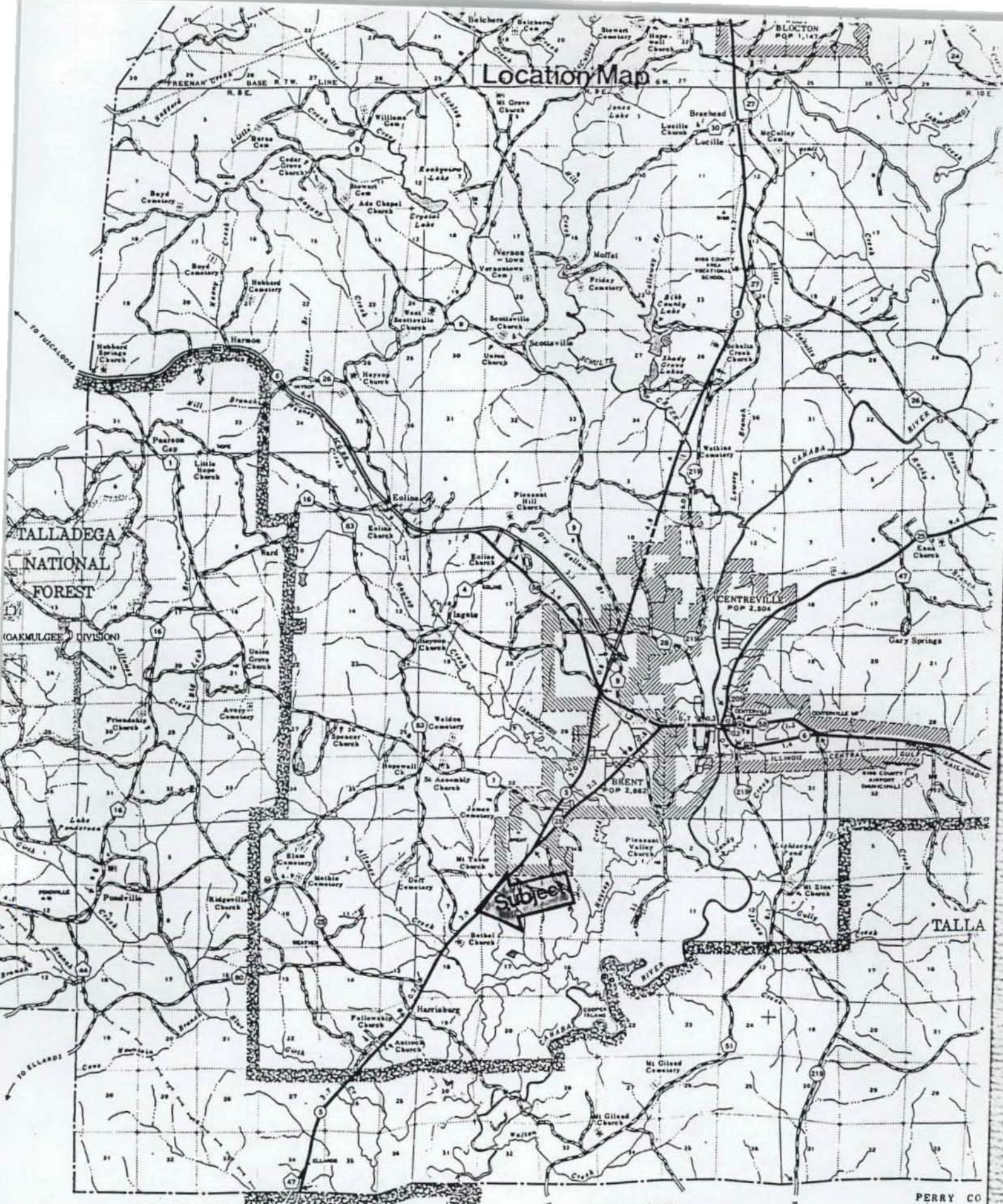
**ALABAMA REGISTER COORDINATOR
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
468 SOUTH PERRY STREET
MONTGOMERY, AL 36130-0900**

MASON HOME - FLOOR PLAN SKETCH



1" = 6'

Location Map



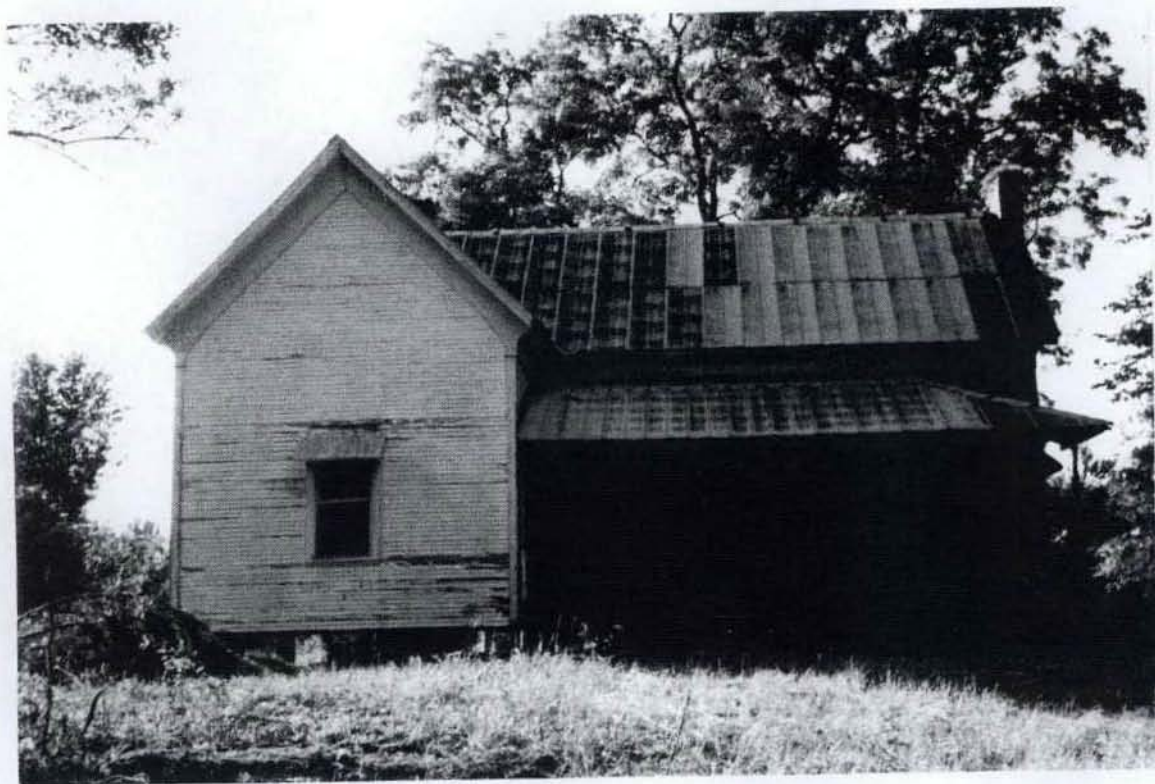
PERRY COUNTY

PERRY CO

FEATURE	REVISIONS	DATE
ROAD ADDITIONS & RELOCATIONS		7/30/84
ROAD SURFACE TYPES		4/18/83
CITY LIMITS		7/10/87
CULTURE & NAMES		4/29/87
COUNTY ROAD NUMBERS		3/3/87

CITY OF
USING AL
DATE OF REV
CANNOT
MAGNITUDE

MASON HOME BEFORE RENOVATIONS WERE STARTED (JUNE 1995)

















































OM HOLFELD
PROGRESSIVE

















