

## ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS AND HERITAGE NOMINATION FORM

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY - DATE ADDED: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. NAME

Historic: \_\_\_\_\_  
and/or Common: \_\_\_\_\_

The Gibeon Jefferson Sullivan Cabin  
The G G House

### 2. LOCATION

Street & Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Sullivan Lane (house has been unoccupied since before E-911)

City, Town: Wagarville

—Vicinity of: Wagarville

State: AL

County: Washington

Zip: - 36585

### 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street & Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
City or Town: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Pvt. Gibeon Jefferson Sullivan Chapter  
United Daughters of the Confederacy  
1730 Carson Road  
Leroy AL 36548  
jeffersondavis@wildblue.net

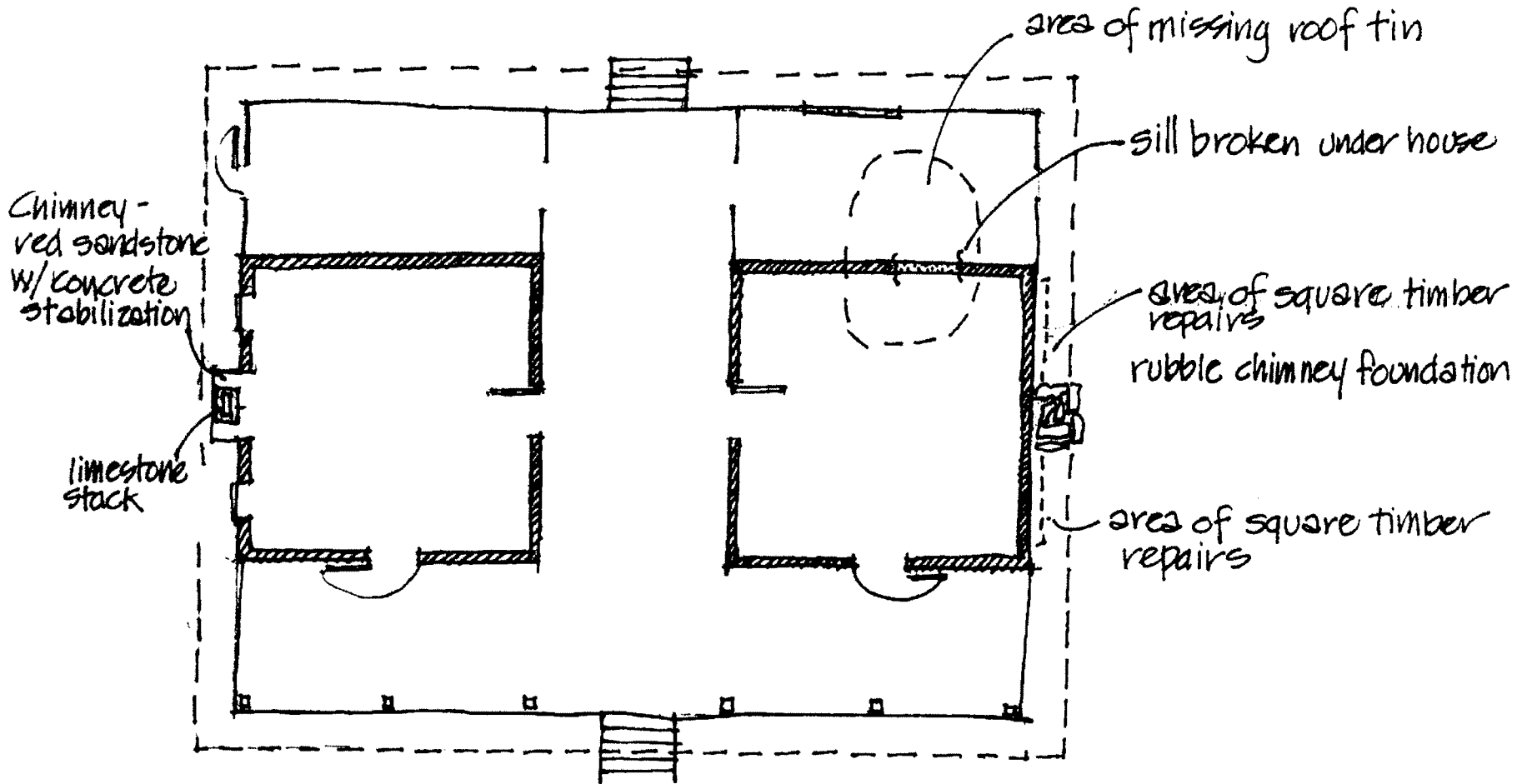
Telephone: ( 251-246-9850 )

Zip: 36548

### 5. FLOOR PLAN & SITE PLAN

(Attach sketched floor plan and/or site plan.)

SULLIVAN LOG CABIN  
nr. Wagarville  
Washington County  
N.T. Scale



## 6. DESCRIPTION

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

### CONDITION

Excellent     Deteriorated  
 Good         Ruins  
 Fair          Unexposed

### CHECK ONE

Unaltered  
 Altered

### CHECK ONE

Original Site  
 Moved    Date Moved

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

### SULLIVAN CABIN

nr. Wagarville, Washington County, Alabama

#### Description:

The Sullivan Log Cabin near Wagarville, Alabama, is a round log, double-pen with dogtrot cabin which has several features common to cabins built in South Alabama:

- A distinctive spraddle-roof shape seen from the gable end so that the porches are under the main house roof. The rear porch has been partially enclosed to provide two shed rooms behind the log pens.
- Wide over-hanging eaves which extend the roof beyond the chimneys
- Long logs on the corners of the pens, front to back, at ceiling height, extending to support the porch roof
- Long shaped battens to cover the space between the logs rather than chinking (most now missing)

It was less common to have doors in the open dogtrot rather one door opening to each pen on the front of the house, but this provided an opportunity for additional windows in the front room, allowing for additional ventilation and light. The wide porches, front and back, and the dogtrot would have helped keep the house cooler in the summer, a necessity in our hot climate with no electricity.

This is a type of folk house that persisted all over south Alabama from the time of early settlement through the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A frame example of the same house type can be seen on the left side of the same local lane on the way to the cabin.

Logs are round, plainly notched without dovetails, both more typical for south Alabama cabins than north. Round logs like these were almost unknown on early cabins, where logs were commonly shaped flat on at least two sides, and chinked to fill the space between the logs. Extensive repairs have been made to the right end of the northern pen with sawn square timber, covering the opening for the chimney, and the two window openings which would have flanked the fireplace.

The foundation, which was probably large round log sections set on end, has been replaced with concrete block.

The chimney remains on the south end of the opposite pen, although it has been heavily rebuilt. The original chimneys seem to have been constructed with rough stones on the bottom, rising to a tall, thin stack of regularly cut local limestone. On the existing chimney, concrete has been poured around the rock at the base of the chimney, with the stack rising from poorly reconstructed shoulders. Look to the similar frame house on the lane previously mentioned for a better chimney shape.

Shed rooms enclose the rear porch behind the pens, and entry to the rooms are through doors into the open dogtrot. The exterior (and interior) of the enclosed rooms are board-and-batten. The room on the right has a salvaged window installed on the back wall; both rooms have a window opening opposite the doors.

Window openings have solid shutters made of boards. Although it was difficult to examine all the openings, the ones examined don't show evidence of having had sashes (friction wear from sashes sliding up and down, nail holes where a stop would have held the sashes in). Openings were hard to investigate because of the plywood rooms constructed within the pens, and need to be examined more carefully when they are more accessible.

#### **Condition and Stabilization :**

The cabin is in overall fair condition, and needs stabilization.

Immediate stabilization issues include:

1. Active termite infestation: Tunnels were noted on some foundation piers. The building needs to be treated for termites as soon as possible. The extent of termite damage is not known. Although old lumber is less susceptible to termite damage, termites will selectively eat even heart pine, especially if wet.

2. Hole in the roof: The rear slope of the roof has missing tin which must be replaced. The material is relatively inexpensive, or you may be able to find salvaged material. The original roof would have been wood shingles, and metal roofing was commonly laid over it in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the wood began to fail. Base the quality of your repair on how long you need it to last.

3. Broken sill toward the back: A structural member, I don't know whether to call it a sill or the bottom log, is broken on the right side where the room adjoins the addition, about in the center of the room. Since this is in the area of the largest hole in the roof, the break is probably caused by a combination of water and termites. This will probably have to be repaired before the cabin is moved. This could mean anything from a splice to replacing the whole log.

Optional, but important:

1. Clean out debris and demolish the plywood rooms on the interior. Nothing makes you feel like you've accomplished something like having everything cleaned up.

If these steps are accomplished, the cabin will last many more years.

## 7. SIGNIFICANCE

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

| PERIOD  | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE-CHECK AND EXPLAIN BELOW    |  |   |  |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric          | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric  | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning                | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> religion                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation                      | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> education                         | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering                       | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social history |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> funerary art                      | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> other                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900-                | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian                      | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    |  |

SPECIFIC DATES: 1874  
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

BUILDER/ARCHITECT: Gibeon J. Sullivan

The Sullivan Cabin is pictured and written up as one of the oldest houses in Washington County in Volume I *The History of Washington County*, by Jackqueline Anderson Matte.

The Gibeon Sullivan Cabin was built by Gibeon Jefferson Sullivan in circa 1874 and remained in his possession until his death November 1, 1914. It then remained in the possession of his heirs until June, 2009, when Mr. And Mrs. James Lankford gave it to the Pvt. Gibeon Jefferson Sullivan Chapter 2662, United Daughters of the Confederacy

At Gibeon J. Sullivan's death, the house passed to G.G. Sullivan, a nephew. G. G. Sullivan used the cabin as a residence until his death in 1964. It is G.G. Sullivan whose name is used by younger living heirs when they refer to the cabin as the "G.G. House."

At G.G. Sullivan's death, the cabin became the property of Doctor Kimbrough Sullivan who bought it from the G.G. Sullivan heirs. Though D. K. Sullivan never used the cabin as a residence, he maintained it faithfully and carefully until his death. The "Doc" Sullivan heirs sold the cabin to Mr. and Mrs. James Lankford in 2002. Mr. Lankford is a lineal descendant of Gibeon J. Sullivan.

The Sullivan cabin is typical of the dogtrot house, a type popular in the nineteenth century especially in the deep South. The rural dogtrot is known for its open central passage, called the "dogtrot." The Sullivan Cabin was constructed originally of two oblong single pen units, separated by about 10 feet. Both rooms are under the same roof. Originally the Sullivan Cabin had a fireplace at the outside end of each pen.

### **Significance con't.**

The Gibeon Sullivan cabin is historically significant additionally, because many of Gibeon Sullivan's descendants still reside locally near where Sullivan built it in 1874 when he had walked home from Camp Chase, Ohio, where he had been a POW as a Confederate soldier. Pvt. Gibeon J. Sullivan was a member of Company A, (Wilson's Guards) 32<sup>nd</sup> Alabama Infantry. This company was formed and mustered in at the Old Washington County Courthouse at St. Stephens (which still stands), only a few miles from the site of the Sullivan Cabin.

The Sullivan cabin is significant because of its association to its builder and architect, Gibeon Sullivan. Gibeon Sullivan is a local historic figure whose history and legend are well-known in Washington County. History credits him with saving the life not only of Capt. Leroy Bowling of Wilson's Guards, but also Capt. Bowling's son, Pvt. Theodore C. Bowling as Sullivan and the younger Bowling walked home from Camp Chase. Had Pvt. Gibeon Sullivan not been heroic and steadfast enough to save his two comrades, the history of Washington County would have been very different. Capt. Leroy Bowling became sheriff of Washington County after the War Between the States; the community of Leroy is named for Capt. Bowling. Pvt. T. C. Bowling became the first post master of Leroy in 1896. He also was elected Superintendent of Education for Washington County.

## 8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Matte, Jacqueline Anderson. The History of Washington County, First County in Alabama. Chatom: Washington County Historical Society, 1982.

Pearson, Theodore Bowling. Collected Historical Papers. Grove Hill: The Clarke County Democrat, 1995.

Sullivan, Jerrell. Interview. Wagarville, Alabama, March 17, 2010.

## 9. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of nominated property: 4.937 Acres, more or less

Quadrangle name: SECTION 24 TOWNSHIP 6 NORTH RANGE 1 WEST  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, AL

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

## 10. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/title: Ellen Williams

Organization: United Daughters of Confederacy

Street & Number: 1730 CAPSON ROAD

City or Town: LeRoy

Email Address: JEFFERSONDAVIS@WILDBLUE.NET

Date: April 26, 2010

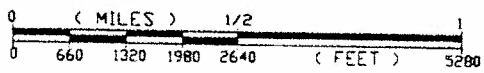
Telephone: (251) 246-9850

State: AL Zip: - 36548

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

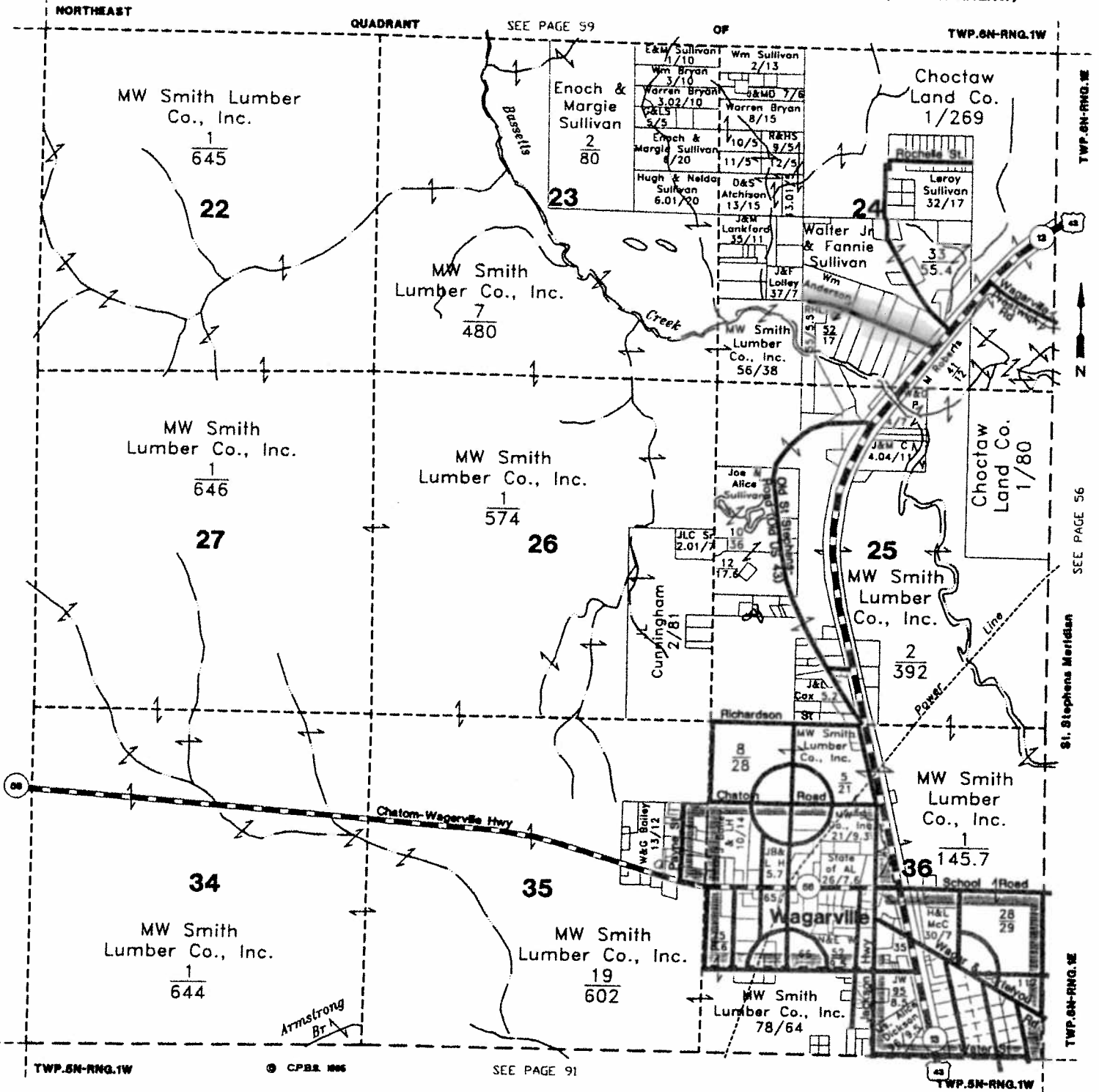
Images are essential to the review process. They can be 4x6 color prints or digital images on a CD. Please see the "Instructions for Completing an AR Form" for more details on images or contact the AHC at 334.230.2687.

## 12. PLEASE RETURN NOMINATION FORM AND DOCUMENTATION TO:



# LOCATOR 14 - SOUTHEAST

WASHINGTON COUNTY, ALABAMA (TWP.6N-RNG.1W)



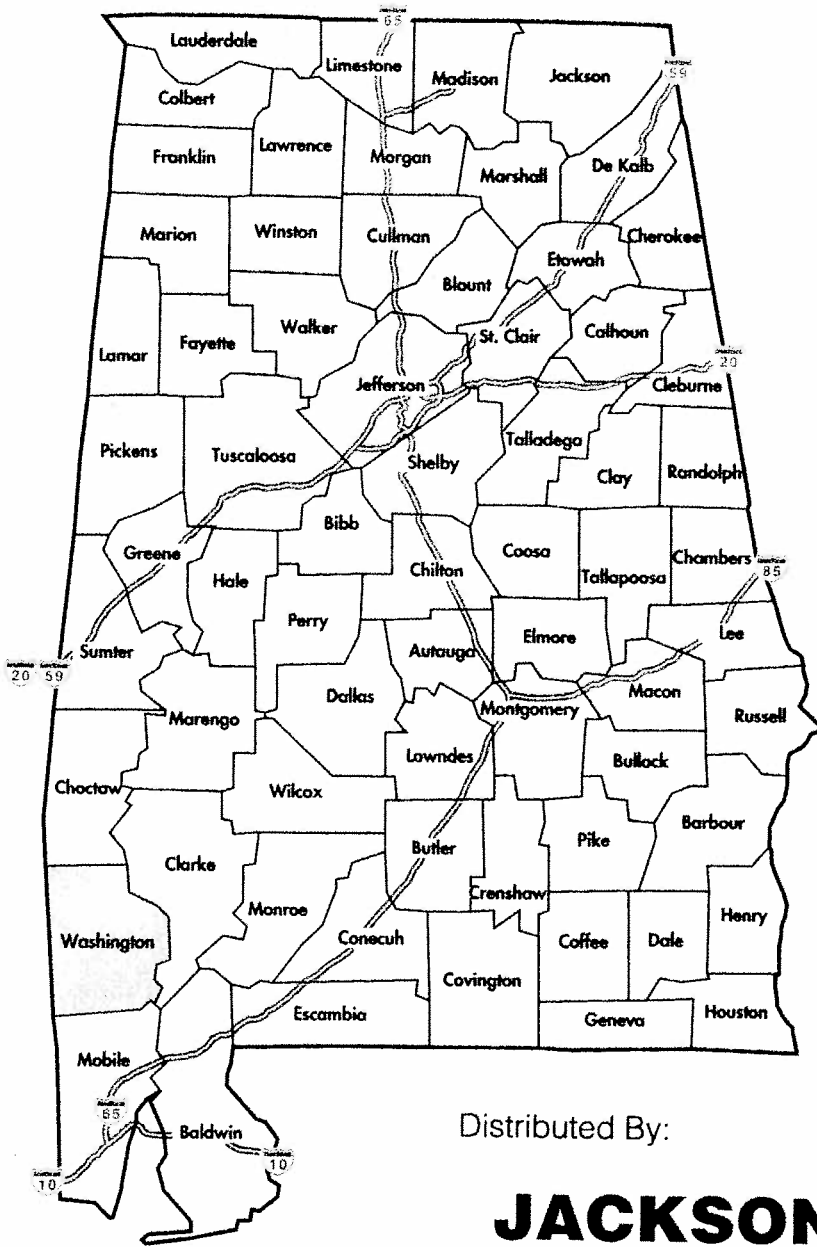
The Sullivan Cabin is located on Sullivan Lane, highlighted in yellow



*HW desks*

# WASHINGTON COUNTY

1995 Plat Directory • Alabama



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**JACKSON LIONS CLUB**

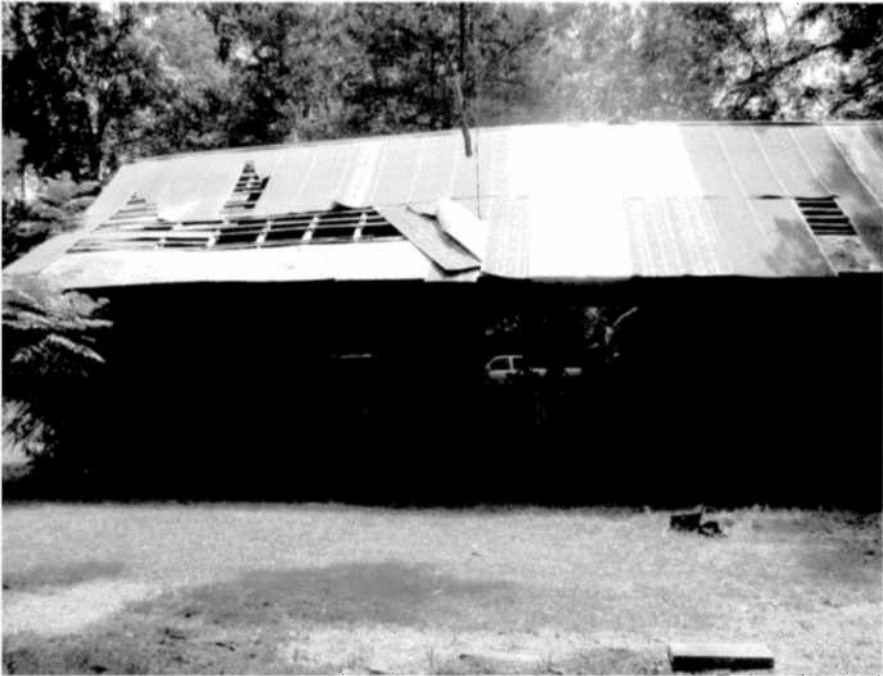
P.O. Box 732  
Jackson, Alabama 36545

Published By:



Note: the wide flat slanted wooden board on the (north) end of the porch of the Sullivan Cabin. This board is called a "cooling board." Before the days of mortuaries and professional undertakers, Gibeon Sullivan often performed this service for his neighbors. The corpse was laid out to "cool" on the board and then the body bathed and dressed for burial. The cooling board is notched underneath so it can be lifted and set across a wagon bed. The notches kept the board from sliding as the wagon moved. *This is the original cooling board used by Gibeon Sullivan.*

We have cleaned the Cabin since these photos were made.  
We have also covered the two main rooms.



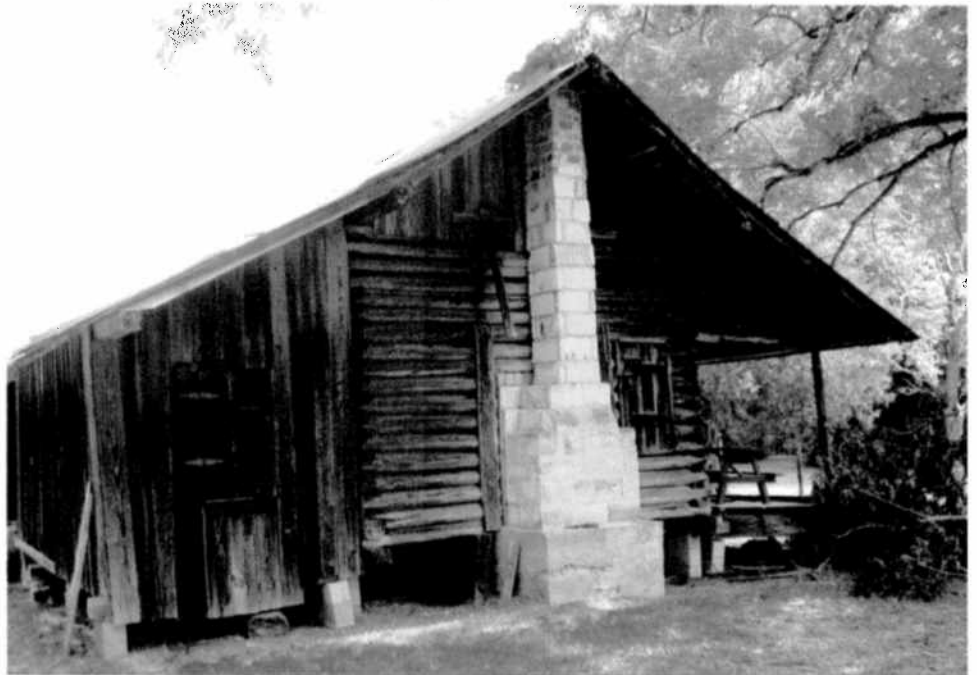
BACK - WEST



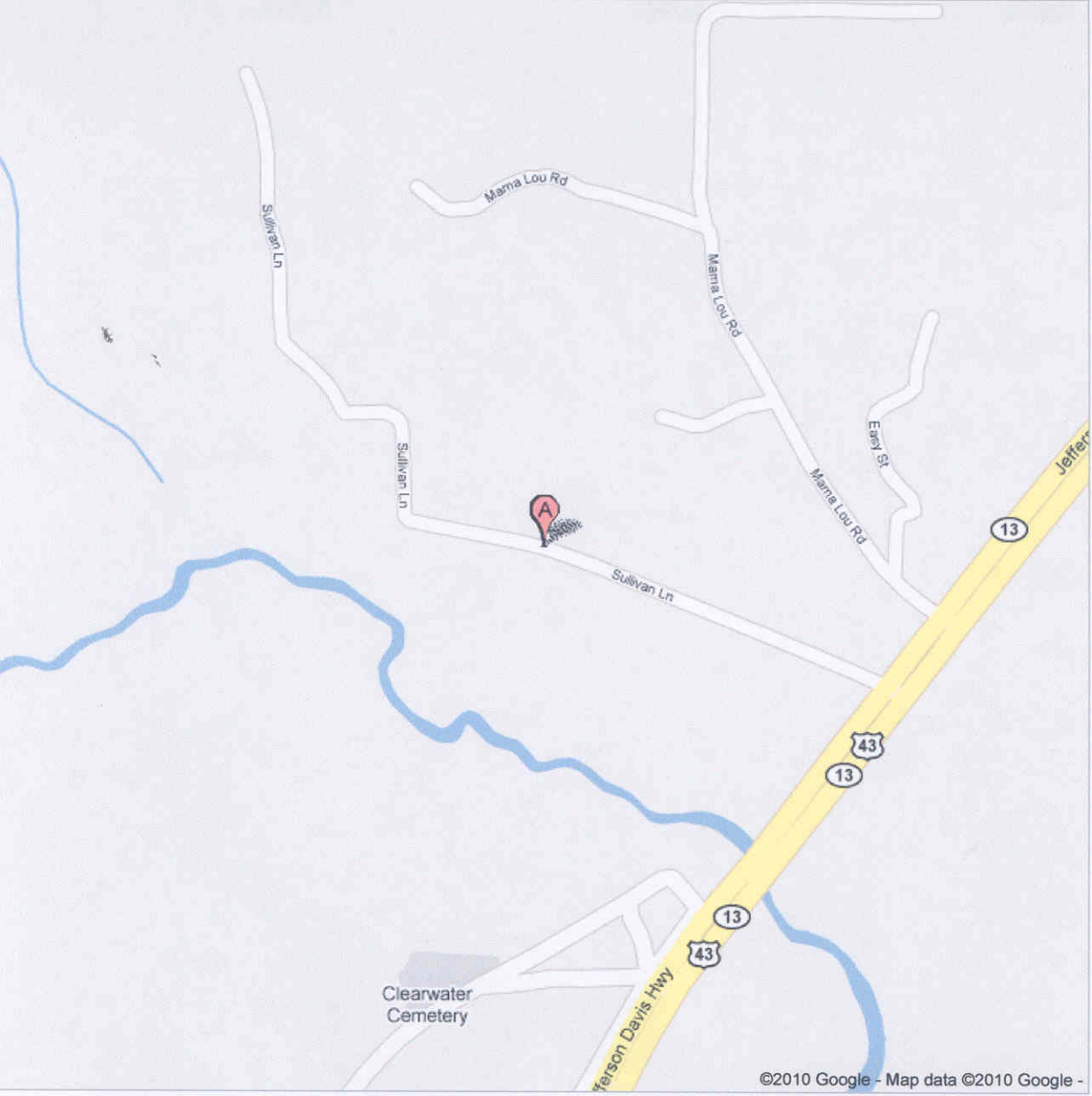
LEFT FRONT - EAST



NORTH END



SOUTH END



Sullivan Ln

Mama Lou Rd

Mama Lou Rd

Eury St

Mama Lou Rd

Sullivan Ln

Sullivan Ln

13

43

13

13

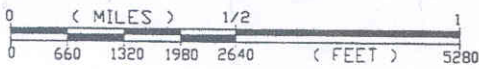
43

Clearwater Cemetery

Jefferson Davis Hwy

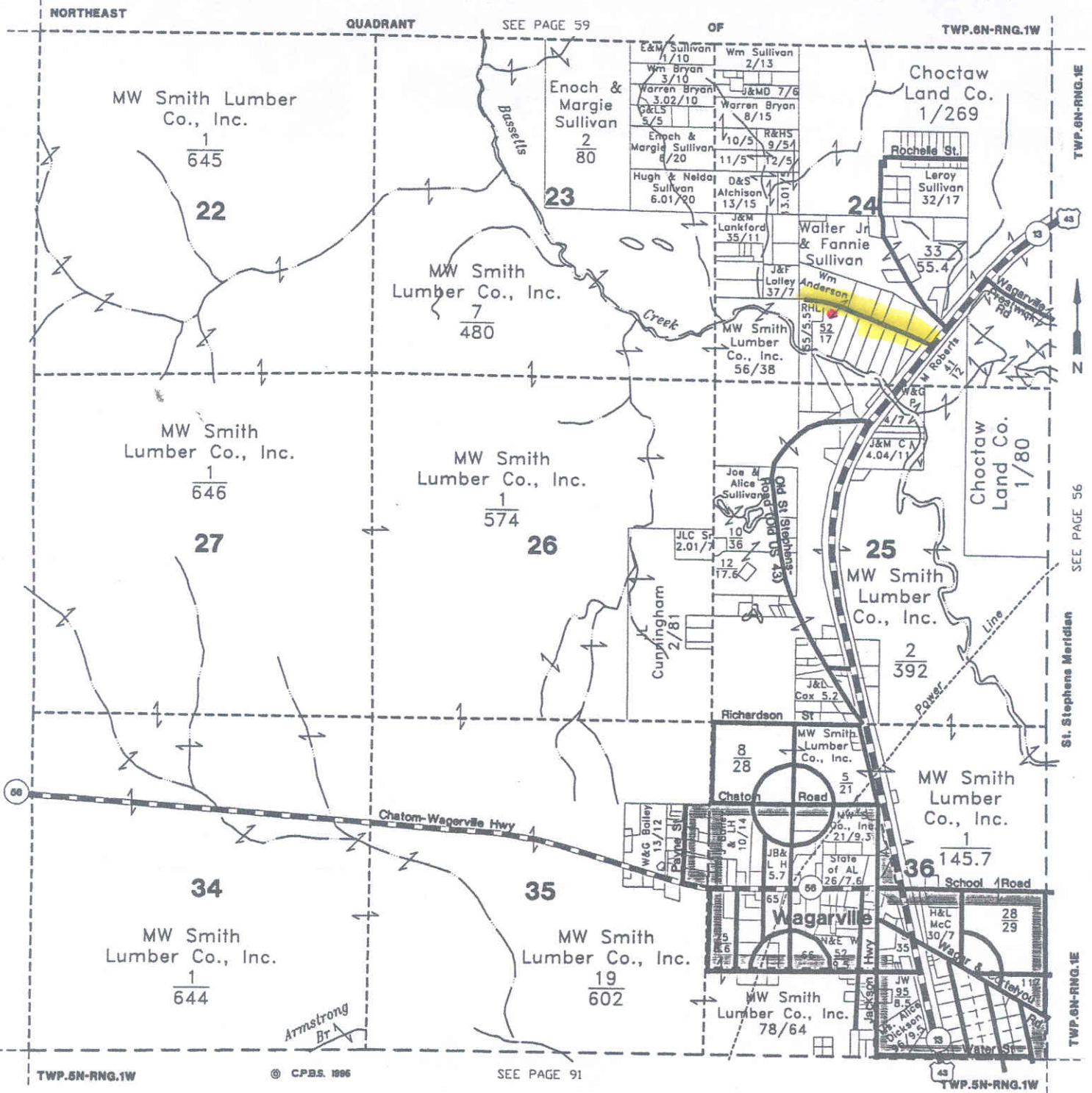
Jefferson Davis Hwy





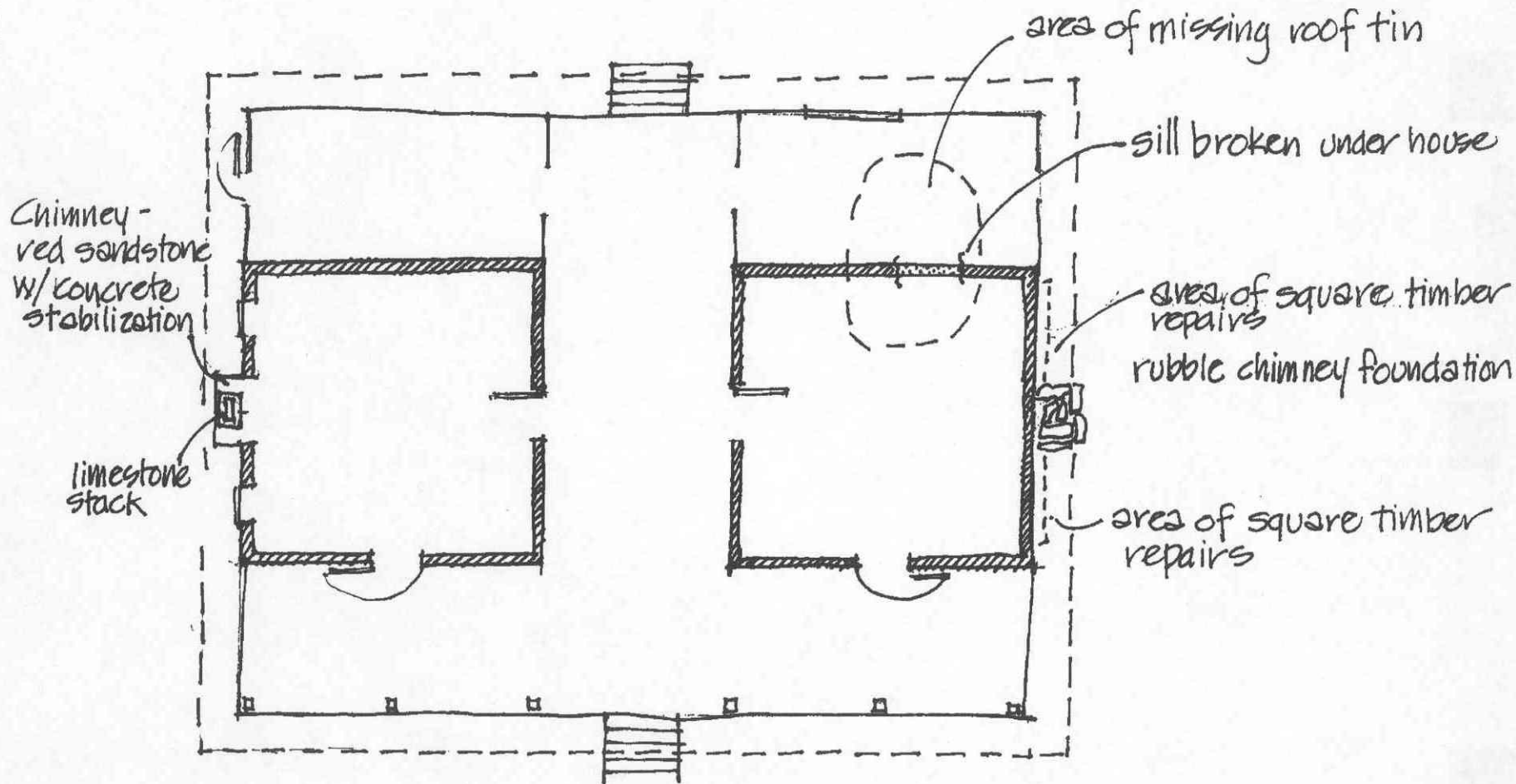
# LOCATOR 14 - SOUTHEAST

WASHINGTON COUNTY, ALABAMA (TWP.6N-RNG.1W)



The Sullivan Cabin is located on Sullivan Lane, highlighted in yellow

SULLIVAN LOG CABIN  
nr. Wagarville  
Washington County  
N.T. Scale





LEFT FRONT - EAST





NORTH END





BACK - WEST



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South End