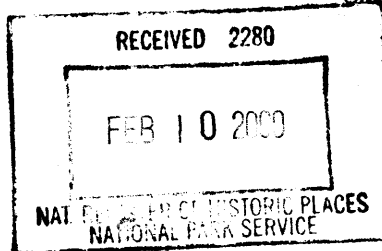


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



224

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

historic name Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
other names/site number Sparkman Farm, Skelley Farm, Holly Hill Farm

2. Location

street & number 5540 Leiper's Creek Road N/A not for publication  
city or town Boston N/A vicinity  
state Tennessee code TN county Williamson code 187 zip code 37064

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.)

Herbert L. Gayer 1/28/00  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission  
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:)

Ma J. M. [Signature] Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

3/27/00

Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Name of Property

Williamson County, TN  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing		Noncontributing	
4	1		buildings
0	0		sites
1	0		structures
0	0		objects
5	1		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Historic Resources of Williamson County

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
AGRICULTURE: storage, field, animal facility

WORK IN PROGRESS

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

ITALIANATE  
GREEK REVIVAL

foundation BRICK, STONE  
walls WOOD  
roof ASPHALT SHINGLES  
other METAL

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)  
See Continuation Sheets

Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Name of Property

Williamson County, TN  
County and State

**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** N/A

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

Property is: N/A

- 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 year of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE  
SETTLEMENT  
ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

circa 1846-1943

**Significant Dates**

NA

**Significant Person**

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**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):** N/A

- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

Tennessee Historical Commission

Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Name of Property

Williamson County, TN  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 94 acres Theta 56 SE

**UTM References**

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>497110</u>	<u>3967700</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>16</u>	<u>496730</u>	<u>3966980</u>

3	<u>16</u>	<u>496130</u>	<u>3967110</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<u>16</u>	<u>496470</u>	<u>3967920</u>

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 Susan A. Besser  
organization Susan A. Besser, Preservation Consultant date December 6, 1999  
street & number 252 Fourth Avenue South telephone (615) 790-6457  
city or town Franklin state TN zip code 37064

**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 H. Preston Ingram  
street & number 1720 General George Patton Dr. telephone 615-371-3972  
city or town Brentwood state TN zip code 37027

**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.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Williamson Co., TN

## VII. Description

The Sparkman-Skelley Farm is located on Leiper's Creek Road, Boston, Tennessee. The principal dwelling of this farm is a one-and-half story farmhouse of post-and-beam construction evolving over a period of ninety years. Historically, the farmhouse began as a single pen of one-and-one half stories and a separate kitchen, date unknown. As early as 1846 tax records indicated that Charles R. Sparkman owned the initial sixty-acre tract containing the dwelling; however, no deed records are available indicating when Sparkman obtained ownership of the property. In 1854, Charles R. Sparkman added two rooms to the single pen and a porch with a front gable.<sup>1</sup> Sparkman sold the sixty-acre tract with the farmhouse to his nephew John J. Sparkman in 1856. Circa 1859 John J. Sparkman made extensive changes to the farmhouse adding an ell consisting of a large entry with a main staircase and a parlor, a porch to the east façade, and an L-shaped porch on the southwest. Circa 1859, the interior Greek Revival details such as shouldered architrave window and door surrounds typical of the period were added. The sweeping elliptical staircase is indicative of this period also. The exterior of the dwelling, as evidenced in the porches and exterior window details, reflects the Italianate influences of the late nineteenth century and probably was changed to this appearance circa 1871.<sup>2</sup> Circa 1943 the kitchen, date unknown, was incorporated into the north wing of the farmhouse. A 1940s era window in the configuration of what is commonly referred to as a picture window or a fixed middle window with double-hung sash windows on each side was added to the north elevation. The rear porches were enclosed to create a bathroom and laundry area.

Currently, the farmhouse is undergoing rehabilitation utilizing the preservation tax incentives. Asbestos siding added in the 1940s has been removed, as have some exterior details from the 1943 renovation. The replacement of eave brackets and replacement of the 1940s window with two arched windows will reflect the Italianate style of the 1871 modifications. Upon completion of the rehabilitation, the exterior will echo the 1870s Italianate architectural style prevalent in that period. Much of the interior of the farmhouse emulates the Greek Revival vernacular influences of the ante-bellum period.

The circa 1859 east or main facade is asymmetrical with an upright and wing configuration. The wing contains three bays, composed of two four-over-four double hung arched windows with a single door entry with rounded transom to the south of the windows. The upright front gabled portion has two four-over-four double hung arched windows with molded surrounds. A window of the same configuration is located in the upper story of the gable end. Indicative of the Italianate style, the gable end has a wide band of trim at the eaves with cornice returns and paired brackets along the eave line and beneath the gable returns. The porch of the wing indicates the Italianate detailing such as the paired brackets along the eave line and arched brackets

<sup>1</sup>Williamson County, Tennessee, Tax Records, 1854.

<sup>2</sup>Williamson County, Tennessee, Tax Records, 1871.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Williamson Co., TN

gracing the porch columns. The foundation of the original facade has brick piers and has been filled in between piers during the 1999 rehabilitation with circa 1859 brick.

The north elevation and entry that is most apparent from Leiper's Creek Road is indicative of the 1854 Greek Revival influence of the house. The circa 1854 pedimented gable on this elevation became the primary facade in 1929 when the railroad bed became Leiper's Creek Road. Two four-over-four arched windows with arched operable shutters and a single entry with an arched transom comprise this section. Three columns support the dominant front gabled portion. The wide raking cornice and entablature on the gable are also indicative of the Greek Revival period. Three additional columns with arched supports, of the Italianate era, continue along this elevation. Above the entry are two double hung four-over-four rectangular windows. These windows are not apparent from a distance, but become visible upon entering the porch area. From examining the eave trim on the porch it is apparent that a room was added to the southeast corner circa 1943 to create additional space and present a view in keeping with the west façade. This room is actually the separate kitchen, date unknown, that was moved circa 1943.<sup>3</sup> A large one-over-one window flanked by double-hung windows was placed in this portion of the addition and has been removed in the 1999 restoration of the exterior. The windows were replaced with two four-over-four double hung arched windows more in keeping with the Italianate architectural style of the exterior. The foundation of this elevation is dressed stone of a yellow hue found in the Williamson County quarries. From this elevation an interior chimney is apparent.

The west elevation reveals the circa 1943 addition with a double hung six-over-six window. The original portion of this elevation shows two double-hung four-over-four windows flanking a chimney. A small six-over-six window is to the south. The second story has two small six-over-six windows flanking the brick chimney. Shutters flank all of the windows. The chimney was re-built slightly taller than the original due to codes.

The south elevation, forming the rear part of the ell, has a small window to the east, circa 1919, when a portion of the porch was enclosed for the kitchen. The remaining rear porch was enclosed circa 1943. This alteration resulted in the addition of a back entry flanked by two small one-over-one windows on either side of the entry. The west elevation of the ell has two windows. This was also altered during the 1943 period. At that time a bathroom and mudroom/storage area were added.

Also located at the south elevation is an entrance to the enclosed rear porch. A gable-roofed outside entrance, date unknown, to the cellar projects approximately six feet from the elevation. An outside chimney is centered and is flanked by a double hung four-over-four arched window. In the second story, small six-over-six windows flank the chimney. The eave has a wide band of trim with gable returns and paired brackets along the eave line and gable returns.

<sup>3</sup>Lehew, Mrs. Otis, Interview by Author, 15 November 1999.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Williamson Co., TN

A staircase fashioned from poplar dominates the east entry hall and combines elements produced by a local sawmill as well as hand-carved elements. The balusters were probably purchased from the local sawmill owned by Seth Sparkman, John Sparkman's father. The handrail is hand-carved and an elegant newel post graces the staircase on the first floor. A lathe carved the top and bottom portion of the newel post, while the center portion is hand-carved to form an elaborate curvilinear form.<sup>4</sup> The open staircase has a curved landing at the second floor and is bracketed on the exposed string and under the return nosing of the treads. In the entry hall, an eleven-inch baseboard with reveal creates a transition from the plaster wall and two-and-one-half inch hardwood floor, circa 1943. A four-panel door that would have lead to the rear porch in the circa 1859 plan is located to the west and has six-inch molded surrounds. A four-panel pegged door with transom and shouldered architrave molding leads to the parlor.

The 1859 parlor contains two windows on the east elevation and two windows flanking a fireplace on the south elevation. All interior walls of the parlor are plaster. The fireplace mantel has reeded pilasters, a sawn shallow arch pattern on the frieze and a molded mantel shelf. The hardwood floor is four-and-one-half inch poplar, circa 1859. Eleven-inch baseboards with reveals approximately nine inches above the floor embellish the parlor and entry hall with the main staircase.

The sitting room, located north of the entry hall, is entered through a four-panel pegged door with a transom. This room is simpler in design than the parlor. Interior walls are five-inch horizontal tongue and groove panels. The fireplace is composed of a mantle shelf with molding, concentric shallow arches on the frieze and plain pilasters. The closet to the south of the fireplace has paired paneled doors, shouldered architrave molding, and two drawers at the floor level. There is no baseboard in this room. Hardwood floors appear to date to the circa 1943 modifications.

One enters the rear entry hall through a four-panel pegged door with transom and shouldered architrave moldings. A small entry of weatherboard siding, 1999, creates a separate entry for the stairs to the second floor. The walls are five-inch tongue and groove poplar horizontal panels. The fireplace has plain pilasters, a molded mantel shelf and simple frieze. A built-in closet, identical to the one in the sitting room, is south of the fireplace.

The dining room contains elements of the circa 1919 period. It has large four-over-four windows flanking the fireplace. The mantelpiece is comprised of simple pilasters with a molded mantel and plain frieze. A four-panel door leading to the circa 1919 kitchen has been modified by sawing the door in half, presumably to act as a pass-through to the adjoining kitchen.

The upstairs portion has much simpler molding, seven foot six inch ceilings, and painted five inch floorboards. Despite the austerity of the upstairs, an unexpectedly elaborate mantelpiece is located in the

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<sup>4</sup> A local carpenter made these observations upon examination of the staircase.

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Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Williamson Co., TN

south bedroom.

Reeded pilasters set on molded bases, a frieze with angular and curved trim, and a molded mantle shelf are the principal features of this fireplace. A four-panel door and two-panel door, circa 1859, are located near the fireplace. Two double-hung six-over-six windows face north.

A small room separates the circa 1919 east bedroom and west bedroom. This room is over the rear entry and has two four-pane windows. The bedroom on the west wing of the house has two double-hung six-over-six windows flanking a simple stained mantelpiece. The bedroom on the east wing has two double-hung six-over-six windows flanking a simple painted mantelpiece.

The two-room basement, now entered through an entry on the south, served many purposes throughout the years. Prior to introduction of electricity in the area, a Delco battery lighting system was located in the basement, circa 1930. The basement has a fireplace that may have served for cooking. This room is of brick and has a dirt floor. Openings with bars and operable doors are located above ground level. An adjoining room has Williamson County quarried stone walls. The tops of the walls are brick. This room has a brick floor with an intricate pattern of concentric squares. Both rooms have finished ceilings in a narrow board and batten design. In the summer months these rooms would have provided respite from the heat. Prior to the enclosure of the porch, circa 1943, entry to the basement was possible through a trap door in the rear porch.

The springhouse, circa 1859, has an attached shed roof that served as a place to store a buggy. After the purchase of a Model T in 1921, this served as a shelter for the automobile. The east elevation of the springhouse reveals large doors with vertical boards. The door has diagonal bracing while the exterior has weatherboard siding. The west elevation is dominated by a porch supported by cypress logs and has a metal roof. This area is stone and has an entry into the storage area for milk and butter. The area above corresponds to the storage area making the building two stories from this elevation. (C)

The smokehouse, circa 1859, located southwest of the farmhouse, has a shed addition, date unknown. The smokehouse has a gable roof and is covered with weatherboard siding. The façade of the smokehouse has two entries. Both are off center and one leads to a storage area. (C)

The circa 1840 barn located approximately 100 yards from the house and across the original Leiper's Creek Road is comprised of a large gable roof section with two additions. The north façade of the barn is comprised of a large shed roofed section with a large vertical board door with cross bracing. The center section contains a large log pen barn of half-dovetail notch construction, approximately 90 feet by 30 feet and was used to feed and water horses and milk cows, and thresh grains. A watering trough carved from a single log is still in place. This section has a large door with vertical board siding with bracing. An opening is located above and to the east of the door. A large opening is located in the gable end of the original section. The shed roof extension has two large doors. The foundation of the barn is comprised of stacked limestone. (C)



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Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Williamson Co., TN

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The auxiliary barn was built after 1945 and is a non-contributing building. (NC)

Oral history indicates that a separate kitchen was located west of the house. Circa 1943 the kitchen was attached to the main house.<sup>5</sup> A chicken coop was located near the outside entrance to the cellar. This is no longer extant.<sup>6</sup> The historic domestic production area is defined by the proximity of the smokehouse, springhouse and stock barn to the principal dwelling. A spring is located to the west of the principal dwelling. The retaining wall with limestone steps defines the historic entrance to the property and is contributing to the farm, circa 1859. (C)

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<sup>5</sup>Mrs. Otis Lehew, Interview by Author, 15 November 1999.

<sup>6</sup>Jackson.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Williamson Co., TN

## VIII. Statement of Significance

The Sparkman-Skelley Farm is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C for its local significance in agriculture, settlement patterns and architecture. Located in rural Williamson County, Tennessee, the house and farm evolved over a period of ninety years into its present configuration. The complex is associated with the Sparkman family, early settlers of the Boston area, and with the Skelley family. The main house an excellent example of a single pen house, date unknown, enlarged and updated to a nineteenth century Greek Revival I-house, circa 1854, and then to an L-shaped house in 1859. Details such as brackets, arched porch supports and arched window moldings created an Italianate farmhouse, circa 1871. A 1943 renovation involving the incorporation of a separate kitchen, date unknown, completes the evolution of the dwelling to its present configuration. The farmstead also contains a good collection of historic outbuildings that contribute to the agricultural and architectural significance of the property. The Sparkman-Skelley Farm retains a high degree of integrity.

The significance of the history and genealogy of the Sparkman family is central to the settlement of the unincorporated Boston community. The founder of the Boston area, William Sparkman, was born February 9, 1764, to Jesse and Rebecca Sparkman, in Beauford County, North Carolina.<sup>7</sup> The contributions of the Sparkman family begin with the settlement of William Sparkman in Boston with a land grant for service in the Revolutionary War. Sparkman had declined the original land grant offered to him in Nashville and stayed on in Major Lewis' service, living near Fort Nashborough. Seth Sparkman was born in 1797 in a stable while the Sparkmans were caretakers for Major Lewis. In 1799, William Sparkman asked Major Lewis for the land grant and was given property at the headwaters of Leiper's Fork and the base of Duck River Ridge in Williamson County.<sup>8</sup> The William Sparkman family settled there in 1811. He and his wife, Rosanna, had nine children.

William Sparkman's son, Seth married Rebecca Latta and raised seven children. Seth and his wife, Rebecca, were well-respected members of the community. Seth Sparkman farmed the land, ran a blacksmith shop, raised fruit trees, practiced medicine and was part owner of the local sawmill. He amassed a great deal of property as 1871 tax records list the acreage at 5,687. Having a strong spiritual and altruistic nature Seth and Rebecca became the first baptized Christians south of Nashville and subsequently, donated the land for the Boston Church of Christ as well as the land for the one-room school on the church grounds.<sup>9</sup> An 1878 D.G. Beers' map of Williamson County documents the settlement patterns of the Sparkman family and indicates the proliferation of the Sparkman family as well as the vast amount of timberland in the area. (Refer to D.G.

<sup>7</sup>Louise Gillespie Lynch, *Our Valiant Men: Soldiers and Patriots of the Revolutionary War Who Lived in Williamson County, Tennessee*, Franklin, Tennessee, 1976, 170.

<sup>8</sup>Warrick, 185, Lynch 170.

<sup>9</sup>Warrick 185, Lynch 170.

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Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Williamson Co., TN

Beers' Map) The Sparkman legacy lives on through the children who married and settled in the Boston community.

Charles R. Sparkman, brother of Seth, owned a mere sixty acres of land with a modest dwelling. Charles R. Sparkman did, however, own a water-powered sawmill providing a livelihood for his family. Manufacturer's Census records for 1850 indicate that Sparkman produced 40,000 feet of planks valued at \$500.<sup>10</sup>

Sparkman's sixty acres of land with improvements was to later become the property of John J. Sparkman. It is not known when Charles R. Sparkman acquired the property containing the house; however, tax records indicate that he owned the property as early as 1846. In studying the tax records it is apparent that Charles R. Sparkman, after his initial purchase of sixty acres, continued to buy land until he sold some acreage and, apparently used some of the money to enlarge his modest house, circa 1854.<sup>11</sup> The original single pen house, date unknown, was of one-and-one-half stories. The stairs, removed in the 1943 renovation, were located on the east side of the house. A substantial addition consisting of an entry with enclosed stairs and a parlor were added circa 1854 creating an I-house formation. Charles R. Sparkman sold the property to his nephew, John Jackson Sparkman, in 1856.

John Jackson Sparkman, the eldest of five children of Seth and Rebecca Sparkman, married Elizabeth J. Burns on December 17, 1856. Sparkman purchased the sixty-acre tract with the principal dwelling in 1856. Over the next forty-three years he systematically purchased surrounding property, as it became available, ultimately amassing 900 acres.<sup>12</sup> Sparkman's property was adjacent to the west border of Seth Sparkman's property. The Sparkman-Skelley house was built on a hill overlooking Leiper's Creek. The primary road ran along the creek bed east of the dwelling as is indicated on the map of Williamson County.<sup>13</sup> Portions of the road are still visible today and are part of the setting.

It is difficult to determine an exact date for the construction of the original single pen one-and-one-half story house and separate kitchen. Tax records indicate that Charles R. Sparkman owned the property with a house as early as 1846. Tax records of subsequent years indicate that Sparkman doubled his acreage; however, in 1854 the property value remains the same \$1,150, but the acreage decreased suggesting that improvements were made to the dwelling. Two rooms, an entry with enclosed stairs and parlor were added to the house, as well as a porch with a front gable creating an I-house plan with Greek Revival influences. Two years later, Charles R. Sparkman sold the house to his nephew, John J. Sparkman. Tax records indicate that the latter Sparkman made improvements to the house circa 1859 adding an ell and substantially updating the dwelling

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<sup>10</sup>Williamson County, Tennessee, Manufacturer's Census Records, 1850.

<sup>11</sup>Williamson County, Tennessee, Tax Records, 1846-1856.

<sup>12</sup>Williamson County, Tennessee, Deed Records, 1858 to 1899.

<sup>13</sup> Williamson County, Tennessee, Map, D. G. Beers & Co., 27 South Sixth St., Philadelphia, 1878.

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Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Williamson Co., TN

with a formal entry with a main staircase and a parlor. Due to the uniformity of the Greek Revival era interior woodwork it appears to have been added in this later remodeling. Consequently, from a humble single pen house of unknown origins, an L-shaped Greek Revival dwelling, circa 1859, housed the John J. Sparkman family.

Charles R. Sparkman enlarged the one-and-one half story I-house, circa 1854 into the L-shaped configuration reflecting simplicity in the exterior detail. The interior details of the house reflected a propensity toward the elegant details of the Greek Revival period and this is shown in the impressive staircase and shouldered architrave window and door moldings. Circa 1871, John J. Sparkman, in keeping with the Victorian era styles of the period, transformed the exterior to reflect the Italianate style. Retaining the rectangular windows of the Greek Revival period, he created arched openings on the exterior in keeping with the Italianate stylistic characteristics. The square-column porch supports were embellished with arched supports and paired brackets were added to the wide band of trim. "At one level," according to Bernard L. Herman, "building fashionable architecture was a means of announcing one's attainment of an elevated social position."<sup>14</sup> The Sparkman family was a distinct presence in the community, especially with Seth Sparkman's ownership in a local sawmill. John J. Sparkman's siblings, Dr. Seth Sparkman, Jr. and James T. Sparkman, are included in *Goodspeed's History of Tennessee*. Dr. Seth Sparkman achieved notoriety as a respected physician and James T. Sparkman owned a large stock farm. The Sparkmans were businessmen, doctors, and farmers. It is said of the elder Seth Sparkman that, despite the lack of formal schooling, he "attained a fair eminence as an English scholar and became well informed in the general sciences."<sup>15</sup> Considering the education level of his father and siblings and his father's ownership of a sawmill business, it is probable that John J. Sparkman would have had access to current pattern books of the period as well as contacts with the most respected craftsmen.

Tracing the evolution of the farm provides a valuable insight into how the land was used. Typically, most of Williamson County is considered fertile farmland. However, the second district had poorer soil and was subject to erosion from spring floods. Due to the poor soil for crops, the farm functioned primarily as a stock farm. Charles R. Sparkman, in 1850, farmed one hundred fifty acres of land, seventy-five of that was improved, seventy-five was unimproved. Livestock was his primary source of income raising seventeen sheep and forty swine. In 1860, John J. Sparkman owned one hundred acres of improved land and one hundred twenty-five acres of unimproved land valued at \$2,500. Livestock consisted of two horses, six mules, three milk cows, two working oxen, thirty sheep and eighty-five swine. Produce consisted of two hundred twenty-five bushels of wheat and one thousand bushels of corn. Examining agricultural production in 1880, Sparkman owned one hundred seventy-five acres of tillable land, forty-five acres of meadows and four hundred acres of woodland or forest. Livestock was all-inclusive, not separated into categories.

<sup>14</sup>Bernard L. Herman, *Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware: 1700-1900*, (Knoxville, Tennessee, University of Tennessee Press, 1987) 120.

<sup>15</sup>Warrick, *Leiper's Fork*, 185.

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Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Williamson Co., TN

However, in examining the records of 1870 it is noted that the majority of his livestock were swine. Swine thrive in woodland areas. They are left to forage in the woods in the winter eating nuts and other edibles throughout this period. Prior to slaughter the swine are herded into pens and fed corn in order to provide the best yield. Records of subsequent years are not available; however, due to the vast amount of acreage that Sparkman amassed, it would appear that he prospered. It is probable that the 1893 depression would have affected the market prices obtained for the swine. The records of 1880 also indicate that he had at least one tenant farmer.

It is apparent that the Sparkman farm was a microcosm of farm to market economy and was successful in transforming the farm to a commercial endeavor. This is evidenced by John J. Sparkman's ability to continue to purchase property up to 1899 and to transform his dwelling to reflect his affluence.

If one reads John Jackson Sparkman's obituary, it is apparent that he was well respected in the community and exhibited the generosity of his father, Seth Sparkman. "In the death of this man Williamson County has lost one of her most substantial citizens, and his neighbors and friends a man whose place can not easily be filled. . . . While he went about doing good to those who really needed help it may be truthfully said of him "his right hand knew not what his left hand did.""<sup>16</sup>

When the railroad came through Boston the tracks were located where the present Leiper's Creek Road is today. In 1928 the railroad bed was removed and the former rail line became Leiper's Creek Road. In so doing the orientation of the front entry of the Sparkman farm was changed. On John J. Sparkman's death in 1899 the land containing the house and outbuildings was sold. Berry Beasley bought 702 acres of the property containing the improvements. Berry Beasley's daughter Mary Beasley Skelley and her husband, H. P. Skelley, bought the tract containing the John J. Sparkman house and its outbuildings with 425 acres in 1919. See Map 1 showing the location of the acreage.

Mrs. Skelley was a charter member and longtime president of the local Home Demonstration Club. According to her daughter, Annie Lou Jackson, Mrs. Skelley had a distinct presence in the community as an activist. She was often found campaigning for such improvements as telephones and electricity to the Boston area and helping neighbors when disaster struck their family, as was often the case during pre-World War II times. A photograph from Williamson County historian Rick Warrick's, *Leiper's Fork & Surrounding Counties* also documents her involvement with the Home Demonstration Club.<sup>17</sup>

The county extension service and home demonstration clubs took a prominent place in the making of

<sup>16</sup>Z. A. McConico, *The Review-Appeal*, 9 March 1899. This is in reference to the King James Version of the Holy Bible's reference to piety in giving to the less fortunate: Matthew 6:3 "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." (King James Version of Holy Bible, Matthew 6:3)

<sup>17</sup>Warrick, 20.

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Tennessee's progressive farms. Seeking to improve the quality of life for rural people, the focus of the progressive movement, especially for women, became the public schools.<sup>18</sup> Central to the Boston community's rural life was the enlargement of the one-room school, on land donated by Seth Sparkman, to provide for a two-teacher school. Most schools of this area typically were one-room schools with one teacher for all grades. The formation of a two-teacher school in a community was a major improvement in the quality of instruction.

Not only did the Home Demonstration Club affect the quality of life in the community but the home as well. "As arbiter of the domestic sphere," according to Dr. Mary Hoffschwelle in *Rebuilding the Rural Southern Community: Reformers, Schools, and Homes in Tennessee, 1914-1929*, "country women determined the quality of rural life by the standard of living in their homes."<sup>19</sup> Modernizing the house to reflect current trends in the "Better Homes Make Better Farms Movement" reflected the position of Mrs. Skelley in the Boston community. The Skelleys installed a gravity water system from Bear Run Creek, that was a good distance from the house. Installing indoor plumbing into the house ended the countless steps from the springhouse to the main house.

Farmer's wives were advised by home demonstration agents to supplement income to the farm by selling eggs. Mrs. Skelley took this to heart and contributed to the family income by selling eggs to the local general store. This addition also signaled a move to the market economy as eggs were sold to the local Carlisle store. This income could then be set aside to make improvements to the house, for example, adding indoor plumbing such as the Skelleys accomplished, circa 1935. Annie Lou Skelley Jackson recounts the story of the night one of her brothers was awakened by stirrings in the chicken coop. It seems a thief was stealing eggs. However, before they could find a weapon to scare off the thief, the thief had vanished.<sup>20</sup> This story illustrates the importance of the chicken coop to the family. Not only did the chicken coop provide necessary eggs and chickens for the Skelley family, but was a source of income as well.

One particular improvement made by John J. Sparkman was central to the Skelley family lifestyle. Mrs. Skelley was an excellent horsewoman and used the front steps along the retaining wall as the place to mount her horse. She would often take as many as four of her children along with her on her excursions to the general store, with two children in front and two in the back.

Other outbuildings on the farm were an intricate part of the agricultural lifestyle. In the late fall, the farmer butchered hogs and ham was stored in the smokehouse. The proximity of the smokehouse presumably

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<sup>18</sup>Mary Sara Hoffschwelle, *Rebuilding the Rural Southern Community: Reformers, Schools, and Homes in Tennessee, 1914-1929*, Diss (Vanderbilt University, Ann Arbor UMI, 1993), 81.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 166.

<sup>20</sup>Jackson.

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deterred the occasional thief. The horses and milk cattle were fed from the barn. The bounty from the butchered hogs and milk cattle provided a link to the changing agricultural system as Mrs. Skelley prepared sausage and chitlins from the hogs and sold these products as well as dairy products again signifying a change to a market economy.<sup>21</sup>

Tobacco was one of the cash crops for the Skelleys. Mr. Skelley worked in tandem with local extension agents such as H.H. Jones to determine when to cut timber and how to plow the land in a terrace formation to avoid erosion. Just as in the Sparkman era, the Skelley era of the farm functioned primarily as a stock farm. The primary source of income was from Hereford cattle. Mr. Skelley, along with his partner in nearby Maury County, purchased Hereford cattle from Texas and used the cattle to upgrade their livestock. Typically, Skelley would have as many as fifty cattle and fed the cattle on corn and hay. In addition to the cattle, Skelley raised hogs and sheep. The livestock was transported to the Nashville stockyards in large cattle trucks.<sup>22</sup>

The Skelleys retained the land (See Map 1) until 1943 when Fleta S. Ellis and her husband, J. Mack Ellis, purchased 285 acres of the original land. (Note Map 2) Changes were made to the dwelling such as enclosing the rear porch and moving the separate kitchen to the house. Four years later the Ellis' sold the land in three tracts. Two of the tracts contained 191 acres. The remaining ninety-four acres were sold to Clark Robinson. (Note Map 3) This tract came with the improvements to the property such as the dwelling and outbuildings. The farm has experienced changing boundaries as do many historic farms. The acreage purchased by Clark Robinson is original to the farm and remains in the current tract owned by H. Preston Ingram. The farmland contributes to the overall integrity of the farm.

By examining Drawings 1 and 1B and Drawings 2 and 2B it is evident that the changes to the dwelling have been necessitated by the adaptive use of the farmhouse. The Sparkman-Skelley House is being rehabilitated to its appearance circa 1942-1943 and earlier. Transforming a dwelling to a business and multi-family housing has required minor alterations in the plan of the house. In some cases doors have been left in place but have a wall built as a temporary closure. Walls that have been added can be removed at a later date should future owners decide to return the building to its original use. New walls are of five-inch tongue-and-groove panel in keeping with existing wall finishes. The north entry has a separate entrance for the upstairs apartment and was necessitated by local fire codes. Prior to this rehabilitation, central heating had not been added to the dwelling. This has been accomplished by adding the ductwork in the attic for the upstairs and in the basement for the first floor. The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* stress the importance of leaving the original walls in place making those alterations that could be removed at a later time without disturbing the integrity of the property. The fine carpentry and attention to detail by Mr. Ingram's staff have respected the building's historic footprint and made the alterations and additions in keeping with the spirit of the Victorian era.

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<sup>21</sup>Lehew.

<sup>22</sup>Lehew.

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Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Williamson Co., TN

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The farm is significant for its embodiment of the local agricultural trends and settlement patterns in the Boston community. The Sparkman family created a small community of working farms that flourished into the twentieth century. The nominated property is the only extant property associated with the Sparkmans. The Skelley family continued in the tradition of livestock farms and upgraded the local livestock by breeding Hereford cattle. Ninety-four acres have remained together through the one hundred and fifty-year history of the land. These acres contain important elements of the farm. Acreage served as grazing land for the livestock farm. The appearance of the land still reflects this mixed use of crop land (tobacco) and land for livestock (swine and cattle). The principal dwelling was the nerve center of the property and here land was bought and sold and families worked together to prepare products for the market economy. The outbuildings, such as the smokehouse and springhouse make up the domestic complex and the barn served as storage for grain that was threshed within the log-pen walls. The farm contains an excellent example of an L-shaped Greek Revival house updated to an Italianate farmhouse to reflect the prosperity of the John J. Sparkman family and, later, the Skelley family.. The mid-nineteenth century outbuildings such as the smokehouse, springhouse and barn contribute to the site of the Sparkman-Skelley farm. The remaining ninety-four acres of property of the Sparkman-Skelley legacy are significant to the integrity and history of the property.



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Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
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## 10. Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of 94 acres along Leiper's Creek in Boston, Tennessee, and is part of parcel 5 and marked on attached county tax maps 121 and 122 from Williamson County Tax Assessors office.

The Tax Map for this nomination has the scale 1" = 800'. The Tennessee State Board of Equalization prepares this scale tax map for rural areas. In the past, the Tennessee Historical Commission used this scale map for nominations and has found that the 1" = 800' adequately meets our office needs. The Tennessee Historical Commission does not have the facilities to prepare maps to the scale preferred by the National Park Service.

## Boundary Justification

The nominated property contains original family farm acreage that is historically associated with John J. Sparkman and Henry Skelley. It corresponds to acreage associated with the farm when the Sparkman and Skelley families owned the property up to the 1940s (the period of significance). The boundary of the nominated property follows current and historic boundaries. The nominated property includes the house, farm acreage and outbuildings.

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## Photographs

Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Williamson County, Tennessee

By: J. Joseph Besser  
3939 Fillmore Road  
St. Louis, Missouri 63116

Date: December 17, 1999

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission  
2941 Lebanon Road  
Nashville, TN 37243

Farmhouse, east façade, facing west  
1 of 38

Farmhouse, south elevation, facing northwest  
2 of 38

Farmhouse, east elevation, facing west  
3 of 38

Farmhouse, southwest elevation, facing northeast  
4 of 38

Farmhouse, north elevation, facing south  
5 of 38

Retaining wall, facing west  
6 of 38

North entry, detailing window area and gable end in half story, facing south  
7 of 38

Detail of north elevation, detailing modification of porch for north facing room  
8 of 38

Detail of eave brackets, existing brackets and new brackets  
9 of 38

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Detail of shutters (1999), constructed to replicate 1871 shutters  
10 of 38

Front entry, detailing staircase, facing west  
11 of 38

Doorway leading to sitting room  
12 of 38

Front parlor, facing south  
13 of 38

Kitchen (1999), facing southwest  
14 of 38

Detail of 1943 kitchen, illustrating use of salvaged lumber  
15 of 38

Detail showing post and beam construction  
16 of 38

Bathroom (1999), facing northwest  
17 of 38

Sitting Room (1943), facing north  
18 of 38

Sitting Room (1943) with added closet (1999), facing east  
19 of 38

Rear entry hall, detail of fireplace mantel and built-in storage, facing east  
20 of 38

Rear entry hall, new wall (1999), facing southwest  
21 of 38

Rear entry (1999), facing west  
22 of 38

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Dining Room, facing southwest  
23 of 38

Dining Room (1859) with closet (1999), facing northeast  
24 of 38

Detail of hinge  
25 of 38

East bedroom, facing west  
26 of 38

West bedroom, facing east  
27 of 38

West bedroom facing north  
28 of 38

Fireplace in basement, facing north  
29 of 38

Main hall of basement, facing east  
30 of 38

Spring house and buggy storage, facing west  
31 of 38

Spring house, entry to cold storage area, facing northeast  
32 of 38

Smoke House, facing northeast  
33 of 38

Barn, Facing south  
34 of 38

Interior of Barn, Facing south  
35 of 38

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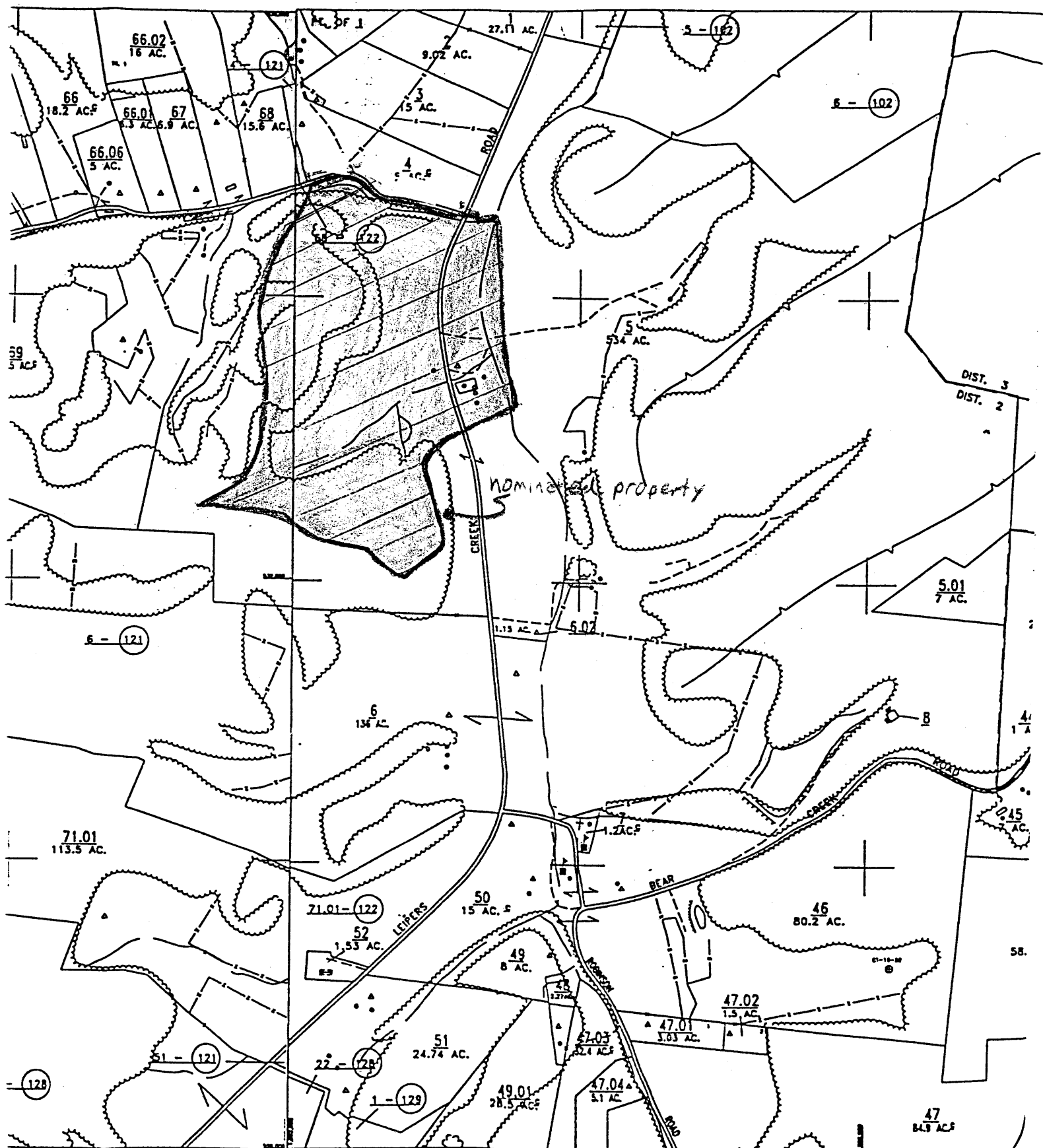
Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Williamson Co., TN

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Interior showing log pen structure, facing southeast  
36 of 38

Auxiliary barn, facing west  
37 of 38

Historic Photograph of John Jackson Sparkman Home  
38 of 38



SPARKMAN-SKELLEY FARM WILLIAMSON CO. TN

COUNTY, TN	MAP NO.
DISTRICT	122
	©1996

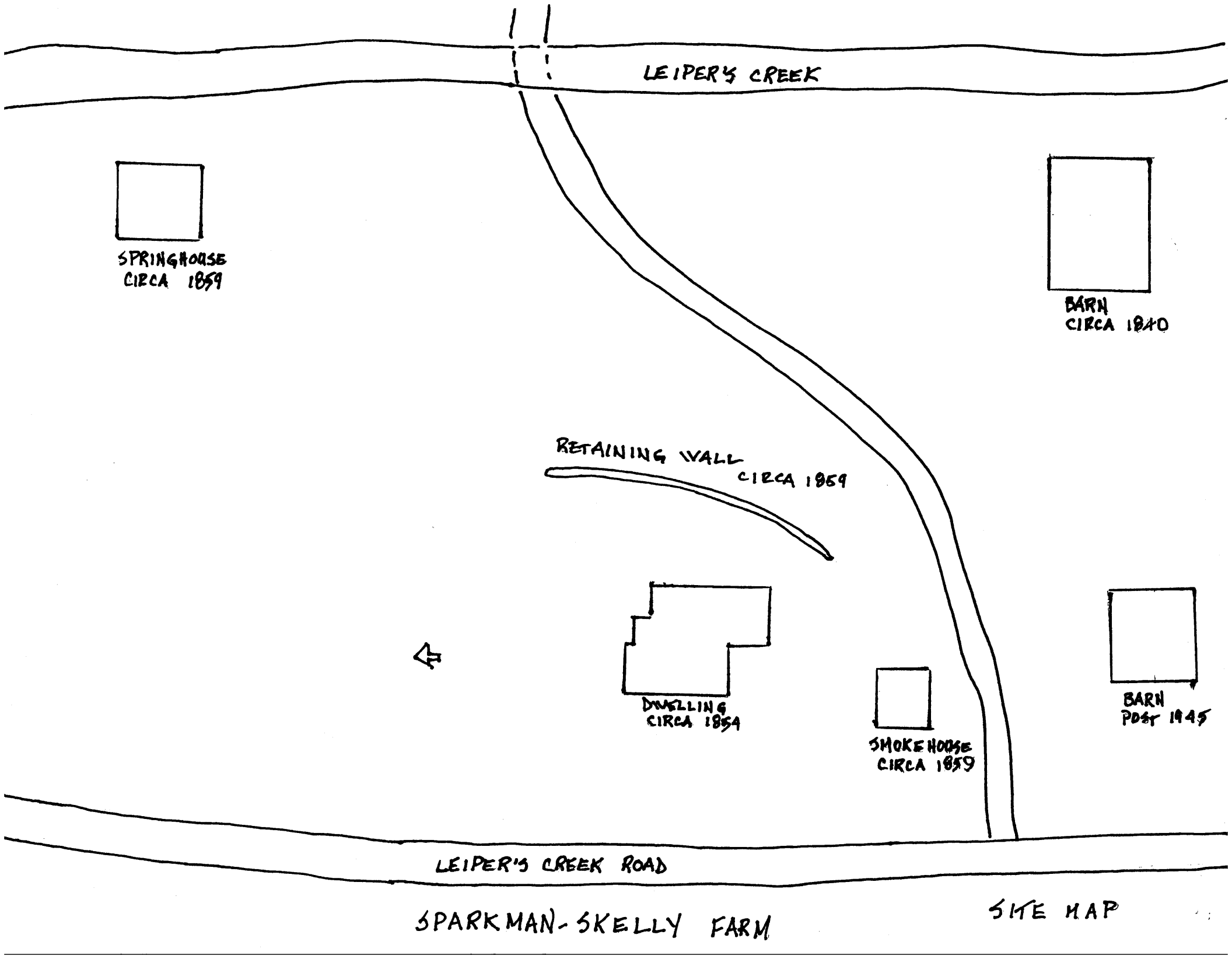
1" = 800' N

WILLIAMSON COUNTY PROPERTY ASSESSMENT  
 DENNIS ANGLIN, ASSESSOR  
 WILLIAMSON COUNTY GIS MANAGEMENT  
 FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE

- PARCEL NUMBER
- PARCEL FRONT
- DISTRICT LINE
- SURVEY LINE
- PARCEL LOT NO.
- PARCEL OUTLINE
- DEER SIGNAGE
- DELINEATED ACREAGE

26  
 0  
 1  
 1  
 0  
 0

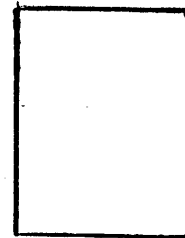




LEIPER'S CREEK

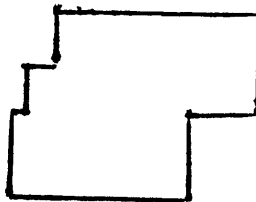


SPRINGHOUSE  
CIRCA 1859



BARN  
CIRCA 1840

RETAINING WALL  
CIRCA 1859



DWELLING  
CIRCA 1854



SMOKEHOUSE  
CIRCA 1859



BARN  
POST 1945



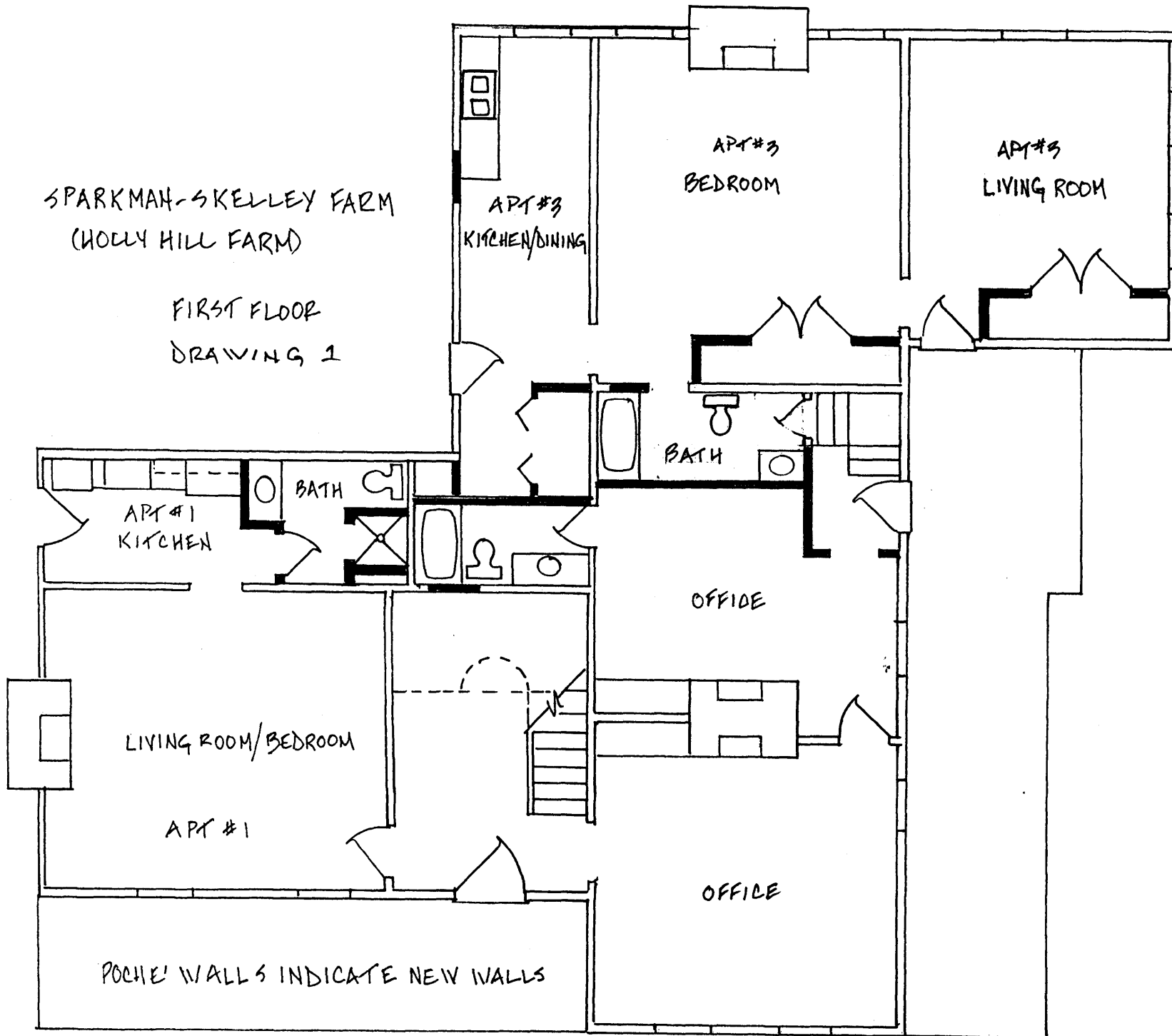
LEIPER'S CREEK ROAD

SPARKMAN-SKELLY FARM

SITE MAP

SPARKMAN-SKELLEY FARM  
(HOLLY HILL FARM)

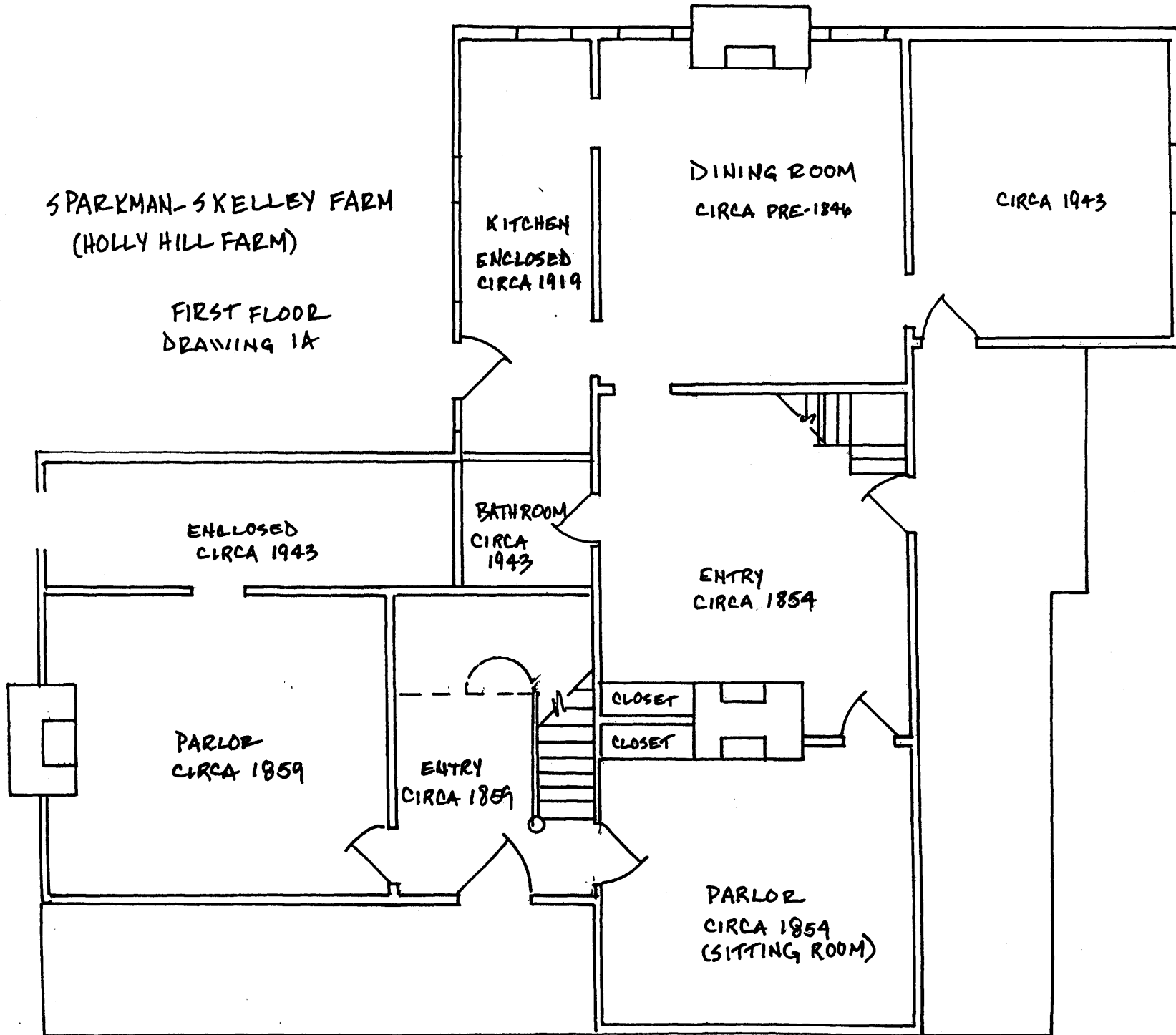
FIRST FLOOR  
DRAWING 1



POCHE! WALLS INDICATE NEW WALLS

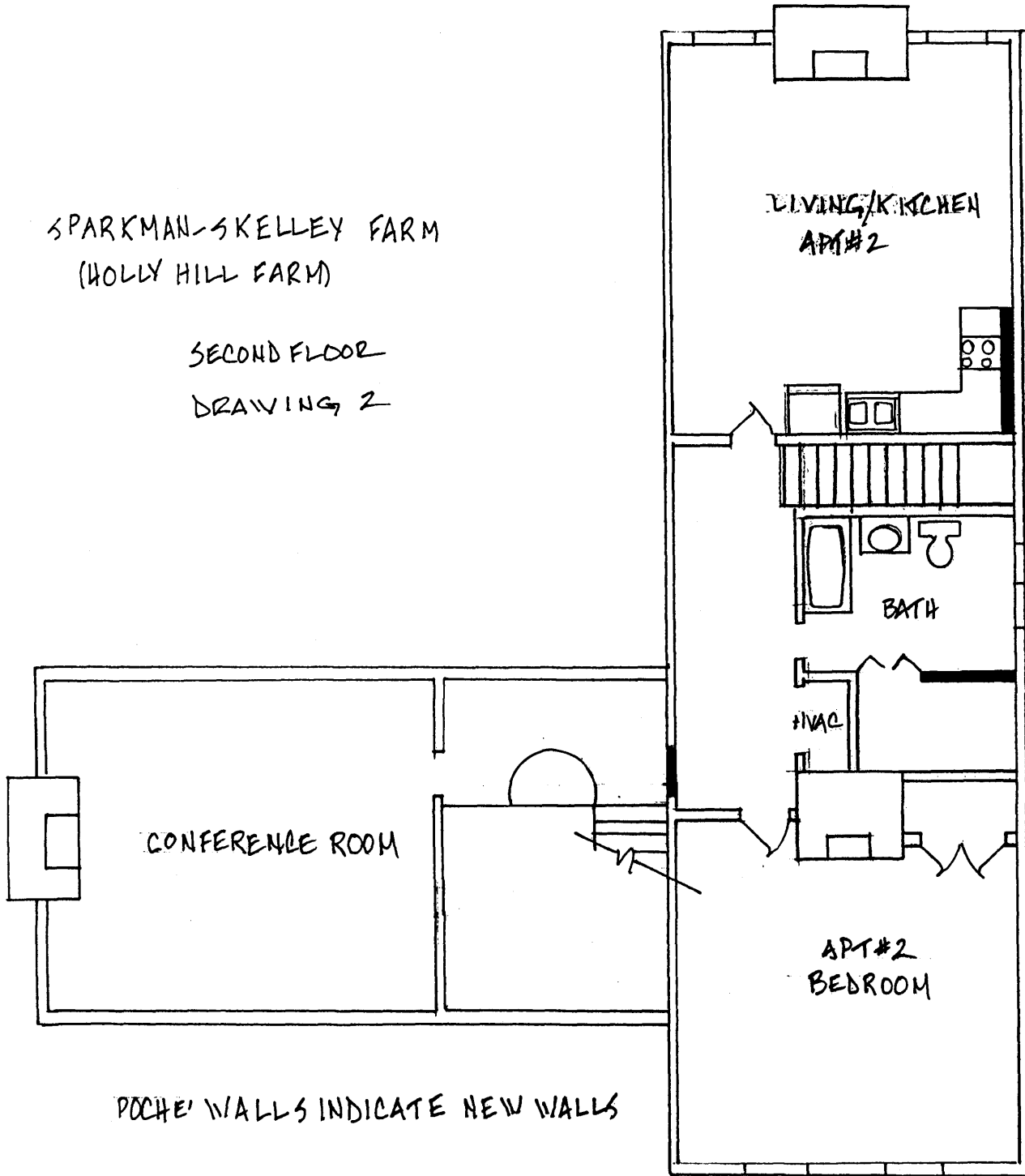
SPARKMAN-SKELLEY FARM  
(HOLLY HILL FARM)

FIRST FLOOR  
DRAWING 1A



SPARKMAN-SKELLEY FARM  
(HOLLY HILL FARM)

SECOND FLOOR  
DRAWING 2

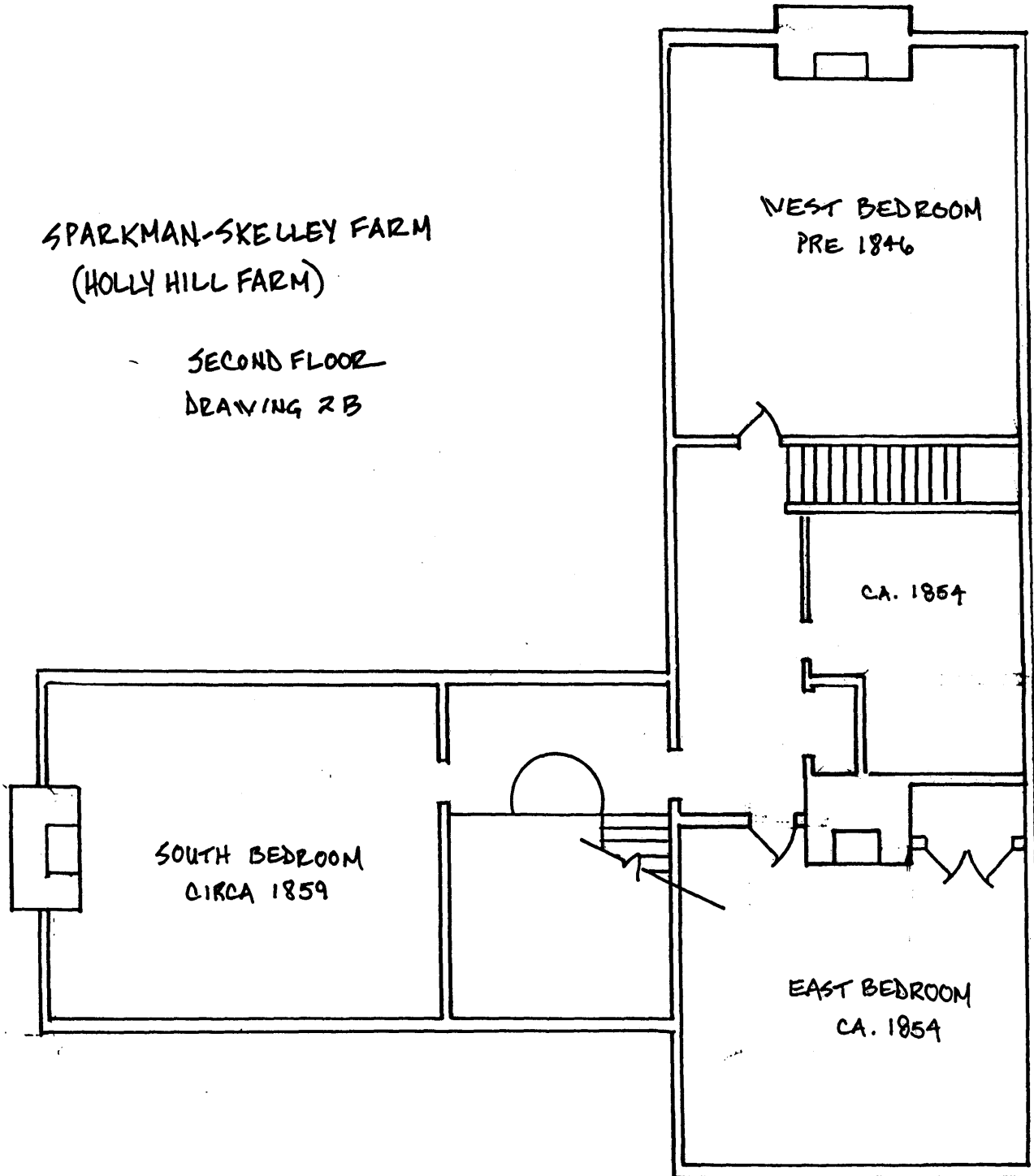


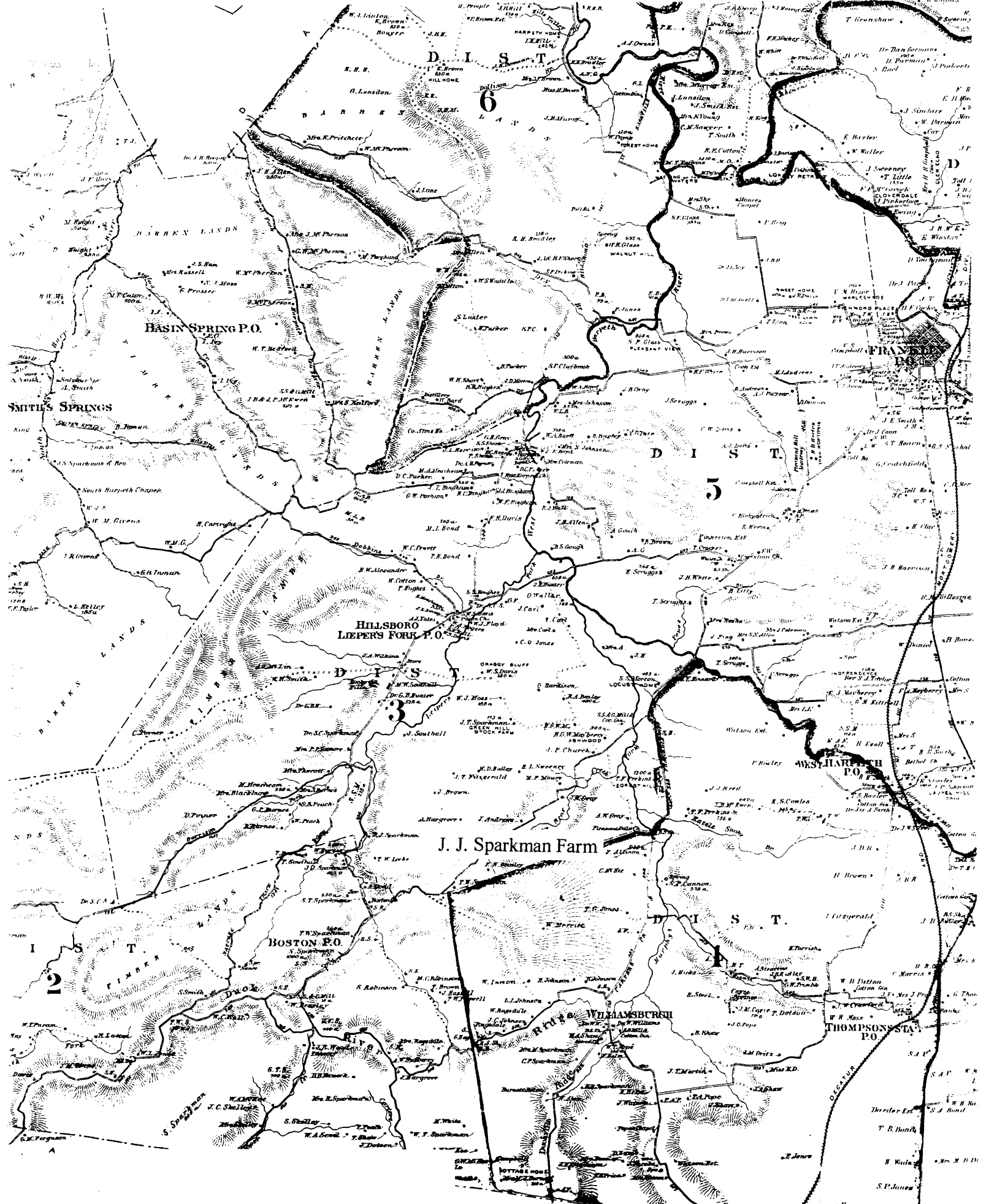
POCHE WALLS INDICATE NEW WALLS



SPARKMAN-SKELELEY FARM  
(HOLLY HILL FARM)

SECOND FLOOR  
DRAWING 2B





D. G. Beers & Co.  
Map of Williamson County, 1878

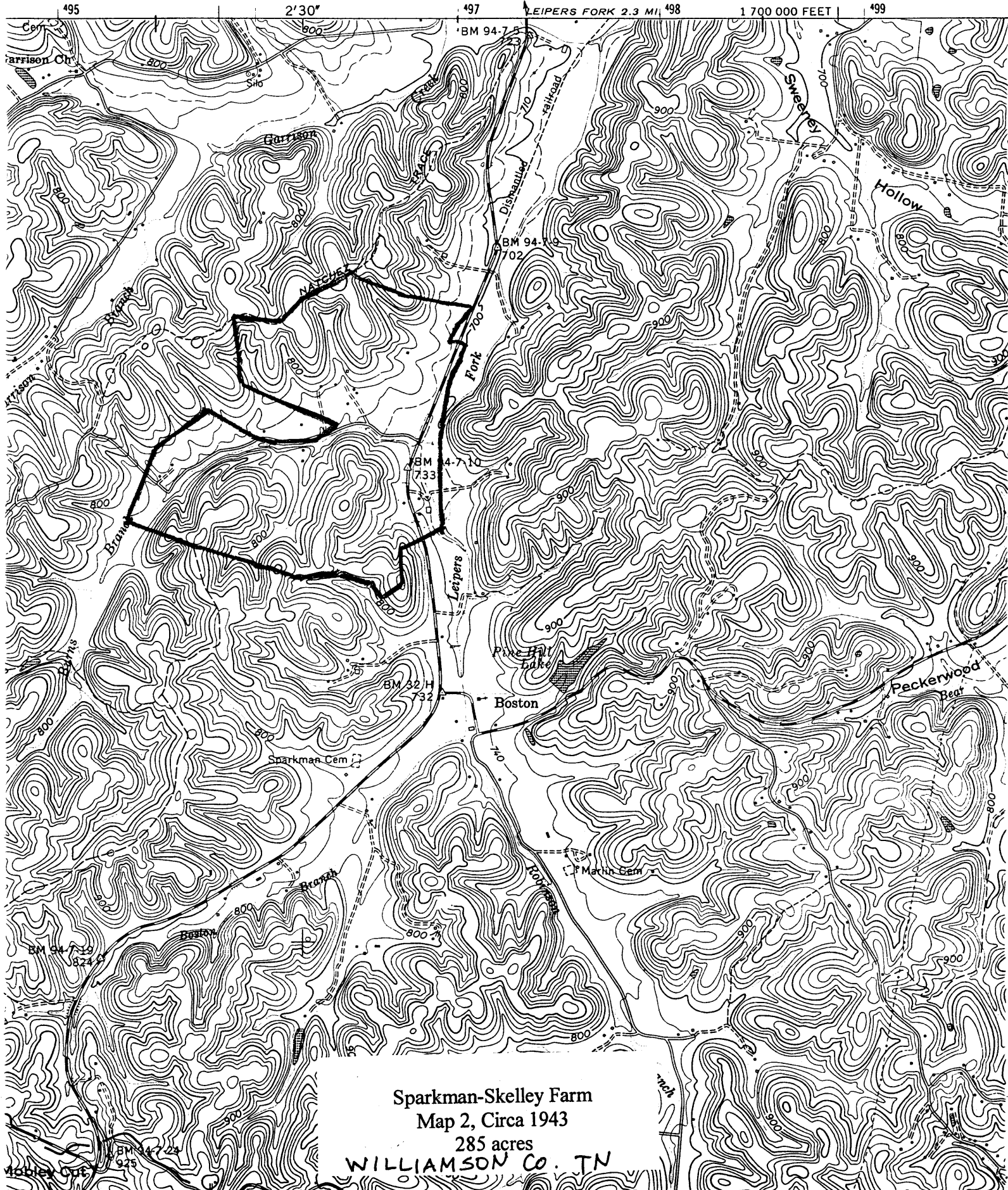
S  
JTHORITY  
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THETA QUADRANGLE  
TENNESSEE  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



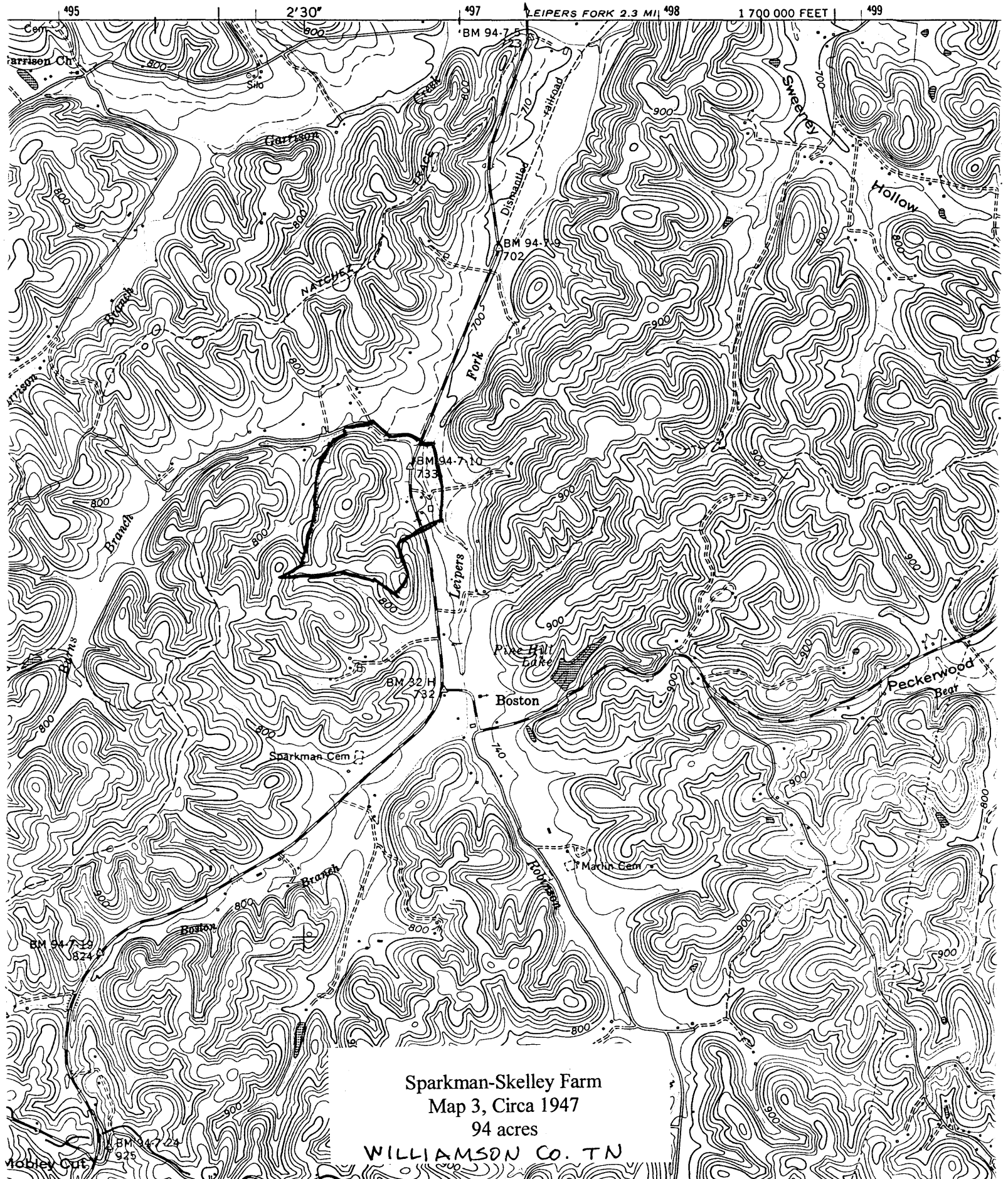
Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Map 1, Circa 1919

425 acres  
WILLIAMSON CO. TN



Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Map 2, Circa 1943  
285 acres  
WILLIAMSON CO. TN





Sparkman-Skelley Farm  
Map 3, Circa 1947  
94 acres  
WILLIAMSON CO. TN