

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 28 1975
DATE ENTERED	JAN 19 1976

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

****** HISTORIC
Verbena
AND/OR COMMON
Verbena

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Irregular pattern north and south of U.S. 31
CITY, TOWN
Verbena
STATE
Alabama

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
7
VICINITY OF
CODE
01
COUNTY
Chilton
CODE
021

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Multiple private owners
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
VICINITY OF
STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Chilton County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Clanton
STATE
Alabama

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Verbena is a small unincorporated town located on rolling hills which slope down to the banks of Chestnut Creek. Included in the district boundaries are 57 structures, most of which date from the late 19th century. With only five exceptions the buildings are of frame construction and most are only 1 story in height.

The majority of the structures are unpretentious dwellings based on traditional house forms found in the state; the dogtrot, saddlebag, shotgun, single pen cabin, and the pyramidal roof house. A number of structures, most notably the Methodist Parsonage (27), are modest Victorian homes with small amounts of ornamentation. Several structures; the Gibson House (37), the two churches (1 & 48), the Verbena Academy (31), the Barrett-Shepard House (13) and the Baldwin House (20) are notable exceptions.

The major concentration of structures is along Cooper Street. Several commercial structures are located at the intersection of Cooper and U.S. 31, while the remainder of the structures are scattered or grouped along the roads leading to the town.

All of the houses along Cooper, the only paved street in town, are occupied and well maintained, while most of those along Montgomery Avenue have been abandoned or are in disrepair.

The town has escaped modern intrusion to a remarkable extent. Out of the 57 structures only three could be classified as real intrusions and are located along U.S. 31. They are: Johnsons Grocery store (22), the Standard Station (21), and the Verbena Post Office (16). The remaining buildings constructed after 1920 reflect the scale, materials and in many cases the traditional forms of the earlier structures.

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ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

Inventory of Structures within the Verbena Historic District

1. Verbena United Methodist Church (Verbena-Enterprise Rd.): 1877, 1 story, weatherboarded, portico on gable front, bracketed bell tower with conical roof.
2. Brooks-Wingate House (Cooper St.): late 19th c., 1 story, weatherboarded, low pyramidal roof, eaves supported by brackets, shed porch with gingerbread colonets.
3. Gulledege House (Cooper St.): c. 1911, 1 story, stone.
4. Oliver House (Cooper St.): c. 1902, 1 story weatherboarded, twin front gables, Ionic columns on brick pedestals.
5. Williams House (Cooper St.): c. 1920, 1 story, weatherboarded, bungalow.
6. Irby De Ramus House (Cooper St.): c. 1920, 1 story, frame, L-shaped, front gable, screened porch.
7. Lamar House (Railroad St.): c. 1920, 1 story, frame, gabled roof.
8. Howell House (Railroad St.): c. 1920, 1 story, weatherboarded, bungalow.
9. Cathey House (Railroad St.): c. 1920, 1 story, asbestos siding, gable roof, shed roof porch, central hall.
10. Rental Cottage (Alley): early 20th c., 1 story, horizontal siding, hipped roof, central chimney, shed porch.
11. Rental Cottage (Alley): early 20th c., 1 story, board and batten, gable roof, single pen.
12. Rental Cottage (Alley): early 20th c., 1 story, board and batten, gable roof, single pen.
13. Barrett-Shepard House (U.S. 31): 1870's, 2 story, weatherboarded, L-shaped, gabled roof, front gable has small balcony with hooded window, small porch with gingerbread ornament.
14. Strock Place (U.S. 31): c. 1900, 1 story, frame, pyramidal roof, shed porch.
15. Kenyon Wells-Norton House (faces railroad from Old 31): prior to 1870, 1 story, clapboard, gable roof, end-exterior chimneys, recent portico.

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16. Verbena Post Office (Old 31): 1 story, brick, gabled roof, contemporary.
17. Driver House (Old 31): c. 1900, 1½ story, frame, gabled roof.
18. Garage (Old 31): c. 1920, 1 story, frame, gabled roof.
19. Driver Washateria (Old 31): c. 1930, 1½ story, frame, gabled roof.
20. Baldwin House (Knights Ferry Road): 1870; 1 story, earlier portion of house is log construction, c. 1900 the earlier section was enclosed with frame, hipped roof has wide overhangs which form three sided porch, box columns, narrow horizontal siding is broken into panels.
21. "J" Self Serv Standard Station (U.S. 31): 1 story, concrete block, contemporary.
22. Johnson's Grocery Store (between Locust and Cooper St.): 1950, 1 story, frame, low gabled roof.
23. Brooks-De Ramus Store (between Locust and Cooper St.): c. 1870, 2 story, horizontal siding, gabled roof, box cornice and returns, 2nd story windows are shuttered and trim has slight pediment, half hipped porch roof.
24. Gibson Store (Railroad St.): c. 1920, 1 story, brick.
25. Gibson-McGehee House (Cooper St.): c. 1880, 1 story, weatherboarded, hipped roof, half hipped roof porch. (similar to 10 and 15).
26. Gibson-Smith House (Cooper St.): c. 1920, 1 story, weatherboarded, central chimney, portico.
27. Methodist Parsonage (Cooper St.): 1877, 1 story, weatherboarded, L-shaped small portico with jigsaw ornament, bracketed cornice, front gable has box cornice and returns, slightly pedimented window trim.
28. Barnett-Culledge-Claughton (Cooper St.): late 19th c., 1 story, weatherboarded, central pedimented pavillion with large bay window, flanked porticos, box columns, dentiled cornice.
29. Mitchell-Barnett House (Cooper St.): late 19th c., 1 story, weatherboarded, gabled roof, portico with box columns.
30. Champion House (Cooper St.): c. 1930, 1 story, beveled siding, bungalow.
31. Verbena Academy (Cooper St.): 1882, two story, weatherboarded, 5 bay facade, gabled roof, pedimented window and door trim.

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32. Ruins of house (Montgomery Ave.): frame, dogtrot.
33. Bland-Dansby House (Brooks St.): c. 1880, 1 story, weatherboarded, 1 bay deep, gabled roof, end-exterior chimney, barge board on gables, similar trim on front shed roof porch, abandoned.
34. Servant House (Montgomery Ave.): late 19th c., 1 story, weatherboarded, abandoned.
35. Servants House (Montgomery Ave.): late 19th c., 1 story, weatherboarded, double pen structure, fine stone chimney, abandoned.
36. Gibson Rental Cottage (Montgomery Ave.): late 19th c., 1 story, weatherboarded, central gable is void of trim, abandoned.
37. Gibson House (Montgomery Ave.): 1875, 2 story, central section topped with cupola, numerous gables, wings, 1900 neo-classical portico, elaborate gardens.
38. J. C. Gibson House (Montgomery Ave.): c. 1940, 1 story, gabled roof, frame.
39. Gibson Rental Cottage (Montgomery Ave.): late 19th c., 1 story, weatherboarded, gabled roof, shed roof porch, abandoned.
40. Gibson Rental Cottage (Montgomery Ave.): late 19th c., 1 story, weatherboarded, fine pedimented window trim, abandoned.
41. Servant House (Montgomery Ave.): late 19th c., 1 story, board and batten, gabled roof extends to form porch, single pen structure.
42. Servant House (Montgomery Ave.): 1 story, vertical flush siding, shotgun house.
43. Yellow House (Montgomery Ave.): c. 1940, 1 story, frame, contemporary.
44. Patillo House (Old Verbena Road): c. 1880, 1 story, weatherboarded, high pyramidal roof, end-interior chimneys, shed roof porch.
45. Henry William House (Old Verbena Road): c. 1900, 1 story, L-shaped, front gable is unadorned.
46. Letts House (Old Verbena Road): c. 1890, 1 story, weatherboarded, L-shaped, front gable contains bay window.
47. Williams-Mims House (Verbena-Enterprise Road): c. 1900, 1 story, weatherboarded, pyramidal roof. Trailer next door.

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48. Verbena Baptist Church (Section Line Road): late 1870's, 1 story, weatherboarded.
49. Tennant House (Section Line Road): late 19th c., 1 story, frame covered with asbestoes siding, gabled roof, saddlebag house (two pen structures with central chimney) shed roof porch.
50. Baptist Pastorium (Section Line Road): mid 20th c., 1 story, brick, gabled roof.
51. William House (Section Line Road): late 19th c., 1 story, weatherboarded, hipped roof, shed roof porch, central hall.
52. Ruins of Dogtrot House (Section Line Road): late 19th c., 1 story, two pen structure with central breezeway, gabled roof.
53. Gulledge Rental Cottage (Center St.): c. 1910, L-shaped, front gable, weatherboarded, 1 story.
54. Gulledge Rental Property (between Sayre & Center): late 19th c., 1 story, frame, shotgun house.
55. Thompson House (Sayre St.): c. 1870's, 1 story, board and batten, gabled roof, end-exterior chimney, shed roof porch.
56. Calloway Home (Sayre St.): late 19th c., 1 story, board and batten, gabled roof, shed roof porch.
57. Barn (Center St.): early 20th c., 1½ story, frame barn, modernized into office. (now Gene Mims Office.)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) resort area	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Verbena is one of the few remaining small towns in the state which has retained most of its rural, late 19th century quality. The initial establishment of the community was brought about by the North-South Railroad passing through the area and the opening of a large saw mill in the vicinity, but in large part the town owes its existence to the yellow fever epidemics of the late 19th century. During the 1870's, 1880's and 1890's, considerable numbers of Black Belt families summered in the town and many finding the location and climate to their liking stayed on as permanent residents.

The earliest known settler in the area was Peter Cooper who obtained a large tract of land in the 1830's. Cooper operated a large plantation, a small saw mill, a grist mill and a cotton gin. Next came Captain John Norton, an Alabama Riverboat Captain, seeking to cure his tuberculosis, as later did the Georgia Poet Sidney Lanier. The North-South Railroad was completed in 1870 and shortly there after the Pratt Saw Mill opened its doors.

In 1873 when Montgomery suffered a severe epidemic of yellow fever, most of the inhabitants of the town fled, many of the prominent families coming to Verbena located 450' above sea level and only 32 miles north of the city. Many of the families constructed summer homes in the area and in the late 1870's a hotel was constructed to keep up with the demands of the summer visitors. During this period two churches were constructed, a number of summer rental cottages built and several stores opened.

One of the earliest families to build a permanent home, was the Gibson family. Major Joseph Carr Gibson, for several years the owner-editor of the Montgomery Daily Mail and a brother-in-law of Sidney Lanier, moved to Verbena in 1875 and constructed the finest house in the village.

When in the early 1880's the first hotel was demolished in a fire, a stock company was organized to build a second hotel, the Clifton House, which was completed in 1882. A few years later a private school was organized for the growing number of permanent residents.

The town reached its peak of popularity as a fashionable summer resort in the late 1880's when a summer stay in Verbena was considered a must by many of Montgomery's most prominent families. By 1900, when yellow fever was no longer a threat, the town had a sizable year-round population, two churches, several stores and a school. Its popularity as a resort began to fade and in 1922 when the Clifton House Hotel burned, it was not replaced. During this time the town experienced a small boom due to the construction of nearby Mitchell Dam and several rental houses were built (numbers 7-12). At present the town is composed of permanent residents, many of whom commute to Montgomery. The town itself serves as the religious and educational center for the five neighboring communities.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- McKinney, Sue B. "A Town Born of Yellow Fever," paper presented to Alabama Historical Association (April, 1970).
- Owen, T.M. History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography. Chicago, S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921.
- Personal Interview: Mrs. Joseph A. Sheppard, Verbena, Alabama.
- Vertical Files. Southern Literature & History Collection: Birmingham Public Library.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 150

UTM REFERENCES

545			546		
CA	1,6	3,6	2,3	1,0	0
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
AD	1,6	5,4	6	1,8	0
		3,6	2,4	4,0	0
B	1,6	3,6	7	2,0	0
		3,6	2,3	1,0	0
D	1,6	5,4	5	1,4	0
		3,6	2,4	4,0	0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Commence at the intersection of the southern right of way line of the Verbena-Enterprise Road and the Southern (rear) property line of the Verbena United Methodist Church, the point of beginning; thence easterly along said property line to the eastern (rear) property line of the Brooks-Wingate house, said property line being parallel to and approximately 275 feet from the centerline of Cooper Street; thence

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

W. Warner Floyd, Executive Director

ORGANIZATION

Alabama Historical Commission

STREET & NUMBER

725 Monroe Street

CITY OR TOWN

Montgomery,

DATE

TELEPHONE

(205) 832-6621

STATE

Alabama

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Miss B. Toward, Jr.

TITLE

S A P O - Alabama

DATE

November 20, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

1/19/96

DATE

1-12-76

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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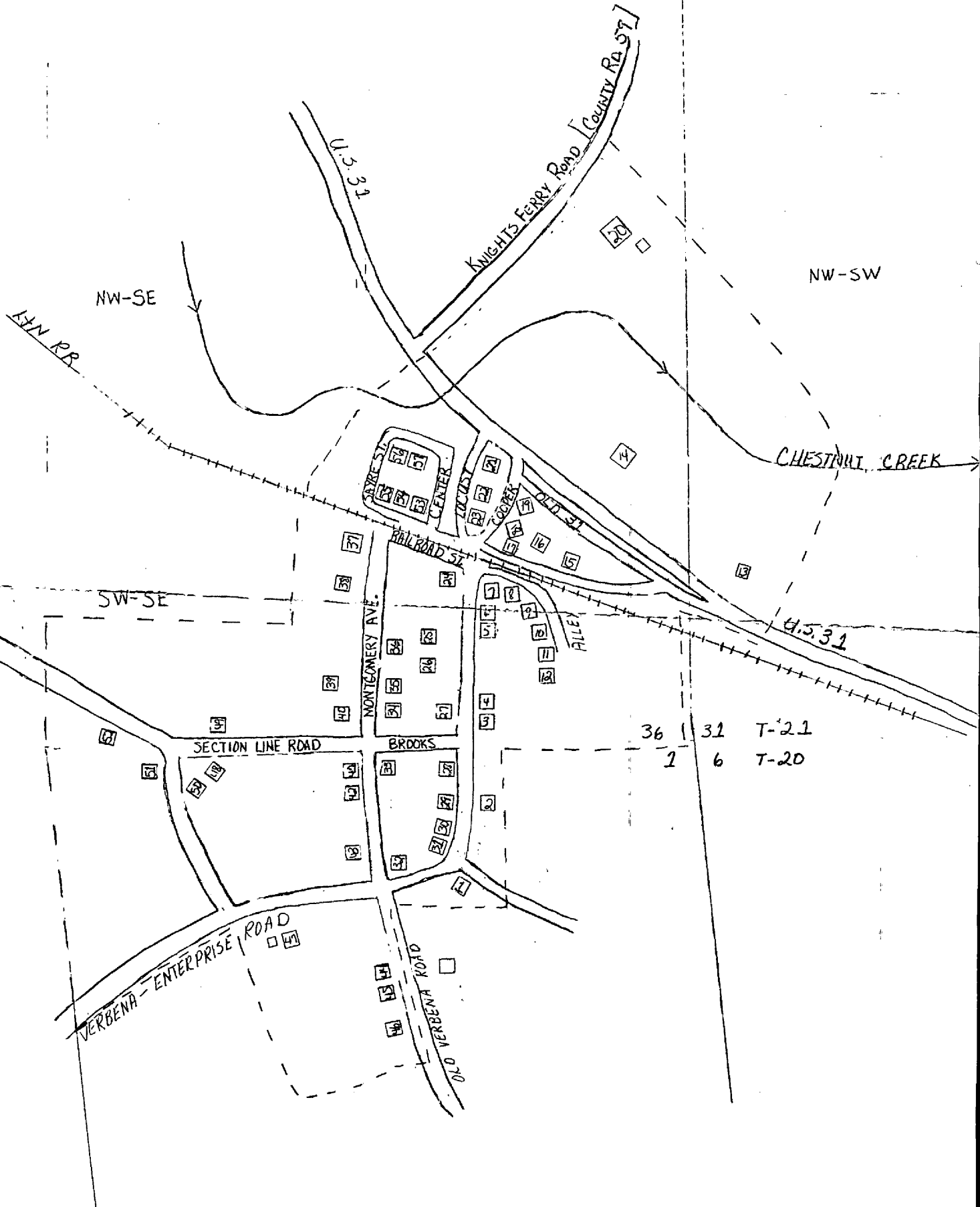
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northerly along said property line to the southern line of section 36; thence east along the section line to the intersection of section 36 and section 31; thence north to the southern right of way line of U.S. Highway 31; thence southeasterly along said right of way line to the eastern town limit line of Verbena; thence northeasterly along said town limit line to the northern bank of Chestnut Creek; thence northwest, parallel to U.S. Highway 31 to the southern right of way line of Chilton County Road 59; thence southwest along said right of way line to the western right of way line of U.S. Highway 31; thence southwest to the northern property line of the Gibson House, said property line being approximately 230 feet from and parallel to Montgomery Avenue; thence southerly along said property line to a line running east-west through the center point of the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section 36; thence westerly to the quarter section north-south line; thence south along the quarter section lines to the southern right of way line of the Verbena-Enterprise road, thence easterly along this line to a point 800 feet west of and parallel to the Old Verbena Road, thence south 800 feet; thence east 800 feet to the centerline of the Old Verbena Road, thence northerly to the point of origin.



VERBENA

1" = approximately 528'

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

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Verbena

AND/OR COMMON

Verbena

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Verbena

___ VICINITY OF

COUNTY Chilton

STATE Alabama

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE Alabama Historical Commission and Chilton County Engineer

SCALE approximately 1:528

DATE November, 1975

4 REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES