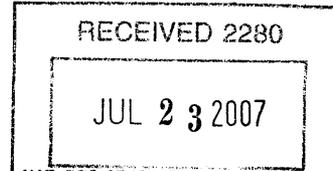


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



897

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in NPS Form 10-900. 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 any 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 BILLINGSLEY FARM

other names/site number FMSF#LE4935

2. Location

street & number 3640 Oakhurst Lane

N/A not for publication

city or town Tallahassee

vicinity

state Florida

code

FL

countv Leon

code

073

zip code

32308

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 forth 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.)

Bartan C. Mattick / DSHPO 7/18/2007
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation
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 See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall

9.5.07

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	2	buildings
1	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
5	2	total

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

"N/A"

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE _____

DOMESTIC: single dwelling _____

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling _____

AGRICULTURE _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Frame Vernacular _____

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK _____

walls WOOD _____

roof METAL _____

other _____

Narrative Description

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

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

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

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):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) 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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1889 - 1957

Significant Dates

1889

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Billingsley, Henry Clay - builder

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of Repository

Billingsley Farm
Name of Property

Leon Co., FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 12.3

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	6	7	7	9	8	2	0	3	3	7	9	7	9	0	
	Zone		Easting					Northing								
2	1	6	7	7	9	8	2	0	3	3	7	9	2	8	0	

3	1	6	7	7	9	5	6	0	3	3	7	9	2	8	0	
	Zone		Easting					Northing								
4	1	6	7	7	9	5	6	0	3	3	7	9	5	0	0	

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 Bauer, Robin, Valerie Strom /Robert O. Jones, Historic Preservationist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date July 2007

street & number 500 South Brounough Street telephone 850-245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32399-0250

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 Richard H. Billingsley

street & number 3640 Oakhurst Lane telephone 850-877-9773

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32308

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 amend listings. 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 20503.

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National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 **BILLINGSLEY FARM, LEON COUNTY,
FLORIDA**

SUMMARY

The Billingsley Farm is located at 3640 Oakhurst Lane, Leon County, Florida. Oakhurst Lane runs south off of Highway 90, in eastern Leon County. The farm contains the main Billingsley House built in 1889, smokehouse, well, horse barn, and a portion of the historic Wadesboro Road that is a major element within a historic cultural landscape. All buildings are of Frame Vernacular construction, and the one-and-one-half story house has a “hall and parlor” form. The well was probably dug by the time of the house construction, if not before, and the smokehouse was built shortly after the house was built. A detached kitchen was built ca.1900, but was demolished as this nomination neared completion. The house was wired for electricity and had modern plumbing installed in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Henry Clay Billingsley built the house and developed the farm. The northern portion of this parcel of land retains its historical landscape to a high degree, and with its field and circulation patterns, is a contributing site. A non-contributing modern brick house is located near the western boundary of the property.

SETTING

The surrounding land along Highway 90 is rolling agricultural land with houses separated by acreage and largely well set back off the road. A tree line blocks the view of US Highway 90 that passes northwest of the historic house. Located fourteen miles northeast of Tallahassee, the area is known as the Baum Community, named for a crossroad directly west of the property that had been a commercial center. Billingsley oriented the house to the south to face a former east/west Wadesboro Road roadbed that is still visible. The Wadesboro settlement is southeast of the farm. The rural character has remained since the time Henry Clay Billingsley built the family home. This area in Leon County has long been described as a “...hills (that) bore a dense cover of hickories and oaks...”¹ Billingsley cleared the land and cultivated crops on a farm that was much larger than the remaining parcel. Field and garden spaces in the northern portion of the property retain their historic configuration. The nominated property is a northern portion of the larger currently owned parcel (see current parcel map).

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Billingsley House is an “L”-shaped Frame Vernacular building with a hall-and-parlor arrangement, which was the dominant folk housing style found in the Southeast until the early twentieth century.² Brick piers support both the house and detached kitchen. Both have horizontal colonial siding. The house and kitchen have

¹ Clifton Paisley, *From Cotton to Quail: An Agricultural Chronicle of Leon County, Florida 1860-1967* (1968; reprint, Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1981), 2.

² Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 94.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 7 Page 2 **BILLINGSLEY FARM, LEON COUNTY,
FLORIDA**

side-gable metal roofs. The house has a cross-gable over the "L" and corner returns. Most windows are 6/6 double-hung wooden sashes.

The south, main façade is symmetrical with a central entrance accessed off of an open porch that spans three-quarters of the elevation (Photo #1). The porch has six brick steps with cheeks, and four turned posts that support a hip metal roof. The posts have scroll-sawn brackets at the top and turned balusters and handrail around the porch. The main single door has six panels and is flanked by three-quarter length sidelights with three mullions. A window is in the wall on either side of the entrance.

The east elevation has the gable end of the main block at the south side, and wall of the "L" extension (Photo #2). A small rectangular louvered vent is in the peak of the gable. The gable has corner returns. A single window is centered under the gable. A small 2/2 double-hung wooden sash is centered in the elevation, and a single window is within the extension wall. The broad side of the metal surfaced roof is visible. A brick chimney pierces the roof ridge at the center of the center of the elevation.

The north elevation has the gable end of the "L" extension with a louvered vent in peak of the gable, and a single window centered under the gable (Photo #3). Gable returns are present. The north wall of the main block contains two windows, and the broad side of the roof is visible. A north porch is located at this "L" intersection and it has a hip roof supported by three square posts (Photo #4). A handrail and turned balusters are between these posts. A covered walk between the house and detached kitchen building is present.

The west elevation has a gable end of the building's main block, a small louvered vent is in the peak of the gable, and there are gable returns. The gable end contains two windows. Visible to the north is the "L" extension which contains a door in its west wall.

Interior

The house was originally constructed with a large front porch, an entry hall, three-bedrooms, and a back porch. The three bedrooms are each fifteen by fifteen feet. Two of the bedrooms, on the east side of the house, have fireplaces which were enclosed in 2000 (Photo #5). The central hallway connects the front two bedrooms (Photo #6). The north end of the hallway was walled off when the north side of the house was turned into a modern kitchen in 2000 (Photo #7). At the same time a modern bathroom was built in the southeast corner of the northeast bedroom. Corner closets were built into each of the east bedrooms (Photo #8).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Smokehouse, ca. 1890s. The smokehouse is located 35 feet northwest of the main house (Photo #9). This structure is built of hand-hewed lumber, with a tin roof, and is 20 feet by 16 feet. There is one entrance on the south side of the structure.

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Section number 7 Page 3 **BILLINGSLEY FARM, LEON COUNTY,
FLORIDA**

Well, ca. 1889. Located just west from the barn is a well, 50 inches by 50 inches, that retains its original brick facing (Photo #10).

Horse barn, 1955. Located east of the house, the barn is of pole construction with a metal roof, metal and wood siding. It is rectangular and aligned north to south. The barn housed horses and mules. At one time the Billingsleys owned thirty-four mules to aid in plowing the land.

Detached Kitchen, ca. 1900. **Demolished 2007**. The kitchen replaced the former log kitchen that burned down in the late 1880s (Photo #4). The kitchen building served as kitchen, dining room, living room and storage/pantry. The kitchen was demolished for insurance reasons after the proposal passed the Florida State Review Board. The covered walk connecting the house and kitchen has been retained and repaired with the intent of rebuilding a kitchen building.

Barn, ca. 1890s. **Demolished 2007**. A small barn, located 98 feet west of the house, was also built of hand-hewed lumber and covered with a tin roof (Photos #11). The barn was demolished for insurance reasons after the proposal passed the Florida State Review Board.

Cultural Landscape

The farmland surrounding the Billingsley House retains the circulation and agricultural use patterns of the historic farm. The main house is located in the northern portion of the property, facing due south, with an access drive running due south and intersecting with the east west Wadesboro Road (Photo #12). The drive and Wadesboro Road are both double-track, single vehicle roads. The Wadesboro Road was a 19th century road that runs east/west, and connected the community of Wadesboro, directly to the east, to points west (Photo #13). The road today is unused and consists of a depressed corridor with trees lining the edges. A large gate post remains at the northwest corner of the intersection of the drive and road. Directly north of the main house and kitchen was a vegetable garden. Directly north of the garden and smoke house is a cultivated field that runs east/west and abuts the north edge of the property. Historically the field was used for corn and sweet potatoes. The open space north of the non-contributing modern house was a cotton field. The open space to the east of the modern house and west of the drive was a sweet potato field. Aligned with the east side of the drive, where a line of pine trees are currently planted, were long gardens for household use. Adjacent to this garden was a small grove of pear trees, only one of which remains. A sugarcane field occupied the eastern part of the property. North of the barn chickens were raised, and to the east was a hog pen. A cattle pen was located at the northeast corner where the drive intersects the Wadesboro Road. At the southwest corner of the drive and road intersection is a large vegetable garden historically used for potatoes and melons. The historic integrity of the cultural landscape extends to this garden, while south and east of the road have returned to natural growth. Immediately to the south is a pond where historically baptisms from the Indian Springs Baptist Church were

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Section number 7 Page 4 **BILLINGSLEY FARM, LEON COUNTY,
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conducted. Historically cattle were allowed to graze around the pond.

NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE

A non-historic family house was constructed in the western portion of the property in 1975 (Photo #14). An additional non-historic shed barn for the storage of equipment is located directly south of this house.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 8 Page 1 **BILLINGSLEY FARM, LEON COUNTY,
FLORIDA**

SUMMARY

The Billingsley Farm is nominated to the National Register for local significance under Criteria A and C in the areas of Agriculture and Architecture. It is an excellent example of a late nineteenth century middle class farm in Leon County, Florida. The Frame Vernacular farmhouse, built by Henry Clay Billingsley in 1889, is a well preserved example of a hall and parlor form which was the dominant folk housing style found in the Southeast into the early twentieth century.¹ Preserved outbuildings include a smokehouse, small barn, a well, and horse barn. The historic agricultural landscape remains in the northern portion of the property, with fields and household garden areas. A historic east/west public roadway remains in an overgrown condition.

By being one of the largest landholders in what was known as the Baum community, the Billingsley's were significant members of their community with one member, Fellows Billingsley, being one of the last Justices of the Peace in Leon County before the office was abolished in 1945.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The rural area around the Billingsley Farm was called the Baum Community, named for a Mr. Baum who owned a store at the intersection of Wadesboro Road and Baum Road. Also at the crossroads was another store owned by a man known as Mac who also had property and a house there. The Kelly family from Georgia bought Mac's store and properties. Richard Billingsley's maternal grandfather was a blacksmith who had a shop at the intersection. Another store and a grist mill were at the intersection of Jefferson and Highway 90. A half mile south of that intersection was Cook's sawmill.

Agriculture was the economic foundation of Leon County and the north/central Florida region since the Florida territory was deeded from Spain in 1821. American settlers flocked to this fertile region as soon as it was opened, and agriculture remained a major force in the region's economy until World War II. In December 1824, the Florida Territorial Legislative Council created a county "...by the name of Leon County, comprehended within a line corresponding on the west with the eastern boundary line of Gadsden County, which is the west bank of the river Ochlocknee, on the north by the boundary line of the state of Georgia, on the east by the river Suwannee, and on the south by the Gulf of Mexico".² After the subdivision of Jefferson and Wakulla counties, Leon County covered 685 square miles and retains that size today.³

¹ Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 94.

² Leon County Commission, *Laws of Leon County: Local and Special Legislation 1820-1956, Published as a report to the Leon County Commission*, (Tallahassee, 1956), 109.

³ Mary Louise Ellis and William Warren Rogers, *Tallahassee and Leon County: A History and Bibliography* (Tallahassee: Department of State, 1986), 6.

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The Billingsley family were early settlers of Leon County. The first mention of the Billingsley family is derived from the marriage records of the county. John P. Billingsley married Ann Smith in 1829.⁴ In 1839, John P. Billingsley began buying tracts of land in Leon County near present day Baum Road, located northeast from the center of Tallahassee. John P. Billingsley purchased the land from the United States Land Office in five separate patents. Two sections of land were purchased in 1839⁵, one section in 1840⁶, another section in 1841⁷, and a final land patent in 1859.⁸ In the United States Census of 1850, John P. and Ann Billingsley are listed as having seven children, ranging from ages three to seventeen, and a farm valued at \$1500. John P. Billingsley is listed as a farmer, the most common occupation in Leon County in 1850.⁹

On January 10, 1861, Florida became the third state to secede from the union.¹⁰ Henry Clay Billingsley, the second son of John P. and Ann Billingsley, left to join the Confederate Army. Henry Clay enlisted in the Second Florida Infantry in Company M, also known as the Howell Guards, on August 20, 1861.¹¹ Henry Clay fought in several major battles of the Civil War, including Fredericksburg and Williamsport. At Gettysburg, he received a major head wound and was taken prisoner.¹² He later recovered from the head wound and was returned to his command in the fall of 1863.¹³ But by the next year Henry Clay was wounded again, this time in the leg at the battle of the Wilderness, Virginia. Henry Clay never fully recovered from his wound and remained crippled for the rest of his life.¹⁴ Henry Clay returned to Leon County in 1864. Two years after returning from the war, Henry Clay married Martha Hall on October 11, 1866.¹⁵ By 1880 the family had grown to include the five children of Henry Clay and Martha. The family included Edward (age eleven), Fellows (age ten), John P. (age eight), Mattie (age six), and Sarah M. (age three).¹⁶

As Henry Clay and Martha's children grew, some of the family began to work outside of the traditional agricultural lifestyle. Fellows Billingsley not only held land and farmed throughout the Baum area, he also played another role in his community, that of Justice of the Peace. Justices of the Peace for county government

⁴ Leon County Clerk of Courts, *Index to Marriages Leon County, FL* (Tallahassee, 1829), 9.

⁵ General Land Office, *Certificate of the Register of the Land Office at Tallahassee*, 1839, no. 1013 & 1014.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1840, no. 7027.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1841, no. 7236.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1859, no. 12,121.

⁹ Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*, prepared by the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census (Washington, D.C., 1850).

¹⁰ Ellis and Rogers, *Tallahassee and Leon County*, 19.

¹¹ Florida Board of State Institutions, *Soldiers of Florida in the Seminole Indian-Civil and Spanish American Wars* (Live Oak, FL: Democrat Print, 1903).

¹² George N. Footman to Emma Billingsley, 26 September 1914 (Family papers owned by Richard Billingsley, photocopy).

¹³ State of Florida. *Soldier's Pension Claim Under the Act Of 1909: Form A (Tallahassee, 1909)*, 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Leon County Clerk of Courts. *Index to Marriages Leon County, FL*, Volume WA. (Tallahassee, 1866), 44.

¹⁶ Bureau of the Census. *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*.

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Section number 8 Page 3 **BILLINGSLEY FARM, LEON COUNTY,
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had been established by the Florida Constitution of 1838. According to that document in each county "A competent number of Justices of the Peace shall be, from time to time, appointed or elected in and for each County, in such mode, and for such term of office as the General Assembly may direct; and shall possess such jurisdiction as may be prescribed by law..."¹⁷

In the Constitution of 1885, the role of Justice of the Peace was further defined. That document empowered the county commissioners to divide the county into as many Justice Districts as they saw necessary.¹⁸ The constitution authorized that the Justices of the Peace have "...jurisdiction in cases of law in which the demand of the property involved does not exceed of fifty dollars...and he shall have power to issue process for the arrest of persons charged with crime..."¹⁹ Fellows was first recorded as Justice of the Peace in 1919.²⁰ According to Fellows' son Julian Billingsley, Fellows often held court underneath a pecan tree located next to the Billingsley family farmhouse.²¹ The Justices of the Peace were in the community in order to "...keep peace in the community and legal order. It was necessary when horse and buggy was the common transportation and travel was slower. The sheriff was at the county seat and it might take him two to three hours or the next day to get to the east side of the county. Someone locally was needed to handle domestic problems."²² In the spirit of municipal reform, the Leon County government attempted to pass in 1945 a law effectively abolishing the Justice of the Peace districts, subject to vote.²³ It remains unclear whether this ended the office of Justice of the Peace in Leon County, but in 1955 another law was passed once again to eliminate the Justice of the Peace districts. This law was signed by the governor on April 22, 1955, and definitively abolished the Justice of the Peace courts in Leon County.²⁴

AGRICULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Agriculture, besides being the main occupation of Leon County inhabitants, was the driving force behind the economy of the county. The main agricultural practice in pre-Civil War Leon County was large plantation style farms worked by slave labor.²⁵ These types of farms consisted of five hundred or more acres of improved land and accounted for most of the improved land in Leon County by 1860.²⁶ Although most of the cultivated land could be found in the large plantation style farms, there was still a portion of the farming community in smaller

¹⁷ Florida Constitution (1838), art. 5, sec.10.

¹⁸ Ibid., article 5, sec. 21.

¹⁹ Ibid., sec. 22.

²⁰ R.L. Polk and J. Wiggins. "Justices of the Peace." *Tallahassee City Directory* 1919-20: 27.

²¹ Billingsley, interview.

²² Ibid.

²³ Leon County Commission, 130.

²⁴ Ibid., 37.

²⁵ Clifton Paisley, *From Cotton to Quail: An Agricultural Chronicle of Leon County, Florida 1860-1967* (1968; reprint, Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1981).

²⁶ Ibid., 7.

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Section number 8 Page 4 **BILLINGSLEY FARM, LEON COUNTY,
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single family style farms. With a farm valued at \$1500 in 1850, the Billingsley family would have been categorized as small-scale subsistence farmers. No record can be found of their owning slaves, so most likely the farming was done primarily by the family members themselves. This period in Leon County agricultural history is thought of as a “golden age” to the free inhabitants of the county. Farm production was high and their lives were comfortable. The Billingsley Farm relied on their production of cotton and corn as their main cash crops. But with the Civil War and the era of Reconstruction there was dramatic social change and Leon County farmers, big and small, felt the changing times.

Through the end of the nineteenth century, the Billingsley family continued to work on their family farm. John P. and Fellows Billingsley, Henry Clay’s sons, jointly held farmland throughout the Baum Community. After the Civil War attempts to diversify the agricultural production were essential, but not always successful. In the year of Henry Clay’s death in 1914, the brothers paid taxes on approximately 774 acres of land, of which 424 acres were improved or cultivated.²⁷ The diversity in farming that had begun in Henry Clay’s time continued into the first half of the twentieth century and the Billingsley’s tried to plant new cash crops like pecan trees, tung nuts, pears, and shade tobacco. But in the cases of pecans, pears, and shade tobacco, the crops never succeeded in Leon County and many small time farmers found themselves still dependant on the stable crops of cotton and corn.²⁸ In the early twentieth century the Billingsley Farm was quite diverse in its production and largely self sufficient. Vegetable gardens supplied their personal needs. In the house gardens were grown rutabagas, turnips, mustards, cabbages, collards, peas, and lima beans.²⁹ The cultivation of sugarcane for syrup and sugar, sweet potatoes, hogs and cattle supplied a regional market.

A change in the value of Leon County farm real estate mirrored trends across the nation in the 1920s. Before 1926, local land values in Florida were on a constant upward swing. From 1920 to 1926 the value of farm real estate increased from \$47 an acre to \$107. But in 1927, instead of increasing even more, land prices instead went down to \$88. This downward spiral would continue until 1941 when the price of Florida farm real estate bottomed at \$39.³⁰ The State of Florida, and the United State as well, was in the throes of the Great Depression and Leon County residents felt the economic strain the hardest in the agricultural sector. As land prices fell during this difficult period, the landowners continued to sell portions of their farms to generate income. In 1932 John P. and Fellows Billingsley paid taxes on 164 acres of jointly owned land.³¹ In the eighteen years since Henry Clay’s death in 1914, the brothers had already sold off 610 acres of land. This trend of selling land was seen all across Leon County with smaller single family farms and large plantations alike. The few large planters that had managed to survive in Leon County did not divide up their land. The planters rather sold the

²⁷ Ibid., 34, 35, 120.

²⁸ Ellis and Rogers, *Tallahassee and Leon County*, 22.

²⁹ Billingsley, interview.

³⁰ Robert Strickland, “U.S. and State Farm Income,” August 28, 2003, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/FarmIncome/FinFidMu.htm> (5 November 2003).

³¹ Tax Collector of Leon County, Florida, *Leon County Revenue for 1932*, Tax Roll 1932 (Tallahassee, 1932), microfiche, 75, 76.

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large plantations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, to northerners who then turned the land into winter homes and used the acreage to hunt quail and other game.³² Slowly the rural residents of Leon County sought other ways of making a living. Sawmills began to appear in the piney woods of Florida around this time.³³ In rural Leon County, farmers began working at these mills full and part-time. Some members of the Billingsley family worked at the mills and took positions in local government to earn a living.³⁴

By the early 1960s agriculture was no longer the largest income producer in Leon County. Only one percent of personal income came from agriculture in 1964, as compared to 1860 when Leon County was rated first in a ranking of Florida counties dedicated to agriculture.³⁵ The land dedicated to agriculture had fallen sharply as well. At the peak of its farm production in the pre-Civil War era, Leon County had 110,609 acres of improved land for farming; by 1964 there were only 46,193 acres.³⁶ The dominance of agriculture in Leon County had come to an end.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE

The building style known as Folk Victorian was popular from the 1870 into the 1910s. These were primarily frame, post-railroad house forms in one and two stories, with porches and spindle work detailing on the main façade. Cornice line brackets are common. Gable roofs are most common with front gables, front gables with side wings. The one-story with side gables and wing was popular across the nation and quite popular in the southeast.³⁷

In 1889 Henry Clay built his family the farmhouse that is the centerpiece of the property. The house was built of hand-hewed lumber and cost Henry Clay "...less than \$500."³⁸ The one-story, side-gable house has a wing, main porch with spindles and ornamental wood-work. It is an excellent example of the Folk Victorian form. It retains original hall and parlor arrangement, with a central hall and two bedrooms accessed off of it. A third bedroom was in the wing. The central hall ran through the building onto the rear/north porch, but it was blocked by the addition of a kitchen.

³² Paisley, *From Cotton to Quail*, 74.

³³ Federal Writers Project, *The WPA Guide to Florida*, (1939, reprint, New York: Pantheon Books, 1984) 88.

³⁴ Billingsley, interview.

³⁵ Paisley, *From Cotton to Quail*, 124.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 125.

³⁷ McAlester and McAlester, *American Houses*, 94.

³⁸ Billingsley, interview.

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In 1910 the original roof on the main house was replaced with tin metal slates, which were then painted red.³⁹ The integrity of the Billingsley House remains high despite the enclosure of the back porch to create a kitchen and the addition of indoor plumbing and electric wiring in the 1940s and 1950s.

The Billingsley Farm is an excellent example of a middle class farm dating from the post Civil War era up to the post World War II period, a time of diversification, recession, and then marginalization. North-central Florida was the state's predominately strong agricultural region and the Billingsley Farm typified this resource and work experience. Of the five counties that make up this region, only Leon County has three National Register listed farms, and only two represent middle class working farms. The diversity of crops and animal husbandry at Billingsley Farm was quite extensive. The integrity of the agricultural landscape is high. The 1889 hall-and-parlor type frame vernacular house is undergoing repairs is in good condition. The house form was common into the early twentieth century, but is now rare in the region and little represented in the National Register.

³⁹ Cortright Metal Roofing Co. to Fellows Billingsley, letter, 16 August 1910 (Family papers owned by Richard Billingsley, photocopy).

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Billingsley Family Farm and Cemetery is located in the E ½ of the E ½ of Section 1 T1N, R2E and the W ½ of the W ½ of Section 6 T1N, R3E. The legal description of the farmland is as follows:
Commence at the iron pipe at the southwest corner of the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 1, T1N, R2E, and run thence south 89 degrees 20 minutes east 1123.84 feet to an iron pipe which is the point of beginning, from said point of beginning, run thence south 89 degrees 20 minutes east 228.5 to an iron pipe on the west boundary line of Section 6, T1N, R3E, then run south 0 degrees 29 minutes west along said section line 492.16 feet to an iron pipe, thence run north 0 degrees 34 minutes east 3172.5 feet to an iron pipe on the south boundary line of U.S. Highway No. 90, thence run south 51 degrees 44 minutes east along said highway boundary line 975.7 feet to an iron pipe, thence run south 0 degrees 34 minutes west 559.5 feet to an iron pipe, thence run south 89 degrees 20 minutes east 178.0 feet to an iron pipe which is the point of beginning. All land lying in the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter and the east half of the southeast quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 1, T1N, R2E, and the north 15 acres of the southwest quarter and the west half of the northwest quarter of Section 6, T1N, R3 East. Containing 38.5 acres more or less. Tax Parcel # 1201200130010.

Within this boundary, the National Register boundary is for the northern portion as represented on the site plan map. This portion of property contains approximately 12.3 acres.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary encompasses the land historically associated with the Billingsley Farm that has a concentration of historic resources and retains its physical integrity.

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Section number Photos Page 1 **BILLINGSLEY FARM, LEON CO., FLORIDA**

PHOTOGRAPHIC LIST

1. Billingsley Farm, 3627 Oakhurst Lane, Tallahassee
2. Leon County, Florida
3. Valerie Strom
4. January 2007
5. Tallahassee Trust for Historic Preservation
6. Farmhouse façade, facing north
7. Photo #1 of 14

Items 1-5 are the same for the following photographs.

6. East elevation, facing west
7. Photo #2 of 14

6. North gable end, and east kitchen elevation (demolished) facing southwest
7. Photo #3 of 14

6. North porch and covered walk, and kitchen (demolished) facing east
7. Photo #4 of 14

6. Fireplace in southeast bedroom, facing north
7. Photo #5 of 14

6. Main door, facing south
7. Photo #6 of 14

6. Kitchen in main house, facing east
7. Photo #7 of 14

6. Closet in southeast bedroom, facing northwest
7. Photo #8 of 14

6. Smokehouse, facing north
7. Photo #9 of 14

6. Well, facing west
7. Photo #10 of 14

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Section number Photos Page 2 **BILLINGSLEY FARM, LEON CO., FLORIDA**

6. Barn, (demolished) facing north

7. Photo #11 of 14

6. Historic entrance road looking to Wadesboro Road, facing south

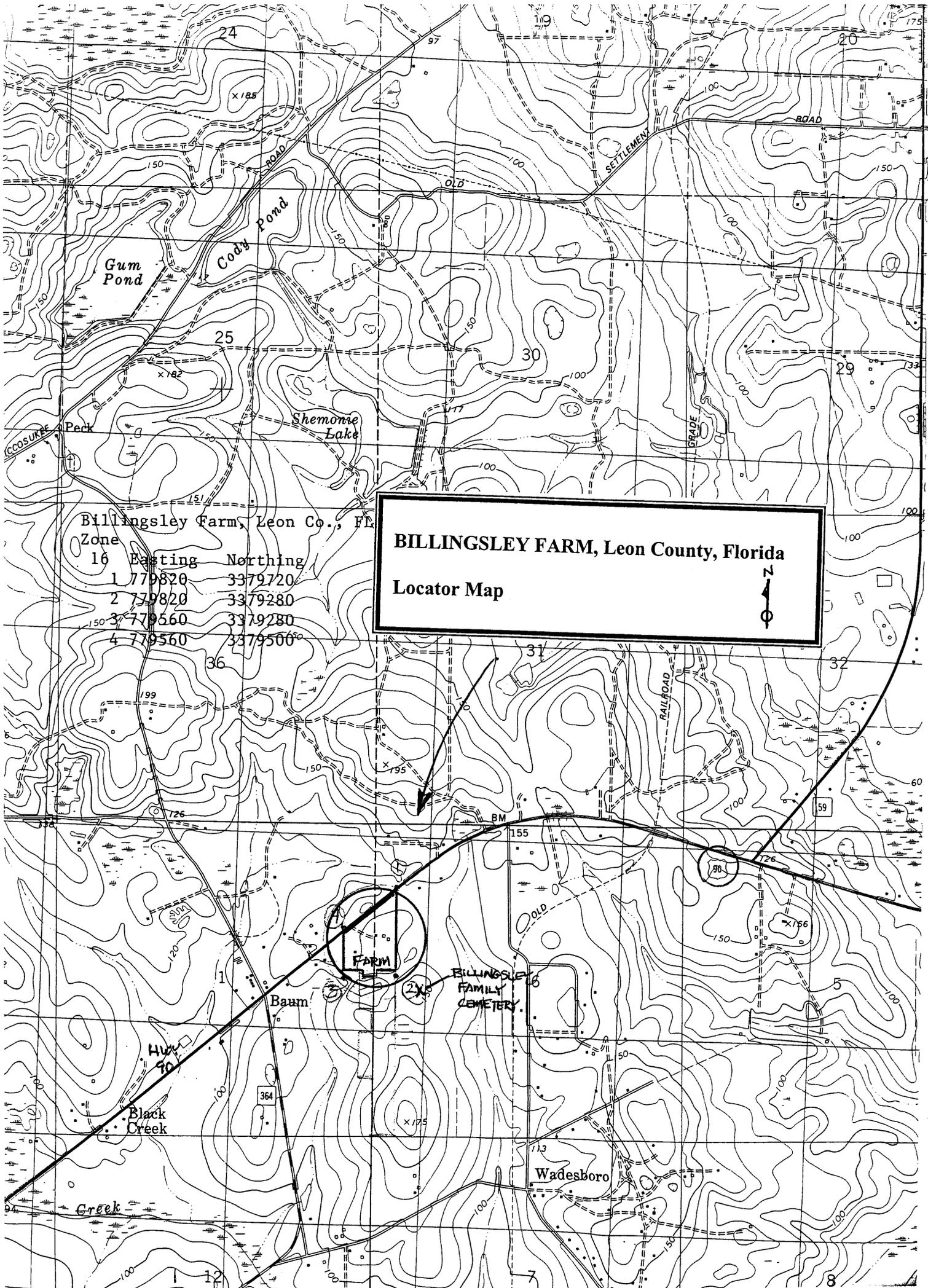
7. Photo #12 of 14

6. Wadesboro Road, facing east

7. Photo #13 of 14

6. Non-contributing house, facing south

7. Photo #14 of 14



Billingsley Farm, Leon Co., FL

Zone	16	Easting	Northing
	1	779820	3379720
	2	779820	3379280
	3	779560	3379280
	4	779560	3379500

BILLINGSLEY FARM, Leon County, Florida
Locator Map



BILLINGSLEY
 FAMILY
 CEMETERY.

Wadesboro

Gum
 Pond

Cody
 Pond

Shemone
 Lake

FARM

Baum

Hwy
 90

Black
 Creek

Creek

RAILROAD

OLD

ROAD

SETTLEMEN

OLD

GRADE

25

30

36

31

32

1

16

5

12

7

8

24

19

20

25

30

29

36

31

32

1

16

5

12

7

8

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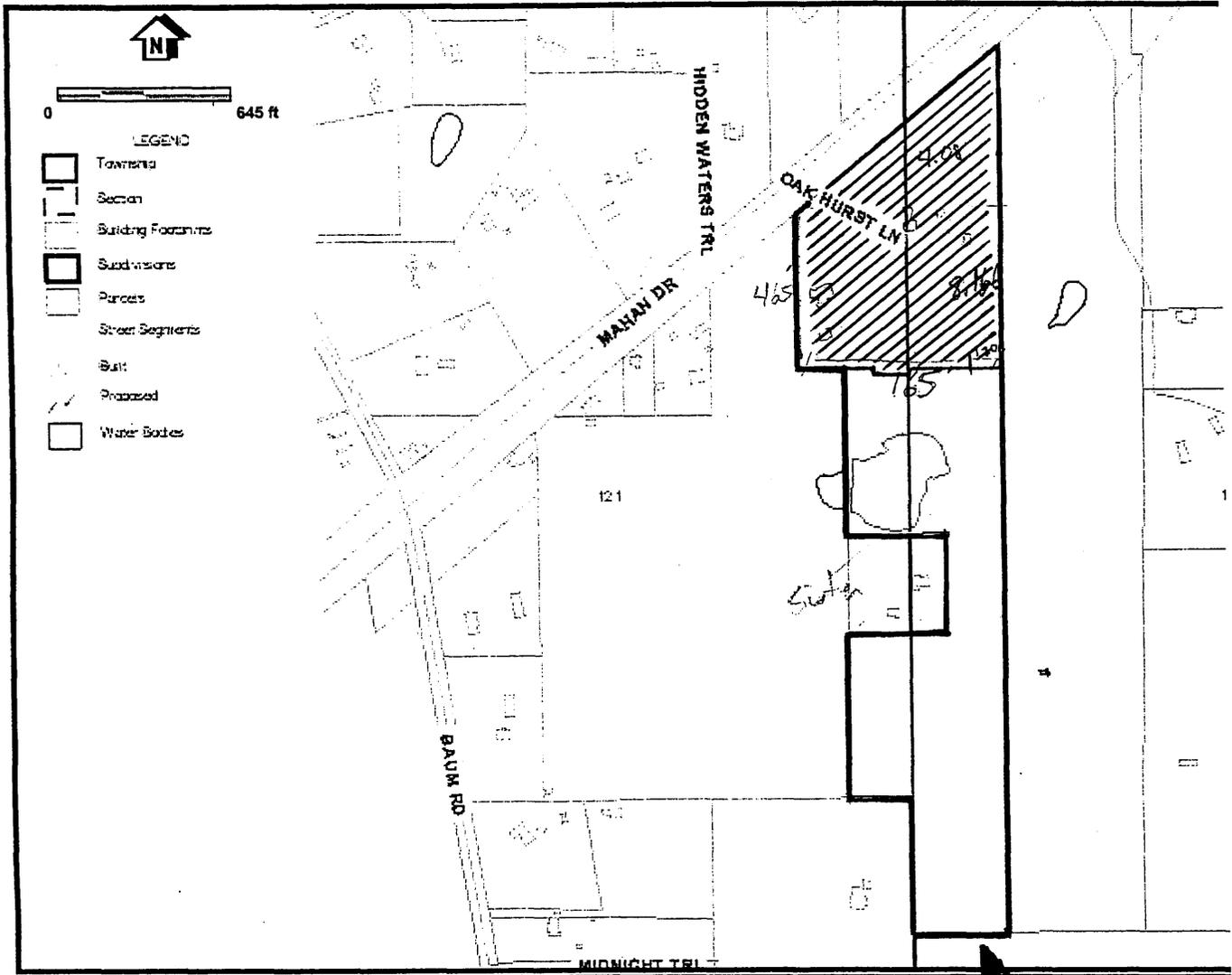
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8

TLCGIS I-Maps Leon County Property Appraiser's Cadastral Map



Tallahassee-Leon County



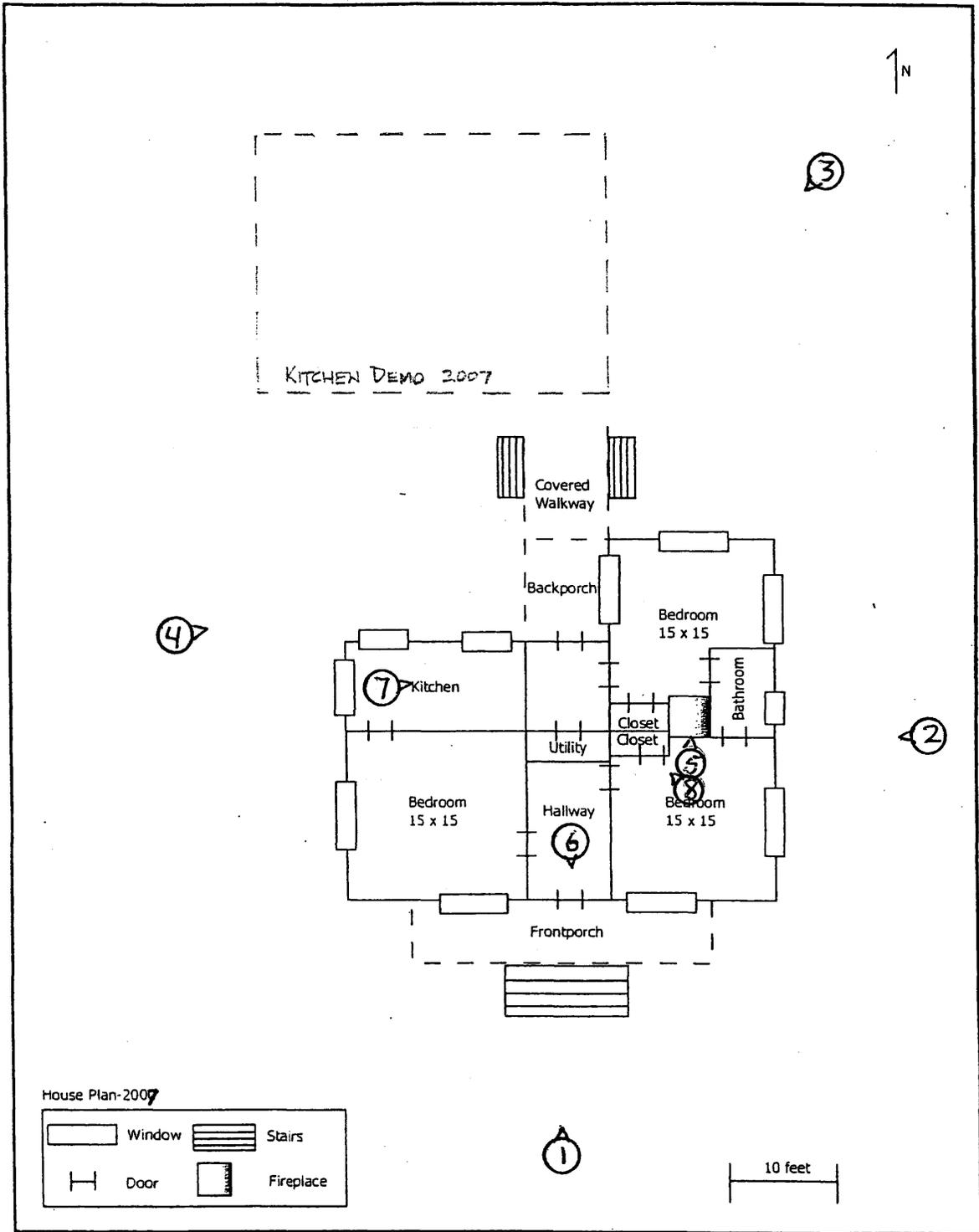
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850/606-5504

Date Created: 1/31/2007

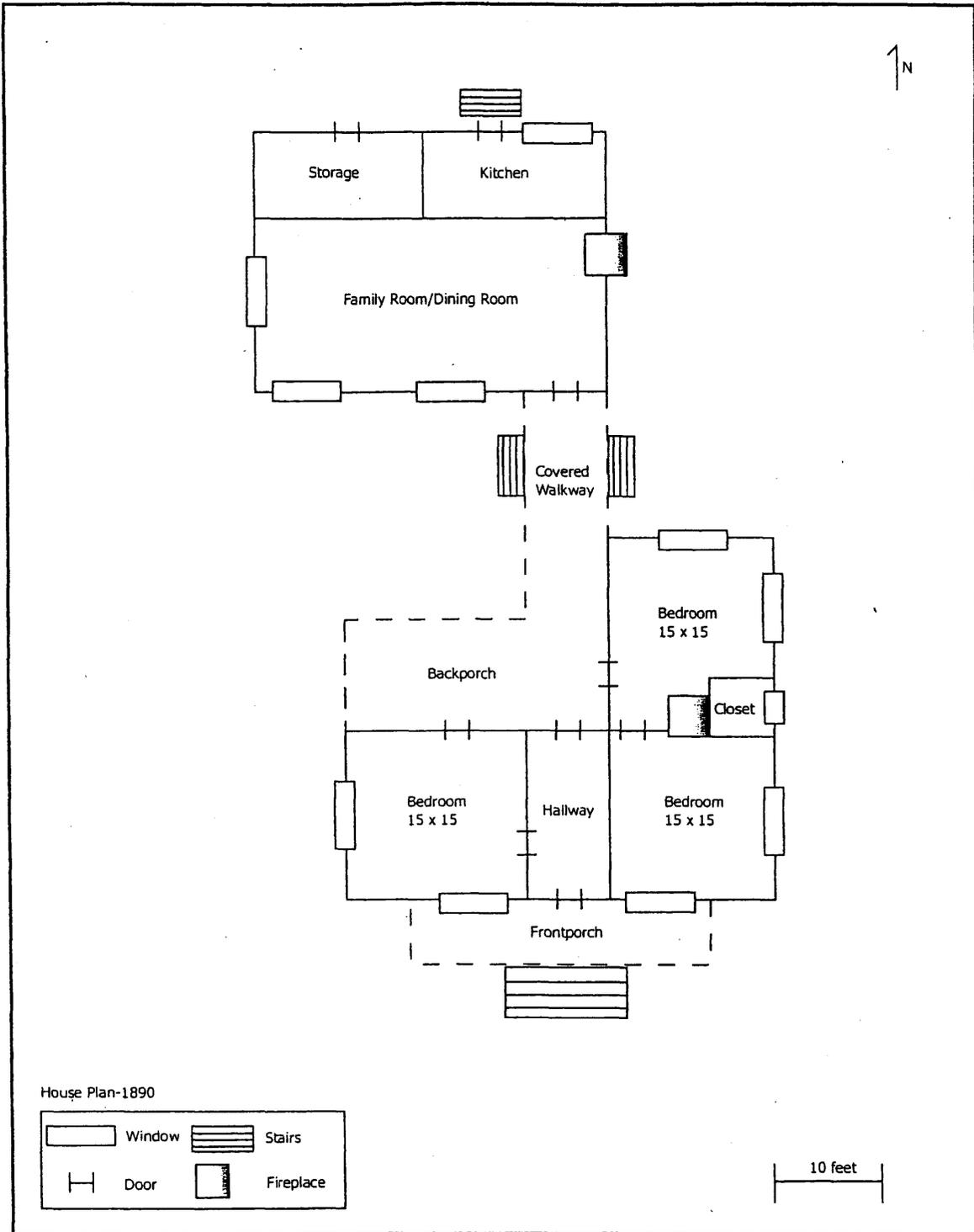
TLCGIS Map Disclaimer: This product has been compiled from the most accurate source data from Leon County, the City of Tallahassee, and the Leon County Property Appraiser. However, this product is for reference purposes only and is not to be construed as a legal document or survey instrument. Any reliance on the information contained herein is at the user's own risk. Leon County, the City of Tallahassee, and the Leon County Property Appraiser assume no responsibility for any use of the information contained herein or any loss resulting therefrom.

BILLINGSLEY FARM, LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

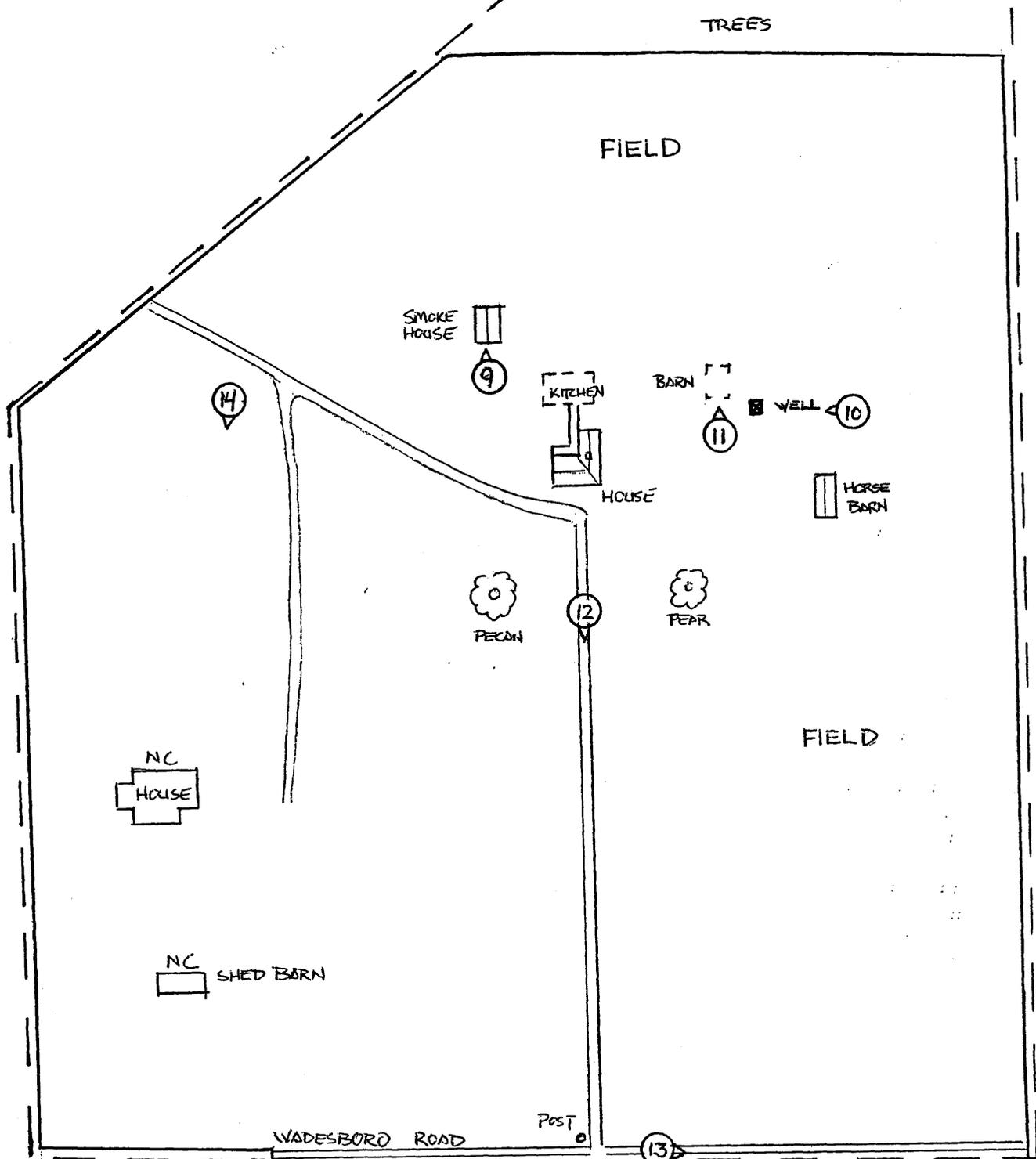
Property Appraiser Map of Current Parcel & National Register designated portion with cross-hatching



BILLINGSLEY FARM, Leon County, Florida
Layout of 2007 House & Photo Diagram

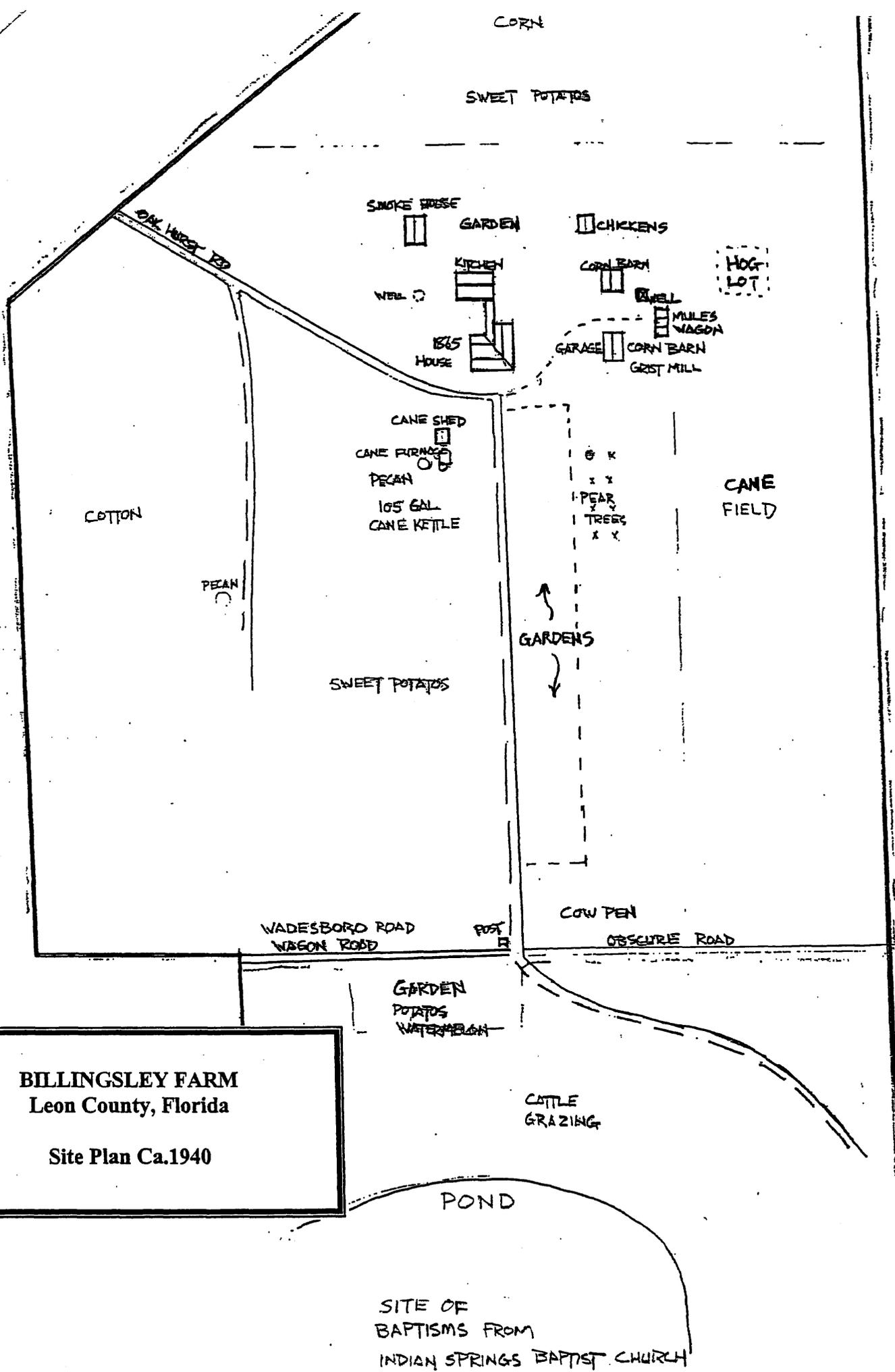


BILLINGSLEY FARM, Leon County, Florida
Layout of 1890s House and Kitchen



BILLINGSLEY FARM
 Leon County, Florida

Site Plan, National Register Boundary,
 Photo Diagram



BILLINGSLEY FARM
 Leon County, Florida
 Site Plan Ca.1940