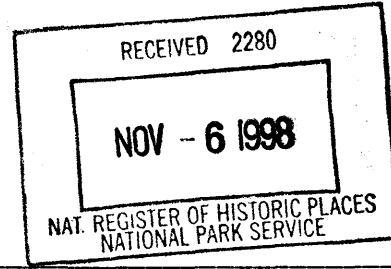


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



1465

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

**1. Name of Property** GILMER COUNTY POOR FARM INFIRMARY

historic name Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary  
other names/site number

**2. Location**

street & number: Off Sycamore Road on Recreation Center Road not for publication: N/A  
city or town Glennville vicinity: N/A  
state: West Virginia code: WV county: Gilmer code: 021 zip code: 26351

**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.)

Susan M. Pierce 10/8/98  
Signature of certifying official Date

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 commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this 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): \_\_\_\_\_

*Edson H. Beall* 12-4-98

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**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)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>  1  </u>	<u>      </u>	buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	objects
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   0  

Name of related multiple property listing   N/A

Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary  
Name of Property

Gilmer County, WV  
County/State

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**6. Function or Use**

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**Historic Functions**

HEALTH CARE: Clinic  
SOCIAL: Civic

**Current Functions**

SOCIAL: Civic

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**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification**

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> AND 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:  
Colonial Revival: Foursquare

**Materials**

Foundation	<u>Stone</u>
Roof	<u>Asphalt Shingle</u>
Walls	<u>Weatherboard</u>
Other	_____

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets)

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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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.

**Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary**  
Name of Property

**Gilmer County, WV**  
County/State

**Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)**

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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.

**Areas of Significance**

Social History  
Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1907 - 1941

**Significant Dates**

1907

**Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

West, Albert Newton - Architect  
Whiting, William Dolivar - builder

**Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets)**

Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary  
Name of Property

Gilmer County, WV  
County/State

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

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(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 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: Gilmer Co. Historic Landmark Commission, Glenville, WV

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### 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

Glenville Quad Map <sup>514800 km</sup>  
17 -50210- 4311320  
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (see continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (see continuation sheet)

Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary  
Name of Property

Gilmer County, WV  
County/State

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Kim A. Valente date June 1, 1998  
street & number 226A Bradford Street telephone 304-344-5149  
city or town Charleston state WV zip code 25301

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Parks and Recreation Board, Inc.  
street & number 10 Howard Street telephone 304/462-7641  
city or town Glennville state WV zip code 26351

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary  
Name of Property

Gilmer County, WV  
County/State

Section number 7

Page 1

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The Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary is located off Sycamore Road on Recreation Center Road, 2.3 miles north east from the Gilmer County Court House. It sits high up on a bluff, with stands of pine and other indigenous trees lining the shallow valley floor and sloping hillsides. The Sycamore Run, a tributary of the Little Kanawha River, flows in a southwest direction along the valley floor. The 114 acres of land originally associated with the poor farm was suitable for farming and grazing for animals. The property has been developed as a local golf course and there is now less than an acre associated with the infirmary.

The infirmary building is a two story, three bay, center entry, frame constructed building with a cross-hip pitched roof. The basement elevation is raised above ground level and constructed of rubble stone thirteen inches thick and elevated three feet in height. Windows and door entrances on all facades of the basement level allow natural light and ventilation into the interior space which houses the kitchen, dining room, bathroom and laundry. Two interior chimneys are located on each junction of roof valleys. The chimneys are constructed of rubble stone at the basement level and brick on the top story levels. The chimney flues are exposed above the roof line rising over 6 feet. Windows are original in size and are double-hung wooden sash with 2/2 glazing. The framing timber is oak and the outside finish lumber is poplar. The original roof was covered with black slate, but has since been replaced with composite asphalt shingles.

The original front, or west facade, had a one story flat roof open porch, supported by four evenly spaced Doric columns 10 inches in diameter. The open woodwork balustrade is an intricate design of 1 x 4's intersecting at 90 degree angles in 1 foot segments. A balcony above the porch provided access to the roof of the porch. Access to the porch roof was through a center bay doorway on the second story, similar to the main entry on the first floor. The double- hung sash windows with 2/2 glazing has wood lintels and sills finished with slightly splayed lintels. A centered hip roof dormer with three windows allowed light into the attic space. Today a full height, full width box enclosed addition has obscured the porch, dormer window and basement entry. These original elements can still be viewed from the interior of the building. The entrance into the building is now from the east facade, or historically, the rear of the building.

The east facade (present day main entry facade) has a one story hip roof open porch supported by squared columns. Although the columns are not original, the size and dimensions of this porch are to the specifications of the architect's drawings for the rear porch.

The original architect's written specifications and descriptions for the construction and materials to be used for the building are still in existence and include specs for: foundation and basement, chimney, basement flooring, sewer, framing, outside finish, roof, porches, rear porch, plastering, flooring, inside finish, paint, mantles, and plumbing.

Some of these specifications outline in detail the size and placement of the interior rooms. The first floor contains a living room (15' x 16'), parlor (14' x 15'), office (14' x 15') and two chambers for sleeping quarters ( 12' x 15' and 12'6" x 15'). Bow windows on the side facades, used as interior window seats, are intact and are located in the living room and in the small chamber rooms. All the window openings are original, as well as the interior stairwell railings, balustrades, and landings. The wall dividing the "chamber" room and parlor (noted on sketch plan) has been removed and columns now bear the load of the second floor.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary  
Name of Property

Gilmer County, WV  
County/State

Section number 7

Page 2

---

The second floor contains six chamber rooms, ranging in size from 12' x 15' as the smallest and 14' x 15' as the largest. The attic has three chamber rooms sized 9' x 15', 14'6" x 25' and 15' x 18'.

Gilmer County Courthouse records show the following work contracts for various activities for the Poor Farm Infirmary. The records indicate that the building was piped for gas, and plumbing was later installed:

October 18, 1907, a contract was made between the Glenville Natural Gas Company and the County Court of Gilmer County to deliver natural gas for fuel for the infirmary as well as furnish and lay 1,551 feet of pipe, regulator and meter for the service.

January 3, 1908, a contract was made between B. F. Bell and the County Court of Gilmer County to drill a water well, lay pipe and ready a pump.

January 4, 1908, a contract was made between W.D. Whiting and the County Court of Gilmer County to do grading around the County infirmary for \$30.00.

Continuing Maintenance:

April 9, 1912 a contract was made between J. W. West & Sons and the County Court of Gilmer County to paint the exterior of the infirmary for \$68.00.

December 13, 1923 a contract between R.L. McGee and the County Court of Gilmer County was made for repair work to the rear porch, reglazing of broken windows, cleaning of exterior woodwork and some painting for \$630.00.

The work contracts are documents which chart the process of the building and construction of the Poor Farm Infirmary. A special levy had to be passed to provide the money for the construction of the building. Because public money was used, all work orders have become official county courthouse records.

**Summary:** The Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary has retained original floor plan space, room divisions and interior detail in the form of stairwells, railings, window trim. Besides the change in the elevation used as the front entry, the buildings' exterior and interior spaces are original to the architects and builders plans.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary  
Name of Property

Gilmer County, WV  
County/State

Section number 8

Page 1

---

---

The Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary building is significant under Criteria A for Social History and Criteria C for Architecture. The period of significance is from 1907 to 1941 when the Poor Farm Infirmary was in operation.

Gilmer County was formed in 1845 from parts of Lewis and Kanawha Counties of the State of Virginia. That same year, local businessmen, religious leaders and political leaders Jacob Stump, Joseph Bennett, Jesse Stump, Jacob Bush, Strawther G. Goff, and Phillip Starcher were appointed as overseers of the poor for the County of Gilmer. They were charged to purchase a tract of land for the purpose of providing and running a county "poor farm". Approximately 300 acres were purchased from Samuel L. Hays and his wife Nancy. The price paid was \$1,000. With the purchase of the land, the overseers began the implementation for providing social services for those in need.

Although little written evidence can be found on how this poor farm was run during the early years; the general idea was to provide certain social services. These services included providing shelter and food for those living on the poor farm land. Small frame structures were built for housing. Corn cribs, livestock barns, chicken coops, barns, etc. were built to facilitate the running of the farm. Photographs dating from 1900-1910, located in the Gilmer County Historic Landmark Commission files show a variety of these buildings located on the farm. Farming was done on a small scale to provide food for those living on the farm. Overseers entered into contracts with the county commission to manage the Poor Farm and provide for the needs of the residents.

The organization and implementation of the "poor farm" was not a new concept. In medieval Europe, the feudal system was the basis of economic security. In Europe during the Middle Ages, local merchants and craftsmen organized guilds to help fellow members during hard economic times. In England during the 16th century, these guilds became known as "friendly societies". The English Poor Law of 1601 was the first systematic codification of English ideas about the responsibility of the state to provide for the welfare of its citizens. When the colonists arrived in the New World, they brought these ideas and customs with them. Local taxation supported the destitute, and local courts determined those who were and who were not in need.

Throughout many rural states in America, local county government agencies made economic provisions to assist those who could not take care of themselves. These were mostly young children or the old and sick who were abandoned and had no place to go. Many communities also found that providing a place-"poor farm", for those considered "undesirable" to go to, would keep them out of the town. This is one of the reasons why many poor farms were located a distance from the town or community center.

The Gilmer County Poor Farm was developed and adopted for many of these same reasons. As the population of the county increased, so did the need of many of its citizens. By the 1907 with the population at the farm on the rise and sanitary facilities limited; a new building on the farm property was proposed. On June 20, 1907, the County Court of Gilmer County, contracted with local architect Albert-Newton West for the sum of \$6,000 to design and build an infirmary at the poor farm site. The construction of the building was to be completed by February 4th of the following year. The money to pay for the construction of the building

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEETGilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary  
Name of PropertyGilmer County, WV  
County/State

Section number 8

Page 2

---

came from a special levy passed by the county in 1907 called the Poor Farm Levy. The building would contain sleeping chambers, living room, parlor, kitchen, dining room, laundry, bathrooms, rooms for health services and office space. All modern conveniences were installed including hot and cold running water, electricity and gas heat. The building would house the children and the sick. It would also house the county appointed caretaker of the farm and his family.

Albert Newton West (1880-1961), architect of the Poor Farm Infirmary, was known throughout the area when approached to design and build the Poor Farm Infirmary. As architect, civil engineer and design draftsman, he had already designed and built the John E. Arbuckle House, a private residence, designed in the Queen Anne style (listed on the National Register 11/21/1991). Albert Newton West built many elaborate private homes throughout Glenville, and built many utilitarian designed and styled public buildings in the area as well, including; the Rosedale, Normantown and Cedarville local public high schools, Court Theater in Glenville and the Gilmer County jail. It is similar in size to many of West's residential homes, but not as ornate. The poor farm infirmary is designed for specific activities, such as sleeping quarters for the sick and young, cooking and food preparation, clinic space to provide medical attention and work space for other varied activities. William Dolivar Whiting, the builder of the infirmary, was partner to Albert Newton West. He was a well known, respected tradesman throughout the area.

For 90 years the county provided social services in the form of the poor farm. But in 1935, the Federal Government's Social Security Act was invoked. This program, one of many implemented under the direction of President Roosevelt's New Deal and social reform programs helped to provide moneys and programs to help alleviate the burden of the local governing boards in providing these services. This in turn made the need for the "Poor Farm" obsolete.

In 1941, the county began to consider other alternative uses for the poor farm infirmary. On March 13, 1941, the Gilmer County 4-H, Gilmer County Farm Bureau, the American Legion, Glenville Woman's Club, local churches, schools and businessmen signed an agreement with the Gilmer County Court to use the land and building formerly known as the poor farm as a county recreation center. The infirmary and 114 acres of the original 300 acres of land became the new Gilmer County Recreation Center. A golf club house and golf green were built in 1942 and acquired the majority of the acreage. In 1951, the Gilmer County Recreation Executive Council was formed to develop the center. Officials were elected that same year, and one of the first orders of business was to repair, remodel and update the old infirmary building. Today the building and immediate grounds are used as a day care center, the building houses a head-start program, and is used as meeting space for local social and civic organizations.

**Summary:**

The Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary is not only a building designed and built by a prominent local architect, but stands as a reminder of the important social programs provided throughout the county's history. From housing the sick and indigent to housing a day care center, the primary purpose to provide services to the citizens of the county has continued. The building continues to be a vital part of the communities' history in providing a place to conduct and participate in varied social services.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary  
Name of Property

Gilmer County, WV  
County/State

Section number 9

Page 2

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**Bibliography**

Gilmer County Courthouse Records

- \* Deed Book 1, page 19-20 transfer of land from Hays to County (August 1845)
- \* Bond between County and Architect to build (April 20, 1907)
- \* County contract for building specifications
- \* County contract with Glenville Natural Gas Co. to lay gas line
- \* County contract with B.F. Bell to drill water well
- \* County contract with W.D. Whiting for grading around building
- \* County contract with J.W. West & Sons for exterior painting (July 1912)
- \* County contract with R.L. McGee for repairs (June 1923)
- \* County contract with B.C. Rader for painting (1954)

Gilmer County Recreation Center, pamphlet, circa 1941

Jones, Anna L. and Mason, Everett- Extension Agent, A History of the Gilmer County Recreation Center.  
January 10, 1980.

United States Social Security Reform Act of 1935

Social Security Online. 5 January 1998 <[http://199.173.224.3/SSA\\_Home.html](http://199.173.224.3/SSA_Home.html)>.

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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary  
Name of Property

Gilmer County, WV  
County/State

Section number      10                      Page 1

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at a point on the intersection of the western side of County Route 12/7 and the northern side of County Route 35/15; thence with western side of CR 12/7, north and west with the meandering of said road (a.k.a. Recreation Center Road) 0.2 miles to a point at the end of 12/7; thence continuing with the Recreation Center Road 0.1 miles to a point east of Shawnee Hall; thence south and parallel with the front of Shawnee Hall to a point in a line of the lot herein described, said point being the beginning point; thence in a eastern direction 35' to a point; thence in a Southern direction 65' to a point; thence in a Western direction 105' to a point; thence in a Northern direction 65' to a point; thence in an Eastern direction 70' to the beginning, containing 6,875 square feet more or less and encompassing the old Poor Farm Infirmary and the current fenced area.

**Boundary Justification**

This parcel of the former Gilmer County Poor Farm includes the Infirmary building, the only existing building historically associated with the property.

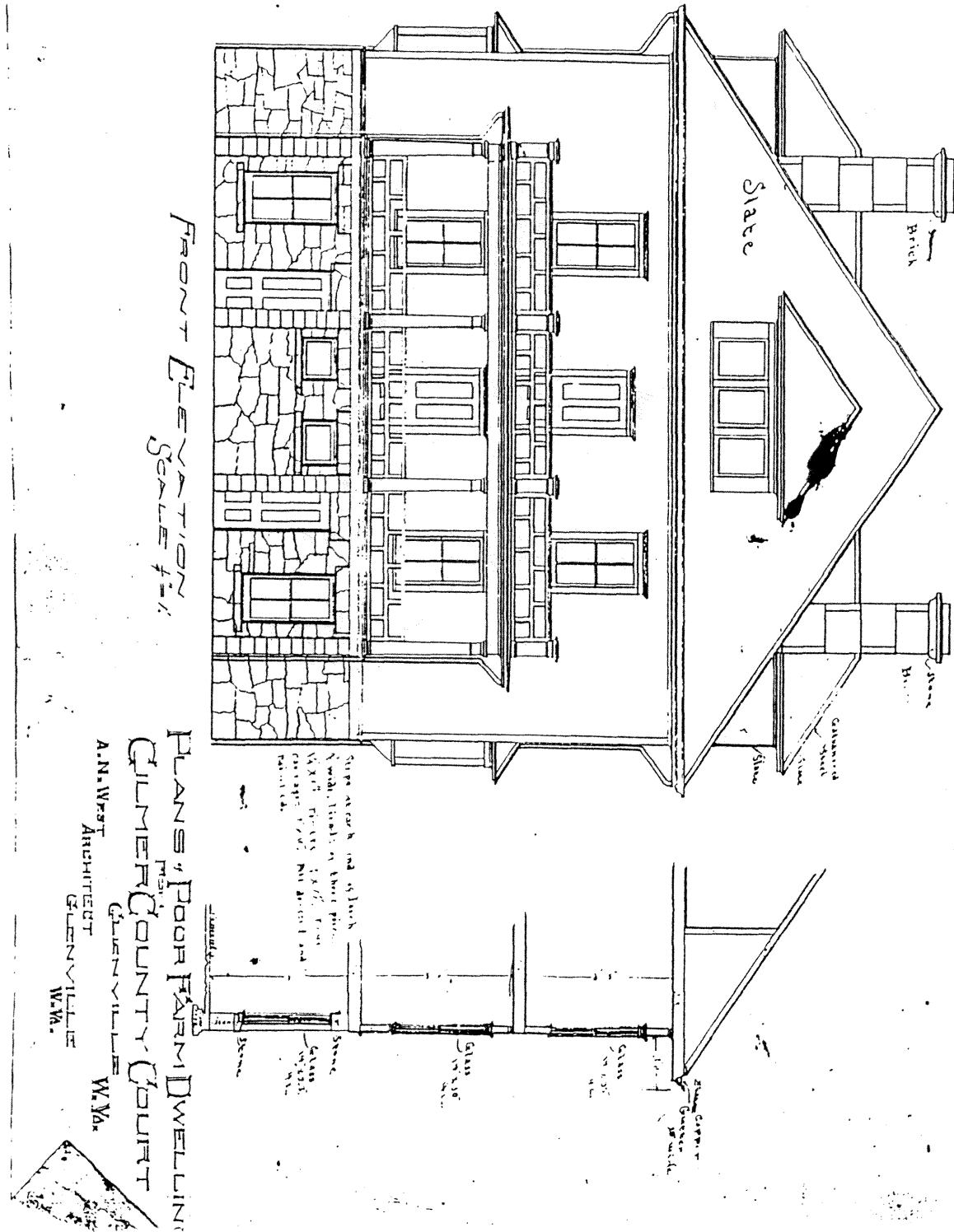
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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Sketch Map Page 1

GILMER COUNTY POOR FARM INFIRMARY  
GILMER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

copy of original architects blue prints  
originals at county courthouse



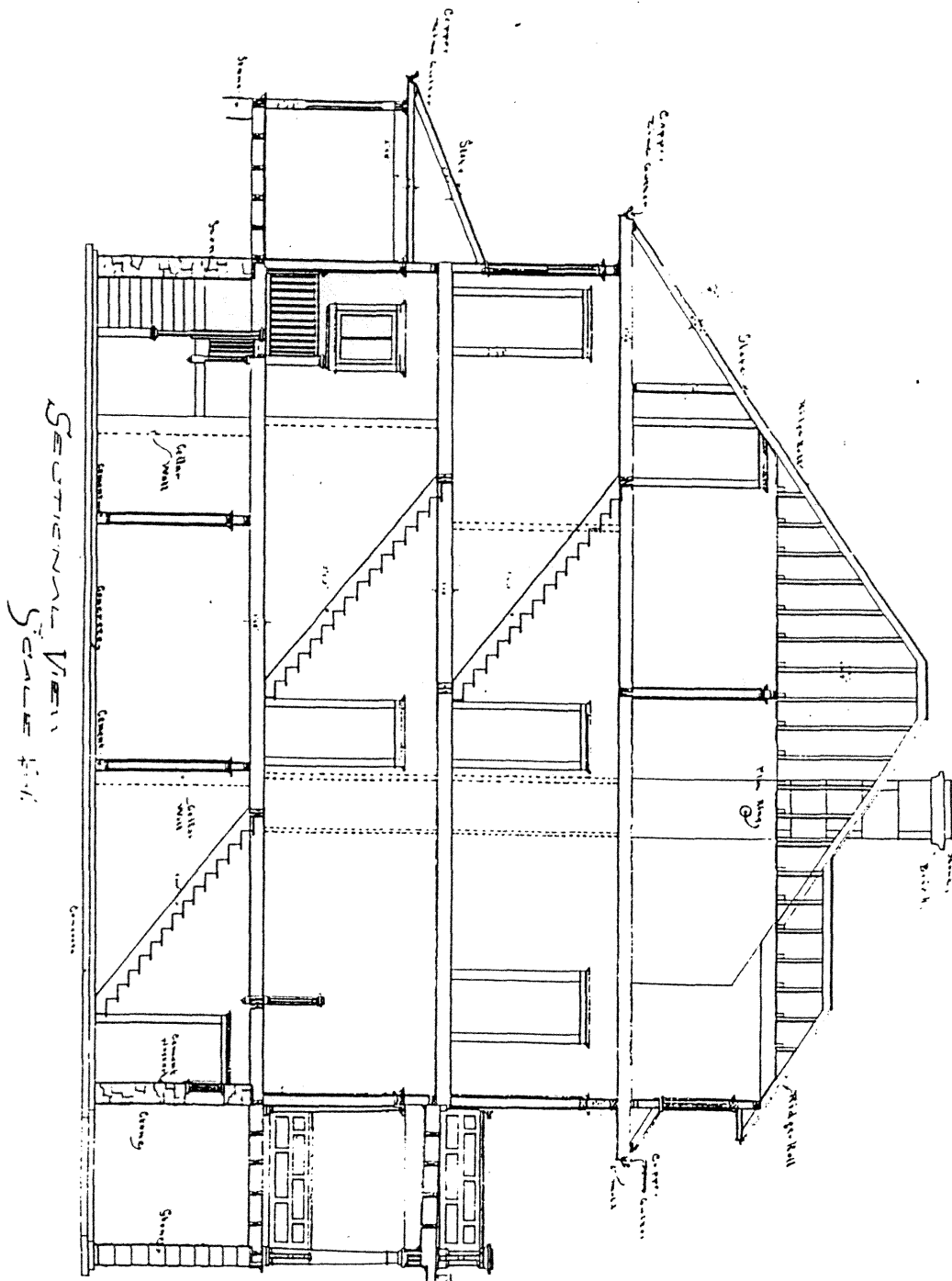
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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

GILMER COUNTY POOR FARM INFIRMARY  
GILMER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

Section number Sketch Map Page 2

copy of original architects blue prints  
originals at county courthouse



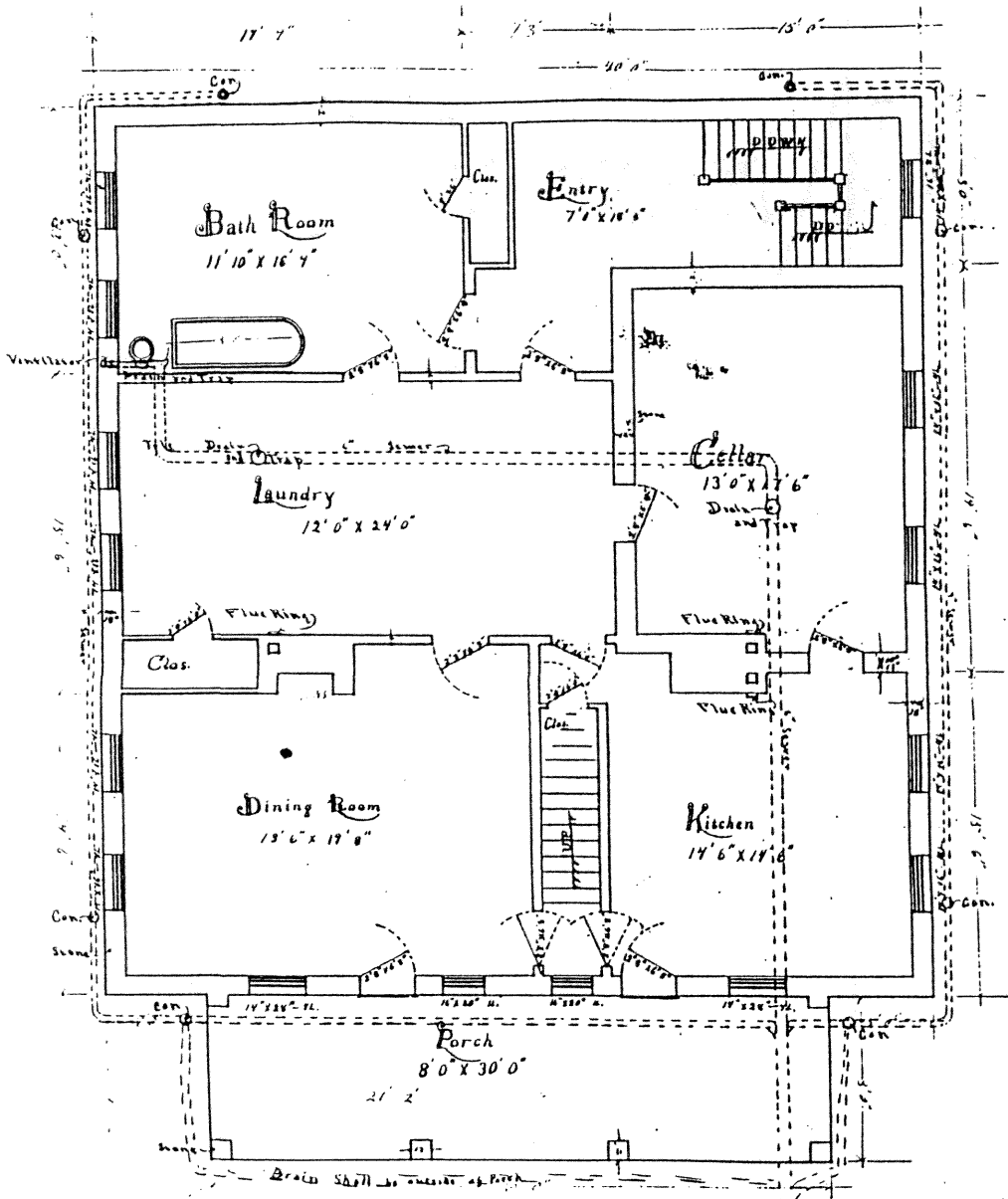
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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Sketch Map \_\_\_\_\_ Page 3

GILMER COUNTY POOR FARM INFIRMARY  
GILMER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

copy of original architects blue prints  
originals at county courthouse



Basement Plan  
Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"

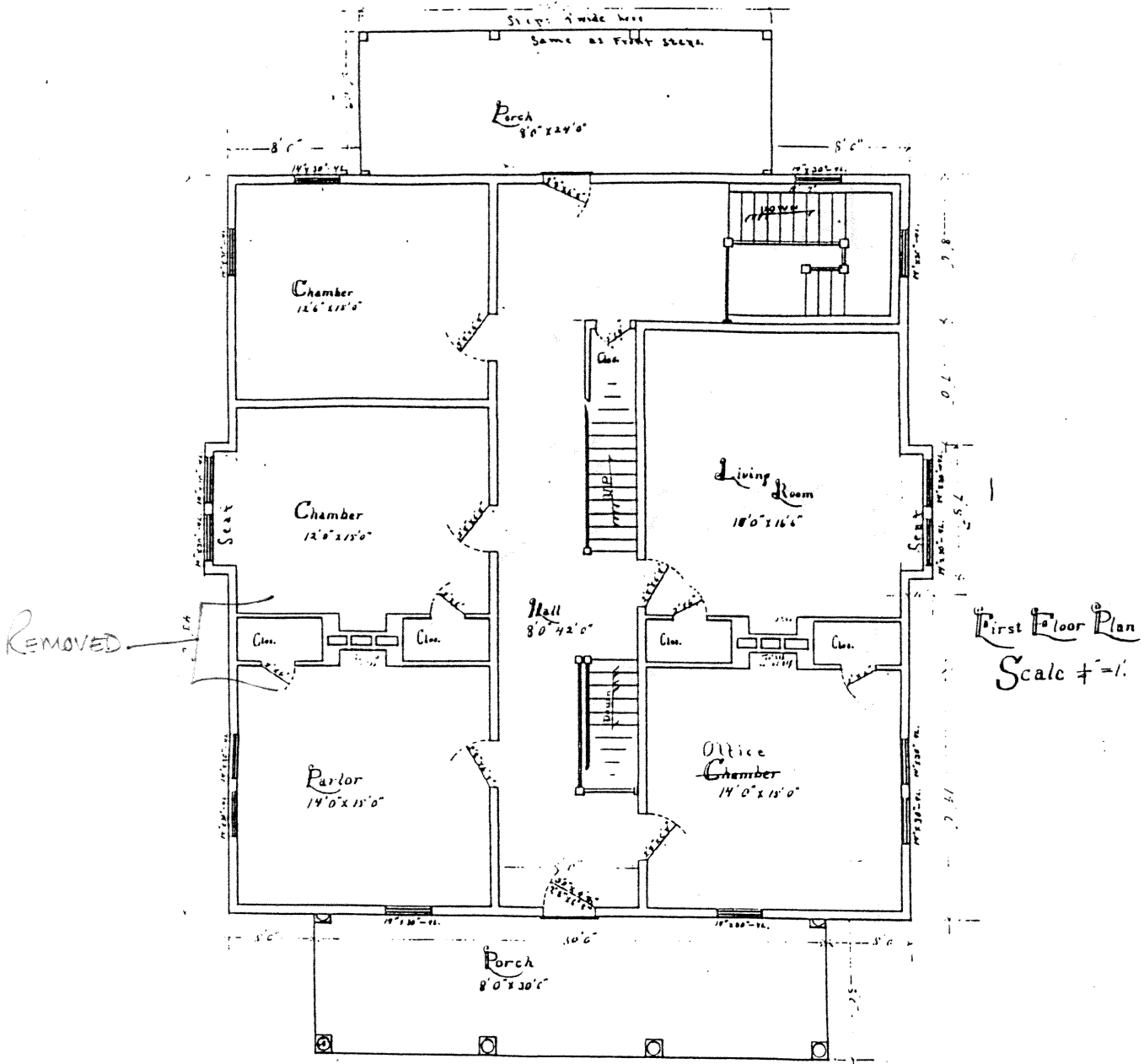
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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

GILMER COUNTY POOR FARM INFIRMARY  
GILMER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

Section number Sketch Map Page 4

copy of original architects blue prints  
originals at county courthouse





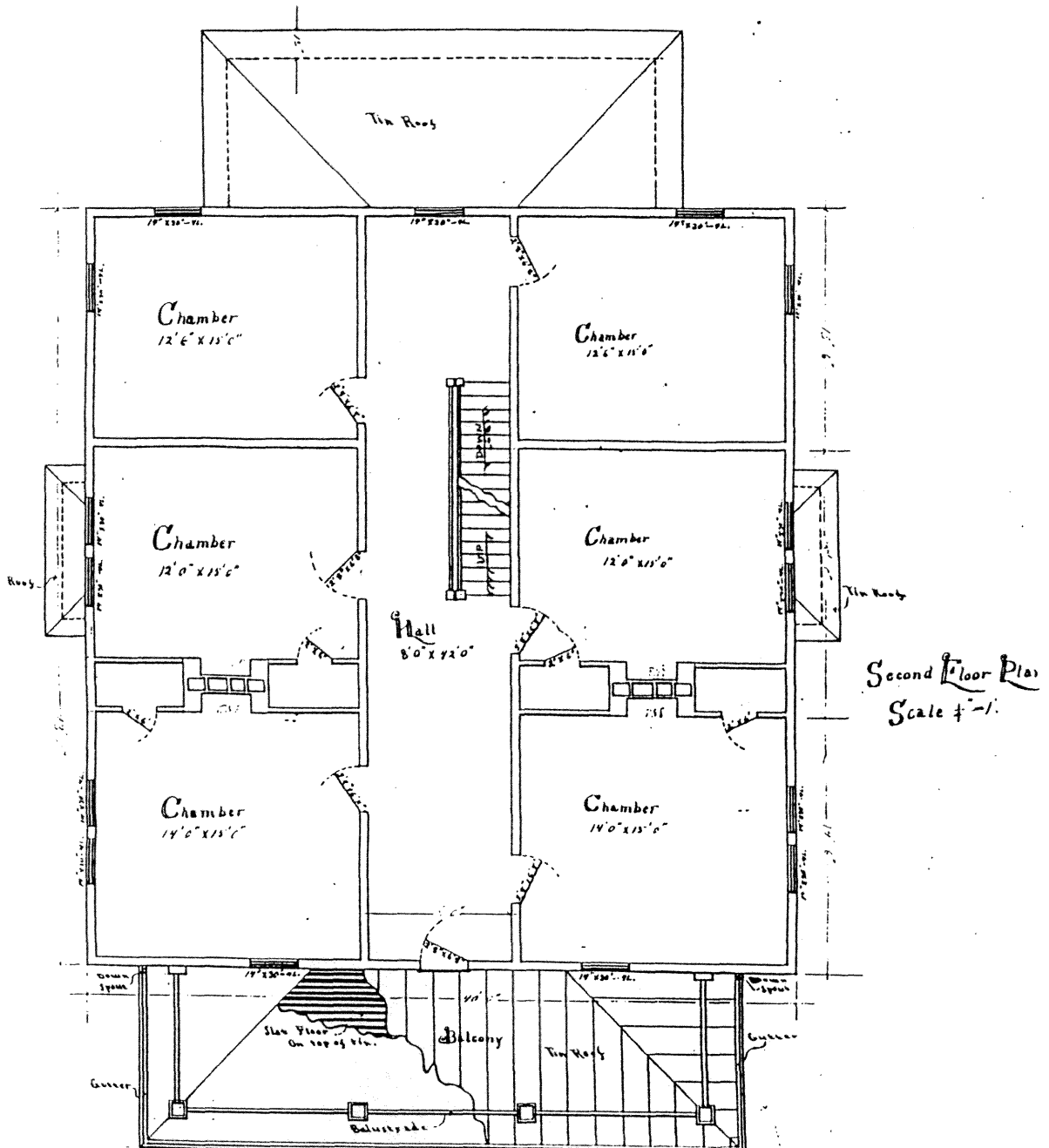
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

GILMER COUNTY POOR FARM INFIRMARY  
GILMER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

Section number Sketch Map Page 5

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originals at county courthouse



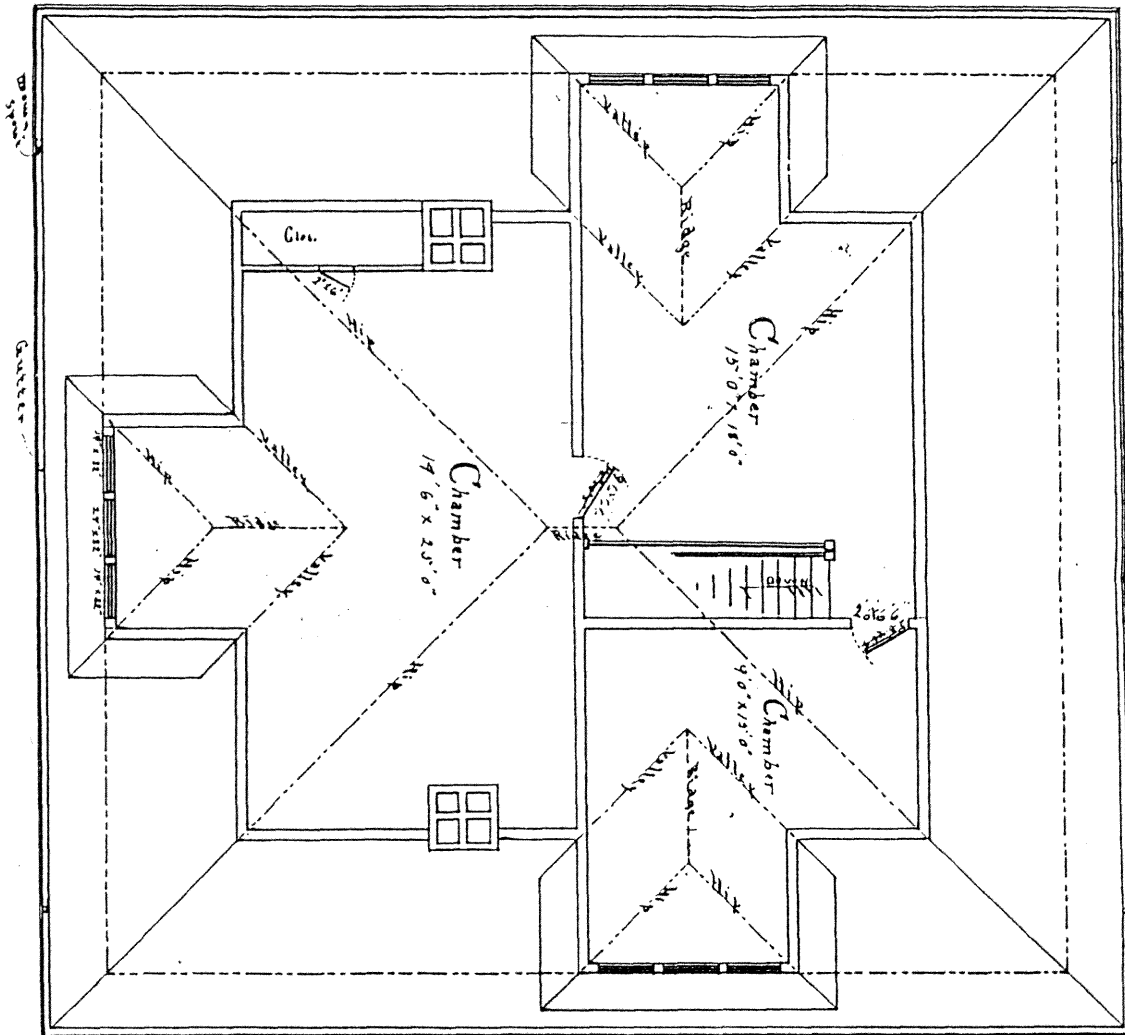
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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

GILMER COUNTY POOR FARM INFIRMARY  
GILMER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

Section number          Sketch Map Page     6    

copy of original architects blue prints  
originals at county courthouse



Attic Floor Plan  
Scale 1/4" = 1'

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Sketch Map Page 7

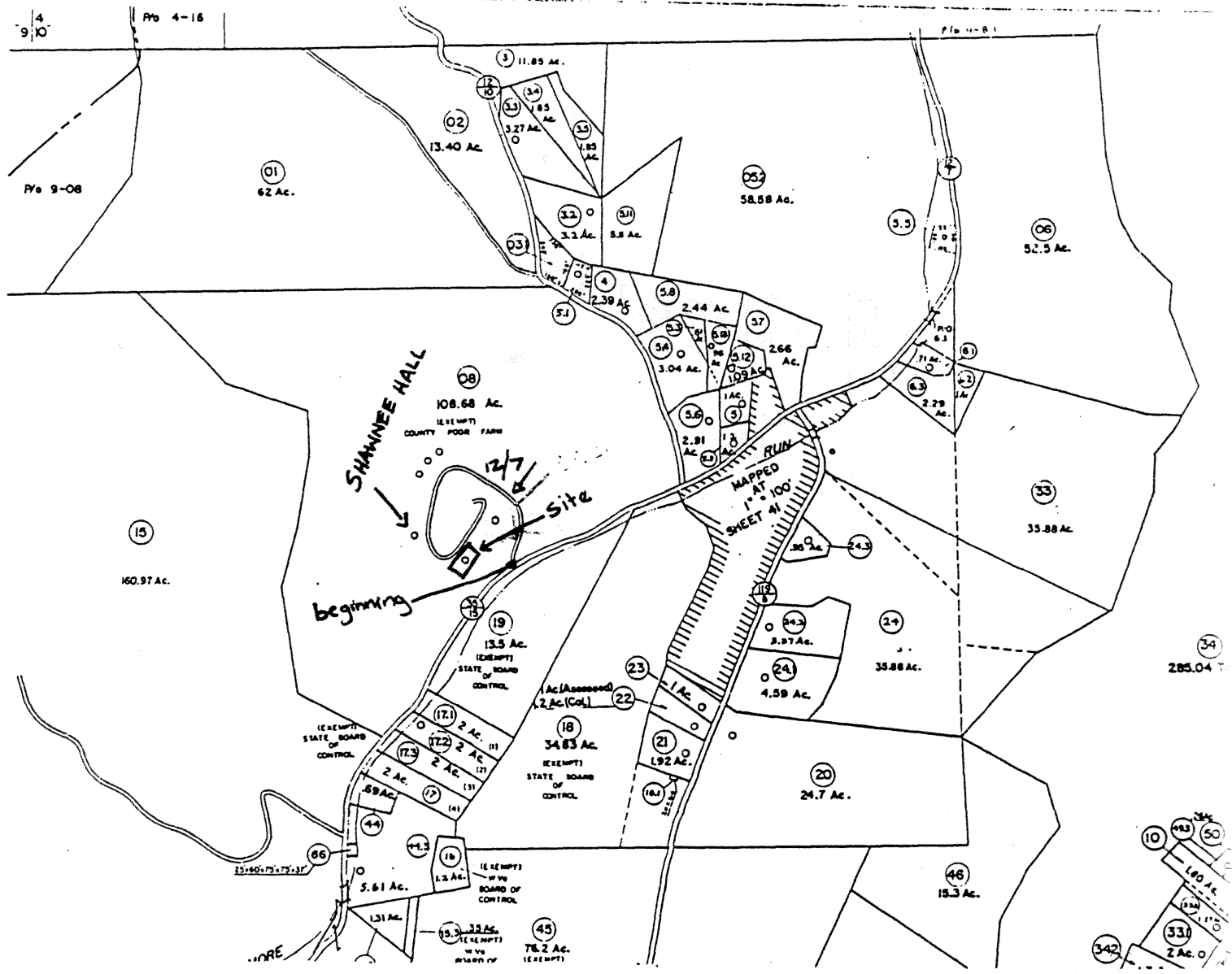
Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary  
name of property  
Gilmer, West Virginia  
county and State

TAX MAP 10, Glenville District, Gilmer County

"Infirmary marked SITE"

NORTH  
↑

Map 10 Glen Dis



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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary  
Name of Property

Gilmer County, WV  
County/State

Section number      PHOTO      Page 1

---

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Name:      Gilmer County Poor Farm Infirmary

Address:      Sycamore Road  
                    Glennville, West Virginia  
                    Gilmer County

Photographer: Kim A. Valente

Date: January 1998

Negatives: Camera In Architecture, 226A Bradford St., Charleston, WV 25301

Photo 1 of 5: West or Front facade (originally rear facade)  
                    Camera looking east

Photo 2 of 5: North Side facade,  
                    Camera looking south

Photo 3 of 5: South Side facade,  
                    Camera looking north

Photo 4 of 5: Interior, chamber and parlor

Photo 5 of 5: Interior, rear stairwell

GILMER COUNTY POOR FARM INFIRMARY  
Recreation Center Road  
Glenville Vicinity, Gilmer County

SKETCH MAP / PHOTO VIEWS

