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NAT REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1369

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 Skullbone Store

other names/site number Dowland Store; Cobb's Store; Sauls Store; Headden's Grocery; Hampton Store

2. Location

street & number #1 Shade's Bridge Road

NA not for publication

city or town Skullbone

NA vicinity

state Tennessee code TN county Gibson code 053 zip code NA

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. Hays
Signature of certifying official/Title

10/5/99
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:)

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

11/18/99
Date of Action

Skullbone Store
Name of Property

Gibson County, Tennessee
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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
	3	structures
		objects
1	4	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(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)

COMMERCE/TRADE: general store

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: general store

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: two part commercial building

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls CONCRETE

roof Built-up

other BRICK

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 N/A

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

Property is:

- 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.

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1948 - 1949

Significant Dates

1948

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Treatschel, E. D.

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: _____

Skullbone Store
Name of Property

Gibson County, Tennessee
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1 acre Bradford 436 SE

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 341410 3994500
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____

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 Glenn Gallien/ Historic Preservation Planner
organization Northwest Tennessee Development District date July 14, 1999
street & number 124 Weldon Drive telephone 901.587.4213
city or town Martin state TN zip code 38237

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 Jesse Landon and Ruby Hampton
street & number 387 Trezevant Highway telephone 901.742.3230
city or town Bradford state TN zip code 38316

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.

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Skullbone Store
Gibson County, TN

DESCRIPTION

The Skullbone Store is located at the intersection of Shade's Bridge Road (Old Dresden-Jackson Road) and Highway 105 in the village of Skullbone, Gibson County, Tennessee. The two-story concrete block building, constructed in 1948, is a simple rectangular structure containing a general store in the lower level and a single family residence in the upper level. The exterior of the Skullbone Store is painted white and has unique artistic drawings and text on three elevations that depict a part of history in this region of Tennessee. Though the murals have been repainted throughout the years, they have retained their integrity because the owners have generally duplicated the original appearance (with the exception of the store operators' names). The roof is flat and is sheathed in rubber sheeting, which replaced the tar roof in 1997. The parapet roofline is decorated by a series of crenellations encompassing the perimeter of the building. A black metal seam was applied to the parapet to help prevent leaking into the building's interior in 1997. The original full-width, one story porch is supported by wood posts and ornamental black metal supports which were added approximately 20 years ago. A series of historic photographs reveal that the store has retained all of its architectural integrity.

The primary, east facade, is the main entrance to the store. The entrance is a metal frame door with a single pane glass that replaced the original wood panel entry and screen door in 1992. Two large single bay windows set in wood trim with concrete sills flank the entrance. Brick was used in the area surrounding these windows, however, the remainder of the store is constructed of concrete blocks. Below these windows are two granite cornerstones which identify the original owner and architect/builder - "Built in 1948 by C.R. Dowland" and "Architect was E.D. Treatschel." A full-width, one story porch with a flat roof extends across the primary facade and has a poured concrete floor. The porch ceiling is constructed of tongue and groove wood panels and roofed by sheet metal. The original support cables that extend from the top corners of the porch roof to the upper level of the building are still intact. Two wood posts and two iron rod supports were added beneath the porch approximately twenty years ago. Multi-color light bulbs line the lower edge of the porch ceiling. The upper elevation of the building has two small rectangular hopper windows with metal sashes that pull open towards the interior. Just above the porch roof is an inlaid stone that identifies this site as the original post office location, stating "U. S. Post Office SKULLBONE 1898 First Postmaster E. E. Dowland." The perimeter of the roof is highlighted with a black metal seam and the edges of the building are painted black.

The most notable feature on the facade and side elevations is the painted advertising and text. Painted just above the two storefront windows on the lower level is "102 DAVY CROCKETT AVE. NORTH" and "LANDON & RUBY HAMPTON - OWNERS SINCE 1964." The porch frieze proudly states that this is the "Capital City of SKULLBONE, Kingdom of Skullbonia." In the center of the upper level, the historic postmasters are noted as "POSTMASTERS E. E. DOWLAND 1898, LONZO CRIDER, WILL MCCALED." Metal advertising signs expanding the full width of the primary facade were added in 1964 and identify "HAMPTON'S GROCERY" and "SKULLBONE, TENN." The advertising signs also include antique Coca-Cola signs. At the very top of the store is painted "CITY HALL" and "MAYORS OFFICE

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Skullbone Store
Gibson County, TN

UPSTAIRS.” Two metal light poles extend from the building, approximately two feet beneath the roof, and reflect down on the artwork. There are two benches on the front porch. An island for gasoline pumps stands in front of the store. The pumps have recently been removed and the island is noncontributing.

The south elevation has two windows on the lower level and three windows on the upper level. The two metal storm windows on the lower level are located near the rear elevation and replaced the original windows in 1996. A third window was originally located in the center of the lower level, but was filled with concrete blocks in 1965. The three windows on the upper level are the original square four-paned metal sash windows and have concrete sills. An air conditioner has been put in the center window. The roofline has three sets of crenellations on this elevation. As on the facade, the most prominent features on the south elevation are the murals. In very large letters in the center of the building is “THIS IS SKULLBONE, TENN. U. S. A.” A map that depicts nearly all of West Tennessee and highlights Skullbone, Tennessee and the “Kingdom of Skullbonia” covers the entire front half of the lower level. Just above the map is a mural of two boxers and the text “UNDEFEATED CHAMPIONS OF BAREKNUCKLE FIST AND SKULLBONE FIGHTING: HENCE THE NAME SKULLBONE.” The south-facing frieze of the front porch identifies the store as “HAMPTON’S.” Five light poles (as described for the primary façade) line the upper level illuminating the artwork. In the grass strip along this elevation is a tall metal Texaco sign with a concrete pad that serves as the base. A Gulf sign originally stood in the same location, but was replaced with the Texaco sign when the current owners bought the store in 1964. Also in this grass strip is a small brick monument that was erected by the citizens of Skullbone in memory of Gary Ray Cates, a local soldier who was killed in the Vietnam War. An American flag flies on a tall metal pole next to the memorial.

The rear, west elevation, has two windows on the lower level, one is a one-over-one double-hung sash and the other is a four-over-four double-hung sash. The upper level has one two-over-two double-hung sash. All three windows are original. Two light poles extend from the upper level. A hand-painted 7-Up sign had been painted on a large section of this elevation historically. The owners changed the advertisement to Coca-Cola in 1964. They are currently waiting for the artist to complete this elevation with another Coca-Cola sign.

The north elevation contains the rear (side) entrance to the store, which is only used by the owners and the upstairs residents. The four panel wood door has four small transom lights along the top and replaced the original door in 1990. A metal storm window is situated closer to the front of the store on the lower level and replaced the original window in 1996. There are three windows on the upper level. The two windows towards the rear elevation are the original four paned sashes. The upper level window towards the front of the store is a one-over-one double-hung metal sash installed in 1996. As on the south elevation, there is a replica of the boxer mural with the phrase “UNDEFEATED CHAMPIONS OF BAREKNUCKLE FIST AND SKULLBONE FIGHTING: HENCE THE NAME SKULLBONE.” Just below the mural is “The HAMPTON STORE: SKULLBONE, TENN.” The north-facing frieze of the porch identifies the store’s location as “SKULLBONE.” Five light poles (as described for the primary façade) line the upper level illuminating the artwork. The roofline has three sets of crenellations on this elevation. A sidewalk extends from the rear door and leads to the feed house and onto the location where a house once stood.

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Skullbone Store
Gibson County, TN

The lower level interior rectangular floor plan consists of a large room used as the store, a storeroom, restroom and a large hallway with a staircase in the rear. The main room, which is approximately 2/3 the area of the lower level, serves as the general store. The floor is poured concrete and the room is a completely open space. The wood-board merchandise shelving lines the length of the walls and is original to the store. There are two islands of freestanding shelves in the center of the room that have been in place since 1964. The northwest corner of this room is lined with chairs for visitors. At the rear of the main room is the kitchen, which was originally a separate room, and only served the private residence. The current owners removed the partition in 1964 to increase the store capacity. The interior wall surfaces are concrete block and the room partitions are fabricated from Sheetrock. The ceiling surface has large impenetrable asbestos sheeting used for fireproofing. The gas furnace in the rear of the store replaced the wood and coal burning stove in 1965. A wide hallway, that is accessible by a door in the main store section and through the kitchen area, leads to the rear of the building. The separated room behind the kitchen serves as a storeroom and has a restroom. At one time, this room was used as a bedroom, while the upstairs bedroom was rented. A wide set of stairs lead up the rear of the building with the rear entrance door at the base of the stairs. With the exception of the kitchen partition removal, the lower level interior has retained its integrity.

The upper level interior consists of a large living area toward the front of the store and three smaller rooms towards the rear. The large room in the front that once was used for social gatherings, now solely serves as a residential unit. A large hall leads towards the front of the building and has three rooms on the left before entering the main living area. The original hardwood floors have been carpeted throughout the entire upper level. The interior walls and ceiling are Sheetrock and paneling material. The first three rooms (restroom, bedroom, and kitchen) are all original in size and function. The main living area is accessible from a hall door and through the kitchen. The main room consists of the living room with a large walk-in closet and two side-by-side bedrooms. The two bedrooms were partitioned in 1964 to accommodate an additional person.

There is one outbuilding associated with the Skullbone Store. A frame feed house built in 1952 and located off of the northwest corner of the store is used for the storage of feed, small implements and tools. The feed house is two automobile bay-widths and has a concrete block foundation, wood frame, and metal sheeting walls and roof. A small ornamental windmill stands on the south side of the feed house and an antique John Deere farm implement sign is attached to the exterior on this same elevation. The feed house retains its integrity of structure and function, but is noncontributing due to its age. The Texaco sign and monument are noncontributing structures on the site. They do not detract from the overall setting and integrity of the store.

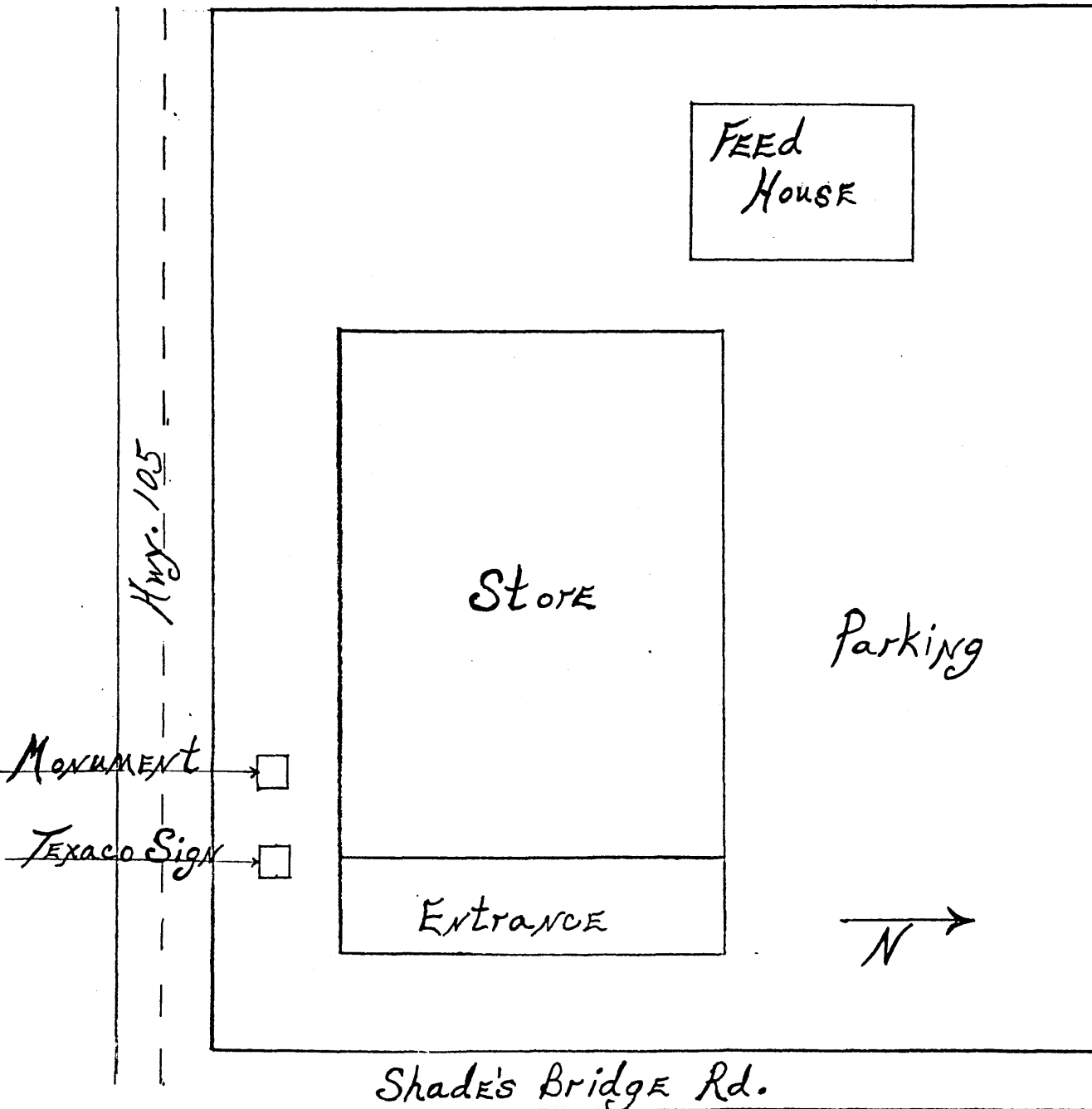
A house was located on the current Skullbone Store property, but was moved just to the northwest and connected by a concrete sidewalk. The house served as a residence (in addition to the upper level of the store) until it burned to the ground in 1969. A large gravel parking lot is located off of the north elevation of the store and there are a couple of large trees that provide shade in the summer. The lawn along the south and west elevations are nicely maintained and the north elevation is decorated by a variety of plants. Since it is located on one of the highest elevations in Skullbone and set just a few yards off of Highway 105, the building is very prominent in this rural setting.

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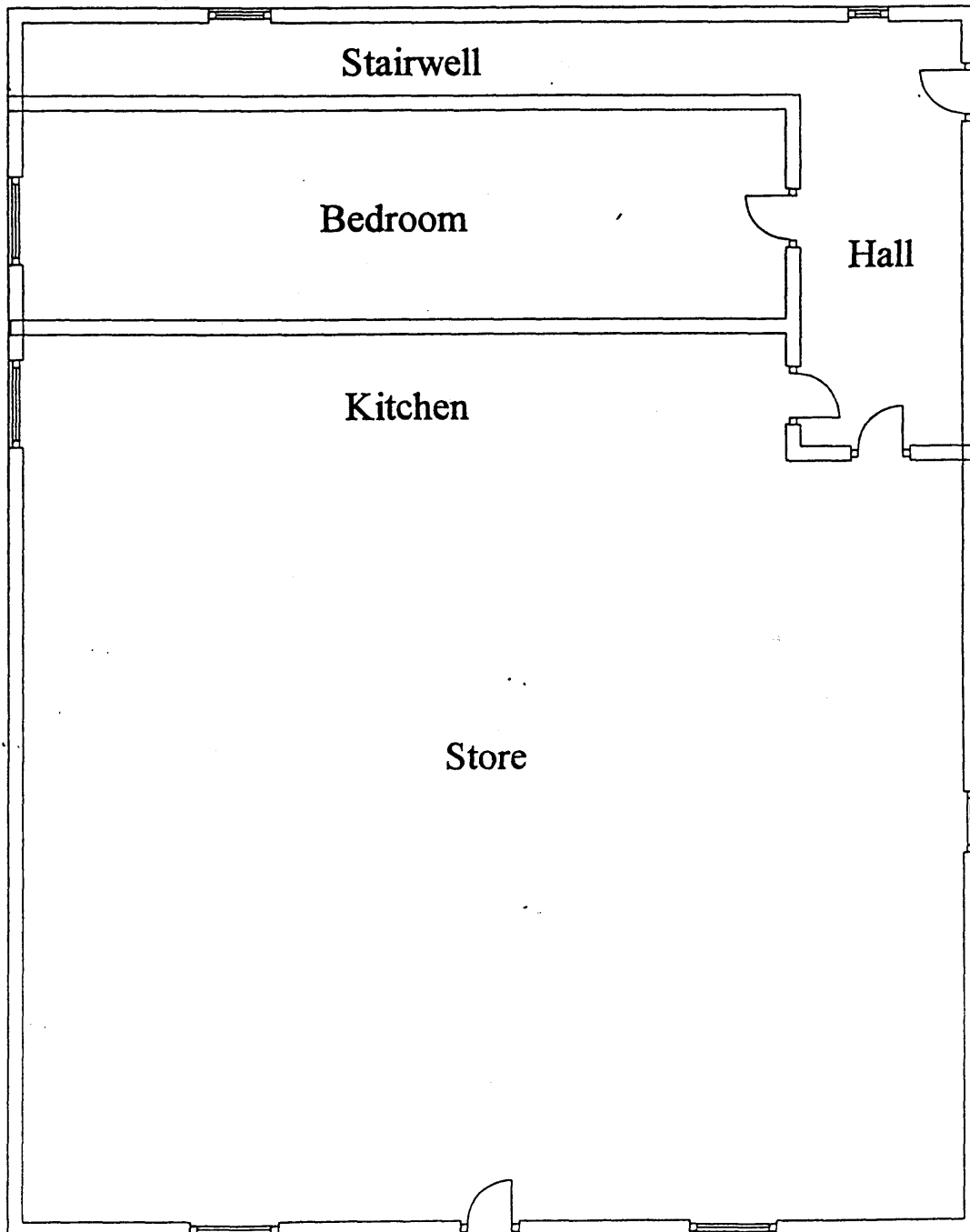
SITE PLAN

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Skullbone Store
Gibson County, TN



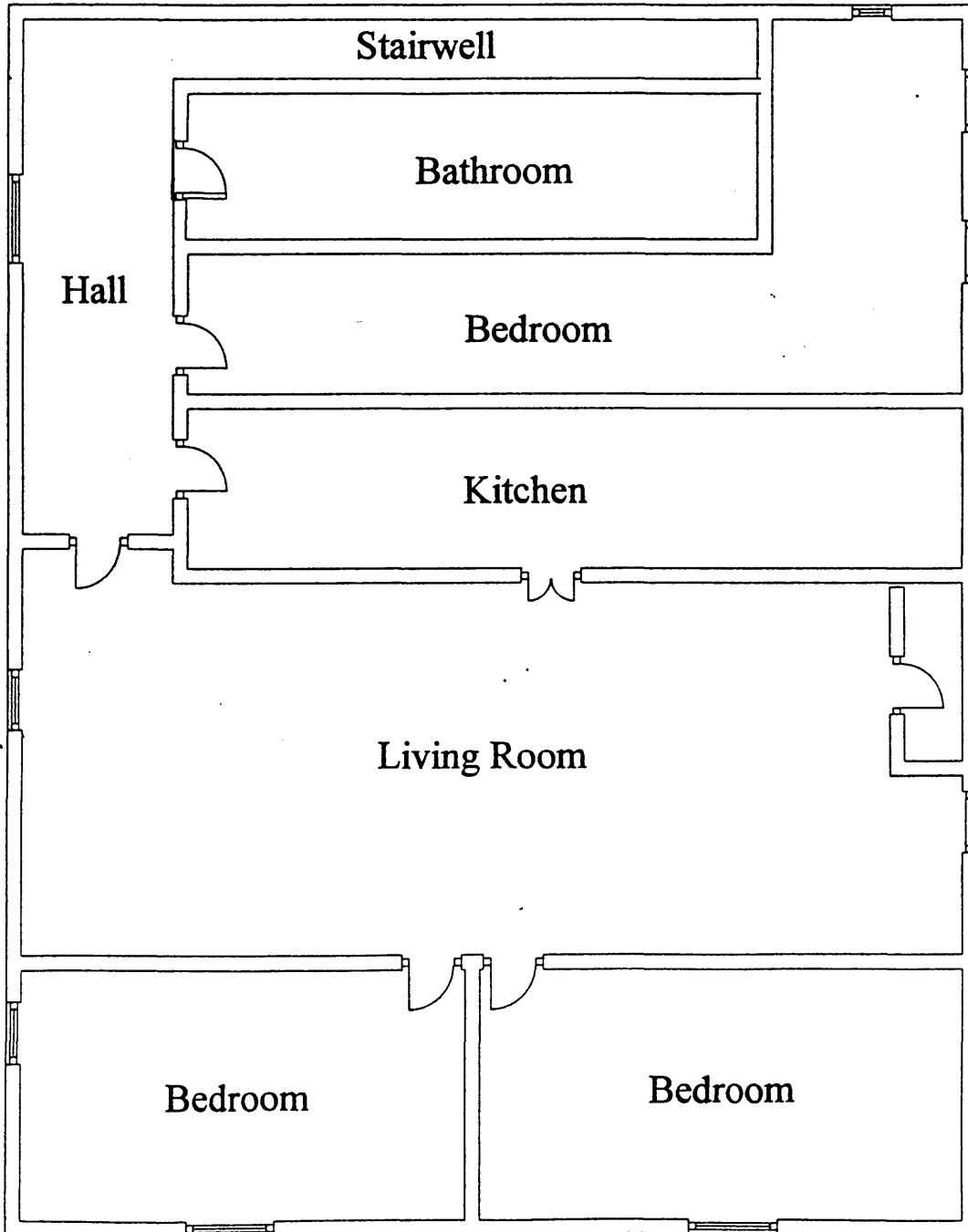
LOWER LEVEL

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Skullbone Store
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UPPER LEVEL

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Skullbone Store
Gibson County, TN

SIGNIFICANCE

The Skullbone Store is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A due to its local significance in commerce and social history. In 1948, C. Reid Dowland perceived a need for the essential services of a general store, including gasoline, for this rural agricultural area and established the Skullbone Store. Throughout the rural community of Skullbone and the local region of northern Gibson County, portions of southern Weakley, and western Carroll counties historically known as "Skullbonia," the store became a local landmark and gathering spot. Constructed at a prominent place at the crossroads, the Skullbone Store not only attracted locals, but also automobile travelers driving in this region. The store has continued to be a center for commerce and social interaction for area residents and visitors since it was built.

The Skullbone Store, located in the village of Skullbone, Gibson County, Tennessee, was designed and built by an area Dutchman, E.D. Treatschel in 1948. The store is located at the intersection of Shade's Bridge Road (Old Dresden-Jackson Road) and Highway 105 (Huntingdon-Yorkville Road). The store was built for C. Reid Dowland and first operated by his cousin, Bud Dowland.

C. (Clipper) Reid Dowland (October 28, 1873 - December 22, 1964), the son of Emerson Ethridge and Addie Louise Reid Dowland, was born in Skullbone, Gibson County, Tennessee. Clipper was educated in the rural schools of West Tennessee and at an early age accepted a position as postal clerk for the U. S. Post Office in Nashville, Tennessee. He retired from the Post Office in 1948 and married Gracie R. Drumright of Nashville in 1949. Although his primary residence remained in Nashville, Clipper had family and friends in Skullbone and developed a "weekend" residence in the upstairs of the store. Clipper was vice president of the Gibson County Historical Society, held a lifetime membership in the Tennessee Historical Society and published many articles in the weekly newspapers of West Tennessee. Clipper also owned and operated a handful of hotels in Nashville and one in nearby Greenfield, Weakley County, Tennessee. All of these experiences contributed to his recognizing the significance of symbols such as the general store to a rural community. In addition to building the Skullbone Store, he built a wrought iron gate and chain link fence around the cemetery (where he is buried) in Skullbone near Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. He was responsible for adding tourism advertising to each of the other Skullbone stores in the early 1950s and made significant monetary contributions to the church and community.

LOCAL HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The rural farming village of Skullbone is situated in northeastern Gibson County, Tennessee. Gibson County was established on October 21, 1823, however the area had already begun to be settled by Europeans around 1800. The physical terrain of this area is comprised of relatively level, alluvial soil. Gibson County is dissected by two forks of the Obion River, and Skullbone's settlement was due to its proximity to the South Fork of the Obion River and the area's fertile soil, which was ideal for agriculture. The village of Skullbone was originally named "North Gibson", as it was a central hub for all of the territory north of the Rutherford Fork of the Obion River in Gibson County and parts of southern Weakley County. Skullbone quickly became

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Skullbone Store
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a river port in 1828 after a bridge was built across the South Fork of the Obion River at Shade's Bridge (about 1-½ miles north of the Skullbone Store). From that time until the turn of this century, Skullbone remained the hub of the region. In addition to the bridge, the commercial success of the village was enhanced by its location at the stagecoach crossroads of the "Huntingdon-Yorkville Road" and the "Old Dresden-Jackson Road." The "Old Dresden-Jackson Road" became a heavily traveled dirt road for those going north and south through this section of the state. It served as a main artery to Shiloh for the Union troops during the Civil War. At any given time during the last three quarters of the nineteenth century, there were saloons, stores, sawmills, stave mills, cotton gins, barber shops, wood shops, blacksmith shops, water mills, tanneries, and whiskey distilleries within a three mile radius of the present Skullbone Store.

When the Illinois Central Railroad came to the nearby town of Bradford in 1873, Bradford succeeded as the local shipping and commercial hub in the territory. Nonetheless, Emerson Ethridge Dowland led an effort to establish a post office in Skullbone (North Gibson) in 1898 and tried to name it after his son "Clipper" (C. Reid Dowland who built the Skullbone Store). However, a town named Clipper, Tennessee already existed. Emerson Dowland ultimately decided to name the village Skullbone, owing to the fist and "skullbone" bare-knuckle fighting famous to the territory and town. With the establishment of the Skullbone Post Office on April 26, 1898, North Gibson officially became known as Skullbone. The Skullbone Post Office discontinued service on December 24, 1903, however, several small commercial businesses continued to exist in the Skullbone village.

In 1920, the Obion River was dredged and was no longer navigable by commercial vessels. As a result of the depletion of commercial river traffic and with improved roads in other sections of Gibson County, a serious decline in commercial businesses prevailed. In fact, when one passes through this area today, they would have no idea that Skullbone was once a thriving river port village. By the mid-twentieth century, Skullbone was well beyond its greatest period of development. In the first half of the twentieth century, a few stores were operated between Shade's Bridge and the crossroads at Skullbone. They included E.F. Usery's Store and Eddie Cantrell's business at Shade's Bridge. Stores located at the crossroads included the Holt Store, E. F. Usery's store, later owned by Aaron Mathis, and William Cantrell's store. About half way between the crossroads and Mt. Pleasant Church (east on Highway 105), Tillman Cantrell operated a store. From 1949 until 1955, four stores operated simultaneously in Skullbone, including the Skullbone Store. The Skullbone Store was the only store in the area constructed of concrete blocks and the only one remaining. With its two stories and parapet roofline, the Skullbone Store stood out over all of the surrounding businesses.

SKULLBONE STORE

Due to his family heritage in the Skullbone area, as well as the potential to revive the cultural and commercial importance of Skullbone, Clipper Dowland decided to build a general store that would serve the community for years to come. Although there were four other general stores within a square mile of the proposed store, the Skullbone Store was unique in its materials, design, size, and feeling. The presence of the Skullbone Store was not only a sign of progress, but also a sign of stability. Since its establishment, the Skullbone Store has

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Gibson County, TN

served as much more than a local grocery store. The importance of rural general stores to their surrounding communities was illustrated in 1974 through Tennessee Senate Resolution No. 30, creating "Country Store Day in Tennessee." The resolution states, "whereas, since the earliest days, the country store has been a part of the social, economic, and political life of Tennesseans living in the rural regions of the state..." (Tate 1986, 135).

Items available at the Skullbone Store, in addition to staples such as canned goods, vegetables, meat, flour, eggs and sugar, included farming equipment, seed and feed, heating fuel, building materials, and health aids. The store had a large open room on the upper level to serve as a social gathering place. Although the old school (gone) behind the store served as the community center, Clipper wanted an additional room where locals and visitors could gather informally to share stories. This helped enhance the social and cultural functions of the Skullbone Store. Clipper was a world traveler and was known for using this upper level room to show his homemade 16mm films. This form of entertainment and exchange was not of the sort that could be found in Skullbone or any nearby communities. Whether attending a formal gathering such as celebrating the Fourth of July or simply meeting informally, there was now a place to sit outside or inside (both upstairs and downstairs) in Skullbone. The Skullbone Store served as an extension of the front porch for local families and travelers who could gather and share stories, get travel directions and gas, play dominos or checkers, or exchange recipes and sewing materials. All of these strengthened the social fabric of the community.

Although the Skullbone Store has never officially served as a post office, mail has often been delivered to the store for people in the community, addressed simply to Skullbone, Tennessee. Due to the isolation of the community, it was not uncommon to leave messages with the store owners. Such messages included announcements of gatherings for a Saturday night dance, a Sunday dinner, the sale of farming implements or a sickness in the family. These messages were relayed as customers came in the store to purchase goods and items. The overall business and frequency of local traders to the Skullbone Store has remained steady throughout its existence. Though there has never been a formal or routinely established delivery service provided from the Skullbone Store, the disabled and elderly have always felt assured that they could have any necessities delivered to their homes by the store owners. The current owner still makes house calls on the weekends. Farmers would often bring in baskets of produce as a gesture for customers to take home at no charge.

As evidenced by the homemade movies of Clipper's, the Skullbone Store was a lively spot for traveling politicians to hold speeches. Voters were more accessible at the store, rather than stopping door to door at local homes. Historic photographs of the Skullbone Store also reveal political posters in the windows of the store and on utility poles around the property. Examples found include former governors Gordon Browning and Frank Clement. One of Clipper's personal films shows a local politician campaigning on the front porch of the store and drawing a crowd of several dozen local citizens. Both cars and pick-up trucks lined the parking lot and spectators listened from the hood of their vehicles. Since voting was conducted at the Skullbone Community Center (gone) located just behind the store, election day always drew a crowd around

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Skullbone Store
Gibson County, TN

the store. Conveniences such as the "Skullbone Water Works" (a water well open to the public on the store's property - gone) and picnic benches under two shade trees were enticing for locals and visitors.

With the local roads improved in Gibson County (as well as the rest of the country) during the mid-twentieth century, the Skullbone Store was built to accommodate increasing automobile traffic. A large gravel parking lot is adjacent to the north elevation of the store. Gasoline pumps were installed with the construction of the store and a large metal Gulf sign was installed adjacent to the south elevation along Highway 105. The gasoline pumps were located just outside the front of the store and easily accessible from either of the crossroads passing through Skullbone. There was no curb or other barrier, providing a smooth, quick entrance off of each road. The pumps have recently been removed. On the south elevation, a large 7-Up sign was painted to be seen by those traveling from Bradford. A Coca-Cola sign was painted here in 1964. These advertising signs were highly visible to the motoring public traveling along the rural Highway 105. Clipper erected a wooden directional sign across Highway 105 when the store was built. The sign consists of arrows in every direction from the store to locations around the world. The current owners have maintained and erected new signs over the years. The current sign is located outside of the store's property boundaries.

SKULLBONE'S IDENTITY THROUGH THE STORE'S MURALS

Upon establishing the Skullbone Store, Clipper covered the building's exterior with murals, phrases, and a large map depicting West Tennessee. He wanted to promote Skullbone as a tourist destination while preserving the history of the local area known as "Skullbonia." Clipper proudly boasted that Skullbone was the first place in the world to successfully commercialize country music. Skullbone musicals were held at Mt. Pleasant Church. Musicians included Uncle Dave Macon and others from the Grand Ole Opry. Clipper was the Program Director and promoter of the music festivals and even captured the events on his home movies. There were at times crowds of 10,000 people or more. One year they served 600 cases of soft drinks and barbecued 185 hogs in one day. Other activities included barn dances, baptizing, picnics, and fiddlers' contests at Shades Bridge. Inside the store there are pictures and memorabilia full of the history (including the musicals) of Skullbone and "Skullbonia."

The large map on the south elevation highlights the region known as the "Kingdom of Skullbonia" and its capital, Skullbone. Skullbone's "village" included only the stores and the immediate neighborhood around the crossroads at the Skullbone Store within a radius of about one mile. The "community" extends to about a three mile radius. The mural depicts the "Kingdom of Skullbonia" as the triangular region encompassed by the Bradford-Trezevant, Trezevant-Milan, and Milan-Bradford roads. However, the fluid borders of this region have varied over the years to include most all of northern Gibson County and portions of southern Weakley and western Carroll counties. In 1953, through the efforts of Clipper, Governor Gordon Browning issued a proclamation confirming the existence of Skullbone and the Kingdom of Skullbonia. Browning stated, "Whereas, Nowadays Skullbonia is no longer hard to find, markers have been erected all over the country, and also in the village of Skullbone, itself, where the visitor sees signs such as... 'Davy Crockett Avenue' and 'this is Skullbone, Tennessee.'" He continues stating, "For the purpose of original organization I

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am pleased to name Honorable C. Reid Dowland (Clipper) as the first Regent of said territory with powers to organize in any manner thought proper so as to promote the developing culture and great activities thereof" (Pounds 1998, 184). This proclamation was a direct result of Clipper's efforts at his store and all of the other stores in Skullbone that displayed tourism and advertising signs provided by Clipper.

The village of Skullbone has never been incorporated, however, the primary store facade identifies the store as the "City Hall" and the "Mayors Office Upstairs." Clipper was given the title of honorary mayor, because of his activity on behalf of the community. This title was bestowed by Governor Gordon Browning at a political rally in Bradford, Tennessee. In May, 1984, a resolution was adopted by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ned McWherter, recognizing the community of Skullbone for its rich tradition and hometown spirit. The owners and operators of the Skullbone Store since 1964 are noted in the resolution - "Whereas, the husband and wife team of the unofficial Mayor Landon Hampton and the unofficial postmaster Ruby Hampton are two of Skullbone's most loyal supporters and their generosity and humanity is most characteristic of the people who live in the Kingdom of Skullbone"(*The Milan Mirror-Exchange*). The Hamptons have continued their contributions to promote tourism for Skullbone in many ways. In 1989, three years after having been removed from the Tennessee official highway map, the Hamptons and other Skullbone residents successfully lobbied and had their village put back on the official state map.

The murals would not be complete without the existence of boxers sparing, symbolizing the namesake of the village of Skullbone. Visitors to the Skullbone Store learn that the historic fights were for sport only. Culp states, "what distinguished the Skullbonia fights from the rest of the world, and named the sport, itself, was the fact that they were organized, with regular, reciprocal dates and places; and, that Skullbonians originated and used the technique rule which required those bare-knuckle boxers to hit on the head or skullbone, hence the name, Skullbone" (216).

CONCLUSION

The Skullbone Store has been in continual use since its construction. Operators of the store after David Dowland "Mr. Bud" (1948-55), included Woodrow Cobb (1955-56), Robert Sauls (1956-57), Roger Headden (1957-64), and the owners since 1964, Jesse Landon and Ruby Hampton. The ownership of the store only changed when Clipper sold the store to the Hamptons. Practically no physical changes were made to the store upon the succession of operators, rather, only the name changed. The Skullbone Store is the only remaining general store in Skullbone. All one would see of this once thriving community is a handful of houses, a church, cabinet shop, and the Skullbone Store. Pounds states, "If there is no map on the side of the store to tell people where they are, they might as well be anywhere" (1998, 182). Throughout the years, it has been operated seven days a week, opening at six and closing at nine. It has endured the modern conveniences of super-shopping centers located in nearby towns, as well as the increasing costs of products from regional distributors. However, the variety and amount of goods have not decreased in demand or availability. Even without the sale of alcohol, which is a primary income producer for many rural stores, the store has prevailed.

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The Skullbone Store is truly a beacon, as well as a historic landmark in the Kingdom of Skullbonia, a pugilistic kingdom. The identification and preservation of this store is essential for the vitality of this community that has lost all of its historic social and commerce centers. Locals and travelers would not have a place of such comfort and warmth to enjoy in this rural area without the Skullbone Store.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is designated as parcel 28.01 on the attached Gibson County Tax Map 52.

The tax map for this nomination has the scale of 1" = 400'. This scale tax map is prepared by the Tennessee Board of Equalization for rural areas. In the past, the Tennessee Historical Commission has used this scale map for nominations and has found that the 1" = 400' 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 all the extant historical property associated with the Skullbone Store.

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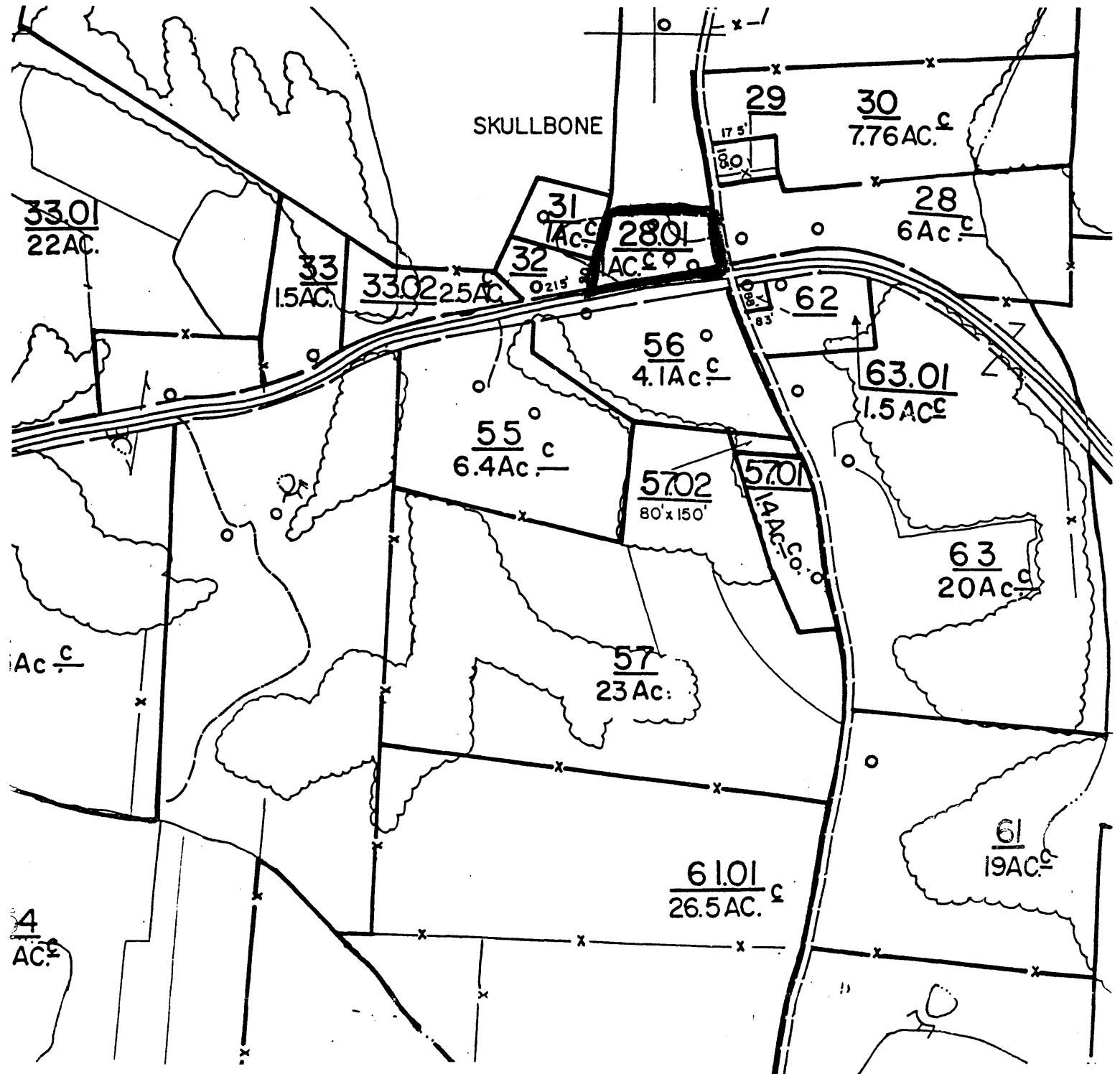
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TAX MAP

1" = 400'



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PHOTOGRAPHS

Skullbone Store
#1 Shade's Bridge Road
Gibson County, TN

Photographs by: Glenn Gallien
Northwest TN Development District
P.O. Box 963
Martin, Tennessee 38237

Date: September 1998
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission
2941 Lebanon Road
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Historic photograph, circa 1950
#1 of 20

East façade, facing west
#2 of 20

East façade, storefront detail, facing west
#3 of 20

East façade, porch detail, facing west
#4 of 20

East façade and south elevation, facing northwest
#5 of 20

South elevation, facing north
#6 of 20

South elevation, mural detail, facing north
#7 of 20

South elevation, mural detail, facing north
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Skullbone Store
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South and west elevations, facing northeast
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West elevation, facing southeast
#10 of 20

East façade, north elevation and feed house, facing southwest
#11 of 20

North elevation, facing southwest
#12 of 20

North elevation, mural detail, facing south
#13 of 20

Store interior, facing west
#14 of 20

Original shelving, facing west
#15 of 20

Store kitchen, wall decorations, facing west
#16 of 20

Upper level interior, facing west
#17 of 20

Memorial, facing north
#18 of 20

Feed house, facing northwest
#19 of 20

Wooden directional sign, facing northwest (outside boundary)
#20 of 20