

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received AUG 27 1984

date entered SEP 27 1984

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Farrar Distillery

and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number Noah Fork Road (~~Houston Thomas Road~~) N/A not for publication

city, town Noah vic.  vicinity of

state Tennessee code Q47 county Coffee code 031

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mrs. Adeline Thomas

street & number Route 2, Box 269 A

city, town Manchester  vicinity of state Tennessee 37355

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number Coffee County Courthouse

city, town Manchester state Tennessee 37355

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A N/A  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

## 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered

altered

**Check one**

original site

moved date \_\_\_\_\_

1 S 932

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Farrar Distillery is located nine miles north of Manchester near the Noah community of north Coffee County in south central Tennessee. The c. 1876 distillery consists of a spring, the remains of a still house, and an intact storage building. The still was situated by the spring on the north bank of the Noah Fork Creek, but it was destroyed in a freshet of 1902, leaving only the extant foundation stones. Sited against the south bank of the creek next to a road, the storage building is of one-story frame construction with a high stone basement and gable roof. The property retains its historical and architectural integrity.

The distillery's storage building was constructed into the side of the low creek bank. The south side of the building is set at ground level at the top of the bank. A plain batten door on center is flanked by 4/2 double-hung sash windows; a small shed porch supported by plain posts extends across this front.

The north side of the building has a full basement story with entrance facing the creek. This portion of the basement wall is constructed of hewn stone; the back portion of the basement is built of brick. There is a small batten door to the basement at the northwest corner, and a group of narrow windows covered with wooden latticework. The frame story above is plain except for a 4/4 sash window in the center. The east and west sides are plain weatherboarded walls.

Originally, the brandy made at the still was stored in the basement. The fruit and grain used in its manufacture were kept in bins in the one-room, first story above. The well-maintained building is now used for storage and has a recent pump for bringing water from the creek for the recent house of the current owner which is near by.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates      c. 1876      Builder/Architect      Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The c. 1876 Farrar Distillery in the Noah community of northern Coffee County is nominated under National Register criterion A for its significance to the county and south central Tennessee in local history. The distillery, which operated until around 1901, is a rare surviving example in south central Tennessee of such early operations in the region, which formed an important nineteenth-century commercial enterprise in Tennessee until statewide prohibition in 1909.

The distillery was begun by Alexander Farrar, son of William Farrar, a landowner in the Noah vicinity. Alexander Farrar assembled a large tract of property in the area, partly by inheritance but also by the purchase of three other tracts. One tract, somewhat over three acres, was bought from a neighbor named Keele in July 1876; it is on this site that the distillery was built, probably soon after the purchase of the land.

The still house itself was located at a good spring on the north bank of Noah Fork on the old stage road between Shelbyville and McMinnville; a storage building was located across the creek. The distillery is known to have produced brandy, but it is possible that whiskey or other spirits were also produced. This was a legal operation licensed by the State of Tennessee until 1909. At a time when most farmsteads had a water pail and dipper for passersby on the road, it is said that Farrar provided a pail of brandy instead.

Alexander Farrar died in 1901, and the still was washed away in a freshet the following year. The foundation stones at the spring mark the site of the still. The storage building across the creek survives in good condition.

Upon Farrar's death, the property eventually passed to his daughter, Laura Farrar Thomas in 1938. In 1939 her son, Leland Thomas, and his wife Adeline purchased the property. Mr. Thomas died in 1974, but Mrs. Thomas continues to live on the property and manage the family farm.

Many Indian artifacts have been found on the site. In 1969-70 Donald Ball and Ralph Periot of the Rutherford County Chapter of the Tennessee Archeological Society did some archeological survey work and testing on the site (Northern Coffee County Multiple Component Site 40-CF-TI, February, 1970). Archeologists from the University of Tennessee have also surveyed the site.

Small distillery operations were common in many areas of south central Tennessee throughout the nineteenth century. Most still owners were farmers who made peach and apple brandy in season and often whiskey the rest of the year. For most Tennesseans there

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Interview with Mrs. Adeline Thomas, February 1984.

Gaston, Kay Baker. "Robertson County Distilleries, 1796-1909." Tennessee Historical Quarterly, Spring 1984, pp. 49-67.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approx. 3.5 acres

Quadrangle name Noah, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	6
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5	7	5	0	5	0
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3	9	3	7	5	3	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard Quin, Historic Preservation Planner

organization South Central Tennessee  
Development District

date February 1984

street & number P.O. Box 1346

telephone 615/381-2040

city or town Columbia

state Tennessee 38402

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy  
State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Hoge

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 8/21/84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
Entered in the National Register

date 9-27-84

Joyce M. Summons  
Keeper of the National Register

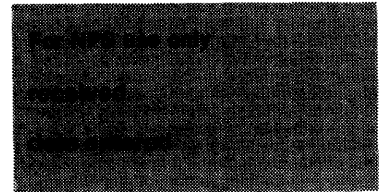
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation sheet

Farrar Distillery

Item number

8

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was no social or religious stigma attached to liquor, and there were no state laws forbidding its manufacture or sale. Alexander Farrar was a typical prosperous farmer of the period who made enough brandy or whiskey for his own use, plus an adequate amount for local sale. In 1909 over the veto of Governor Malcolm Patterson of Memphis, the state legislature passed a law establishing state-wide prohibition. The era of the farmer-distiller was over, and there were no attempts to revive it after national prohibition was lifted in 1933. Consequently the buildings associated with small distillery operations were demolished, allowed to deteriorate, or adapted to other purposes. There are no known complexes which have survived intact in south central Tennessee, and therefore the Farrar Distillery is an important remnant of a bygone industry.

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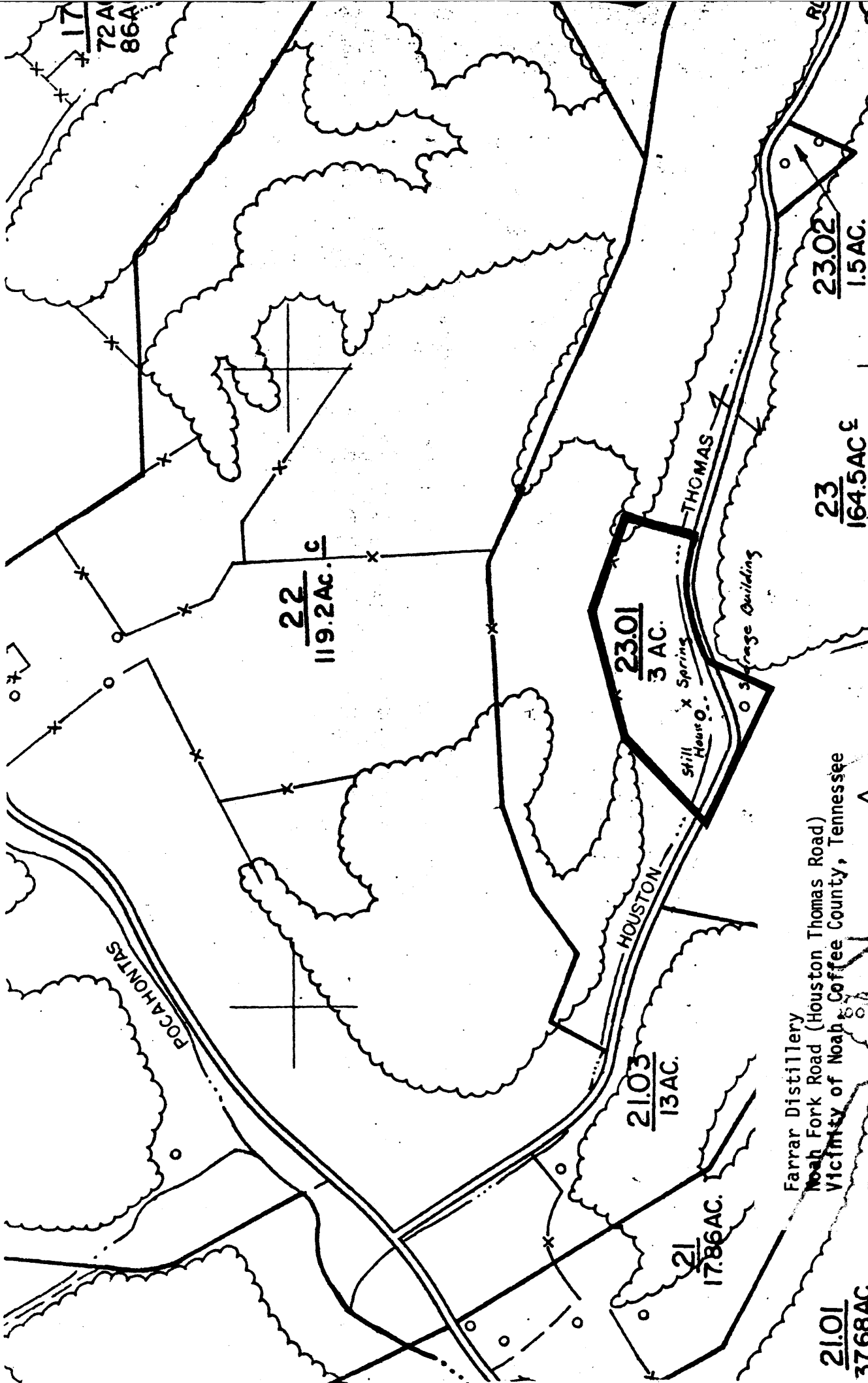


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Continuation sheet    Farrar Distillery    Item number    10    Page    2

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The irregularly-shaped property is roughly bounded on the east, north, and west by adjoining property lines and on the south by Noah Fork Road (Houston Thomas Road) except where this boundary jogs at a right angle to include the storage building. The nomination includes the minimum land needed to protect the historical integrity of the site.



17  
72A  
86A

22  
119.2 AC.

23.01  
3 AC.

23.02  
1.5 AC.

23  
164.5 AC.

21.03  
13 AC.

21  
17.86 AC.

21.01  
37.68 AC.

POCAHONTAS

HOUSTON

THOMAS

Still Hear Springs

Storage Building

Farrar Distillery  
Noah Fork Road (Houston Thomas Road)  
Vicinity of Noah, Coffee County, Tennessee

Tax Map 1" = 400'

↑ N