

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JUN 1 1983
date entered

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

1. Name

historic James Webster House
and/or common Vine Hill (preferred)

2. Location

street & number Sawdust Road N/A not for publication
city, town Cross Bridges X vicinity of
state Tennessee code 047 county Maury code 119

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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
	<u>N/A</u> 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 Maury County Historical Society
street & number P. O. Box 147
city, town Columbia N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 38401

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Maury County Courthouse
street & number Public Square
city, town Columbia state Tennessee 38401

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maury County Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date August 1982 federal state county local
depository for survey records South Central Tennessee Development District
city, town Columbia state Tennessee 38401

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Vine Hill is a large frame residence atop a minor spur at the Western Highland Rim. Built approximately in 1836, the house is an excellent example of the vernacular interpretation of Greek Revival architecture and one of the earliest of the style in Maury County. It is a cross-axial house, four major rooms over four with cross halls communicating between them. The house is massive, sixty-foot square, with two-story pedimented porticos centered on the east (front) and south elevations. Door and windows are accented with Greek Revival trim. There are four inset brick chimneys and a combination hipped and gable roof. The main house is surrounded by several of its early outbuildings. The setting is unique; the house was well-sited and commands the local horizon. Although the view is open for miles in most directions, there are no visible intrusions.

Vine Hill is located off the western side of the Cross Bridges - Sawdust Road, $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles north of the village of Cross Bridges. The house and outbuildings occupy a $29\frac{1}{2}$ acre lot, the surviving remnant of the original 430 acre farm. The bulk of the property remains in use as pasture land, enclosed in part by original dry stone walls; the grounds retain elements of the original landscape plantings, a formal garden and the original road.

Three bays square, the main house is built of poplar, covered with weatherboard siding, and sits on a foundation of limestone piers with brick between. There are four brick chimneys (with eight fireplace openings) set inside the north and south walls. The front of the house has a hipped roof; two gables extend to the rear. Part of the roof is covered with replacement cedar shingles; part is of composition shingles, not very visible from the ground. Windows are of a 6/6 configuration with movable exterior louvered shutters.

The front of the house faces east. Its most prominent feature is a monumental portico supported by four square pillars connected at floor level by a simple balustrade. The pillars are panelled with simple moldings forming the capitals. A plain entablature is topped with a pediment with a raking cornice; the tympanum is covered with weatherboard. The front doorway in the central bay is flanked by two primitive Ionic pilasters with volutes formed from single bent poplar boards. The double-leaf doors are surrounded by sidelights and are surmounted by a transom. The surrounds feature bulls-eye corner-blocks and fluted connecting members.

The south elevation also has a central pedimented portico, this one having a balcony. Four panelled pillars have neck molds and panelled capitals supporting a deep entablature; the pediment has a raking cornice and a weatherboarded tympanum.

The north elevation is less elaborate. There are three bays, with double-leaf doors flanked by sidelights centered on the wall. A one-story pedimented porch supported by two square pillars protects the entry.

The west elevation is the rear of the house. It is three bays wide, with doors on the first floor and 6/6 sash windows on the second. The central doorway has sidelights and a transom. A one-story shed porch, added during restoration, runs the full length of the facade.

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Important interior features include: two grand halls roughly 60' x 16', two cross halls with dogleg stairs, original built-in closets with panel doors in the bedrooms and double doors in the library, and all eight original mantels. Interior doors and other millwork are walnut; the flooring is ash.

Structurally the house has been altered by a small bathroom attached to the southwest corner of the rear of the house. It is a small lean-to shed, framed with weatherboards matching the house's exterior walls. It is unobtrusive and reversible; it could be removed without requiring major reconstruction.

Directly behind the house is a detached frame kitchen, one bay wide with a gabled roof. The building rests on a brick foundation with a full cellar below. There is a large stone chimney on the north side. The massive fireplace and mantel are original; the floor has been replaced.

Also on the property is a large frame crib barn, built about 1900. It is two and one half stories tall and has three loading bays. It has its original in-framing, latticework, and bonnet on the east side. The structure is in fair condition.

A small tenant house, built about 1900, is 120 yards west of the main house. It is one bay wide, two rooms deep, and has a loft above. An original shed section at the rear has been fitted as a kitchen and bath. There is a large limestone chimney of excellent work on the south side.

A cinder-block dairy barn has been converted into a caretaker cottage; it dates from the 1940s. Its effect is generally intrusive.

The large original icehouse is just behind the kitchen. It is in poor condition, partially collapsed.

The setting is integral to the property. A strong effort has been made to preserve the area as a conservation area. The property is protected by a covenant, as are the adjoining farms.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates ca. 1836 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Vine Hill, the James Webster House, is nominated under National Register criteria B and C for its local significance to Maury County through its connection with early settlers of the county and its architectural distinction. A large frame farm house dating from 1836, the building is noteworthy in part for its association with the Webster family, in particular James Webster, who were important people in the settlement of the Cross Bridges area, originally Webster's Mill, and the western part of Maury County. The house is one of the finest frame examples of the Greek Revival style of architecture in southern Middle Tennessee, and is important in tracing the development of the style in the region.

Vine Hill was the home of James Henry Webster, son of Jonathan Webster, an early pioneer and Revolutionary War veteran who settled the Cross Bridges area in 1807. James Webster was the first white child born in Maury County after its creation. The Webster family formed a powerful farming and milling empire in the area by 1840. Vine Hill was one of the major farms, listed as 418 acres in the 1860 Agricultural Census. Cotton, wheat, and livestock were the primary farm products. Thoroughbred race horses were raised on the farm, which had its own racetrack, and the farm was the first in Maury County to use mules. (Mule trading was a major industry in Maury County until World War II, and the county seat, Columbia, still calls itself the Mule Capital of the World.) The farm's value was assessed at \$51,005 in 1860. Besides Vine Hill, James Webster farmed extensive holdings in neighboring Lewis County, in Arkansas, and in Mississippi. Vine Hill was divided and much reduced after the Civil War. The main house was altogether abandoned in the early part of the twentieth century and was used for a while as a tobacco barn. It fell into an advanced state of deterioration before restoration in the 1960s. Today the farm is an excellent example of an early self-sufficient farm, or plantation. The site retains several of its early outbuildings, and the surrounding farmlands are protected by restrictive covenants. The farm and these protected lands form an important conservation area.

Four of Jonathan Webster's sons built homes in the area. Of these only two remain, Vine Hill and the George Webster House, a two-story brick building constructed in 1844. The modest brick house built by Jonathan Webster around 1808 and enlarged around 1826 also still stands in the Cross Bridges vicinity.

Architecturally, the house is one of the most interesting in south central Tennessee. Its unique cross-axial arrangement allows the central hall to run the full length of the house. Vine Hill retains virtually all of its original interior detailing, including original built-in closets, dogleg stairs in the side halls, all eight original mantels, and original doors and floors.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Maury County Historical Society. Visitor information sheet on Vine Hill, n.d.

Sowell, Mary Webster. Early Cross Bridges and the Websters. Columbia, Tennessee, 1969.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 29.50 acres

Quadrangle name Williamsport, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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

B

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

C

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

D

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

E

Zone	Easting						Northing							

F

Zone	Easting						Northing							

G

Zone	Easting						Northing							

H

Zone	Easting						Northing							

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 H. Quin

organization South Central Tennessee
Development District

date January 1983

street & number P. O. Box 1346

telephone (615) 381-2040

city or town Columbia

state Tennessee 38401

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. Haysen

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 5/10/83

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

Maria Ann Owsen
Keeper of the National Register

date 7/15/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The building represents the early stages of the Greek Revival style in Middle Tennessee when simple vernacular residences were built with large porticos. These houses helped establish the fashion for the style which increasingly became more sophisticated and elaborate in the area during the 1840s and '50s in such buildings as Clifton Place and Rattle and Snap.

Vine Hill has been restored and is well maintained. It is open to the public as the home of the Maury County Historical Society.

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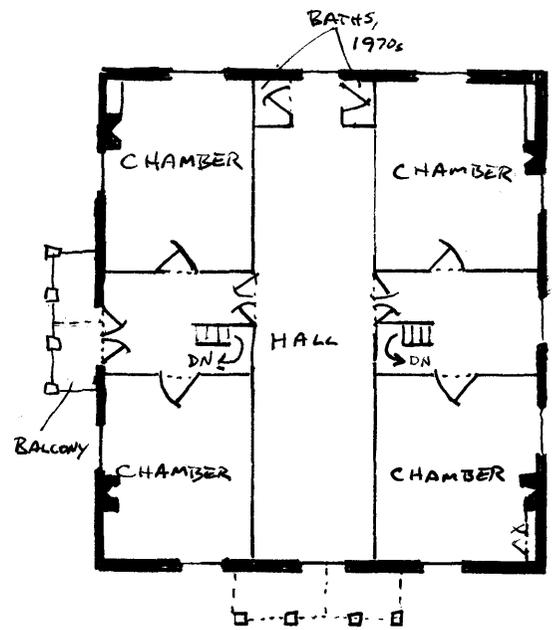
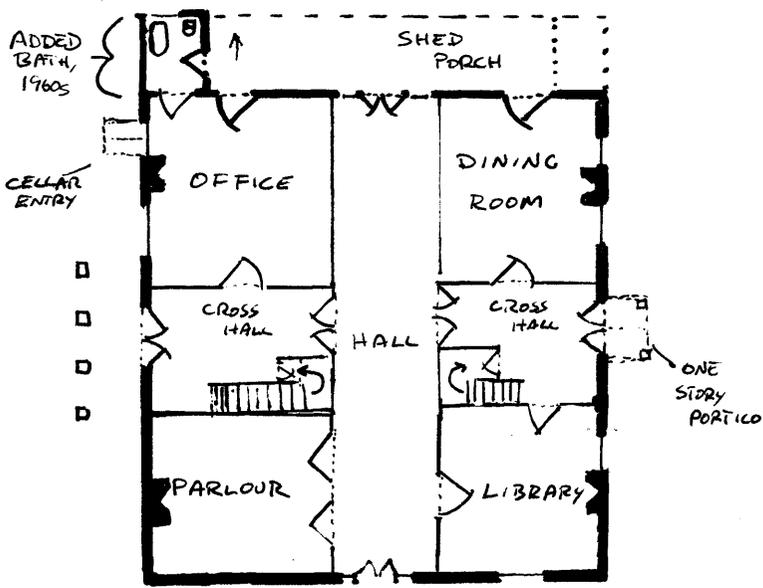
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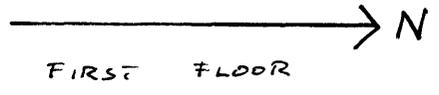
Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The house and outbuildings occupy a 29½ acre site, the surviving remnant of the original 430 acre farm. The property is bounded on the east by Sawdust Road and on its other sides by adjoining farmland. The nominated acreage of 29½ acres is included to protect the historical integrity of the house which is approximately located in the center of the property.



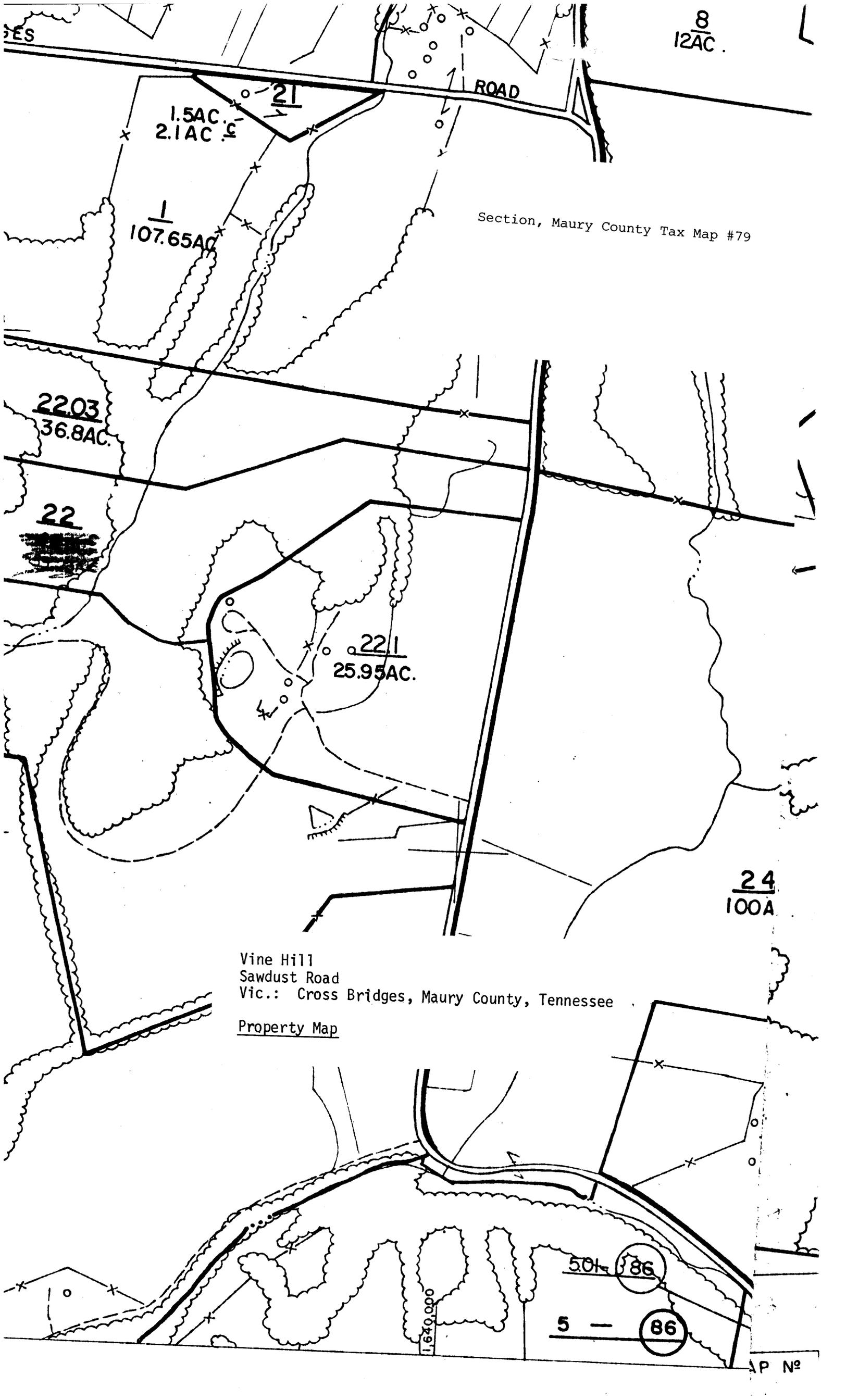
VINE HILL, CROSS BRIDGES

2ND FLOOR



Vine Hill
 Sawdust Road
 Vic.: Cross Bridges, Maury Co., Tennessee

Floor Plan



8
12AC.

21
1.5AC.
2.1AC.

ROAD

Section, Maury County Tax Map #79

1
107.65AC

2203
36.8AC.

22

221
25.95AC.

24
100A

Vine Hill
Sawdust Road
Vic.: Cross Bridges, Maury County, Tennessee

Property Map

50ft 86

5 — 86

AP No