

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name : SMITH, MICHAEL HOUSE
other name/site number:

2. Location

street & number: End of CR 5/11 1 mile from jct. CR 19/26 not for publication: N/A
city/town: Cedarville vicinity: X
state: West Virginia code: WV county: Braxton code: 007 zip code: 26619

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally.
(___ See continuation sheet.)

Randall Reid-Smith, SHPO Date

West Virginia Division of Culture and History
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

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is: Signature of Keeper Date of Action

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____		

5. Classification

Ownership of Property:
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property:
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		building(s)
_____		sites
_____		structures
_____		objects
1		TOTAL

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Current Functions

Work In Progress

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification

OTHER: Double-Pen Log House

Materials

foundation: Sandstone
Walls: Log
Roof: Tin
Other: Wood

Narrative Description

(See continuation sheets)

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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.

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Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance:

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance:

1848; 1878

Significant Dates:

1848

1878

Significant Person:

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Smith, Michael and Smith, Jacob Ferdinand

Narrative Statement of Significance

(See continuation sheets)

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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Bibliography:

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 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: Collection of preparer

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property .892 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Quad Map Name: Cedarville

17 517264 4295596
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(See continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(See continuation sheet.)

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

Name/Title: Joann B. Daley

Organization: Smiths of Brush Run Heritage Foundation Date: August 31, 2005

Street & Number: 103 Deming Drive Telephone: 304-342-0893

City or Town: Charleston State: WV ZIP: 25314

=====
Property Owner
=====

Name: Smiths of Brush Run Heritage Foundation, Gary Smith, President

Street & Number: 5031 Hackers Creek Road Telephone: 304-269-6386

City or Town: Weston State: WV Zip: 26452
=====

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Architectural Description:

The Michael Smith House is situated at the head of Brush Run, approximately one mile from the Cedar Creek Road. The Brush Run road intersects the Cedar Creek Road halfway between Exchange in Braxton County and Cedarville in Gilmer County, W.Va., approximately five miles from each town. The log house is located in a meadow, beside a tiny stream and in sight of the two farmhouses later built by Michael's grandsons, Homer and Lee. These houses continue to be owned by Michael's descendents and are used on weekends. The family cemetery is up on the hill.

The log house and the acre of property surrounding it is now owned by the Smiths of Brush Run Heritage Foundation, LLC, a non-profit organization whose members include all descendents and relatives of Michael and Rosena Smith. The purpose of the foundation is to promote the family heritage and to preserve the house in its original condition so that all family members may visit it and have the opportunity to learn about their ancestors and their way of life.

The house is 40 by 19 feet, with a six-foot porch across the entire front. The original part of the house, 22 by 19 feet, was built in 1848 and constructed of large hand-hewn logs supported by a foundation of rock pillars spaced about ten feet apart. Four sills, which are twelve-inch thick logs, are placed on the rock pillars and skirt the perimeter of the building. At each corner the logs are notched, lapped, and pinned together with locust pegs. Floor beams are placed across the sills at two-foot intervals and mortised into the sills with a lap joint. The attic floor joints are made of three by six inch hand-hewn boards placed two feet apart. The floor covering is made of poplar lumber. The attic rafters are made of small pine logs, four inches in diameter, positioned two feet apart. Hand-hewn boards are placed across the rafters. The roof was originally made of oak shingles but now is tin. The spaces between the logs of the outside walls are filled with a clay mixture and the building was later covered with lap siding.

The inside of the house is sealed with hand-hewn poplar boards, many of which exceed fourteen inches in width. They are a beautiful chestnut brown. There is a large stone fireplace in the west end of the original house. Most of the stones are eight to twelve inches thick. The fireplace served to heat the house and also for cooking until Jacob included a kitchen in the 1878 addition.

The initial house contained three rooms and an attic loft. The large room, 13.5 by 16.5 feet, served as a kitchen/living room and the two small rooms, each 7.5' by 7.5', served as bedrooms. The large attic was used as a bedroom for the children.

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In 1878, Michael's youngest son, Jacob, built a log addition, 18 x 19 feet, on the west end of the log house and a lean-to kitchen and porch on the back. The fireplace was opened up into a double fireplace, which served both sections of the house. The construction of the addition was similar to that of the original structure except that the kitchen was made of framing covered with plank boards. The kitchen and back porch are no longer there.

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Statement of Significance

The Michael Smith House is eligible under Criterion C for Architecture, with a period of significance of 1848 and 1878, dictated by the years of construction of each section of the house.

Mattheis Schmidt (1782-1866) and his wife lived in the Baden state of Germany during the late 18th and mid-19th centuries. In 1828 his son Michael (1804-1879) came to the United States. He met his wife, Christina Rosena Marinere (1806-1881), on the ship and they were married during the voyage. They settled in Baltimore, where Michael worked as a shoe cobbler and a barrel maker. During these years they had five children and Michael became a U.S. Citizen in 1840. At this time he had changed his name from Schmidt to Smith.

The family moved to Weston, W.Va, in 1843 and then to Bender's Run, west of Gassaway, in 1846. Several friends, the Gerwigs, Engels, Whitsels, and Ellisons, from Germany were living in the area. Two more children were born, the youngest of which was Jacob Ferdinand (1847-1921), who is the patriarch of our branch of the Smith family.

On October 13, 1847 Michael bought a 91-acre plot of land at the head of Brush Run, five miles away. He bought it for 50 cents an acre from a New York land company. During the following year, 1848, he built the log house, which still stands as an example of early American architecture and craftsmanship. In 1878 his youngest son, Jacob, who continued to live on the farm with his parents, built an addition to the original house

Michael and Christina raised seven children, three sons and four daughters, on the farm. Two sons were in the Union Army during Civil War. The eldest, John (1833-1926), served throughout the war and fought in the Battle of Bull Run and the Battle of Gettysburg. His younger brother, Christian (1842-1863), died of measles while serving in the army in the Sutton, W.Va. area. Jacob was too young to serve. However, during the war he was captured by Confederate raiders, released in Flatwoods, and had to walk the long distance home. An interesting note is that two of their cousins served in the Confederate Army. Jacob named his eldest son Ulysses Lee (1872-1942), honoring both Civil War generals.

At his death, Michael gave the entire 91 acres to Jacob, who had continued to live there. Jacob (1847-1921) and his wife, Louisa (1853-1926), had five children. The youngest, Luther, died in infancy. Their only daughter, Susie, died at age 17 of measles and pneumonia. Two of the others, Lee (1872-1942) and Homer (1874-1966) and their families continued to live nearby in houses they built on the farm. These houses, built in the early 1900's are still owned by family members and occupied as week-end residences. Son John (1881-1971) moved a few miles away to Glenville and raised his family there. At his death, Jacob owned 207 acres, which was divided among his three sons.

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A large family has developed from the three sons of Jacob and Louisa and now their descendents live all over the United States. Lee had ten children, Homer had eight, and John had three. Many of them graduated from nearby Glenville State College and even now the main profession of the descendents is teaching and related fields. There are also numerous other professions, including engineers, lawyers, journalists, psychologists, musicians, nurses, writers, business men, and government leaders.. The family built a reunion pavilion on the farm in 1961 and since then each summer more than one hundred relatives gather there for the Smith Reunion.

This pioneer log house is historically significant for a number of reasons. It is one few original pioneer log houses remaining in the Braxton County area, and maybe the only one. It nicely represents the primitive but expert craftsmanship of the pioneers of the era, who had only simple tools and equipment. It was built during a time of Westward movement in our country, when immigrants were encouraged to become part of the American dream – and it reflects the story of a young German immigrant family who cleared the West Virginia forests to create productive farmlands and to begin a life in America.

The house was built as part of a settlement of German immigrants. Although the original Gerwig house is gone, the Gerwig descendents built several fine houses along Tom's Run in the early 1900's and many of these continue to be occupied by Gerwig family members. The original German Church has been razed but a replacement church stands on the site and continues to be a viable, important community asset.

The Smith family takes great pride in their strong ancestry and strives to continue the ideals of hard work, integrity, and character their forefathers instilled in them. The younger generation is working to preserve this home of their pioneer ancestors to enable future generations to hold onto a part of their heritage.

This pioneer log house is a representative example of those built by settlers during the pioneer movement into West Virginia from Europe in the mid-1800's. It demonstrates the primitive but expert craftsmanship of the pioneers of the era, who had only simple tools and equipment.

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It reflects the story of a young German immigrant family who cleared the W.Va. forests to create productive farmland and to begin a life in America. Michael and Rosena Smith came as part of a group of German families who came to Baltimore and then moved West to settle in this part of Braxton County. For 78 years the house served as the home of the family of Michael and Rosena Smith and subsequently of the family of their son, Jacob, and his wife, Louisa – until Louisa's death in 1926. Two of Jacob's sons raised their families in large farmhouses they built on adjoining properties. These houses continue to be owned by Smith descendents and are used on week-ends. The log house was the home of the Smith family during the Civil War, a time when their sons, relatives, and neighbors served in either the Confederate or Union Army.

Summary

The Michael Smith pioneer house is one of the last vestiges of the 19th century settlement of rural West Virginia by European immigrants seeking new freedoms and a better life. The Smith descendents are working to preserve this important landmark for future generations, to allow them to experience the way life was during that long ago time. Having the house placed on the National Register of Historic Places would give recognition to the historical significance of the property.

(NPS Form 10-900)

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Bibliography

Smith, Gary Gene, The Smiths of Brush Run, 1979.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the center of an 18-inch diameter walnut, said by Robert W. Smith to be the original walnut corner used in the survey of 1920 or thereabouts, the beginning point of the fourth tract or parcel of land conveyed by Leonard Gene Smith and Dorothy Smith, his wife, to Michael David Smith and Adam Jeffrey Smith by Deed dated 27 December 1999 and recorded among the Land Records of Braxton County, WV in Deed Book 524 at Page 769, and then running along and binding on part of the first line of said Parcel No. 4, per a direction system based on a single magnetic bearing measured November 23, 2004,

S 31° 21' 19" E 32.45 feet to the center of the South Fork of Brush Run, and then with the center line of said stream, and continuing in the same direction system, the following eleven (11) courses and distances:

- 1.) S 6° 50' 50" E 9.08 feet,
- 2.) S 6° 25' 06" E 12.10 feet,
- 3.) S 8° 23' 07" E 33.67 feet,
- 4.) S 16° 05' 12" W 4.85 feet,
- 5.) S 14° 27' 26" E 19.26 feet,
- 6.) S 34° 59' 50" E 5.73 feet,
- 7.) S 12° 12' 21" E 15.03 feet,
- 8.) S 49° 59' 23" E 14.41 feet,
- 9.) S 32° 32' 17" E 14.11 feet,
- 10.) S 51° 53' 17" E 12.91 feet, and

11.) S 49° 20' 42" E 16.92 feet, to a point on the second line of the aforementioned Deed, then binding on pan of this second line,

S 26° 23' 41" W 125.15 feet to a point on a steep hillside, then continuing in the same direction system, but along a new line of division,

N 63° 38' 06" W, at 22.93 feet crossing over a 3/8 inch diameter rebar set, in all 231.48 feet to a point, then along another new line of division in the same direction system,

N 14° 09' 12" W 38.43 feet to the center of a 24 inch diameter walnut, thought to be the original corner point used in 1920, at the end of the twentieth, or next to the last line of the aforesaid Parcel No. 4, then following and binding on the twenty-first, or last line of the said Parcel No. 4 as described in said Deed, on a bearing rotated to match the direction system of the other lines described herein.

N 55° 08' 41" E 239.60 feet to the point of beginning, containing 0.9021 acres, being the part of the same land conveyed by Leonard Gene Smith and Dorothy Smith, his wife, to David Smith and Adam Jeffrey Smith by Deed dated 27 December 1999 and recorded among the land survey records of Braxton County, WV in Deed Book 524 at Page 769, as surveyed by Edwin L. Smith, Professional Surveyor No. 828, in August and November, 2004.

(NPS Form 10-900)

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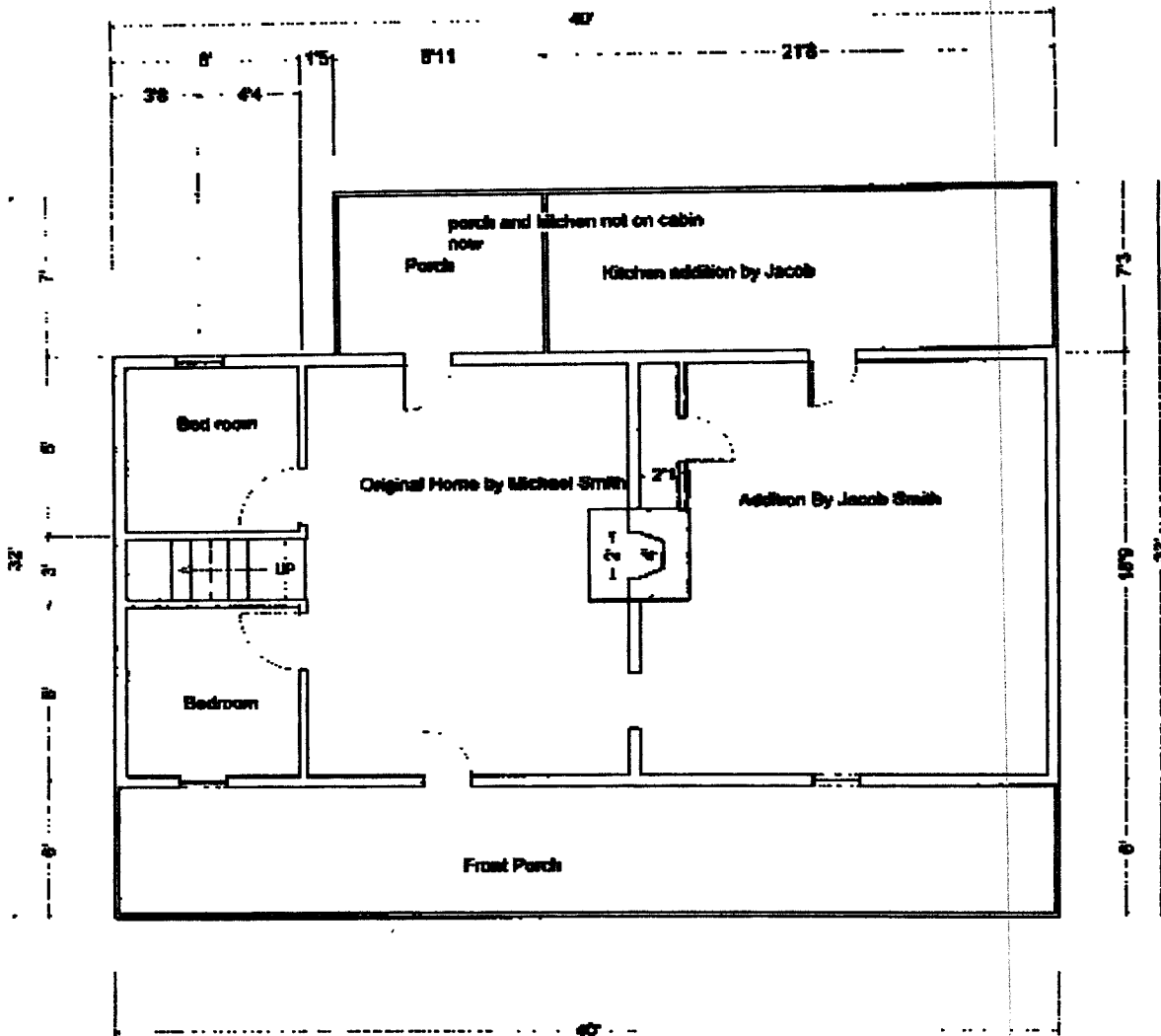
Section number 10

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Boundary Justification

This is the parcel that contains the Michael Smith House.

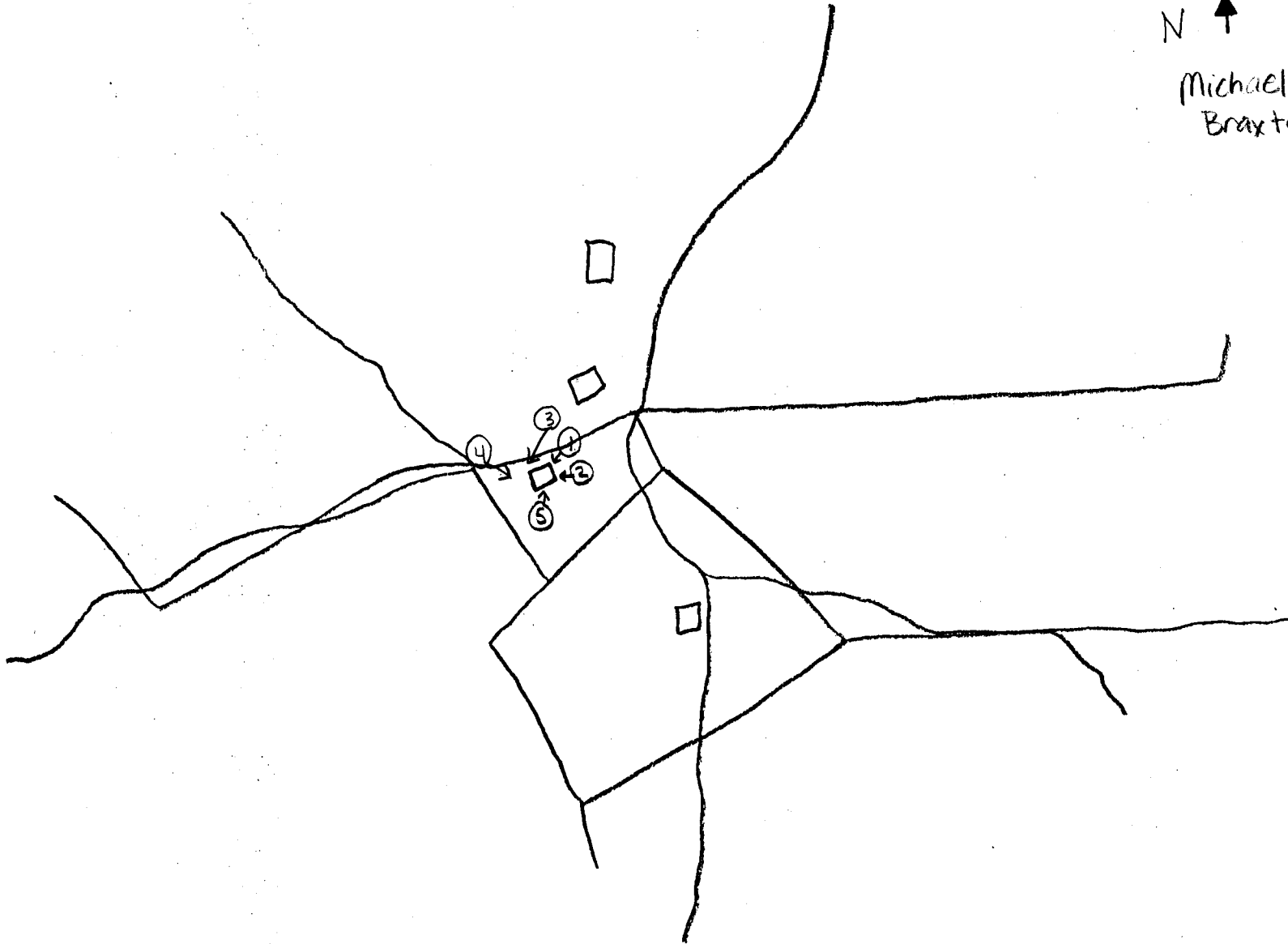
Floor plan of the cabin

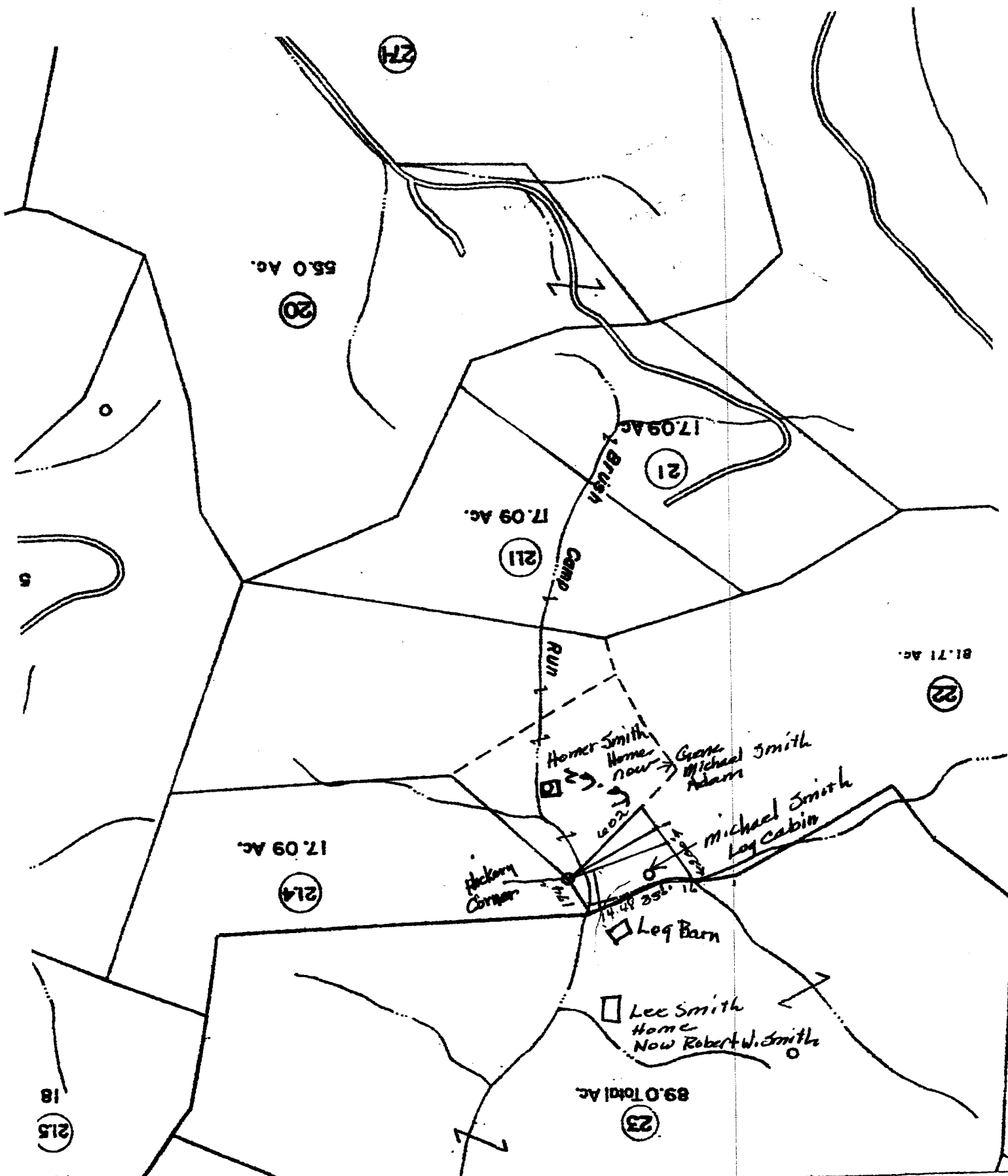


Michael Smith Hase
Branston County, WV

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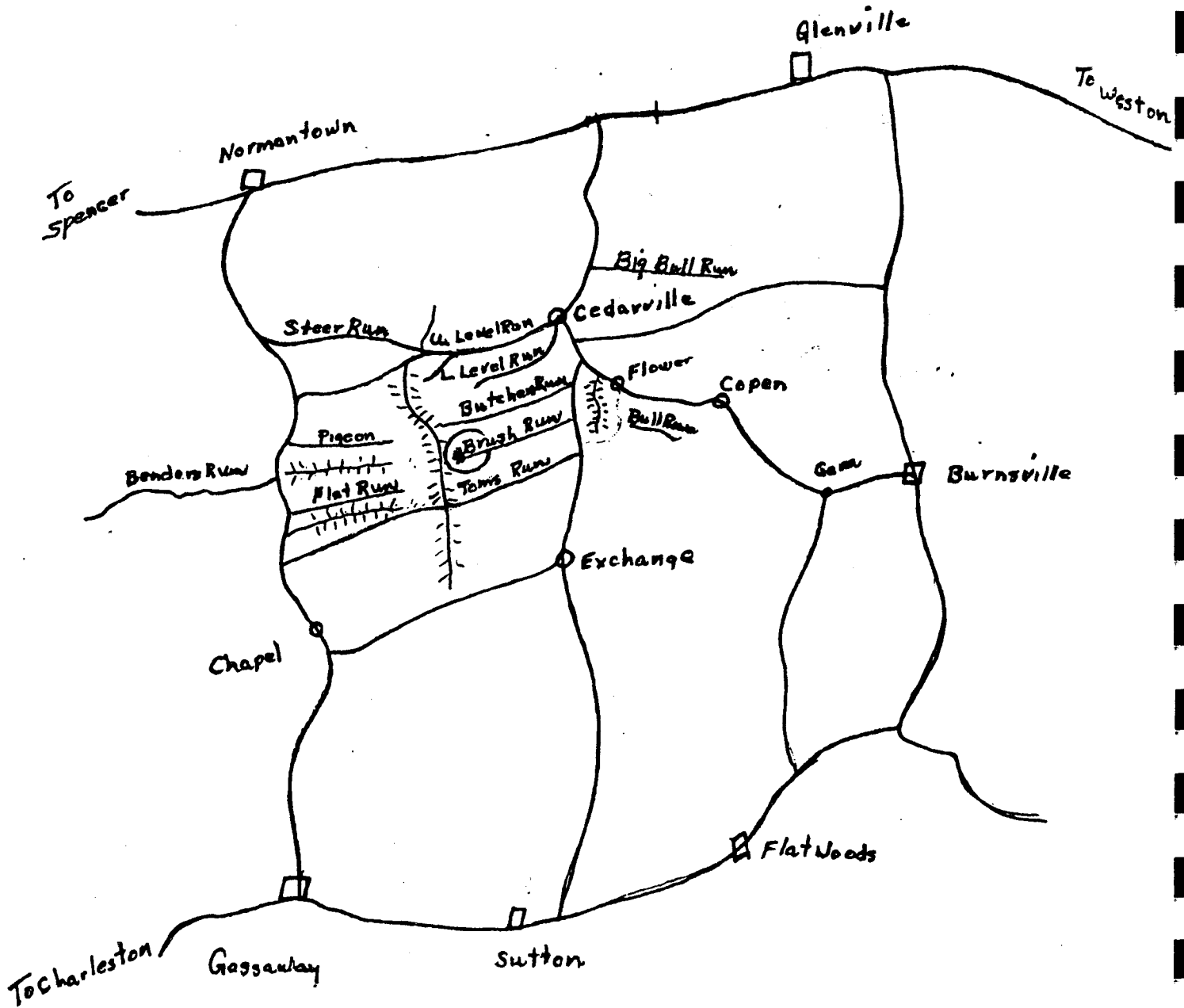
Michael Smith Haze
Braxton County, WV





N ↓ Michael Smith House - Braxton County, WV
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Map of Area of West Virginia Where Smiths and German Friends Settled



Michael Smith Huse
Braxton County, WV







HDB







