

The Cartography of Southern Queerness

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ABSTRACT

Examining maps and invitations to parties hosted to and for students and faculty at the University of Alabama [UA] in the 1990s reveals a community partly shaped by fear of safety and a desire for intimacy. UA's queer student group, called the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Alliance and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Alliance during the decade under examination, began in 1983 as a group primarily focused on assimilation into campus culture. Members often hosted parties off-campus and in rural areas of Tuscaloosa County, issuing maps and invitations intentionally opaque and decipherable only to those with prior knowledge. Later invitations are clearer, more open and public. The change indicates a growing level of comfort among queer students and faculty in announcing their presence in public.

METHODS

The documents examined are found in the Miller-Stephens Collection held at W.S. Hoole Special Collections at the University of Alabama. Roughly 10 linear feet were examined to find maps within the collection. Maps and invitations found in the collection were gathered and analyzed with the intent of better understanding the organization's position on campus. The Frank Susko Papers, held at the Birmingham Public Library Archives, also informed research.

CONCLUSION

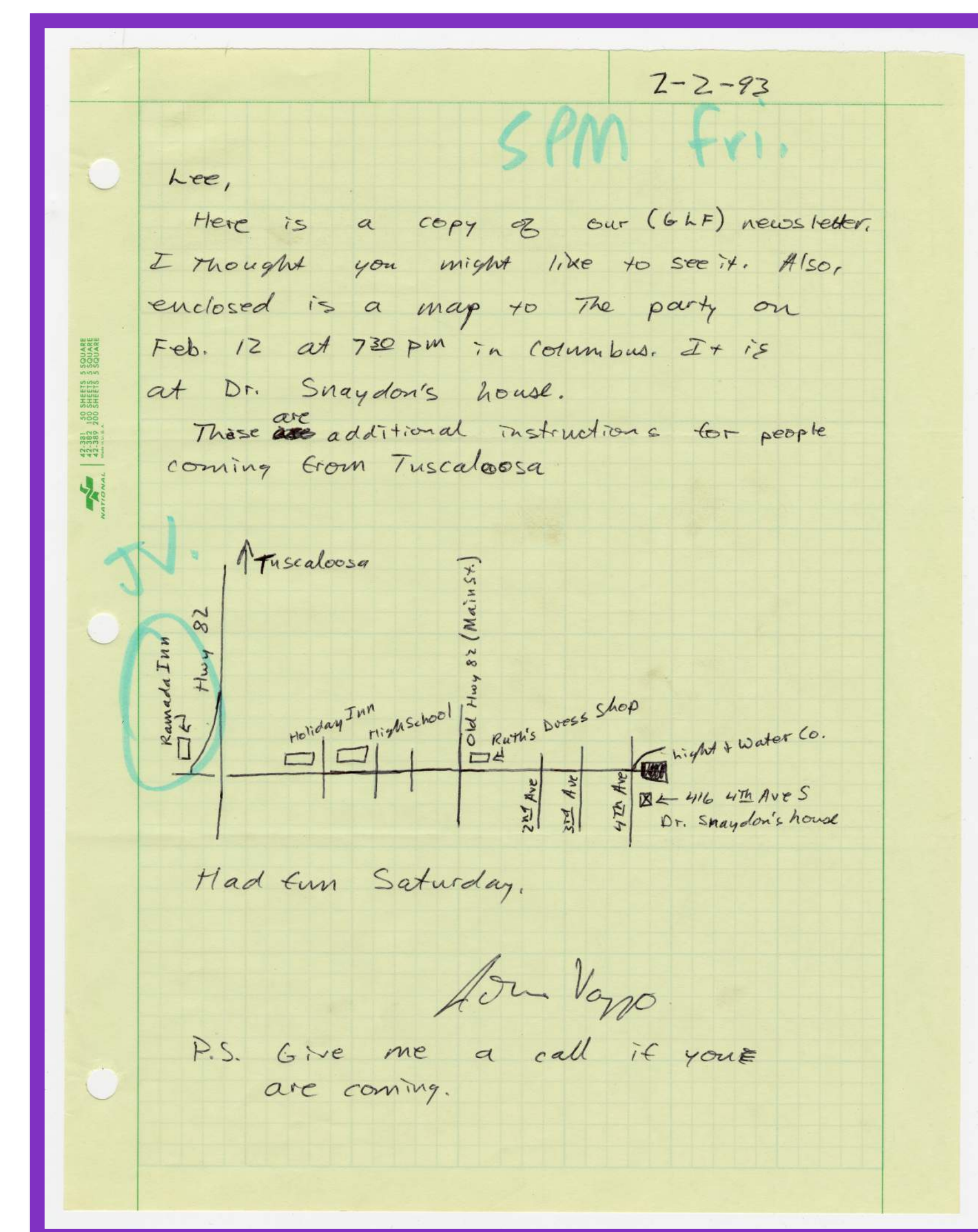
The growing clarity and directness of the maps and invitations to social events hosted by queer students and faculty reflects a growing national acceptance of queer rights and culture. It also is a product of a shift in the character of the queer student groups themselves, one that bolder and more aggressive in demanding acceptance and legitimacy.

DOCUMENTS

Zodiac Love Dance

February 14, 1993

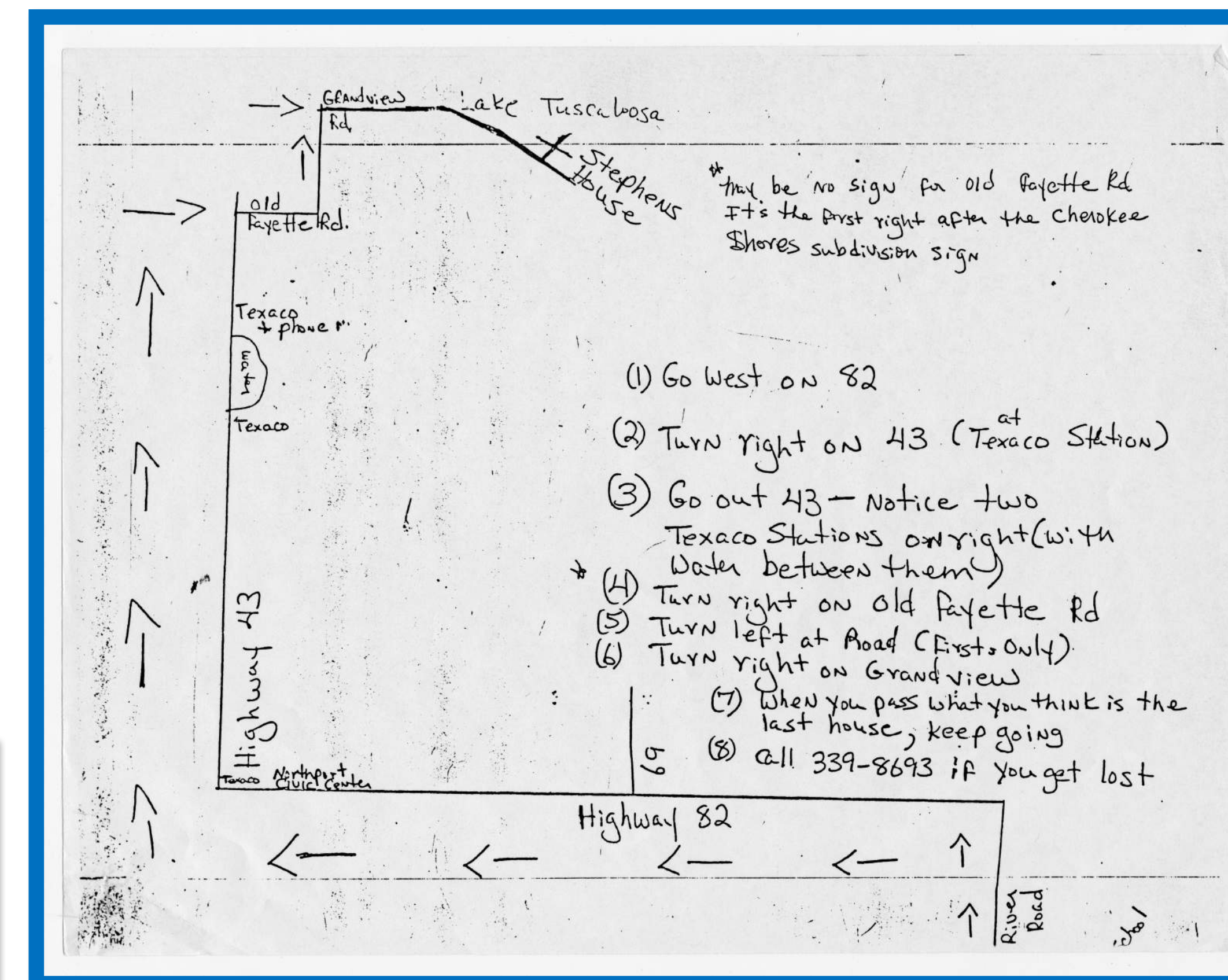
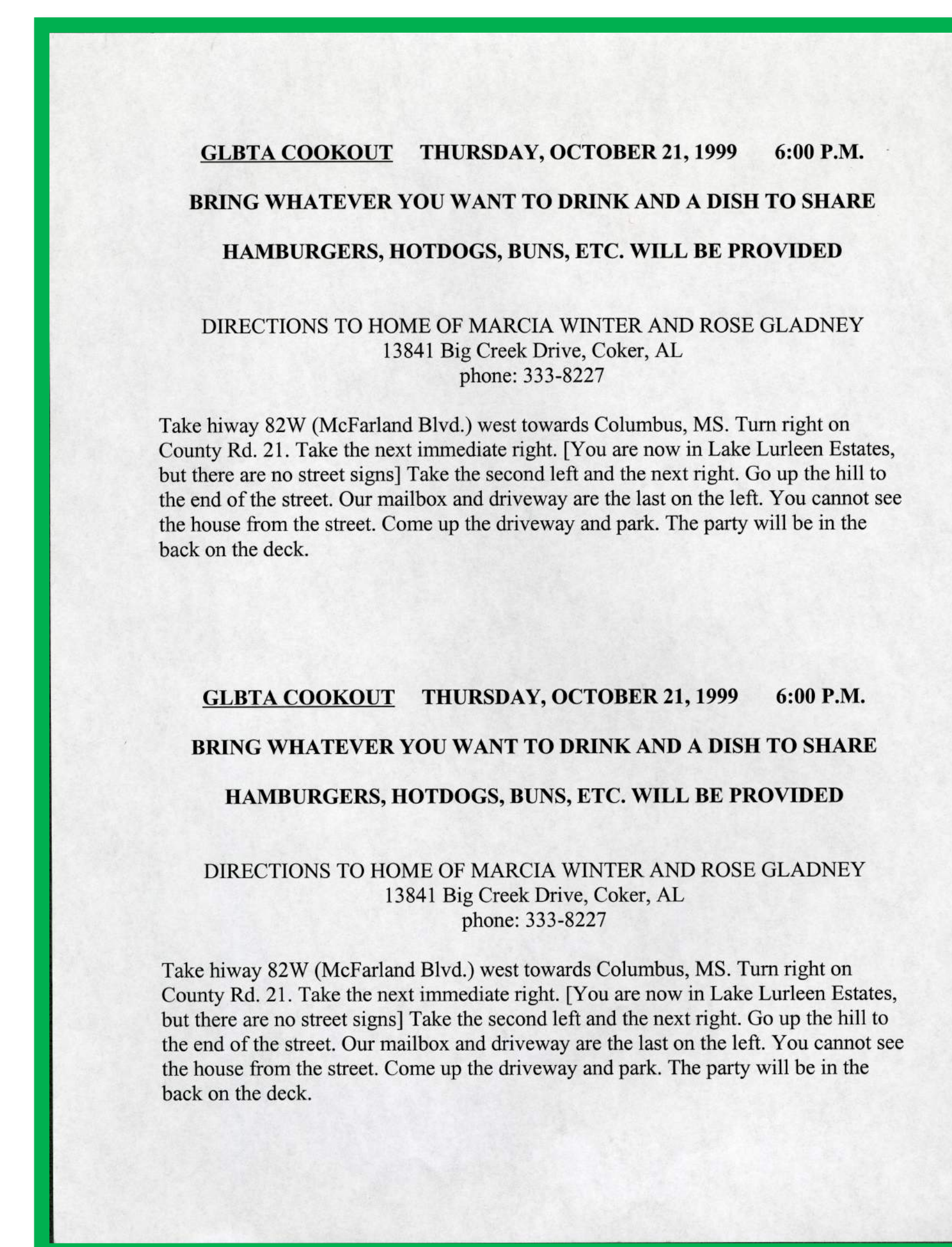
Distributed to GLB members



GLBTA cookout

October 21, 1999

Clear address to Rose Gladney + Marcia Winter's home

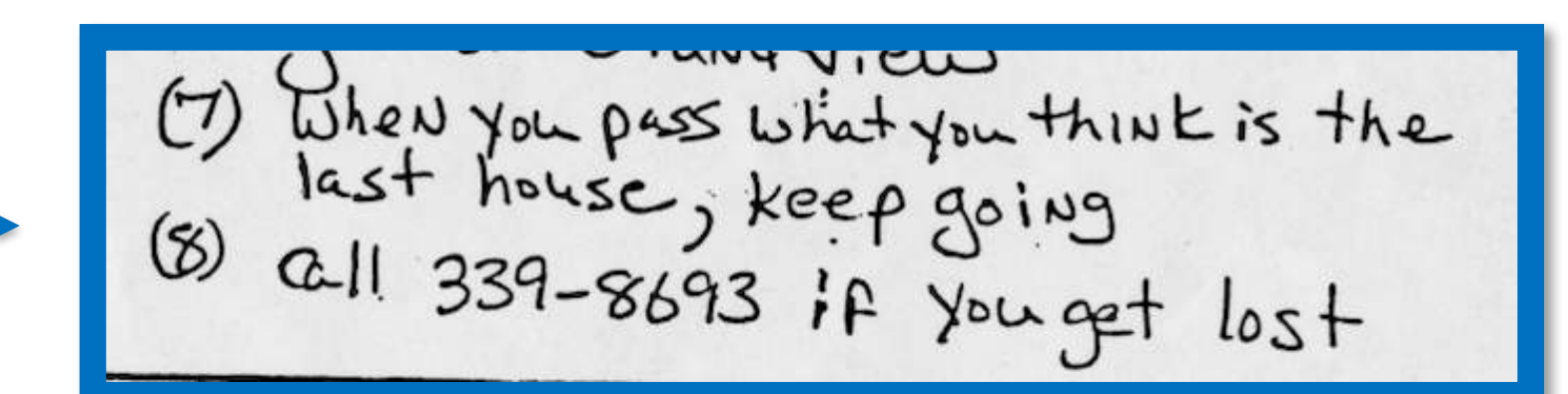
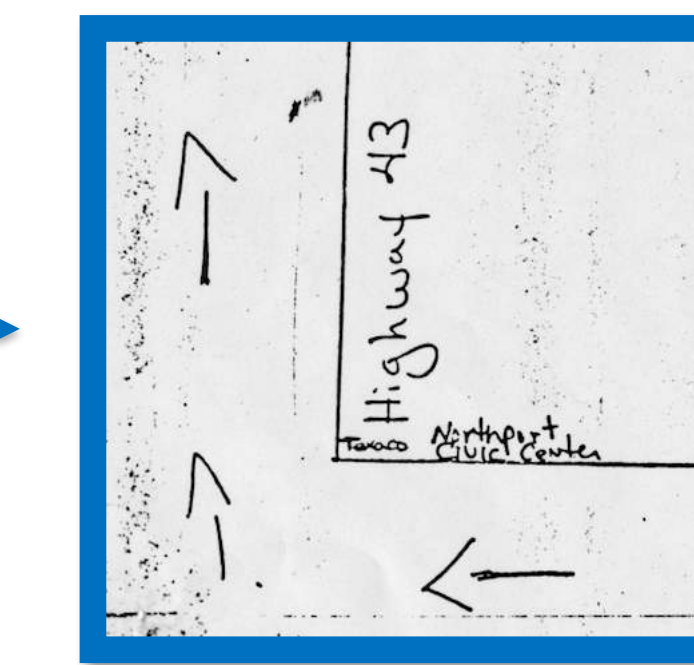
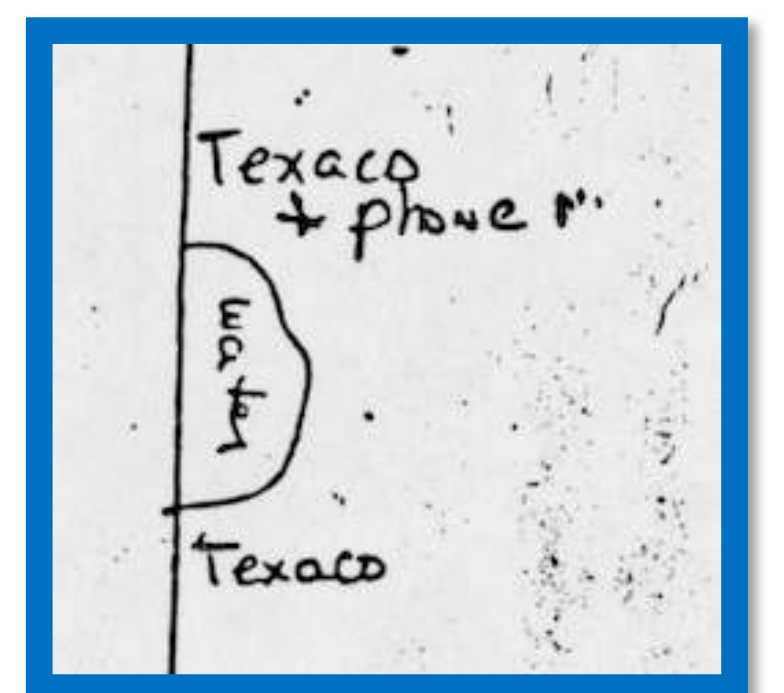


Party Map

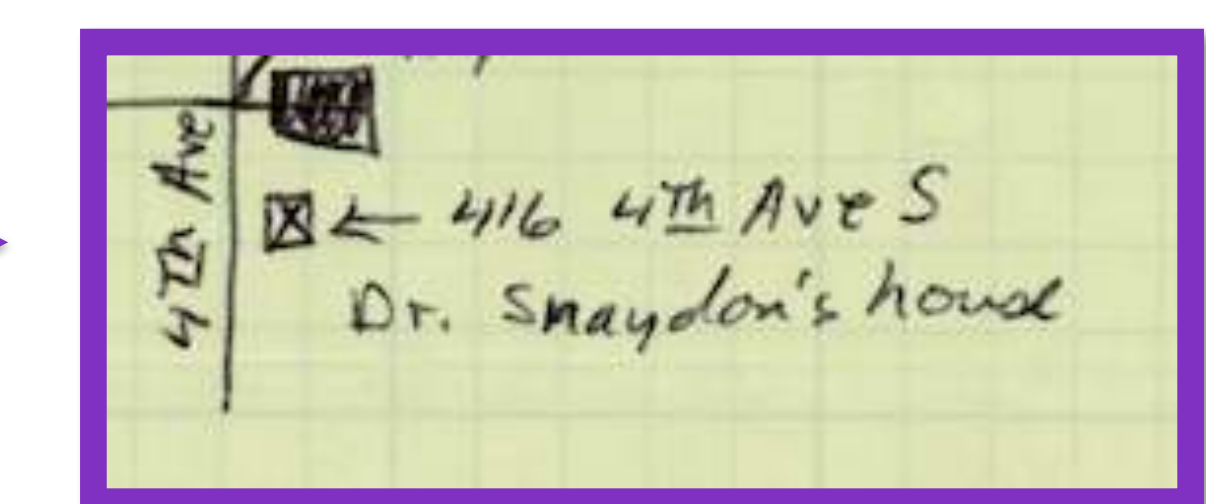
February 2, 1993

Hand drawn map showing final location for party

DOCUMENT DETAILS



The note was written on a scrap piece of paper, pointing to the intentionally ephemeral nature of the document



HOME OF MARCIA WINTER AND ROSE GLADNEY

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phone: 333-8227

REFERENCES

Frank Susko Papers, Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and Manuscripts

Miller-Stephens LGBTQ UA Student Organization collection, University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections