



AND NATCHEZ TRI-WEEKLY GAZETTE.

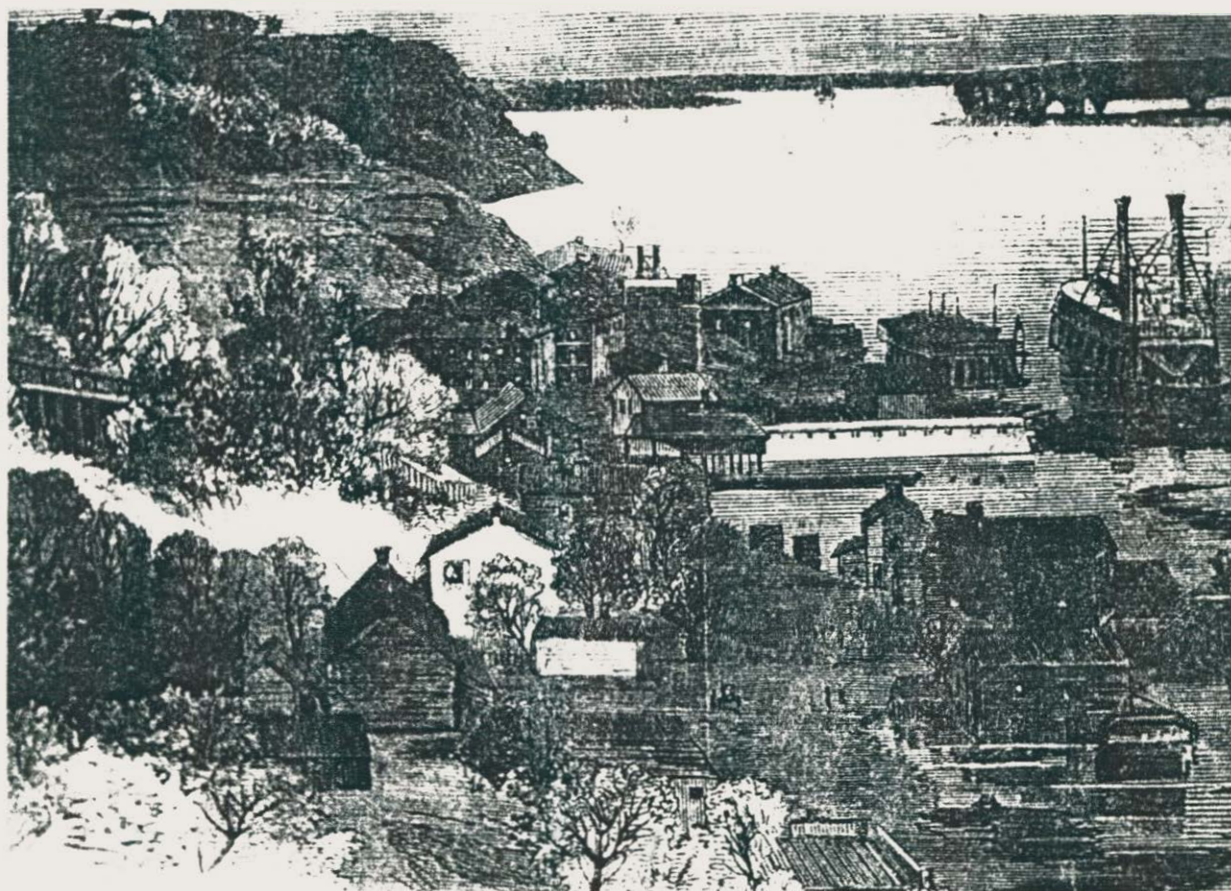
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**THE NATCHEZ DISTRICT:  
ARCHITECTURE AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE**

**FIELD GUIDE for the  
FOURTEENTH VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE FORUM  
Natchez, Mississippi  
May 12-15, 1993**

**edited by  
Jack Elliott, Mary W. Miller, and Belinda Stewart**

Conference sponsored by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Center for Small Town Research and Design, Historic Natchez Foundation, Mississippi Chapter/American Institute of Architects, Mississippi State University School of Architecture and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at University of Mississippi.

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Belinda Stewart  
Eupora, Mississippi

## INTRODUCTION

The Natchez District evokes a mixed and sometimes contradictory imagery of planters and frontiersmen, of opulence and poverty, of Frenchmen and Spaniards and Indians. For the visitor to the area, whose mind often associates the area with plantations and cotton fields, few cultivated areas are to be found. Instead one often encounters the anomaly of large rural houses bearing the name "\_\_\_\_\_ plantation," completely surrounded by thousands of acres of timberland.

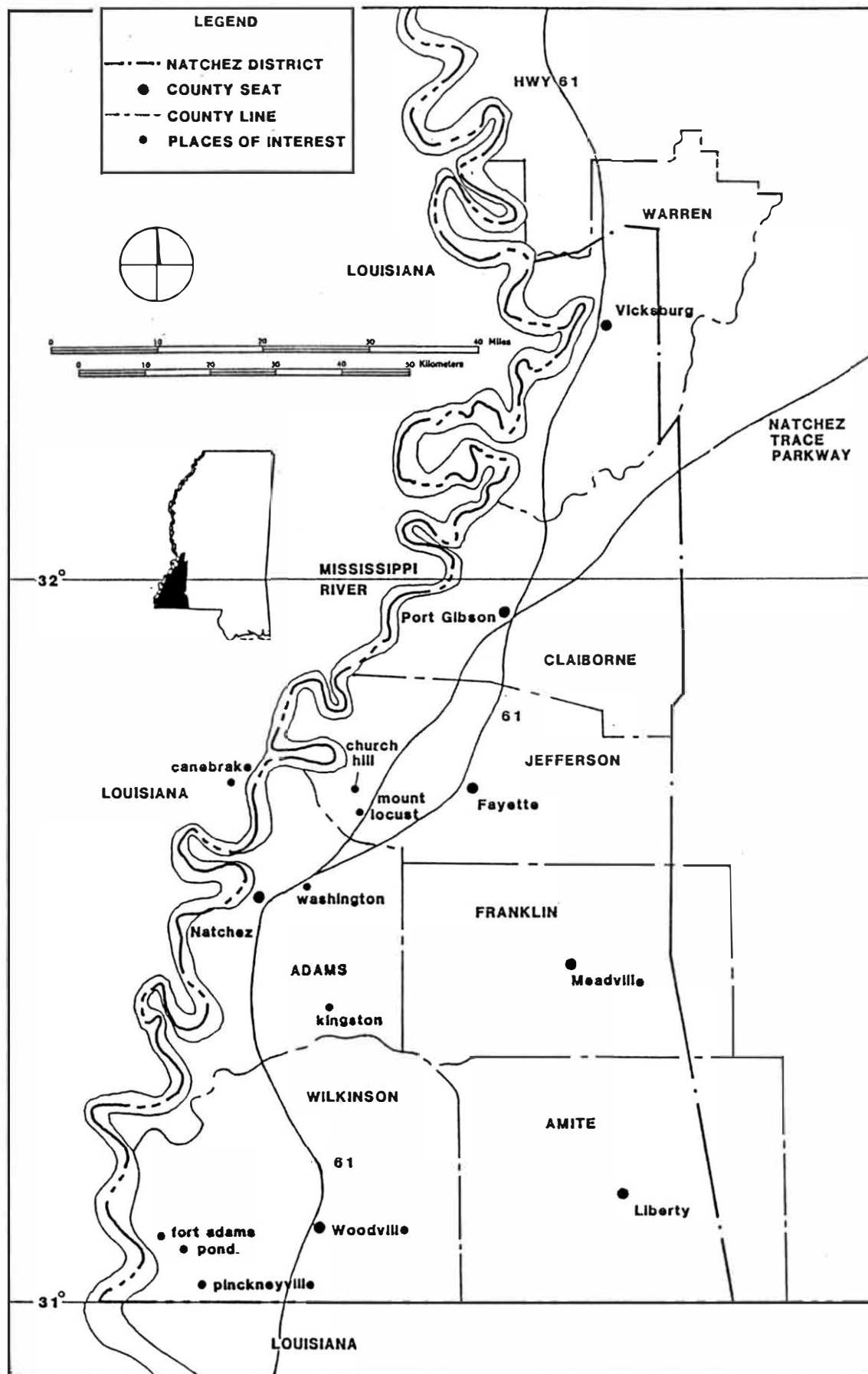
The variety of images associated with the Natchez District are represented in both words and in the physical remains that constitute the landscape. These are a residual collage, fossils from a complex process of settlement evolution, the interaction of variety of peoples and processes that have culminated in that which one sees today. To examine that past is to participate in a symbolic world of words and images, that lies between the lived time of the eternal present and the external cosmic time. It is, as Paul Ricoeur (1988:100) put it, a realm that lies between a "past that is abolished yet preserved in its traces."

The Natchez District occupies a narrow strip of land bounded on the west by the Mississippi River. Located primarily on loess-covered uplands, the District began in the south at the 31st parallel, or, as more commonly recognized, at the Loftis Heights (Roche d'Avion) on the Mississippi, and stretched northward to the mouth of the Yazoo River near Vicksburg, beyond which lay the vast bottomlands of the "Mississippi Delta". On the east, the District was only nebulously bounded by the eastward extent of settlement from the River. The only distinct boundary was a line that was surveyed by the British about 1778 to separate the District from land claimed by the Choctaws. Today, the Natchez District approximately corresponds to the seven Mississippi counties of Wilkinson, Adams, Jefferson, Claiborne, Warren, Amite, and Franklin.

In treating the history of settlement in the Natchez District, it would be misleading to treat it as a static region, because it evolved as both a concept and as a spatial entity. Originally when Europeans, primarily the French, referred to *les Natchez* -- Natchez -- they meant only the uplands, or bluffs, on the Mississippi River that was settled by the Natchez Indians, whose name became synonymous with this immediate area. Although known officially as Rosalie or Panmure, the fort that was established on the bluffs there in 1716 was more commonly known as "the fort of Natchez" or "Fort Natchez" thus preserving the name long after the dispersion of the Natchez Indians in 1730. When settlements grew up around the Natchez fort, first under the French, and later under the British and Spanish, they too were known under the rubric of "Natchez." The expansion and growth of these settlements eventually lead to the emergence of a discrete political unit under the Spanish administration that was known as " *el Distrito de Natchez* " -- "the Natchez District".

A dynamic conceptual basis for interpreting the evolution of the Natchez District is to be found in Donald Meinig's geographical interpretation of the emergence of the United States. In his work, the nation began as a series of colonies that were produced as Europe expanded around the world, establishing outposts and colonies that became increasingly interdependent as the transportation networks expanded. In America, after the initial exploration of an area, "points of attachment," were established to anchor the expanding global trade network into a New World hinterland. These bases of operations were usually in the form of towns, forts, or trading posts, all serving as bases of operation from which the colonizing powers maintained their claims to a territory and as entrepôts for the collection of raw materials (Meinig 1978:1190).

According to Meinig, the chroniclers of North American history "must trace what unfolded from the many points of attachment within it." Although many of these places were short-lived, others became the primary central places of "discrete colonization areas" with the latter being "the basic units in the geographical growth of the American nation." Numerous examples come to mind, such as Jamestown, the point of attachment around which the Virginia colony evolved, Charleston for South Carolina, and Philadelphia for Pennsylvania (Meinig 1978:1190-1191). Each colonization area, termed by Meinig "nuclei", had its own distinctive economic and social characteristics and each expanded until it



**THE NACHEZ DISTRICT**

merged with its neighbor. The characteristics of the nuclei were often essential in the emergence of distinctive cultural regions.

In the following narrative, it will become evident that Fort Natchez was effectively a "point of attachment" for the imperial powers and a central place for a discrete colonization area, that is, the Natchez District. The fort initially served as a strategic outpost for European powers, guarding the river, supplying convoys, and maintaining trade and diplomatic relationships with neighboring Indians.

Developing around the fort, the Natchez District evolved socially and economically from a rough frontier area into the core area of the Mississippi Territory with the latter eventually giving rise to the State of Mississippi. As a result of the reciprocal relationship that existed between the hinterland and the center, that is between the District and the fort, a parallel growth occurred as the fort evolved into the town of Natchez. The town served as the capital of the Spanish Natchez District and later as the first capital of the Mississippi Territory and remained as the major trade center for the State of Mississippi until the mid-nineteenth century.

Assimilated into the American settlement fabric, the Natchez District retained distinctiveness as it evolved into a wealthy cotton producing social center. The town and District were soon covered with numerous buildings associated with the cotton economy. The building boom of antebellum years was greatly curtailed as a result of the Civil War. Cotton still dominated the economy into the twentieth century, only to rapidly decline after the 1930's with cotton fields being converted to forest, pasture, and oil fields. However, a growing self-consciousness of the area's history has encouraged the preservation of the vast historical architectural repertoire and promotion of tourism. Along with this trend Natchez and the District have grown in the public perception and awareness as being something distinct, a place that is shrouded in history and legend. In exploring the Natchez District, the visitor should be aware that the material remains are part of a more complex mythic reality, of object and of subject, and of an intersubjective world that one participates in.

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Located between the 31st and the 33rd parallels and in proximity to the warm moist air masses of the Gulf of Mexico, the Natchez District lies within a region of humid, sub-tropical climate. With a mean annual rainfall of over 50 inches, hot summers and mild winters, the District is characterized by luxuriant plant growth and considerable stream discharge.

The District lies astride three physiographic provinces: (1) the Mississippi Alluvial Plain, which lies in a narrow, sometimes discontinuous strip along the western edge of the District, (2) the Loess Bluffs, lying to the east of the Alluvial Plain, is characterized by loessial soil and irregular topography, which is very fertile but also very susceptible to erosion, and (3) the Piney Woods, which lies to the east of the loess, and which is considerably less fertile.

Geologically, the Natchez District is situated on relatively recent geological formations that range in time from the Miocene to the Pleistocene epochs. Excepting the loess deposit, these often unconsolidated formations consist of marine, fluvial, and estuarine sediments.

The Mississippi River has played a dynamic role in the District. Its meanderings have carved out its wide alluvial plain that is relatively narrow on the eastern side but extends for tens of miles to the west. The low level plain has accentuated by way of contrast the high bluffland on the east. Continuing movements of the river have often eaten away at the sites of river towns, such as Grand Gulf and Natchez-under-the-hill, or moved away from them leaving them at a distance from the source of their livelihood, such as Rodney and Fort Adams.

The uppermost formation in the Natchez District is the loess deposit that has contributed so spectacularly to the topography and to the past fertility of the area. It extends as a belt running approximately north-south with its deepest deposits along the western edge of the uplands adjacent to the Mississippi floodplain. The deposit then progressively thins out to the east.

The deposit which apparently dates to the Pleistocene glaciation is apparently derived from fine glacial materials that were carried southward by the Mississippi River and deposited in vast quantities on the floodplain where without vegetation cover to secure it, much of the material was swept up by the prevailing southwesterly winds, and blown to the uplands on the eastern side of the river, where the change in topography resulted in their deposition. Because the loess was deposited on a land surface that was already dissected by streams, it is found on both hill-tops and valley bottom of the pre-loess landscape.

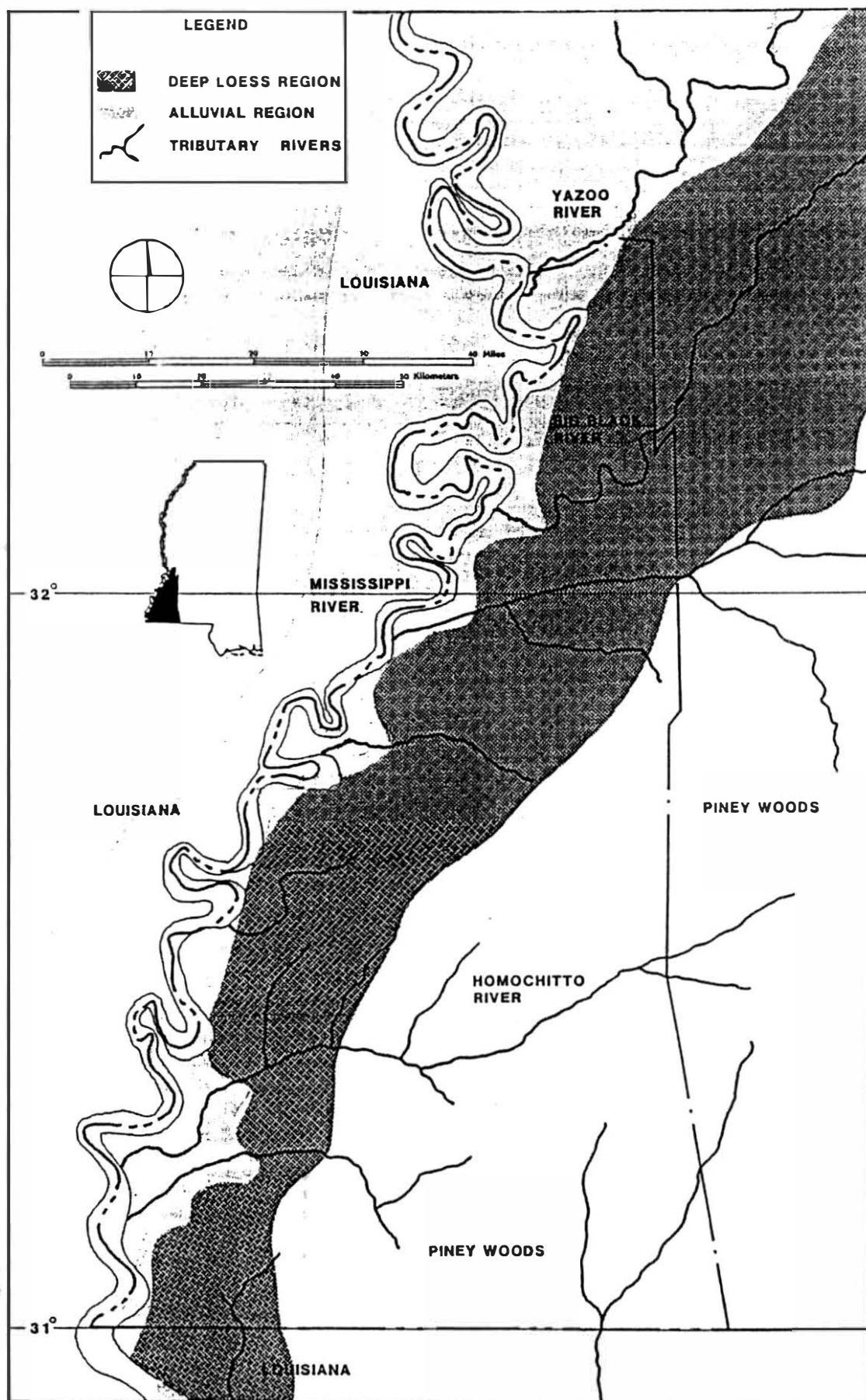
The loess is permeated by the shells of land snails and occasionally yields remains of mastodon and other Pleistocene mammals.

The topography associated with the Loess Bluff region is often characterized by steep hills and steep-walled valleys. This characteristic is particularly pronounced near the western edge of the bluffs where the Mississippi River has cut into them, producing the type landscape for which the region is so famous. In the early nineteenth century, Zadok Cramer (1811:211) described the town of Natchez as occupying

a very handsome situation and one that is uncommon on the Mississippi. It is built on a hill nearly perpendicular of about 200 feet in height from the surface of the river. This hill called the Bluff, affords a fine prospect up and down the river for two or three miles each way.

The bluff at Natchez has been subject to numerous landslides over the years as has been commented on by several writers (e.g. Hall 1909:564-565; Sealsfield 1828:122). Sir Charles Lyell (1849:153) on a visit to Natchez attributed the landslides in part to springs along the bluffs that undermine the overlying loam.





**PHYSIOGRAPHY OF THE NATCHEZ DISTRICT**

Although the steep, loess slopes are highly erodable if exposed to the weather, they are capable of maintaining very stable vertical profiles as a result of calcareous inclusions that tend to "cement" the loess. This characteristic is directly responsible for the processes that have produced one of the landscape features most characteristic of the District--the sunken roadbed. The phenomenon is produced by the rapid erosion of denuded road surfaces causes their level to drop considerably below that of the surrounding ground level, while the slopes along side the road attain almost verticality. The depth of many of these sunken roads along with their being overhung by the limbs of trees often produces a tunnel effect. Writing in the 1850s, Frederick Law Olmstead (1907:28-29) described such a road "with high banks on each side, coped with thick and dark, but free and sportive hedges, out of which avenues of trees grow carelessly and bend angel-like over the traveler."

## Soil

Much of the soil of the Natchez District receives its character from the loess formation. Because the loess is primarily a fine silt, the soil derived from it is a silt loam and is often referred to as "brown loam." Additionally, because the loess possesses many substances that are important for plant growth, the associated soil tends to be very fertile and will retain this fertility for a long time. However, the areas with the deepest loess deposits are on the western edge of the District which is also the most highly dissected. The greater slopes here have historically contributed to extensive erosion when these areas have been turned into cultivation (Vestal and McCutcheon 1942: 93-94; also Vanderford n.d.:58-61). In the mid-1830s J.H. Ingraham wrote *The Southwest by a Yankee* which is an astute description of the Natchez District that has provided much material for this work. Regarding the erosion of the loessial field, he observed that

The rich loam which forms the upland soil of this state is of a very slight depth--and after a few years is worn away by constant culture and the action of the winds and rain. The fields are then 'thrown out' as useless. Every plough-furrow becomes the bed of a rivulet after heavy rains--these uniting are increased into torrents, before which the soil dissolves like ice under a summer's sun. By degrees, acre after acre, of what was a few years previous beautifully undulating ground, waving with the dark green, snow-crested cotton, presents a wild scene of frightful precipices, and yawning chasms, which are increased in depth and destructively enlarged after every rain. There are many thousand acres within twenty miles of the city of Natchez, being the earliest cultivated portions of the country, which are now lying in this condition, presenting an appearance of wild desolation, and not unfrequently, of sublimity (Ingraham 1835:86-87; also see Cuming 1904:317; Kellar 1936b:138; Olmstead 1907:10-11).

Today, these highly fertile but erodable lands, once the domain of vast plantations, are now primarily in forest and pasture.

Eastward, as the loess deposit thins, underlying formations become more exposed and thus become increasingly important, the Piney Woods are usually sandy and gravelly loams or clay loams which are acidic and lacking in the fertility of the loessial soils. Consequently, these soils have never been cultivated as extensively as the loessial soils. Ironically today they are characterized by forest land much as are the more fertile loessial soils (Vestal and McCutcheon 1942:94).

A third category of soils is found on the alluvial plains of the Mississippi River and its tributaries. The materials that constitute the alluvial deposits is varied and consequently so too are the derived soils. Although many places near the streams are very sand and not suitable for cultivation, there are numerous areas that possess fertile soils (Vestal and McCutcheon 1942:94).

Today, most of the agriculture in the District is located on the alluvial soils (e.g. Childress, Bograd, and Marble 1976: Plate 8).

Today, the vegetation of the Natchez District is primarily forest. The portions of the Mississippi Alluvial Plain that are not in cultivation are dominated by oak, gum, and cypress. The Loess Bluffs are dominated by oak and hickory that gradually is replaced by loblolly and shortleaf pine as one travels eastward into the Piney Woods. Historically, the pine forests were dominated by longleaf pine that was harvested during the lumber boom of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and eventually replaced by the now dominant loblolly and short leaf pine. At the time of European contact, the area of the Natchez bluffs was dominated by prairies that were interspersed with clumps of trees, most of which were apparently oaks (see Iberville's 1700 observations in McWilliams 1981:125-126).

Even with the extensive clearing associated with settlement during the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth, virgin forest appears to have survived in places unsuitable for cultivation.

Writing in the 1850s, Frederick Law Olmstead (1907:9) observed that in the very rugged terrain north of Woodville, "the ground being too rough here for cultivation, the dense native forest remains intact." In the 1830s Ingraham (1835:104-105) had described in detail the surviving forests in the Natchez District:

'There is a grandeur in the vast forests of the south, of which a northerner can form no adequate conception. The trees spring from the ground into the air, noble columns, from fifty to a hundred feet in height, and, expanding like the cocoa, fling abroad their limbs, which, interlocking, present a canopy almost impervious to the sun, and beneath which wind arcades of the most magnificent dimensions. The nakedness of the tall shafts is relieved by the luxuriant tendrils of the muscadine and woodbine twining about them, in spiral wreaths, quite to their summit, or hanging in immense festoons from tree to tree. In these woods horsemen can advance without obstruction, so spacious are the intervals between the trees, so high the branches above them, and so free from underwood is the sward.

The openness inside the forest was possibly the result of grazing practices. The abundant growth of Spanish moss that is ubiquitous hanging from the trees of the district. During the nineteenth century, the moss was used as a substitute for horse hair and to stuff pillows and mattresses (Ferrall 1832:216).

Cane brakes were very common during the period of early settlement (Anderson 1958:12; Olmstead 1907:11). This type of vegetation was probably associated with bottomlands. As late as the 1830s, Ingraham (1835:107) ironically observes that the "pasture lands" of the Natchez District were not "broad green fields" but were instead "the woods and cane-brakes" of the area, a fairly traditional form of Southern open-range grazing (Jordan 1981:26).

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

### INDIANS

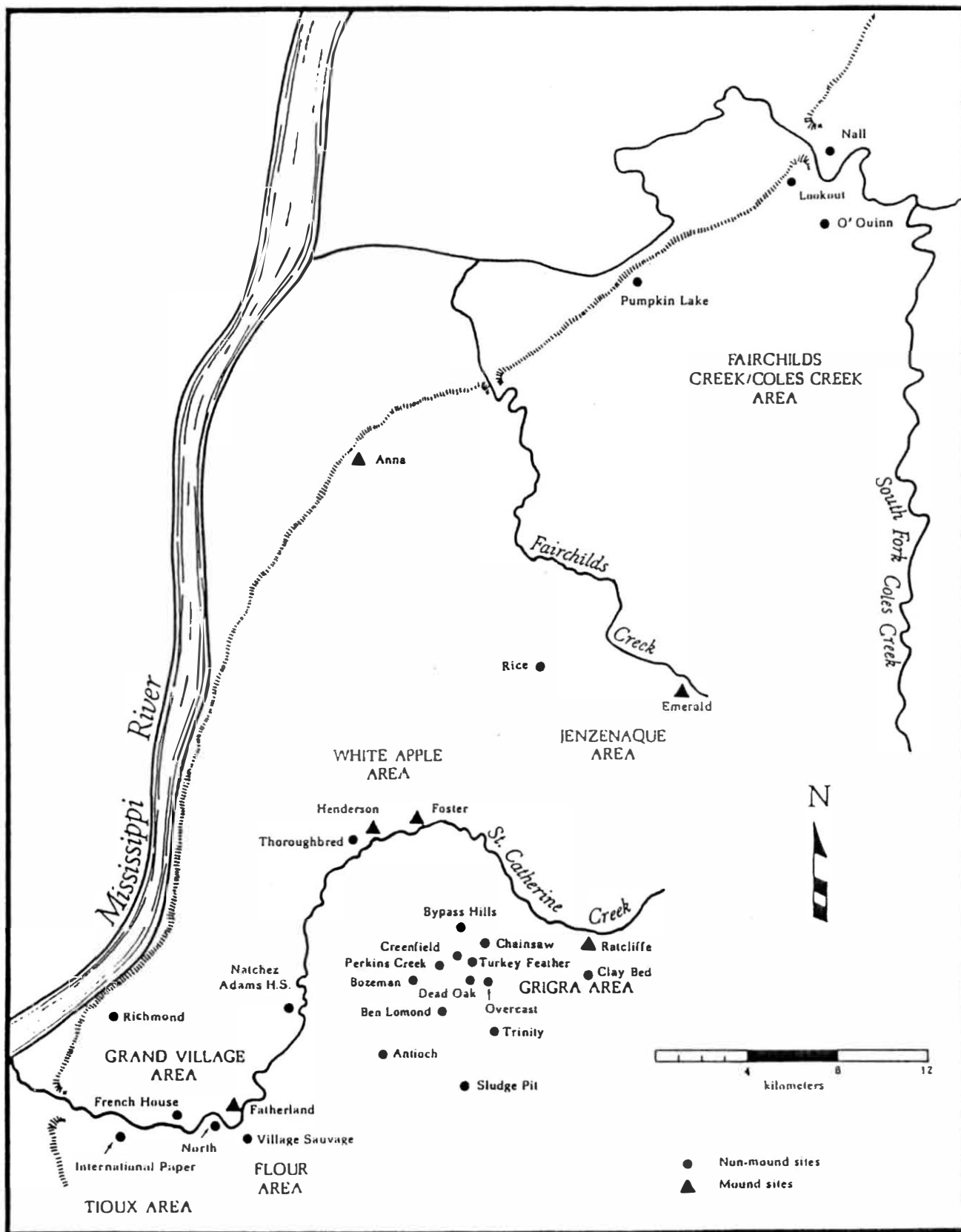
The ancestors of the American Indians crossed over into the Americas from Siberia during the last glaciation. Members of the earliest culture, the Paleo-Indians could have been in the Natchez District as early as 10,000 B.C. Remains of succeeding cultures have been found in the area that represent the transition from mobile, hunting and gathering societies to sedentary agricultural societies. By 1000 A.D. the Mississippian culture development was underway that developed into the most complex aboriginal social development in what is now the southeastern United States. On an agricultural base consisting of the production of maize, squash, and beans, and politically characterized by chiefdoms, this culture developed large agglomerated settlements often centered around plazas and pyramidal mounds that supported temples and the homes of elites. The large, often fortified settlements includes sites such as Cahokia in Illinois, Moundville in Alabama, Etowah and Ocmulgee in Georgia, Toltec in Arkansas, and Winterville and Lake George in Mississippi.

By the time that Hernando de Soto's expedition passed through the Southeast in 1539-1541, the population and culture of the Mississippians was in decline and within a century there were only a few groups still living in mound-centered settlements. The Natchez Indians, however, represent perhaps the best survival of this culture following the overall decline.

It has been estimated that in late prehistoric times the territory of the Natchez extended along the Loess Bluffs from the Homochitto River in the south to Vicksburg in the north, which is to say for almost the entire length of the Natchez District. They were likely associated with the large mounds and mound groups such as Anna and Emerald, the latter being the second largest surviving mound in the United States with a base of approximately eight acres (see description of Emerald Mound under Tour 1). Yet by the time of initial French contact, their population was considerably reduced and they had concentrated in the vicinity of the Natchez bluffs. Here their primary sociopolitical center was the Grand Village (i.e. the Fatherland site) which possessed platform mounds surmounted respectively by a temple and the home of their leader, the Great Sun. To partially compensate for a reduced population, the Natchez had adopted at least two other remnant groups, the Tious and the Grigra, that had originated in the Yazoo River basin north of Vicksburg.

Brown (1985:4, 6) has summarized the overall settlement pattern of the Natchez:

Historical documents have revealed the existence of at least nine Natchez villages in the early eighteenth century, but we have adequate information on only seven of them. Although the French employed the term "village," its application to the historic Natchez settlement pattern is confusing. The Natchez did not live in nucleated villages. The Grand Village, home of the Great Sun, served as the sociopolitical nucleus for the Natchez as a whole, but it was largely a vacant ceremonial center. The rest of the society was scattered across the landscape in districts which came under the jurisdiction of secondary members of the Sun class. Each district was characterized by a minor ceremonial center and a number of hamlets, each of which consisted of several houses. A Natchez "village," therefore, often covered quite a large territory and should be referred to as a "village area." The application of specific names to the village areas on Figure 3 is based upon our reading of the historical documents .... During the historic period the peoples of these village areas were divided into political factions. Generally friendly with the French were the Grand Village, Tioux, and Flour village populations, while the White Apple, Jenzenaque, and Grigra villages were, seemingly, always aligned with the English.



Protohistoric/Historic Aboriginal Sites in the Natchez Area  
(Source: Brown 1985)

## THE FRENCH

The origins of the Fort of Natchez that laid the seed for the Natchez District is to be found in the vision of the French who sought to claim and control the heart of North America by penetrating rapidly into the continent using the Mississippi River and its tributaries as highways. There they planned to establish strategic control points for defense and Indian diplomacy and to serve as entrepôts for raw materials to make the colony self-sufficient.

The exploration had begun by Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet, and later Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle. Operating out of bases in French-settled Quebec, these explorers crossed the Great Lakes and descended tributary streams to the Mississippi. Control of the Mississippi could nullify English territorial claims that extended from their Atlantic seaboard settlements westward to the Pacific and could separate the Spanish colonies of Florida and New Spain. In 1673, Marquette and Joliet descended the river as far as the mouth of the Mississippi itself, where he laid claim to then entire Mississippi Valley in the name of France. To protect this vast claim, he conceived of building a fort at the river's mouth to prevent intrusion by rival powers. Unfortunately, in 1687 La Salle was murdered following a failed attempt to establish his proposed fort, and his plan temporarily lapsed.

In the course of his 1682 descent and return ascent of the Mississippi. La Salle had stopped briefly at the Natchez bluffs where he acquainted himself with the Natchez Indians. In years to come the Natchez bluffs became a regular landing point for French explorers. Henri de Tonty, who had accompanied La Salle in 1682, later visited there in 1686 and 1690.

Pierre LeMoyne, Sieur d'Iberville, a Canadian-born Frenchman, first began to implement the vision of La Salle. Following the 1697 conclusion of the War of the League of Augsburg, England, France, and Spain devoted their energies to advancing their New World empires. Sailing from France in 1698, d'Iberville arrived in the Gulf of Mexico in 1699. There he found that there was not one mouth of the Mississippi River but many small distributaries which made entrance to the river difficult for ocean vessels. Consequently he established the beginnings of the Louisiana colony, as it was called, not on the river but on the Gulf Coast itself, where the colony's headquarters remained for over two decades.

During the course of an exploratory trip in February 1700, Iberville arrived at the Natchez bluffs. Traveling inland about three miles to visit the Natchez chief, the Great Sun, at the Grand Village, d'Iberville left a description of the landscape:

From the river landing one climbs a hill, about 150 fathoms high, a sheer bluff covered with hardwood trees. Once on top of the hill one discovers a country of plains, prairies, full of little hills, with clumps of trees in some spots, many oak trees, and many roads criss-crossing, leading from one hamlet to another or to huts. Those who have rambled around for 3 or 4 leagues say they have found the same country everywhere, from the edge of the hill to the chief's village. According to what I have seen, it is a country of yellowish soil mixed with a little gravel as far out from his hut as the distance of a cannon's shot, where the gray soil begins, which appears to me to be better. This countryside is very much like France (McWilliams 1981:125-126).

d'Iberville died on board ship in Havana harbor in 1706, and it was left to others to further the French dream of control of the Mississippi River. Notably, in 1718 d'Iberville's younger brother, Jean Baptiste LeMoyne, Sieur de Bienville, founded the city of New Orleans near the river's mouth. The capital of Louisiana was moved from the Gulf Coast to the new city in 1722, effectively consummating La Salle's plan for erecting a control point at the mouth of the Mississippi. Yet by that time, the French had already proceeded with the establishment of other control points in the interior of North America, including Arkansas Post, Fort Toulouse on the Alabama River, Natchitoches on the Red River, and Fort Natchez, the latter having been established by Bienville himself.



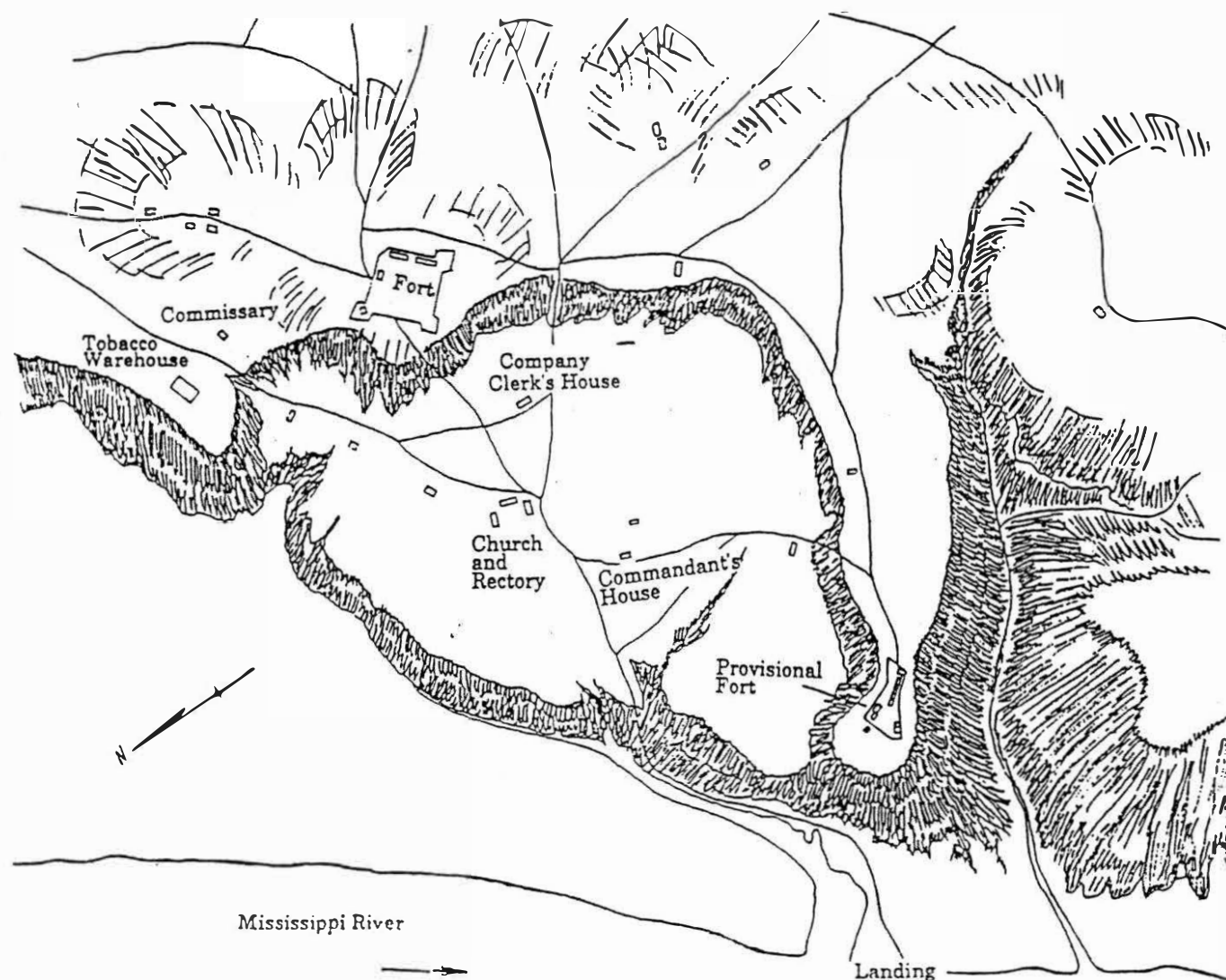
Following years of sporadic contact, in 1716 the French established a permanent outpost on the Natchez bluffs by erecting Fort Rosalie, or Fort Natchez as it was often commonly termed. Standing on its high bluff overlooking the Mississippi River, the palisade fort was rectangular in plan with a bastion on each corner. Adjacent to the fort stood the commissary under the supervision of the Clerk of the Company of the Indies. For decades to come, the fort was to serve as a strategic control point for monitoring and supplying traffic on the river and as a trading post, primarily dedicated to purchasing hides from the Indians. The Indian trade played a role in the international diplomacy of North America in that it was used by the colonial powers to vie for and maintain the allegiance of the Indian tribes.

The location of the fort at Natchez is the product of both historical and geographical factors related to its functions pertaining to strategic control and trade. By virtue of antecedent events, the location had become an established landing for the French and a point of contact with the Indians. By being located on a bluff approximately 180 feet above the water and on the outside of a bend, the site possessed unobstructed views for over a mile both up and down the river. Additionally, the site benefited from access to the Indian trails that converged on the area and consequently connected the fort with not only the Natchez Indians but also the Choctaws, the Chickasaws, and more distant tribes. Finally, the fertile hinterland afforded possibilities of profitable agricultural endeavors.

In 1717, the charter for the Louisiana colony passed from Antoine Crozat to the Company of the West, soon to become the Company of the Indies. The Company was able to dramatically increase the population of the colony from mere hundreds into the thousands by granting "concession," or tracts of land, to either individuals or corporations. The first concessions were given to small companies who then sold shares with the stockholders being expected to travel to Louisiana to cultivate their portion of the concession. In 1719, however, concessions began to be granted to wealthy financiers who launched expeditions to establish and operate their land grants as plantations.

Lured no doubt by the fort, which offered a semblance of law and order, and by the fertile soil, many of the new land grantees descended upon Natchez, where they settled between the Mississippi River and the nearby St. Catherine Creek. The first, who began arriving about 1718, were primarily smallholders whose farms were "dispersed in the country, each amidst his field." Many of these small farmers had settled at Natchez where, with its numerous meadows, it was less expensive to clear farmland than it was on the bottomlands and natural levees of the Mississippi to the south. About 1720 two plantations were established on St. Catherine Creek, as it came to be called: the St. Catherine Concession, after which the creek was named, and the Terre Blanch Concession. During a 1723 visit to Natchez, Diron d'Arteguette described the settlers as engaged in the cultivation of "maize, beans, and other vegetables in quantity." He further noted that they "labor principally at tobacco raising, which grows there very fine and [is] good and abundant, but the scarcity of negroes among them prevents them from pushing forward this industry" (Mereness 1916:45-46). As a cash crop, tobacco bore promise of providing an economic base for the settlement. By 1729, approximately 738 inhabitants resided at Natchez, of which 458 were Europeans (28 military and 430 civilians) and 280 were black slaves.

Over the years tensions arose between the growing French colony and the neighboring Natchez Indians. In late 1722 hostilities between the Indians and the French at the St. Catherine Concession led to violence, and the following year, 1723, violence again broke out. Matters reached a climax when the Natchez discovered that the Commandant intended to seize one of their villages and confiscate its lands. On the morning of November 28, 1729, Natchez warriors interspersed themselves among the scattered French settlers, ostensibly on friendly terms. Then upon an attack signal that was transmitted through the area, the warriors attacked the Frenchmen, who, caught offguard, were virtually defenseless. Before the fighting ceased, they had suffered over two hundred casualties, mostly men, but including some women and children. The surviving women and children were taken hostage, while the slaves were released. Only about twelve Natchez were killed. After looting the fort, the warehouses, and various residences, the Natchez burned all of the buildings (Rowland and Sanders 1927:54-63; Du Pratz 1975:90-91). In regard



The Fort of the Natchez and its Environs. This is a tracing of a portion of a map by Ignace Francois Broutin entitled *Carte des Environs du Fort Rosalie des Natchez et du Fort Provisionnelle fait depuis la Destruction de ce Poste arrive le 28 9bre 1729 entre 8 et 9 heures du Matin par les Sauvages*, No. 35, Section Outre Mer, Archives Nationales, Paris. Although undated, the map was undoubtedly made about 1730, shortly after the provisional fort was constructed following the 1729 massacre. All of the other buildings, however, antedate the massacre, indicating that the map was probably constructed using a base map that was made as part of Broutin's work at Natchez in the 1720s.

The individual building labels are translations of identifications that are included in the cartouche of the original map.



Detail of a painting by Dumont de Montigny showing the nucleus of French Natchez during the 1720s.

to this terrible destruction, Bienville observed that it was as if Louisiana had "lost one-half of its establishment" (Rowland and Sanders 1932:593).

French retaliation was swift. Governor Perier led a force upriver and attacked the Natchez Indians, besieging them in forts that had been hastily constructed near their villages. They were eventually allowed to escape across the Mississippi in return for the release of the women and children who were being held hostage. In subsequent campaigns against the Natchez, the French managed to kill or enslave most of the tribe. The remainder found refuge with various tribes throughout the Southeast (Green 1936).

The rebuilding of Fort Natchez began almost immediately. It was reconstructed with earthen embankments in the shape of a pentagon surmounted by a palisade, all surrounded by a moat (Broutin 1732; Rowland and Sanders 1927:136; 1932:562, 592-593, 662-663). Following the rebuilding of the fort, France continued to maintain there a garrison of about fifty troops until 1763 (Claiborne 1978:68; Rowland, Sanders, and Galloway 1984b:142, 255). The fort continued to provide a military presence on a frontier that remained politically unstable as France and Britain contended for territorial control through the use of Indian proxies. Much of the danger to the French in the Lower Mississippi Valley was provided by the long-time allies of the British--the Chickasaws--whose raids on French settlements were countered by the Natchez garrison. In times of hostility, detachments from tribes allied with the French such as the Tunicas and the Arkansas could be deployed to Natchez to assist the garrison. Additionally, from as early as 1733 until as late as 1758 a remnant of the Ofogoula tribe resided at Natchez "beneath the cannons of the fort" and participated in military ventures with the French troops (Rowland and Sanders 1927:196, 300; Rowland, Sanders, and Galloway 1984a:250, 337-339; 1984b:24, 34, 48-49, 143, 176, 212, 216).

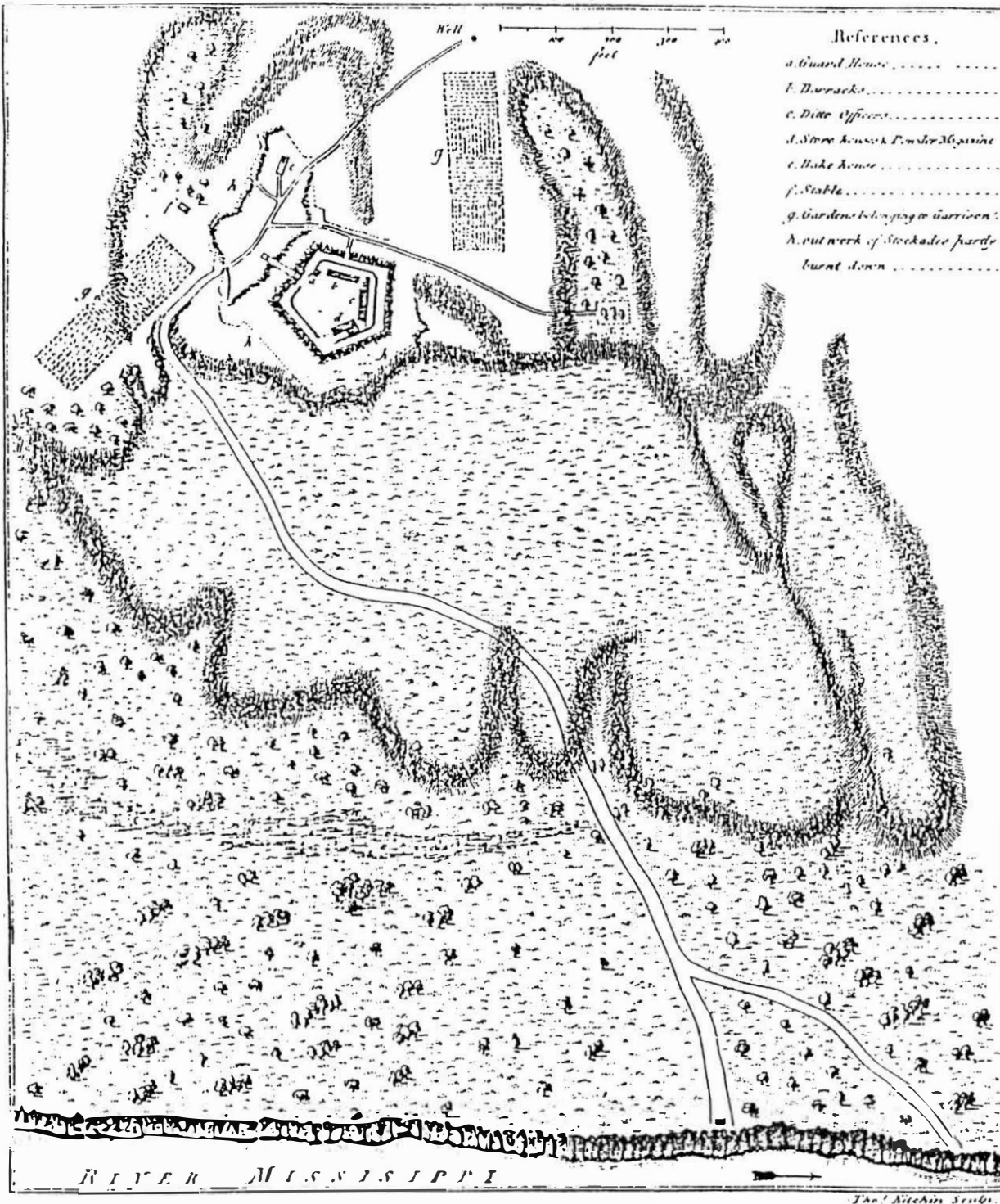
Besides its military role, the fort continued to function as a distribution center following its rebuilding. To facilitate movements of the French along the Mississippi, it served as a supply depot for convoys ascending to the Illinois settlements and as a station for the *voyageurs*, while continuing as a center of trade with the Indians (Rowland and Sanders 1932:590, 593; Rowland, Sanders, and Galloway 1984b:250; Chambers 1942:14n). However, despite the importance of the fort as a vital cog in the French strategic network and despite the potential of the surrounding fertile land, the French never reestablished agricultural settlements at Natchez following the massacre of 1729.

Despite its vision, France's attempt at founding a North American empire was doomed. Although Louisiana witnessed relatively little military activity during the French and Indian War, France did lose the war and, by virtue of the 1763 Treaty of Paris, lost all of its North American holdings.

In the division of France's North American land holdings between Spain and Great Britain, the Natchez area was incorporated into the newly established British province of West Florida. The following years were a period of quiet tension as both Great Britain and Spain attempted to provide for the defense of their own territory by establishing and maintaining forts and by wooing the allegiance of the Indian tribes.

Although the former governor of French Louisiana, Louis Billouard de Kerlerac, suggested that the new British administration place a garrison of two officers and fifty soldiers at Natchez, such an action was not carried out immediately, probably for financial reasons (Rowland 1911:9, 56-57, 117). Finally, Colonel William Tayler, acting brigadier general of the military forces in West Florida, ordered a portion of the 21st Regiment to garrison the fort at Natchez. Thus on September 29, 1766, a detachment of the Scottish Fusiliers consisting of four officers and forty-four men arrived at Natchez to occupy the fort and protect the western frontier of West Florida. They found the fort, now renamed "Panmure," to be in "a repairable State," following its three years of abandonment. The Spanish responded quickly to the garrisoning of Fort Natchez by establishing their own fort, San Luis de Natchez, on the west bank of the river in the spring of 1767 (Chambers 1942:15-16, 18; Holmes 1975:100)

# PLAN OF FORT ROSALIA.



Captain Philip Pittman's map of the Fort of the Natchez, 1765. Depicts the fort as abandoned by the French in 1763. From Pittman, *The Present State of the European Settlements on the Mississippi*.



Again the fort served as a diplomatic center by which the allegiance of the Indians was wooed through trade. Shortly after the regarrisoning of the fort, General Thomas Gage wrote that "the Post of the Natche's [sic] is reported to be of Consequence, chiefly for gaining an Influence over the Savages in those Parts" (quoted in Chambers 1942:29). This position of consequence with the Indians was no doubt due to the continued role of the fort in the fur trade. Writing in 1768, Montfort Browne, Governor of British West Florida, noted that over 2000 Indians "of different nations: hunt every winter on British lands in the Natchez area and "take shelter under our Fort on purpose to Barter for our Goods" (quoted in Chambers 1942:40).

During the British rule, agrarian settlements were established that provided the demographic base for, sequentially the Natchez District and the Mississippi Territory. This settlement was initiated by the issuing of grants by the British government at Pensacola, with the first for the Natchez area dating to May 26, 1766. Most of the early grants were in the vicinity of the fort, which had been reoccupied in 1766. By the spring of 1768, undoubtedly encouraged by the promise of security offered by the presence of the regarrisoned fort, people were beginning to settle in the Natchez vicinity as indicated by Governor Montfort Browne who wrote that:

Considerable Tracts of Land have been granted in many parts of the Province, particularly on the Mississippi to able Planters, some of whom have at great Expense begun to settle, and others are expected from Virginia, Pensilvania [sic], and elsewhere, who have given security for the Settlement thereof (quoted in Chambers 1942:37).

The American Revolution saw the passage of West Florida and with it Natchez from Great Britain to Spain which now controlled the entire Lower Mississippi River Valley as part of an empire that stretched from Florida to California. Meanwhile the population of the Natchez District had continued to grow. The Spanish government in an attempt to build up the Natchez District as a viable buffer between their territory and the American state offered liberal emmigration policies, generous land grants, and a guaranteed market for tobacco in Madrid as incentives to lure emmigrants. The success of the policies is evidenced by the number of settlers that moved into the district, many having arrived from the Atlantic seaboard settlements through descending the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers (James 1968:40-42). According to the 1784 census, taken by the Spanish, there were 1,619 residents of which 1,121 were whites and 498 were black slaves. By 1788 the total population was 1,926, and by 1792, it had more than doubled to 4,346 (Holmes 1965:114-117).

In 1785, Commandant Francisco Bouligny noted gloatingly that the settlers according to a conservative estimate, will extract this year from a peaceful and satisfactory cultivation a product of one hundred and fifty to two hundred thousand pesos in tobacco, cotton, maize, vegetables, animals, wood for construction, and planed lumber--a thing to be marvelled at by one who gives it any thought, for such production is seen in only a few parts of the world (Kinnaird 1946:136-137).

In late 1790, the economy of the District was thrown into crisis when in response to a glutted international tobacco market, the Spanish government decided to cut its annual purchases of Louisiana tobacco from 2,000,000 pounds to 40,000. The previous year, the Natchez District had alone produced 1,402,725 pounds of the crop (James 1968:48).

In desperation, the planters briefly turned to indigo as a substitute cash crop, only to have the 1792 crop devastated by insects. In 1795, news reached the District of the Eli Whitney's invention of the saw gin which could clean 500 to 1000 pounds of lint a day. The saw gin was designed for ginning short staple cotton, which was far better adapted to the District than the tropical long staple cotton. Almost immediately, several planters had saw gins improvised and began to increase their production of cotton which was in demand as a result of the development of textile mills in England. Whereas cotton production in the District amounted to only 36,351 pounds in 1794, it had soared to 1,200,000



pounds by 1798, paving the way for the antebellum Cotton Kingdom (James 1968:51-52).

The ethnic composition of the District was clearly dominated by Anglo-Americans and their black slaves with there being only a minority of Latins, people of French and Spanish origins. In 1785, Francisco Bouligny, the commandant of the Natchez fort, wrote to the Spanish governor in New Orleans that

the greater part of the inhabitants of this town [he is actually referring to the district in general] are natives of North America, others are English royalists, a few are French, and very rarely there is a Spaniard (Kinnaird 1946:136).

In 1797, Francis Baily (1969:150) reported that

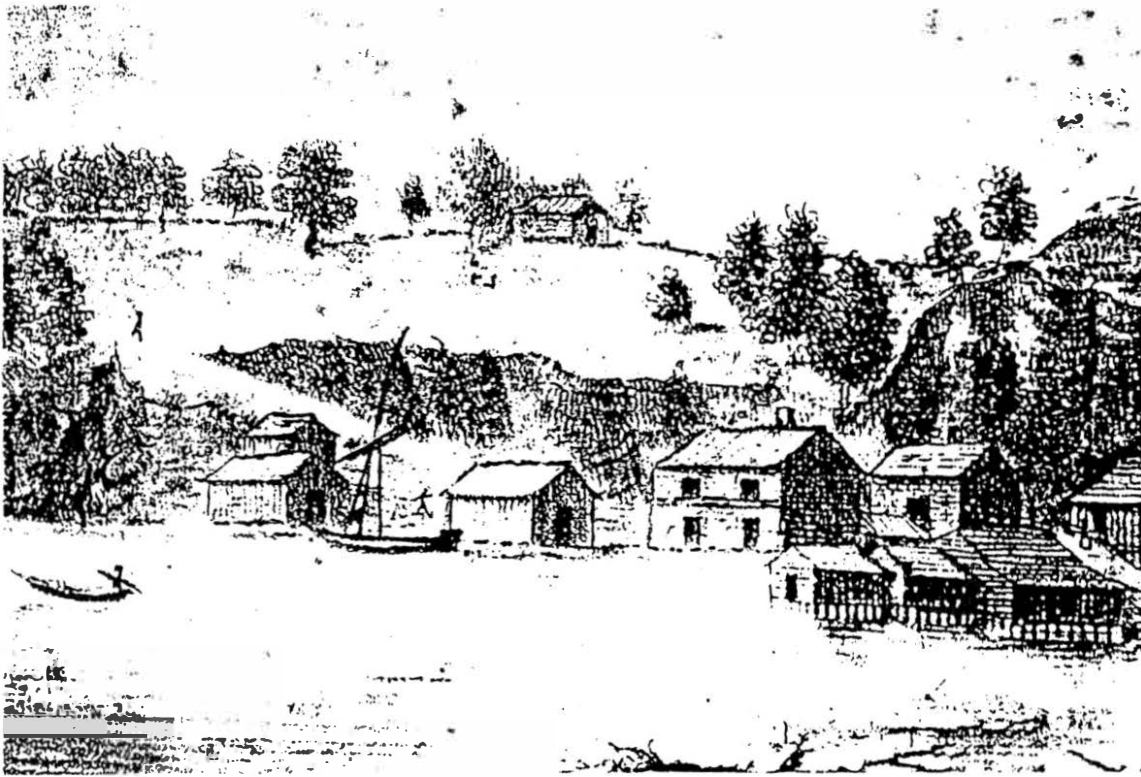
This district has been settled principally by English and Americans; and though the country was given up to the Spaniards in 1783 [sic], the proportion of Spanish inhabitants is very small.

These accounts both indicate that the predominant ethnic composition of the Natchez District population that began under the British rule, continued on through the Spanish regime, during which time there were relatively few Spaniards outside of administrative and military positions and even many of these "Spaniards" were actually French creoles bearing slightly hispanicized names. This overall ethnic pattern continued into the nineteenth century.

In the years following the American Revolution, the Spanish turned to matters of administering its settlements along the Mississippi. Many of these widely separated settlements were under the military rule of commandants. For the Natchez District, the commandant was attached to the fort where he was supported by a garrison of soldiers, a quartermaster, and a surgeon. The commandant served as a combination of sheriff and justice and could appoint local residents to serve as minor magistrates, or *alguaciles*. A warehouse that was associated with the fort continued to supply the garrison and provide the Indians with gifts and provisions (Holmes 1965:18-20, 49-50; Lemon 1989:51).

In 1787, Governor-General Miro converted the administration of the Natchez District into a civilian government, undoubtedly as a result of the continued demographic growth, and a civilian governor supplanted the commandant as chief official. The first governor was long-time Spanish civil servant Manuel Gayoso de Lemos. In association with the change in government, Governor Gayoso established a town to provide a more effective administrative center than could be provided by the mere handful of buildings clustered around the fort. The rudiments of a town had already emerged during the British regime. By 1776, a number of houses and stores had sprung up on the *batture* located below the bluffs on the river's edge at Natchez, giving rise to what later became known as Natchez-under-the-hill. It was probably in the summer of 1790 that a town plat was surveyed adjacent to the fort. A church and hospital were constructed by the government, while private citizens erected residences, stores and shops. Additionally, Gayoso organized a *cabildo* or representative body which was to meet in Natchez at a rented house which was termed "Government House." With Natchez as the capital of the district, a secondary administrative center known as Villa Gayoso was established to the north which consisted of a parish church, commandant's house, priest's house, barracks, and a kitchen. Overseers were appointed to maintain the growing network of roads that converged on the fort and town and that assured communication and travel between the center and the outlying settlements.

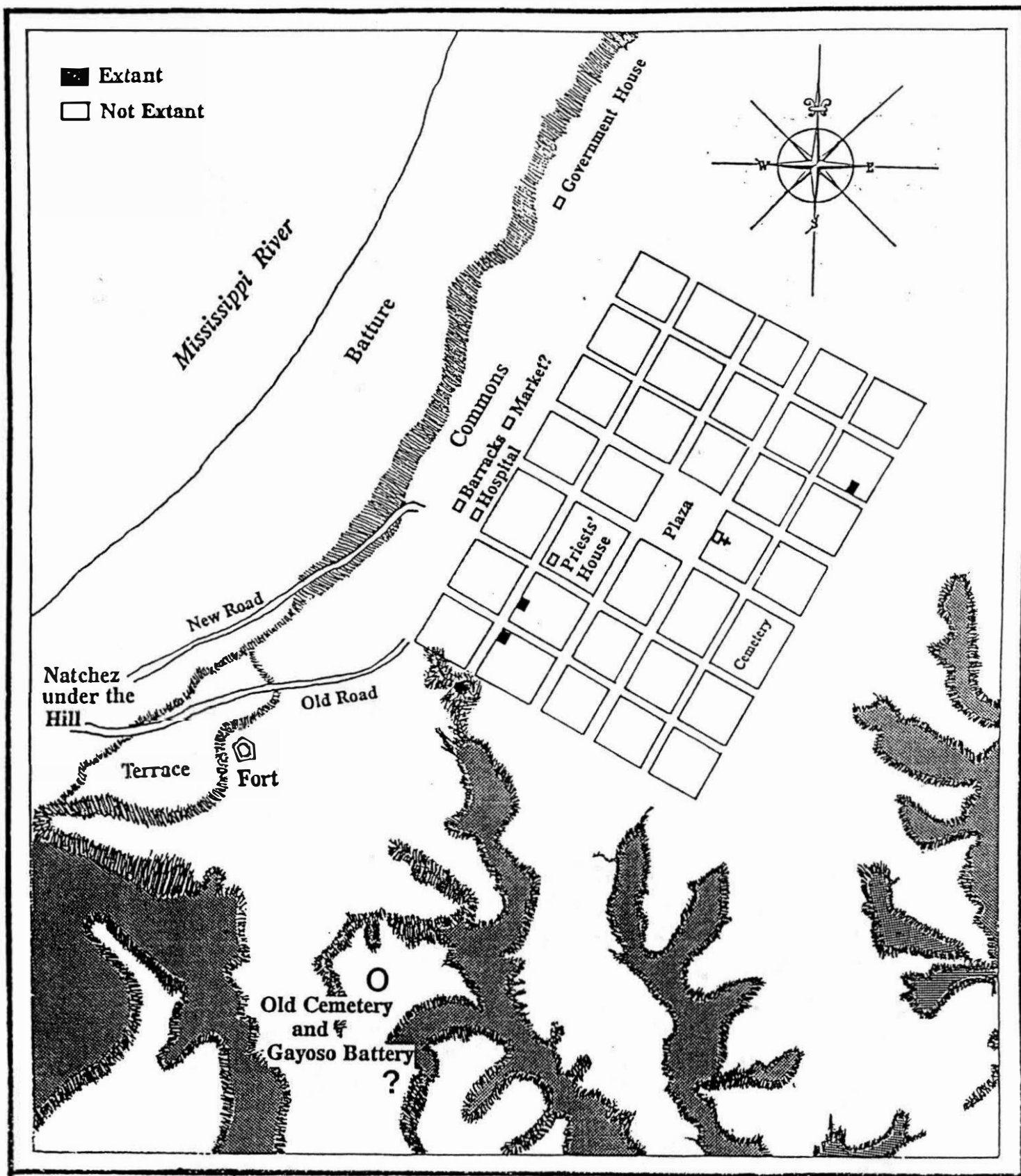
By the end of the eighteenth century, the Natchez District had emerged as a coherent sociopolitical entity. Although the population had continued to expand inland, the greatest concentration remained around Natchez. The clustering of much of the population around the fort and town of Natchez was part of a reciprocal relationship between the central place and its hinter land. Settlers tended to cluster around the fort and town for social and economic benefits, which included increased security



A portion of Natchez-under-the-hill ca. 1815 by Edouard de Montule.



Natchez-under-the-hill during the mid-nineteenth century  
(Scharff collection, Armstrong Public Library, Natchez)



Natchez in the 1790s

and access to the landing for shipping agricultural produce to market. The increased social and economic interactions that took place at the center in turn encouraged the center to grow.

In the years following the American Revolution, the United States began to assert a claim to the portion of Spanish West Florida that lay north of the 31st parallel. The most populated area within this claim was the Natchez District. In October 1795, the Treaty of San Lorenzo, also known as Pinckney's Treaty, was signed, in which Spain agreed to give possession of the disputed lands to the United States. The exchange of territory was not totally effected though until the night of March 30, 1798, when the Spanish garrison withdrew from Natchez.

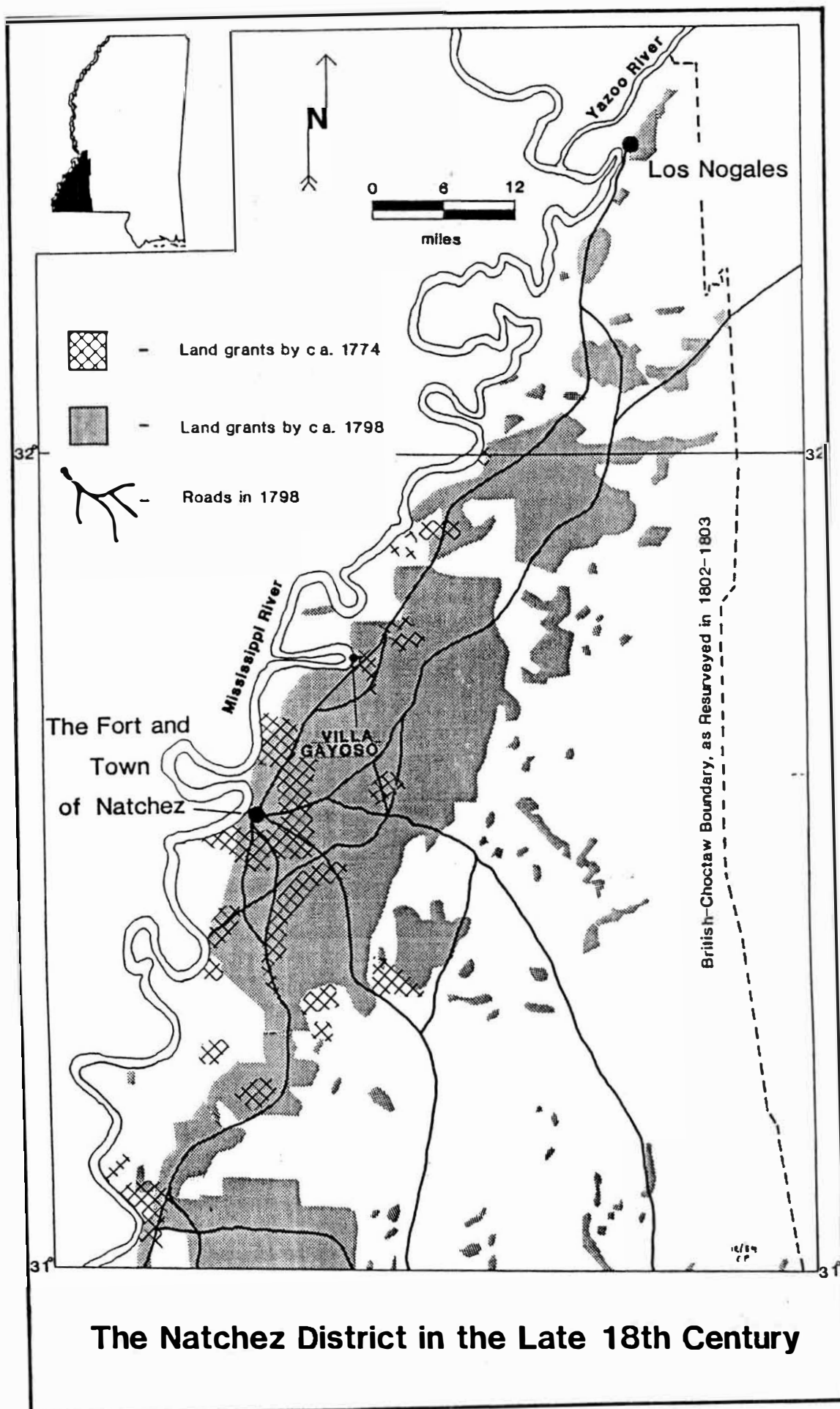
On April 7, 1798, only a few days following Spanish withdrawal, the United States Congress passed legislation creating the Mississippi Territory. In the absence of a civil government, Captain Issac Guion with the American army served as the commandant for a military government until the August 6 arrival of the appointed governor, Winthrop Sargent.

The newly established Mississippi Territory was little more than an American version of the Spanish Natchez District. The boundaries of the Territory on the south, west, and north were respectively the 31st parallel, the Mississippi River, and an east-west line that began at the mouth of the Yazoo River, making these virtually identical to those of the Natchez District. The Territory's eastern boundary, however, was the Chattahoochee River, almost 400 miles east of the Mississippi River, but most of these vast lands had little bearing on the socio-political composition of the Territory since most of this land was still claimed by the Indians and had very few non-Indian inhabitants, except for a small pocket of Anglo-American settlement around Fort St. Stephens on the lower Tombigbee River. For all practical purposes the Natchez District and more specifically Natchez was the center of territorial activities. It was there that the capital was established and that most of the commercial activities of the territory took place. Indeed, the American Congress was hardly even aware of the existence of the Tombigbee settlement (Haynes 1973:174).

The year 1798 marked the beginning of rapid political, social, and demographic change. The Natchez District at that time was a demographically discrete settlement separated from the state that had just absorbed it by hundreds of miles of territory claimed by the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Creeks. The Federal Government almost immediately began work to improve a number of trails that connected the district with the settlements around St. Stephens and Nashville. Out of this were born wagon roads that provided improved transportation through the Indian territories.

Rapid boundary changes accompanied by cessions of Indian land soon left the Natchez District in a very altered geopolitical situation. In 1805, the northern boundary of the Mississippi Territory was moved northward to the 35th parallel to encompass a vast new territory of land that was still primarily owned by the Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks. Between 1810 and 1813 additional large territories between the 31st parallel and the Gulf Coast acquired from Spanish West Florida were added bringing the territory to its maximum geographical extent. In 1817 the territory was divided into two parts with the western becoming the State of Mississippi in that year and the eastern becoming the State of Alabama in 1819. A series of treaties between 1805 and 1834 extinguished the remaining title of the three Indian tribes to the balance of the territory providing for a rush of new settlers. By the mid-1830s, the Natchez District had not only long ceased to be a separate political entity but it has also lost its demographic discreteness, being now only one component of American settlement that extended from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Mississippi River and beyond in the west.

As the center of the District, Natchez became the first capital of the Mississippi Territory in 1798. However, as a result of political rivalry the capital was moved to the newly founded town of Washington in 1802. Washington lay only about five miles from Natchez and was thus little more than a suburb. Thus the removal of the territorial capital was little more than a change in name, with the center of political power remaining in effectively the same place. With the continued settlement of land to the east and north of the District, the capital of the State of Mississippi was eventually established







Natchez in 1822, viewed from the south. Detail from a painting by John James Audubon



at the new town of Jackson which was more closer to the demographic center.

Nevertheless Natchez continued to be of major importance. With its fertile loess soils, its developing cotton economy, and its growing population, the District became a major cotton producing area. People of modest means often became millionaires almost overnight. As Ingraham (1835:84-85) observed in the early 1830s:

A plantation well stocked with hands, is the ne plus ultra of every man's ambition .... Young men who come to this country, "to make money," soon catch the mania, and nothing less than a broad plantation, waving with the snow-white cotton bolls, can fill their mental vision.... Hence the great number of planters and the few professional men of long or eminent standing in their several professions. In such a state of things no men grow old or gray in their profession if at all successful. As soon as the young lawyer acquires sufficient to purchase a few hundred acres of the rich alluvial [sic] lands, and a few slaves, he quits his profession at once, though perhaps just rising into eminence, and turns cotton planter.

The growth of plantation resulted in a fluorescence of large residences both in the towns and in the countryside. The cotton trade supported the growth of river port towns such as Vicksburg, Warrenton, Grand Gulf, Rodney, and Fort Adams. Natchez, however, was the chief beneficiary of the boom and remained the largest town in Mississippi through the Civil War.

During the early nineteenth century the Mississippi River, and to a lesser degree its major tributaries were the major transportation routes in the District. In the 1830s, however, a number of railroad development schemes were implemented. The earliest plans were for short lines that would feed into Mississippi River ports. Thus Natchez constructed a line that led into its hinterland, another was to run from Vicksburg to Clinton, another from Grand Gulf to Port Gibson, and another to run from St. Francisville, Louisiana, to Woodville, Mississippi. However, by the beginning of the Civil War

"Adams County has been and is being explored thoroughly for oil and gas structures by representatives of a number of companies.... Leasing has been lively, and at least two wells have been drilled during the last few months." Vestal and McCutcheon 1942:89

"Petroleum and natural gas account for the bulk of the dollar value of mineral resources produced in Adams County. Production of oil and gas began in Adams County on October 4, 1943, just a few years after the first commercial oil production in the State (at Tinsley Field in Yazoo County in 1939). .... In 1974 there were 378 producing oil and gas wells; this put Adams County in second place among the State's 82 counties. In the same year, 4,519,089 barrels of oil were produced, the fourth highest amount among the counties. Also produced were 857,697 MCF (thousand cubic feet) of natural gas, in which Adams County took 17th place." (Childress, Bograd, and Marble 1976:47-48)

"In 1945 the first producing well was brought in at nearby Cranfield .... During the boom years of the 1950s, 1960 and 1970s, Natchez-area oil created thousands of jobs and quite a few fortunes. It became the No. 1 industry in Natchez, and the town prospered." (Sansing, Callon, and Smith 1992:160)

Pervading the Natchez District today are images pertaining to its past. These images are of two basic classes that are associated with two aspects of the history and culture of the area. The first is a frontier image associated with early colonization and the territorial period, and second and more prevalent, the Old South image that is associated with antebellum prosperity, particularly as evoked in the architecture.

Perhaps the earliest passage of Natchez into the mythical realm occurred during the early nineteenth century when the French writer Chateaubriand wrote his novel *Les Natchez* which was set

at Natchez during the 1720s and involved both French and Indian characters. The popularity of the novel may well have been responsible for Peter Little's naming of his 1823 mansion "Rosalie" after the site of the fort that was located to the south of the building. The naming of the mansion effectively revived the French name that had largely fallen into disuse. A few years later, J.H. Ingraham (1835:16, 23), who was obviously familiar with Chateaubriand's work, would refer to "the romantic ruins of Fort Rosalie, now enamelled with a rich coating of verdure", as being "the principal scene of Chateaubriand's celebrated romance."

With the growth of the town of Natchez, its port on the batture, Natchez-under-the-hill, grew in economic activity and in notoriety. Besides its port function, the locale also contained an assemblage of bars and houses of prostitution designed to cater to the rough elements that operated the keelboats and steamboats. The description and exaggeration of the more sordid elements of Natchez-under-the-hill, first by travelers and later by fiction writers, transformed the area into a symbol of the "Myth of the Wild and Savage West" (Beard 1981). This image survives today in the local depiction of Natchez-under-the-hill, and served as the inspiration of a restaurant--the Cock-of-the-Walk--that was founded there based on the theme of the keelboat men.

Prominent in the frontier myth is the Natchez Trace Parkway, a unit of the National Park Service, that was created in the 1930s to commemorate the Natchez Trace, a trail that connected Natchez with Nashville and during the early nineteenth century traversed hundreds of miles of intervening Indian territory. Today the Parkway highlights natural history, Indian mounds, and the sites of stands and missions.

The Old South myth became a prominent part of the self-image of Natchez with the 1932 beginnings of the Natchez Pilgrimage. This event, now held in both the spring and fall, opens dozens of houses to the public and draws in thousands of tourists annually to Natchez. The income from tourism has encouraged the restoration and preservation of the architectural heritage of Natchez. Additionally, the pilgrimages are major social events for the Natchez citizenry who produce balls, dances, plays, and pageants for the occasions.

## SETTLEMENT

In discussing the settlement pattern of nineteenth century Natchez the observations of Arensberg and Newton regarding the county as the most fundamental unit and framework within which other settlement forms were nested. In his study of American communities, Arensberg (1955:1151) wrote that:

The distinctive community form of the South was and is the county. Dispersed a day's ride in and out around the county seat, that community assembled planter and field or house hand from the fat plantations, free poor white or Negro from the lean hills and swamps, for the pageantry and the drama of Saturdays around the courthouse, when the courthouse, the jail, the registry of deeds, and the courthouse square of shops and lawyers' row made a physical center of the far flung community."

For Newton (1974b:340-341), the county is "the culturally meaningful unit" because:

the Upland South frontier movement included both elite and peasant segments, and because only the county includes the minimum personnel to represent both parts of Upland South society .... A smaller social group will lack the important courthouse town elite; a larger one will introduce unwieldy complications.

It was standard procedure for the government of the Territory, and later the State, of Mississippi to organize counties in land acquired from the Spanish or the Indians. The first two counties in the District, Adams and Pickering (later Jefferson), were established in 1799. After the initial establishment of counties, new counties were often carved out of portions of older counties, which entailed the creation of new county seats for the new counties and often the relocation of the county seats of older counties. New county seats were often located at already extant towns. In fact, many a town may have served as the political impetus for the creation of a new county, so that the town could become a seat of government and thereby assure itself of having a county full of people to visit it and trade there.

The framework of settlement was established by the survey systems by which the land was divided. All land granted during the British and Spanish regimes was surveyed according to irregular metes-and-bounds systems, while the United States surveyed the remaining land according to the G.L.O. system of sections and townships.

The earliest parcels granted tended to front on and extend back from either the Mississippi River or its tributaries, giving land owners not only access to streams but also provided them with a cross section of both bottomlands and uplands (Wilton 1774). These parcels were much narrower along their stream frontage than they were deep and could therefore be characterized as long lots. However, they were not as long and narrow as many of the archetypical long lots were. Filling in the interfluvial interstices were irregular parcels that had no claim whatsoever to the "long lot" designation.

During the early nineteenth century United States government surveyors surveyed the ungranted portions of the Natchez District according to the G.L.O. system into sections, townships, and ranges. The township and range lines were, however, extended across the areas previously surveyed into metes-and-bounds parcels, and the parcels were resurveyed and given sectional numbers, thus transforming them into permanent survey boundaries. Thus the old metes-and-bounds lines survive on topographical maps today, clearly distinguishing the areas of colonial settlement from the post-colonial settlement areas.

Superimposed onto the surveyed framework was a mixture of buildings, fields, roads, and woodlands. The basic settlement forms consisted of clusters of buildings ranging on a continuum from the agricultural units, that is farmsteads and plantations, at one end to the largest towns at the other. Also prominent are the "settlements" and "communities," areas that have distinct identities, yet which usually are not demographically discrete, such as Pinkneyville in Wilkinson County, Kingston in Adams County, and Church Hill in Jefferson County. These areas may have a small agglomerated center, that is an incipient town, or they might have a number of dispersed communities centers such as post offices, stores, schools, churches, and blacksmith shops. The agricultural units and towns also certainly had identities, particularly the latter. So someone living in a rural area might have a complex hierarchy of areal identifications, such as plantation, community, and neighboring town.

## THE RURAL LANDSCAPE

In the 1830s, Ingraham (1835:107-108) provided a number of insightful descriptions of the rural landscape. In commenting upon the types of fences used, he also provided an impressionistic view of the land:

The absence of fences is a peculiarity of southern farms. As their proprietors cultivate but one article as a staple, there is no necessity of intersecting their lands by fences, as in the north, where every farm is cut up into many portions, appropriated to a variety of productions.... The few fences, however, that exist on plantations, for defining boundaries, confining public roads, and fencing in the pasture lands--which, instead of broad green fields as in New-England, are the woods and cane-brakes--are of the most unsightly kind. With a gently undulating surface and a diversity of vale and wood scenery unrivalled, the natural loveliness of this state is disfigured by zigzag, or Virginia fences, which stretch along the sides of the most charming roads, surround the loveliest cottages, or rudely encroach upon the snowy palings that enclose them ....

He further noted the presence of a few rose hedges that had been planted along some rail fences with the intent to supersede the fences with hedges. "The culture of the hedge" for use as a fence, however, was "altogether neglected." He surmised that hedges would not been used to any extent until the forest had sufficiently dwindled to make wood too costly to waste on rails (Ingraham 1835:109).

Approximately two decades later, the use of rose hedges had apparently increased in popularity, as indicated by Olmstead (1907:4, 28) who observed between Natchez and St. Francisville, Louisiana, that "the roadside fences are generally hedges of roses--Cherokee and sweetbriar." He additionally noted that the hedges are "planted first by the side of a common rail fence, which, while they are young, supports them in the manner of a trellis....", suggesting that the hedges were replacing rail fences (Also see Solon Robinson's 1848 observations in Kellar 1936b:138, 141-142).

The tendency to name plantations was far more pronounced in the Natchez District than in other parts of Mississippi. Ingraham commented in detail upon this situation during the 1830s:

It is necessary for the planters who reside between towns so far asunder, to have some more particular address, than the indefinite one arising from their vicinity to one or other of these towns. Hence has originated the pleasing custom of naming estates, as in England; and names so given are always regarded by the planters themselves, and by the community, as an inseparable part of their address. These names are generally selected with taste, such as "Monmouth," "Laurel-Hill," "Grange," "Magnolia Grove," "The Forest," "Cottage," "Briars," "Fatherland," and "Anchorage"--the last given by a retired navy officer to his plantation. The name is some times adopted with reference to some characteristic of the domain, as "The Oaks," "China Grove," "New Forest" &c., but more frequently it is a mere matter of fancy. (Ingraham 1835:204-205)

# MAP OF ADAMS COUNTY MISSISSIPPI

C. W. BABBIT  
COUNTY SURVEYOR  
NATCHEZ

Reproduced by  
R. M. Hynes, Chicago

From Photographs by  
H. C. NORMAN, Natchez.

ADAMS COUNTY

JEFFERSON COUNTY

HARRISON COUNTY

LINCOLN COUNTY

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Section 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Land parcels labeled: Hickory Grove, Pine Grove, Oakland, Hickory Hill, etc.

Roads: Highway 1, Highway 2, etc.

Geographical features: Mississippi River, etc.

County boundaries: Adams, Jefferson, Harrison, Lincoln.

Inset map: Shows Adams County's location within Mississippi, with labels for Jackson, Natchez, and other nearby cities.

The center of each plantation was usually a cluster of buildings. Sparks (1870:328) observed that in association with the plantation main house "the plantation houses for the slaves were arranged conveniently together, constituting with the barns, stabling, and gin-houses a neat village." The comparison of the plantation center to a village was common. Solon Robinson (Kellar 1936a:481) humorously recorded lodging in a plantation building "across the yard from the main centre of the small village that it takes to make up a dwelling place 'in these diggings'" (cf. Heartman 1942:105). Describing a particular plantation Ingraham (1835:109) observed that "the 'quarters'... were pleasantly situated upon an eminence a third of a mile from the road, each dwelling neatly white-washed and embowered in the China tree, which .... is the universal shade tree for cabin and villa in this state." On Joseph Dunbar's Jefferson county plantation, Robinson noted that "His negro quarters look more like a neat, pleasant, New England village, than they do like what we have often been taught to believe ...." (Kellar 1936b:292-293)

Despite the ample evidence of many pretentious plantation houses and of well-built quarters, there were certainly many examples that were less imposing. During the course of a boat trip upriver from Rodney, J.H.Ingraham (1839:70) observed along the river banks:

There was an air of substantial comfort in the well-built villages or quarters for the negroes, the large "gin" and neat dwelling-houses of many but for one well-ordered plantation, we passed five which were as crude as log-cabins, field filled with stumps and scathed trees, ragged negroes, ill-clothed, and sickly-looking men and slattern women could make them.

In the 1850s Olmstead (1907:11-12) recorded:

The plantations are all large, but, except in their size and rather unusually good tillage, display few signs of wealthy proprietorship. The greater number have but small and mean residences upon them.

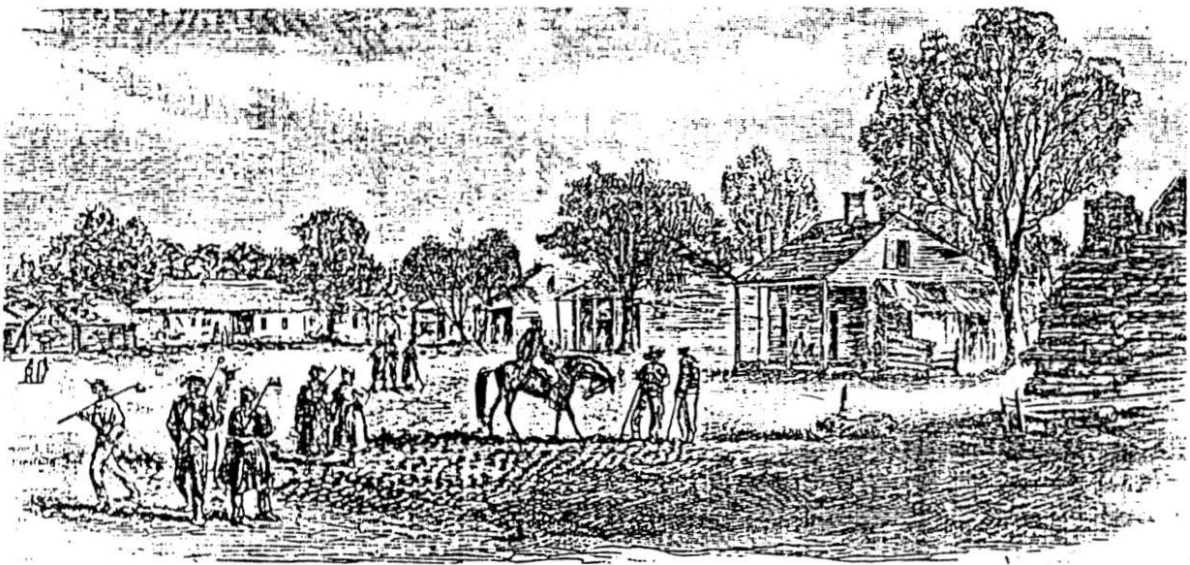
Ingraham (1835:51) notes that many wealthy planters are "lodged wretchedly" still residing in "the same cabins, but little improved, which they originally erected." Here one might find

a splendid sideboard not unfrequently concealing a white-washed beam--a gorgeous Brussels carpet laid over a rough-planked floor--while uncouth rafters, in ludicrous contrast to the splendour they look down upon, stretch in coarse relief across the ceiling.

He was, however, optimistic that such contrasts "always characteristic of a new country, are rapidly disappearing; and another generation will be lodged, if not like princes, at least, like independent American gentlemen." He concluded that "many of these combinations of the old and new systems still exist, however, of a highly grotesque nature." One of these "combinations" created the bizarre contrast between the more pretentious planters' homes and the disorganized, frontier-like atmosphere of their surrounding grounds:

There are many private residences, in the vicinity of Natchez, of an ... expensive character ... , whose elegant interiors, contrasting with the neglected grounds about them, suggest the idea of a handsome city residence, accidentally dropped upon a bleak hill, or into the midst of a partially cleared forest, and there remaining, with its noble roof grasped by the arms of an oak, and its windows and columns festooned by the drooping moss, heavily waving in the wind. Thus are situated many of the planters' dwellings, separated from the adjacent forests by a rude, white-washed picket, enclosing around the house an unornamented green, or grazing lot, for the saddle and carriage-horses, which can regale their eyes at pleasure, by walking up to the parlour windows and gazing in upon handsome carpets, elegant furniture, costly mantel ornaments, and side-boards loaded with massive plate.... Very few of the planters' villas, even within a few miles of Natchez, are adorned with surrounding ornamental shrubbery walks, or any other artificial auxiliaries to the natural scenery, except a few shade trees and a narrow, gravelled avenue from the gate to the house. A long avenue

*A. B. Ward, from Harper's Weekly, September 15, 1866*



NEGRO QUARTERS AT BRIERFIELD



of trees, ornamenting and sheltering the approach to a dwelling, is rare sight in this state, though very frequently seen in Louisiana .... (Ingraham 1835:100-101)

The smaller agricultural units of the Natchez Districts, that is the farms, were characterized by clusters of buildings much like the plantations except on a smaller scale. Such farmsteads are usually organized around a dogtrot house lying parallel to the road with a transverse crib barn behind it and off to one side. In addition to the main barn, the farm often included a small single crib barn or corncrib of logs or vertical boards flanked by sheds (Glassie 1968:101; Zelinsky 1951:173). Smoke houses were also common, as were a few slave houses. Such farmsteads were certainly more common in the less fertile areas of the district and therefore tended to increase in frequency to the east.

## POSTBELLUM SETTLEMENT CHANGES

The freeing of the slaves initially resulted in the abandonment of the land by the blacks, most of whom, exulting in their new freedom, had no insight into what the future held for them. However, with few prospects for these people other than as agricultural laborers, their emancipation would in the long term not include emancipation from the land. Although many migrated to towns, most eventually returned to the farms and plantations, where the land owners, needing them as much as they needed the land for survival, experimented with new labor arrangements (Wayne 1983). The results were a reorganization of the antebellum plantation system that consequently brought about changes in the spatial organization of the plantations.

Before the war, with centralized control of the labor and capital, the plantation functioned more as a single coordinated unit. The slaves worked together in gangs in the fields, making it more efficient to cultivate in large fields. Slave houses and service buildings were usually located in compact clusters near the owner's or the manager's house. This permitted better supervision of the labor force and the more efficient utilization of and access to stables, storage buildings, gins, commissaries, and blacksmith shops.

In the postbellum period, the transformation of labor arrangements resulted in the demise of the nucleated plantation form and the creation of two dispersed forms. Writing in Natchez, Eisele (n.d.) observed that "the toll of slow decay, of wind and fire, have blotted out the old-time quarters, and the economic system which followed the days of '61-'65 replaced them with isolated 'cabins in the cotton,' where each tenant-occupant centers the land he rents." One of these dispersed settlement forms was characterized by the use of sharecroppers and the other by the use of tenant-renters. The sharecropper form was the more common of the two. With it, the plantation owner supplied almost all of the elements of production. This included land, mules, tools, half of the seeds and fertilizer, and even the housing for the laborers. The laborers supplied, of course, their labor and the balance of the seed and fertilizer. The plantation owner was repaid at the end of the harvest by half of the crop, that is to say by a "share," hence the term "sharecropper." Whereas the slave housing had been nucleated, the houses of the sharecroppers were often dispersed throughout the cropland with about one house to every 30 or 40 acres. The large antebellum fields were broken up with each sharecropper family having the use of a unit of farmland, with each of these units being divided into several plots, with each plot being used for a different crop. The plantation's barns and service buildings remained nucleated near the owner's house as they had been prior to the war (Prunty 1955).

The second form of the fragmented, postbellum plantations was the tenant-renter type. Whereas sharecroppers paid the owner with a share or percentage of their crop, a renter paid either a specified amount of his crop or a specified amount of money. Besides his labor, the tenant supplied cultivating power, primarily mules, implements, and two-thirds of the seed and fertilizer costs. The landlord supplied land, buildings, and the balance of the cost of fertilizer and seed (Prunty 1955).

There are differences in the settlement landscape of the tenant-renter type of plantation as opposed to the sharecropper. The central barns and sheds located are not present in the tenant-renter type. Because the tenants own their mules and tools, each tenant house has a barn and sheds located near it. Thus the area around each tenant house comes to take on the form of the Southern farmstead. Pasturage is also fragmented and dispersed, so that each tenant will have convenient access to pasture for his mules and other livestock (Prunty 1955).

Although most rural blacks, eventually returned to the plantations shortly after the Civil War to work as sharecroppers or tenant-renters, there were others who permanently escaped by becoming farm owners. Many of these were in the Natchez District. For the South as a whole the numbers of black farm owners steadily increased following the war to reach a peak about 1910 or 1920, after which the numbers have declined (Fisher 1973).

With the decline of the agricultural base in the Natchez District blacks have either moved into towns or built houses in rural hamlets, leaving very few surviving examples of their antebellum or tenant housing. The rural hamlets have usually originated from the subdivision of small tracts of land and the subsequent sale of lots as homesites to blacks. These projects have often been sponsored by the U.S. Farmer's Home Administration (Aiken 1985). In other cases, hamlets consisting of extended families have developed on parcels known locally as "estates." These are tracts of land once owned by a person who died intestate with the possession then passing to a number of heirs all having a certain share in the land. In the course of a generation or so, heirs of heirs soon have claim with the parcel effectively coming to be communally owned. Unable to obtain mortgages for building sites, houses in these hamlets either consist of house trailers or are built by the occupant

Economic and social changes following the Civil War and extending into the twentieth century have made many of the settlement components obsolete and resulted in their eventual removal from the landscape. These components include slave and tenant housing, gins, stores, and schools. The larger planter's houses, because of their size and adaptability and prestige value, have been selectively preserved and thus are disproportionately represented today.

## TOWNS

Towns in the Natchez District were essentially commercial and social centers that were located at the intersection of roads that connected them with their agricultural hinterlands. Within this general description differences were primarily functional and hierarchical. The major functional differences were those of situation in relation to trade routes and the major administrative differences related to whether or not the territorial capital or a county seat was located at a town. During the first three decades of the nineteenth century, the major functional differences in relation to routes was whether or not a town was located on a river or merely at a crossroads. The advent of railroads increased the complexity of the route network and increased the importance of many towns located along them. The most important towns in the urban hierarchy were usually located on a river and/or railroad or served as county seat or both.

Ingraham analyzed the urban situation of the area for the pre-railroad period:

[The county seat] forms the centre of an area which is soon filled with edifices and inhabitants. If the county lies on the river, another town may arise, for a shipping port, but here the accumulation of town usually ceases. A county seat, and a cotton mart, are all that an agricultural country requires. The towns in this state are thus dispersed two or three to each county, nor so long as this is a planting country, will there be any great increase to their number.... In these towns are the banks, the merchants, the post offices, and the several places of resort for business or pleasure that draw the planter and his family from his estate. Each town is the centre of a circle which extends many miles around it into the country, and daily attracts all within its influence (Ingraham 1835: 205-206).

By 1870 Vicksburg had surpassed Natchez as not only the largest town in the district but also in the state.

There were also a number of very small towns that were neither county seats nor located on railroads. These formed the nuclei of rural communities which were the effective trade and social areas of the towns. Included in this class of crossroads town were Kingston, Pinkneyville, Selsertown, and Uniontown. Ingraham (1835:180) described Kingston in the 1830s as "a small village, containing a church, postoffice, two or three stores, and several dwelling-houses." Pinkneyville was described as "merely a short street, lined by a few dwelling-houses and stores." Seltzertown was described by Ingraham (1835:163) as "containing a tavern and a blacksmith's shop." All of these centers are now extinct.

## CEMETERIES

The general character of the cemeteries has more in common with the cemeteries of most of Mississippi and have relatively little in common with the ethnic French cemeteries of southern Louisiana and coastal Mississippi. Each town had its own cemeteries, usually with separate cemeteries for whites and blacks. Several of the larger towns also had separate Catholic and Jewish cemeteries. Also family cemeteries located on plantations were very numerous, for example the Surget family cemetery at Cherry Grove (Tour 1). There are also a number of rural community cemeteries usually associated churches, such as Christ Church at Church Hill (Tour 1) (cf. Ingraham's [1835:40, 73-83, 104] observations on cemeteries).

## NATCHEZ INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of the Natchez Indians was of palisade construction, that is it involved walls constructed on rows of thin posts placed either in individual postmolds or in wall trenches. Most of the buildings that have been identified through excavation have been rectangular in plan, although a few were circular or approximately circular (Brown 1985:32, 34, 41-42, 128; Neitzel 1965:19-21, 25, 28, 33; 1983:42, 37, 57, 62).

Father Charlevoix who visited Natchez in 1721 described the houses of the Natchez as constructed

in the shape of a square pavilion, quite low and without windows, the roof is rounded almost like an oven. The majority are covered with leaves and stalks of Maize; some of them are built of a kind of mud ... covered outside and within by very thin Mats. That of the great Chief is quite neatly plastered on the inside; it is also larger and higher than the others, placed on a somewhat elevated site, and is isolated on all sides (quoted in Spencer and Jennings 1965:410).

## FRENCH ARCHITECTURE

No buildings remain from the French period in the Natchez area, yet an examination of documentary sources help elucidate that architecture and contextualize it within its historical framework. As the discussion will indicate the architecture was fairly characteristic of the early phases of the evolution of Creole architecture.

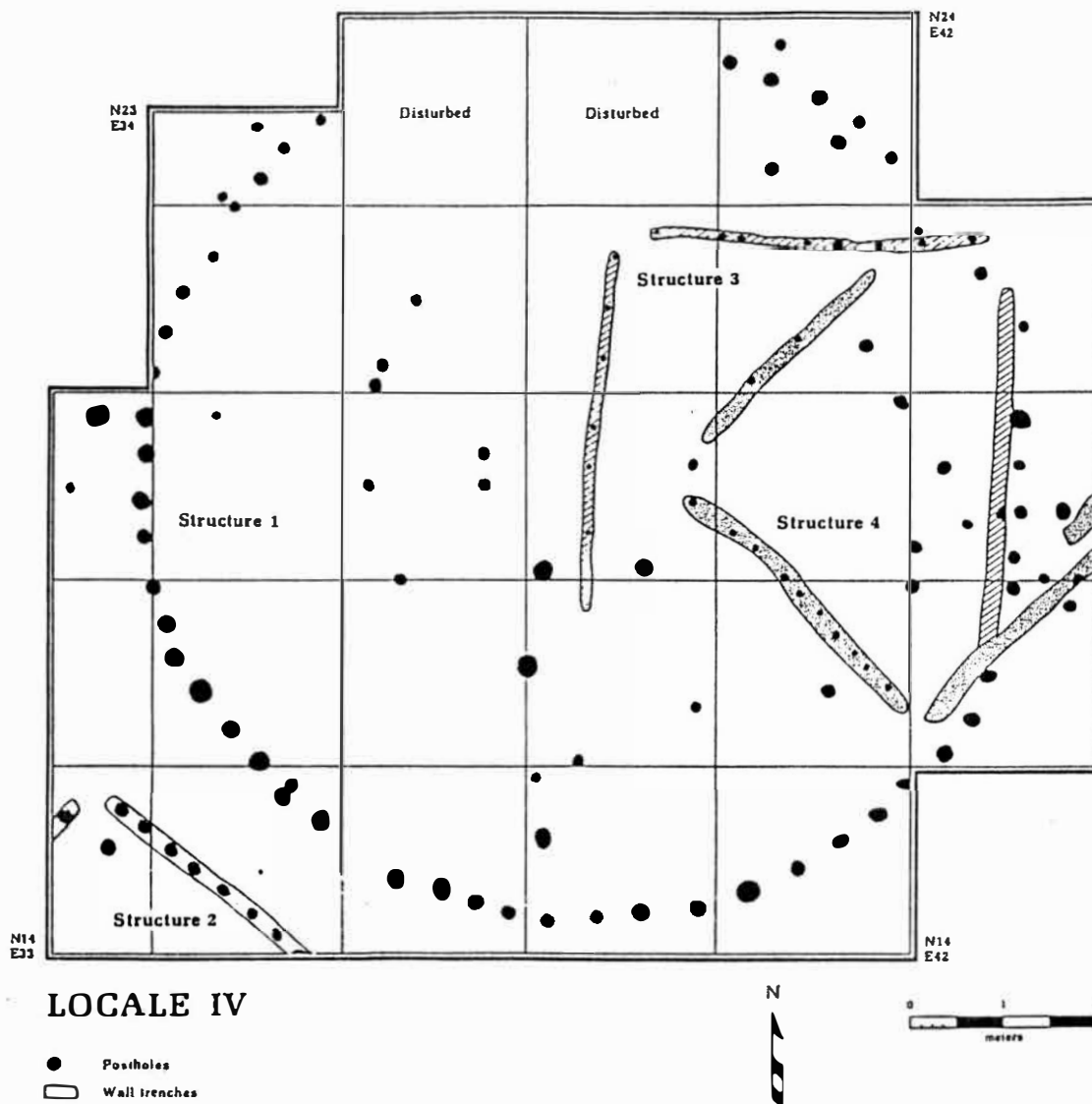
The French architecture of Natchez apparently was constructed using three of the basic construction forms associated with early Creole architecture: (1) palisade, (2) timber framed, or *colombage*, and (3) *piece sur piece*. Palisade walls consisted of rows of posts, either hewn or unhewn, placed upright in trenches a few inches apart. In a house wall, the interstices were usually filled with mud (*bousillage* or *bousillee*) mixed with some type of organic matter, such as Spanish moss, or with mortar.

Two types of palisade construction are frequently mentioned in the eighteenth sources, *pieux en terre* and *poteaux en terre*. Although it is quite possible that the terms were often used interchangeably, Peterson (1965:26-27) makes a distinction between the two: *pieux en terre* consisted of unhewn round posts and *poteaux en terre* consisted of posts that were "probably hewn neatly to allow a good exterior finish like the framed houses: (cf. Kniffen and Glassie 1966:47).

Palisade construction was probably the most common technique used for the construction of houses in rural Louisiana during the first half of the eighteenth. It was also used for fences and for the walls of forts. The building technique was commonly used by the aboriginal populations of North America and the Caribbean. By the end of the seventeenth century, it was used by the French in their settlements in Canada and St. Dominique in the Caribbean. During the eighteenth century it was common among the French not only on the Lower Mississippi, but also in the Illinois and at Detroit (Peterson 1965:26-35).

Regarding the Natchez settlement during the 1720s, the engineer Ignace Francois Broutin (n.d.) observed that "all the houses in general are huts [*baragues*] made of *poteau* [sic] *en terre* covered with *bouzille* and covered with bark" (translation by Patricia K. Galloway). Le Page du Pratz (1975:34), who operated a farm at Natchez during that period, recalled that his house there was constructed of *pieux en terre*. (The English edition of this work inadequately translated this term as "piles." The French term was supplied by Galloway from the original French edition.)

The basic structures of these houses is addressed by Dumont de Montigny who described the construction of farm houses in general in early eighteenth century Louisiana. He wrote:



Archaeological plans of superimposed aboriginal dwellings from the Lookout site (22Je544). (Source: Brown 1985)

In regard to cabins, they do not require much craftsmanship and their method of construction is very quick. First one takes as many poles [*perches*] or forked logs [*fourches*] as are judged appropriate to the length and width desired for the cabin. These forked logs ought to be at least a dozen feet long. They are planted in the ground at regular intervals two and a half feet deep and joined together by plates [*traverses*] laid on top. thus is formed a rectangle of which the short sides make the width of the cabin, taking the place of a gable. In the middle of the two short sides, one raises two other forked poles to the height of sixteen to eighteen feet on which is placed the ridgepole [*faite*] to which are nailed the rafters, the latter being properly spaced and falling on the plates to which they are also nailed. The framework [*carcasse*] of the cabin is thus raised. It is closed in with cypress stakes [*pieux*] driven a foot into the ground and fastened above to the plates [*traverses*] with nails, allowing for doors and windows in the walls. Finally it is covered, as I have said, with cypress bark or palmetto [*lantanier*] leaves and, *voilà*, a cabin has been built. One can see that in a country as well wooded as Louisiana there should be no difficulty of procuring shelter since one can build a house in twenty-four hours (quoted in Peterson 1965:28-29).

Le Page du Pratz (1975:211-212) provides a similar description for a construction of a tobacco house for which he noted that "the first settlers likewise build their dwelling houses in this manner." For the construction

... they set several posts in the ground, at equal distance from one another, and lay a beam or plate on the top of them, making thus the form of a house of an oblong square. In the middle of this square they set up two forks, about one third higher than the posts, and lay a pole cross them, for the ridge-pole of the building; upon which they then nail the rafters, and cover them with cypress-bark, or palmetto leaves.

The second construction technique was *pièce sur pièce*, which was a vernacular term that appears to include two different forms of "log construction" (cf. Peterson 1965:40). One form is defined by Kniffen and Glassie (1966:50) as "the support of horizontal timbers by corner posts: and note that it was "the prevailing method of wood construction in early French Canada." the second form is defined by Edwards (1988:5-6) as using logs that

were hewn into planks 4 to 6 inches wide and 8 to 16 inches tall. They were tied together at the corners with full-dovetail notching to form a solid crib. Unlike Anglo and Scotch-Irish log cabins, the planks were beautifully hewn and fitted so closely together that little chinking material was required to fill the cracks.

The first form of *pièce sur pièce* construction was probably used in the 1716 construction of buildings associated with the Natchez fort. Richebourg (quoted in Swanton 1911:202) recorded that during the construction of the fort, 2500 pieces of wood, each three feet in length by ten inches in diameter, were used, probably for buildings inside the fort. The length of these pieces of wood suggest that they were used for this form of *pièce sur pièce* construction.

The third construction technique is timber-framing, or *colombage*, which involved the hewing of beams which were held together by mortise-and-tenon joints. Although this type of construction involved more time and skill than palisade construction, the result was a far more substantial building that was less subject to rot, principally because it did not inherently involve wood coming in contact with the ground (Peterson 1965:35).

During the early and mid-eighteenth century, *colombage* construction seems to have been less common than palisade construction. In the first half of the eighteenth century, it appears to have occurred primarily in New Orleans, where it quickly became dominant, and in more prestigious buildings in rural settings. When the Natchez fort was rebuilt following its 1729 destruction, the buildings associated with

it were apparently of colombage construction. The De Batz (1732) section drawing of the fort depicts a *colombage* building, probably the guard house. In 1765 when a British expedition visited the abandoned fort, the accompanying engineer Philip Pittman (1906:80-81) noted that all the buildings within the fort were

made of framed timber, filled up with mud and *barbe Espagnole*, (a kind of moss, which grows in great abundance on all the trees in Louisiana) and in this country that manner of building houses is very common.

Pittman noted that the spaces between the timbers were filled with mud mixed with moss, *bousillage*. This practice appears to have been more common in rural areas, as opposed to urban areas where brick were commonly used (Knipmeyer 1956:110-113).

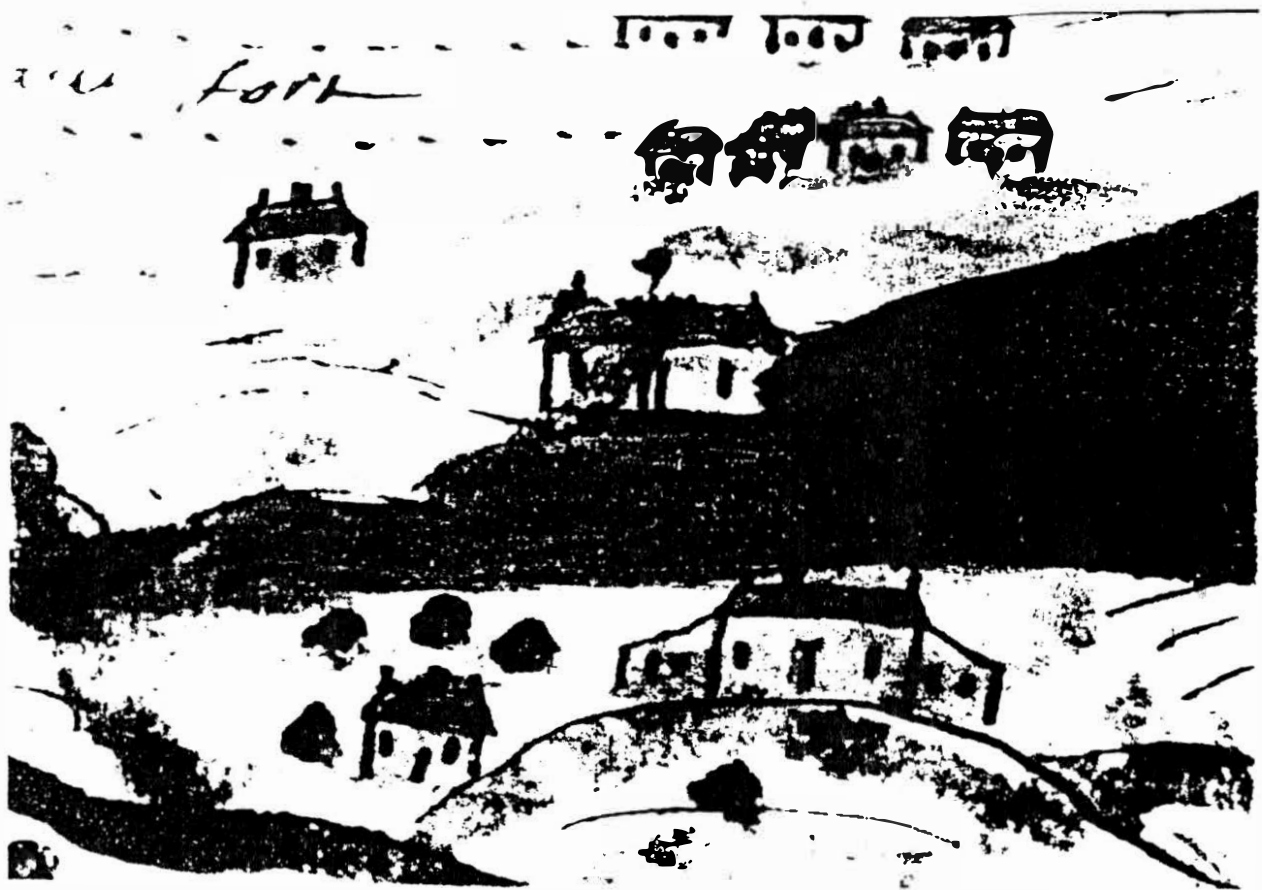
The overall form of houses present at Natchez during the French regime, that is primarily during the 1720s was apparently fairly simple. The descriptions by Dumont de Montigny and Le Page du Pratz of the common rural dwelling of the time both describe oblong, one room houses with either gable or hip roofs. The naive paintings by Dumont de Montigny of the Natchez settlement, to the degree that that can be relied on, appear to depict fairly simple houses with gable and hipped roofs. Many of these appear to be of Noble's (1984:12-13, 91-92) "Norman cottage" type, having two rooms with a chimney between and a steeply pitched hipped roof.

During the eighteenth century, French settlement was characterized in part by the use of palisade fences which were placed around gardens and houses and were used for penning livestock. They also apparently served to protect crops from free-ranging livestock. They were constructed by driving stakes into the ground, leaving them at a height of about six feet above the surface. The stakes were not connected by stabilizing horizontal rods as they were in later years. During the nineteenth century, runners were added for stability, and the stakes became shorter. This fence type was eventually replaced by the picket fence (Knipmeyer 1956:138-139; Peterson 1965:25-26). Evidence of the usage of such palisade fences at Natchez during the 1720s is provided by the illustrations of Dumont de Montigny which depict such fences enclosing the plantation headquarters of the Terre Blanche concession, various farmsteads, and the cemetery near the fort. Other palisade fences are shown as apparently enclosing gardens near the commandant's house and near a number of farm houses.

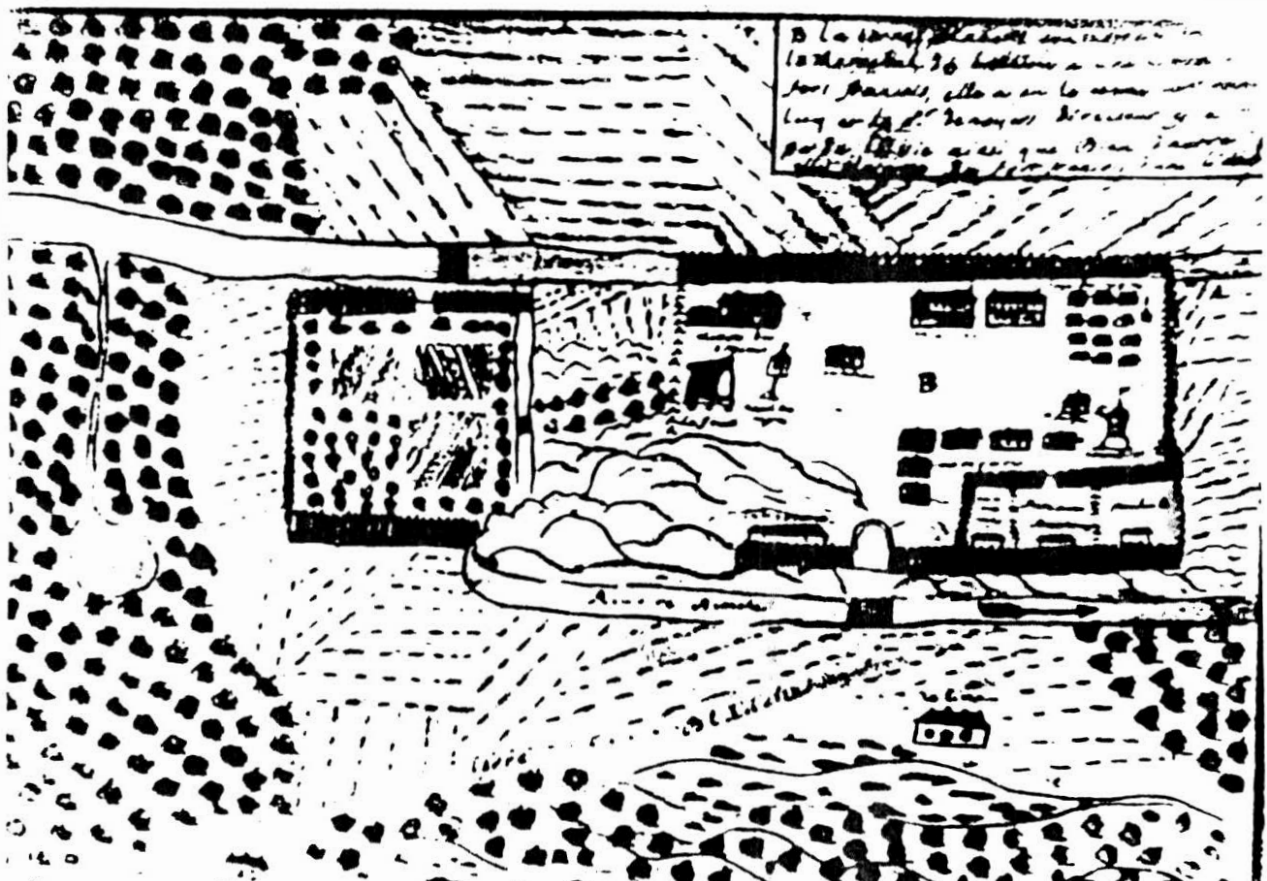
Although French Natchez was close to the heart of the Creole culture hearth, its civilian occupation was so brief that it can hardly be said to have seen any real evolution of the Creole architecture. Instead, it represents a "slice of time" in which only the earliest and simplest forms from the evolutionary continuum are represented. The destruction of the settlement in 1729 and its continuation as only a military outpost prevented it from playing any major role in the evolution of the regional architecture. The rebirth of settlement in the area primarily through the immigration of Anglo-Americans set its architectural development into a different trajectory, yet one that would not be wholly unaffected by the proximity of Creole culture.

## VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE OF THE NATCHEZ DISTRICT

It has been established that the settlers of the Natchez District under both the British and the Spanish were primarily Anglo-Americans and their black slaves. Given this fact one would assume that the vernacular architecture would be similar to that of the English settlements on the Atlantic Seaboard. This architectural tradition would have been very similar to the Midland or Upland South architectural tradition



Details from Dumont de Montigny's paintings of French Natchez.  
 Above: church and houses near the fort.  
 Below: the Terre Blanche concession on St. Catherine Creek





(Jordan 1985; Newton 1974). This tradition relied heavily on the use of log construction and house types based on the use of the "pen" as the basic unit from whence various single-pen and double-pen forms were derived.

The evidence suggests that this was indeed the architectural tradition that dominated the early settlement of the Natchez District, excepting for Natchez itself where it appears to have been mixed with Creole architecture. Samuel Forman (1888:53) recorded having observed a dog-trot log house on the St. Catherine's Creek plantation of his uncle in ca. 1789:

The place had a small clearing and a log house on it, and he put up another log house to correspond with it, about fourteen feet apart, connecting them with boards, with a piazza in front of the whole. The usual term applied to such a structure was that it was "two pens and a passage." This connecting passage made a fine hall, and altogether gave it a good and comfortable appearance.

Also indicative of log construction is the memoir of John Hutchins (b. 1774) who recalled that after his family moved to the Natchez District from South Carolina in 1774, they constructed "log cabins" (Anderson 1958:2, 17). Compared to others parts of Mississippi relatively few log buildings survive in the Natchez District. This is in part a consequent of the rapid economic development of the area during the early nineteenth century that resulted in the replacement of many log houses with more pretentious structures.

I have, however, observed a few surviving log buildings in the district, often in the form of hall-and-parlor houses or dogtrot houses. These housetypes also exist of frame construction along with I-houses and much more pretentious structures, the latter being products of a more advanced economic situation. Writing in the 1830s about the building practices of the district's planters, J.H. Ingraham (1835:101-102) noted that they "originally" occupied "log huts in the wilderness" where "their whole time and attention were engaged in the culture of cotton." However with the passage of time "they became the lords of a domain and a hundred slaves" and "razed the humble cabin, and reared upon its site the walls of an expensive and beautiful fabric."

Many houses constructed for slaves were probably single pen and double pen houses. However by the 1850s many were constructed in the dogtrot house form. This is evidenced by the work-diary of the carpenter William B. Scothorn which gave the specifications for what was conceivably a standardized plan for houses for slaves and overseers. His descriptions reads:

Double cabins, with 12 feet open passage (floored) between cabins to be 10 1/2 feet high from top of sill to top of plate. To be planked, with plank 10-12 inches wide, 1 1/2 inches thick (up & down), & the joints covered, with Laths, 3 inches wide, 3/4 inches thick. The flooring planks to be jointed & laid on Laths, so that the joints may be covered.

The upright plank to project high enough above the plates to come close up to the shingles, & the gable ends weatherboarded so close as to exclude the air entirely. The houses to be raised on brick pillars, 3 feet from the surface of the earth to the top of the sills. To be covered with 3 feet boards, & the eaves to project 10 or 12 inches over the sides of the houses, 7 the ends to project 12 inches over the gables.

16 cabins of this size, 8 on each side of the center, & a space of 120 feet left between the two center cabins.

The overseers' house, to be of same size and description, raised 5 1/2 feet above the earth, & to have a gallery 10 ft. wide in front and rear, & 2 windows in front and 2 in rear, & 2 rooms 12 by 10, taken off the back gallery, one at each end. The height from floor to ceiling to be 11 feet. (quoted in Eisele n.d.).

Despite the Anglo-American background of many of its settlers, the architecture of the town of Natchez was different from its hinterland. Early travelers's accounts and other evidence suggest that there was a distinctive Creole influence that was much less prevalent than in the balance of the district. Dr. John Bedford (1919:119) visited Natchez in 1807 and noted that "most of the houses are of wood and in the French style--elevated 7 or 8 feet from the ground--above which is one story only--and piazzas or galleries all round."

Fortesque Cuming (1904:320), who visited the town in the same year as Bedford, observed "I was much struck with the similarity of Natchez to many of the smaller West India towns, particularly St. Johns Antigua, though not near so large as it. The houses all with balconies and piazzas . . . ."

In 1820, John James Audubon visited Natchez and described a hotel that was built "on the Spanish plan, very large and surrounded by wide verandahs" (Ford 1969:92). Additionally, an unknown writer in 1826 recalled that Natchez in 1799 consisted of "a few low and ragged houses, built in the Spanish manner" (*Natchez Courier* 1852).

Although these four writers used different specific comparisons in describing the early Natchez architecture, it is clear that they were referring to the same phenomenon--the Creole or French vernacular architecture that evolved in the Lower Mississippi Valley during the 18th and 19th centuries (Edwards 1988). The references to Spanish-like buildings is probably derived from the association of Creole architecture with the Spanish regime that ruled portions of the Creole heartland from 1763 to 1813. The Creole architectural tradition was the product of the process of syncretism, by which elements of several traditions were merged to form a new tradition. Creole architecture has antecedents in French, West African, and Caribbean architecture (Edwards 1976-1980; for the concept of syncretism see Jordan 1985:6, 154-155). Caribbean vernacular architecture had similar antecedents and many similarities in appearance to the Creole architecture of the Lower Mississippi Valley, hence Cuming's comparison of Natchez architecture to that of West Indian (Caribbean) towns (Edwards 1980). One should also keep in mind that some of the attributes of Creole architecture, such as extensive usage of galleries, in particular undercut galleries, is also characteristic of the South Carolina coastal areas, one of the source areas of the Natchez settlers.

Other sources give more specific references to architectural attributes suggesting a Creole origin. A 1781 inventory of the estate of John Blommart, a former merchant at Natchez Under-the-Hill who had fled the District following the 1781 revolt, lists a number of buildings, including a dwelling on a St. Catherine's Creek plantation made of "*poteaux en terre et de pieces sur pieces*," and at Natchez-under-the-Hill, an old store house of *poteaux en terre*. An 1805 Natchez tax roll lists a number of "picket houses," probably referring to similar structures. It will be recalled that these are typical French construction methods that were often associated with the earliest phases of settlement. No known examples of these construction techniques have survived in the Natchez District. Also listed was a frame house in Natchez-under-the-Hill with front and rear galleries and containing a *salle*, two *chambres* and two cabinets on the back gallery, suggesting a fairly typical Creole floor plan of the late 18th century (Edwards 1988; McBee 1979:4; Spanish Records vol. 1, pp. 286, 288-289).

Extant frame houses in and around Natchez also demonstrate a strong Creole influence beginning in the Colonial Period, extending through the Territorial Period (1798-1817) and into the period of early statehood. House forms in this tradition utilize full galleries, roof types of either broken-pitch or the Louisiana type, internal chimneys, multiple exterior doors, and a set of floor plans based upon the use of rooms referred to as *salles*, *chambres*, and *cabinets*. At least five surviving Natchez houses, Airlie, Bedford, the Briars, Hawthorne, and the Governor Holmes House, exhibit the Creole attribute of having brick fill between the framing members. Two rural examples of this are Salisbury and the Wall house, both in Wilkinson County. The use of the central hallway with a bilaterally symmetrical arrangement of

rooms on either side was typical of Anglo-Saxon traditions. Examples of the Creole influenced architecture include Airlie, the House on Ellicott's Hill, Hope Farm, the Gardens, the Griffith-McComas House, Mount Locust, Saragossa, Williamsburg and the middle portion of Richmond (Crocker 1973; Gleason et al. 1986).

Other attributes associated with the earliest architecture of Natchez that are probably in part associated with Creole architecture are asymmetrical facades, lack of central hallways, galleries extending completely around houses, and raised construction which is a first floor of brick construction surmounted by a frame second floor. Also common to much of the Natchez District and Louisiana are false galleries. These are narrow roof-like additions that were added to the fronts and sides of porches to reduce the sunlight.

Perhaps the most ubiquitous feature of Natchez and Natchez District architecture (although by no means confined to these areas) were the galleries or porches. Although they were very prevalent by the first decade of the nineteenth century, Ron Miller (1987) has observed that many of the early buildings that now possess galleries, originally did not. Ingraham (1835:43-44) observed that galleries

are necessary to every house in this country as fire-places to a northern dwelling.... No house, particularly a planter's, is complete without this gallery, usually at both the back and front; which furnishes a fine promenade and dining-room in the warm season, and adds much to the lightness and beauty of the edifice.

He also elaborated upon the functional importance of the gallery, first noting the

saddles, whips, horse blankets, and the motley paraphernalia with which planters love to lumber their galleries. On nearly every piazza in Mississippi may be found a wash-stand, bowl, pitcher, towel, and water-bucket, for general accommodation. But the southern gallery is not constructed, like those at the north, for ornament or ostentation, but for use. Here they wash, lounge, often sleep, and take their meals (Ingraham 1835:98).

With the passage of time during the 19th century, the Creole tradition waned to be replaced by architecture tending to reflect Anglo-American vernacular and academic traditions. Nevertheless one can still see numerous Creole cottages located in and around the town of Natchez, many of which date to the late 19th and possibly even the early 20th centuries. This house form consisted of two main rooms, two or three cabinets and a loggia in rear, full undercut gallery in front, internal chimneys, and two front doors (Newton 1971:13; 1985:183). Some of these are elaborately constructed with stylistic features, such as Williamsburg in Natchez and Oakwood in the Kingston community. Most of these forms are vernacular and unpretentious with many being located in black neighborhoods in the towns of the district such as the Woodlawn neighborhood of Natchez.

Also of Creole origin are the shotgun houses, a house type that is defined as being one room wide by three or more rooms deep with a front gabled roof (Newton 1971:15). According to Vlach (1975), the shotgun house has African antecedents which were combined in Haiti with the gable front orientation of the architecture of the Arawak Indians. Having emerged as a house type, the shotgun house was carried to New Orleans in the early nineteenth century by immigrants from Haiti where it became a common urban house form. Many examples survive there today that are quite elaborately decorated with Greek Revival trim, Victorian gingerbread, or other stylistic elements. Probably during the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, the form spread throughout much of the southeast into areas that had not been settled by the French and had not been affected otherwise by Creole architecture. After diffusing out of New Orleans, the shotgun house was usually used in rural areas as the home of black tenant farmers or in urban areas as the home of laborers (Newton 1985:187). Many examples of this housetype can be seen in the black residential areas of Natchez District towns, again Woodlawn is an example.

All of the architecture discussed heretofore has been of a vernacular character, that is, it is the product of traditional building practices. It stands in contrast to academic styles of architecture that were largely based upon the study of ancient Greek and Roman and renaissance buildings and theory. Although vernacular and academic architecture are often treated as being a duality, in actual occurrence the two are often mixed, as they were at Natchez. At about the time of the transition from Spanish to American rule, evidence begins to appear of academic architectural that was beginning to appear as embellishments on fairly vernacular forms of buildings. These include such features as the fanlight on the ca. 1798 House on Ellicott Hill and carved cornices on the ca. 1800 Texada (Miller 1987). The first attempt to use both academic details and form was the brick house, Auburn, that was both designed and built by Levi Weeks in 1812. In a letter Weeks stated that this was the first occasion in which the "orders of architecture" were utilized in the Mississippi Territory. The "orders" at Auburn referred to the portico with two-story columns that eventually was one of the first usages of the architectural form that became virtually symbolic of the South (Miller 1987). These first academic treatments were of the Federal style, which soon gave way to the Greek Revival style that has come to be virtually synonymous with the climax of Natchez architecture. Additionally, associated with the increased popularity of styles of classical derivation was the increased usage of bilaterally symmetrical facades and central hallways on both academic and vernacular buildings.

Also emerging were two basic house forms that were treated with different stylistic emphases, the planter's cottage and the grand mansion (Miller 1987). The smaller of the forms, the planter's cottage, consisted of a full-frontal, usually undercut gallery, a row of two or more rooms in front, and in the rear small rooms or cabinets, often located on either side of a loggia, all under a side-gabled roof. This rather loose definition encompasses a large variety of house types, including Creole cottages and many dogtrot houses. The more elaborate forms were often quite large and style conscious. The earliest forms did not have central hallways; some being of the *salle* and *chambre* plan with a single wide central room (*salle*) with a narrow room (*chambre*) at each end, such as Selma Plantation and the House on Ellicott Hill. Later planter's cottages almost invariably had central hallways. Most of these were one room wide on either side of the hallway, although a number had two rooms on either side, such as the Briars.

Perhaps the most stereotypical form of antebellum Natchez architecture was the grand mansion. It is described by Ron Miller (1987):

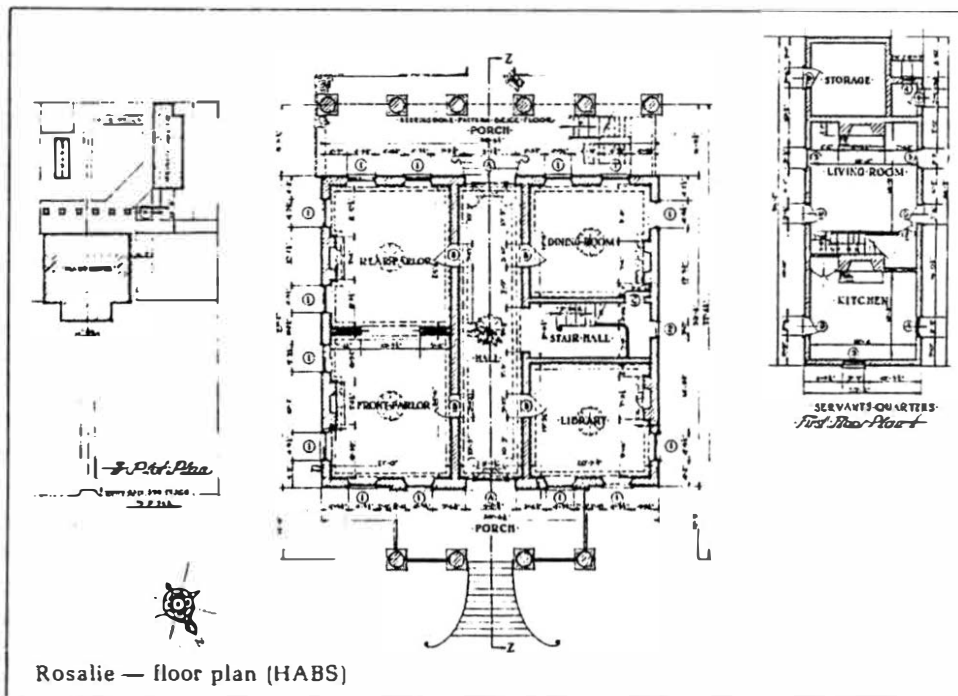
A modified version of the Auburn portico was built in 1823 at Rosalie, where it is combined with other features to produce the first complete form of the grand mansions common to Natchez and found, to a much lesser extent, throughout the South. As introduced at Rosalie in 1823, this form is based on a nearly cubical brick block, crowned by a hipped roof with railed balustrade. Of the five openings on the front, the center three are sheltered by a portico supported by giant order columns, or columns that are two stories tall. The columns are repeated on the rear gallery to form a colonnade that extends the full-width of the rear elevation. The grand mansion form established at Rosalie was repeatedly utilized for Natchez houses up to the time of the Civil War. It was duplicated at Melrose, Homewood, Choctaw, and the Harper House. It was slightly modified at Magnolia Hall and Stanton Hall...

Although these two basic forms were used for a large number of Natchez District buildings and therefore tend to provide standard images for the more pretentious antebellum architectural repertoire, there were also a number of larger antebellum homes that did not fit into these categories. All of these building forms were usually the creations of local master builders who served as both designer and builder. Although these builders usually borrowed stylistic details from design books, there was enough similarity in their architecture to give it a pronounced regional flavor. This flavor was accentuated by a number of architectural devices, which along with the galleries, served to ameliorate the heat of the summer. These features included floor-length windows, jib windows, jalousies, and hinged doorway sidelights and transoms (Ron Miller 1987).



Rosalie

Rosalie Mansion

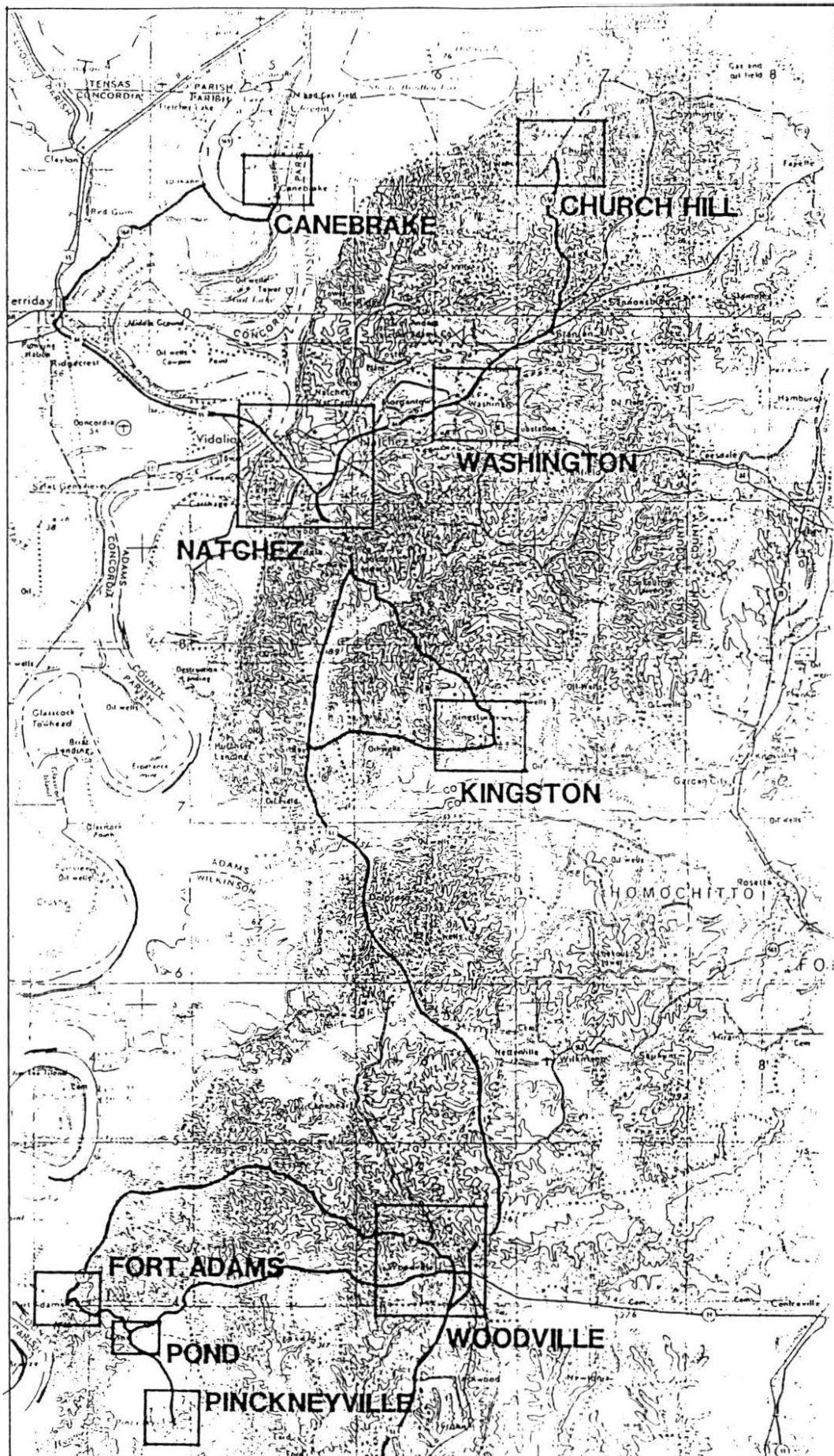


Shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War, a trend began that led away from the regionally based architecture. Early examples of this trend are Longwood and Edgewood that were both designed by out-of-state architects. This trend was accelerated following the Civil War, when builders built directly from plans published in pattern books and even ordered the millwork from out-of-state companies. Thus post-bellum Natchez architecture lacked the regional distinctiveness of the ante-bellum architecture (Ron Miller 1987).

Before the Civil War, the greatest development of more pretentious architecture was certainly in the town of Natchez and in the immediately surrounding areas where numerous large houses, often referred to as "suburban villas," were located. Ingraham (1835: 163) noted that "within three miles of the town [Natchez] the country is entirely occupied by houses and grounds of a villa character." Other notable architectural developments also occurred in the other towns of the district, such as Woodville, Washington, Port Gibson, and Vicksburg. However, the rural plantations often possessed large and pretentious homes, usually built to replace an original log home. Following the Civil War very few ambitious architectural projects were undertaken in the rural areas. In the towns, architecture was somewhat more subdued yet still vibrant and, having lost much of its regional character, consisted of a variety of national styles such as Second Empire, Queen Anne, Neo-Classical, Beaux Arts, and Craftsman.



OVERVIEW OF TOUR ROUTES AND SITE LOCATIONS





## THE NATCHEZ TRACE AND THE NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY

Two miles east of Washington on Highway 61 is the current southern terminus of the Natchez Trace Parkway, a unit of the National Park Service. To the north of the highway the parkway leads towards Nashville, Tennessee, and to the south the parkway is presently under construction toward Natchez. The Parkway was created to commemorate the frontier road that we term the "Natchez Trace," and has contributed to the historical image of Natchez and the Natchez District. Although today the common parlance refers to the Parkway as simply the "Natchez Trace," this is an incorrect and misleading usage as will become clear.

When the Mississippi Territory was created in 1798, the Natchez District settlements were separated from other American settlement by hundreds of miles of Chickasaw, Choctaw and Creek territory, which had to be crossed by using trails. One series of trails connected Natchez to the settlements around Nashville, Tennessee and came to be known as the "Natchez Trace." Because of an increase in traffic on the Trace following the annexation of the Natchez District by the United States and because of the Federal Government's need to have a satisfactory line of communication with Natchez, President Thomas Jefferson in 1801 authorized improvement of the road. The work on the Trace began in late 1801 and continued through 1807. Postal service began on the Natchez Trace in 1800 and continued through the 1830s. To accommodate the numerous travelers, as many as fifty "stands" or inns sprang up between Natchez and Nashville. Within the Natchez District, a number of towns were established on the Trace where they could cater to both the traffic along the Trace and to the growing rural population. From Washington northward, these towns consisted of Selsertown (Ellicottville), Union Town, Greenville, and Port Gibson. Port Gibson became the county seat of Claiborne County while Greenville served as the county seat of Jefferson County from ca. 1802 through ca. 1825. All are now extinct except for Port Gibson.

As the rural population grew and new urban centers were developed, a process that spread into the former Indian territories following the cession of their lands, new county roads were opened and older roads were often realigned or abandoned. Similarly, the Natchez Trace, while losing its importance as a regional transportation artery, continued to be used in part as components in various county road systems, while other parts were abandoned.

Ironically, the name "Natchez Trace" did not come into usage until the 1820s, well past the heyday of the road. During its peak usage, it was variously referred to as the "Natchez Road," "Nashville Road," "Mail Road," or "Cumberland Road." In 1909, the Daughters of the American Revolution began a campaign to commemorate the old road by erecting a stone monument in Natchez, the southern terminus. Over the next 25 years, twenty more monuments were erected along the route in Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee, raising the road into the public consciousness. Through the usage of the term "Natchez Trace," the Daughters forever froze the somewhat anachronistic name into the public consciousness. Meanwhile, attention to the concept of the road increased, both scholarly and popular works were published, resulting in part into the reification of the concept of the road into something static and unchangeable, something that had existed for centuries, that is before the white men it had been an Indian trail, and before that it had been an animal trail. The image of antiquity was such that one unidentified politician is reported to have stated that "the Natchez Trace was the oldest road in the world, made by the animals and the Indians long before the Romans built the Appian Way" (Daniels 1962:9).

During the 1930s a movement to establish a commemorative parkway developed in the U.S. Congress which in 1938 authorized the creation of the Natchez Trace Parkway and Blue Ridge Parkway as a unit of the National Park Service. Construction of the scenic parkway began, associated with the interpretation of historic and natural sites along the way. Because a number of towns grew up on the old route of the road, the Parkway could not follow its exact route; in many places the Parkway is up to one or more miles

away from the route of the Trace. Although the National Park Service has never hidden this fact, in the mind of much of the public the Parkway *is* the Trace, the modern avatar of a concrete, metaphysical reality that originated in the dim recesses of prehistory (For an overview of the Trace/Parkway see Phelps 1962).

## MOUNT LOCUST AND UNIONTOWN

Adjacent to and in front of Mount Locust is the site of an extinct town that was surveyed by, if not in, 1799. Owned and maintained by the National Park service as a key feature of the Natchez Trace parkway, Mount Locust is one of the few remaining eighteenth century structures of the Natchez District and is significant as being representative of the area's colonial and frontier architecture. During the early nineteenth century it served as a stand, or inn, on the Natchez Trace.

Mount Locust dates at least to the 1780s, that is to the period of the Spanish regime and might date even earlier to the British period. By 1785, the house was the home of William Ferguson who at an unknown time began to operate it as a stand, or inn, on the Natchez Trace and in 1799 was co-founder of the Union Town. Following Ferguson's death in 1801, his widow Paulina "Polly" Burch Ferguson married James Chamberlain, and this family continued the operation of the inn through 1838 and possibly later.

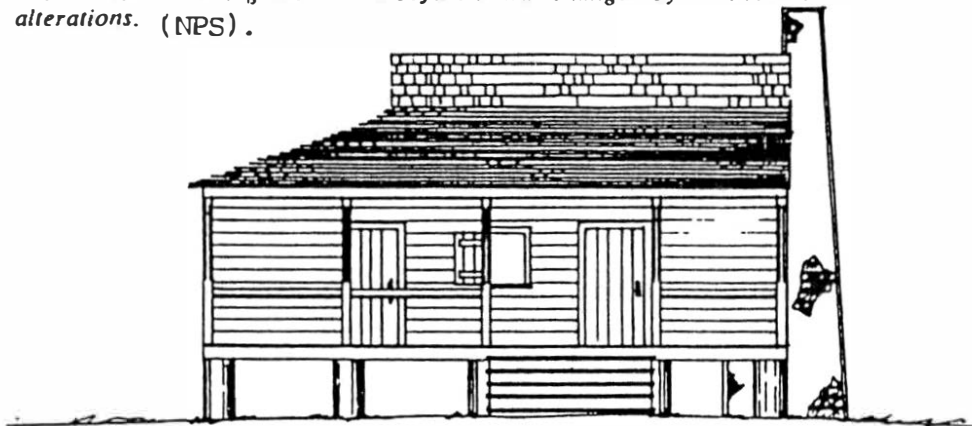
The house began as either a one room or hall-and-parlor frame house with front and rear galleries. Over the years, the house evolved considerably in size, but has been restored by the National Park Service to a ca. 1820 appearance.

In 1799, shortly after the annexation of the Natchez District by the United States, William Ferguson joined with four other men in a joint venture at founding a town. A plat of 28 blocks (four by seven) was surveyed adjacent to Mount Locust and named Union Town. The Natchez Trace that had run immediately in front of the inn was diverted a short distance to the southeast so as to follow Main Street. A few lots were sold and a few buildings were constructed, including residences, a store, and a tannery, yet overall the town attained little size and died out after a few years. In 1808, Fortesque Cuming (1904:317) described the town as "a small village of three or four houses in decay...."

A reminiscence by John Watkins of New Orleans (quoted in Goodspeed vol. I, p.176) described Union Town:

At Union Town, Shackleford established an extensive tannery, and had branches at the old Cable place and at Mrs. Wallace's. Ellis had a public gin, as few at that day were able to run one for private use. Farley made all the hats. We killed coons and took the skins to him, and in return got a hat. Jake Warner made shoes at Union Town, Pintard was cabinetmaker, McMurchy bull-whips. Weaving was extensively carried on, but it was done by hand.

*Mount Locust during the 1780's before it was changed by additions or alterations. (NPS).*



# Mount Locust and Union Town

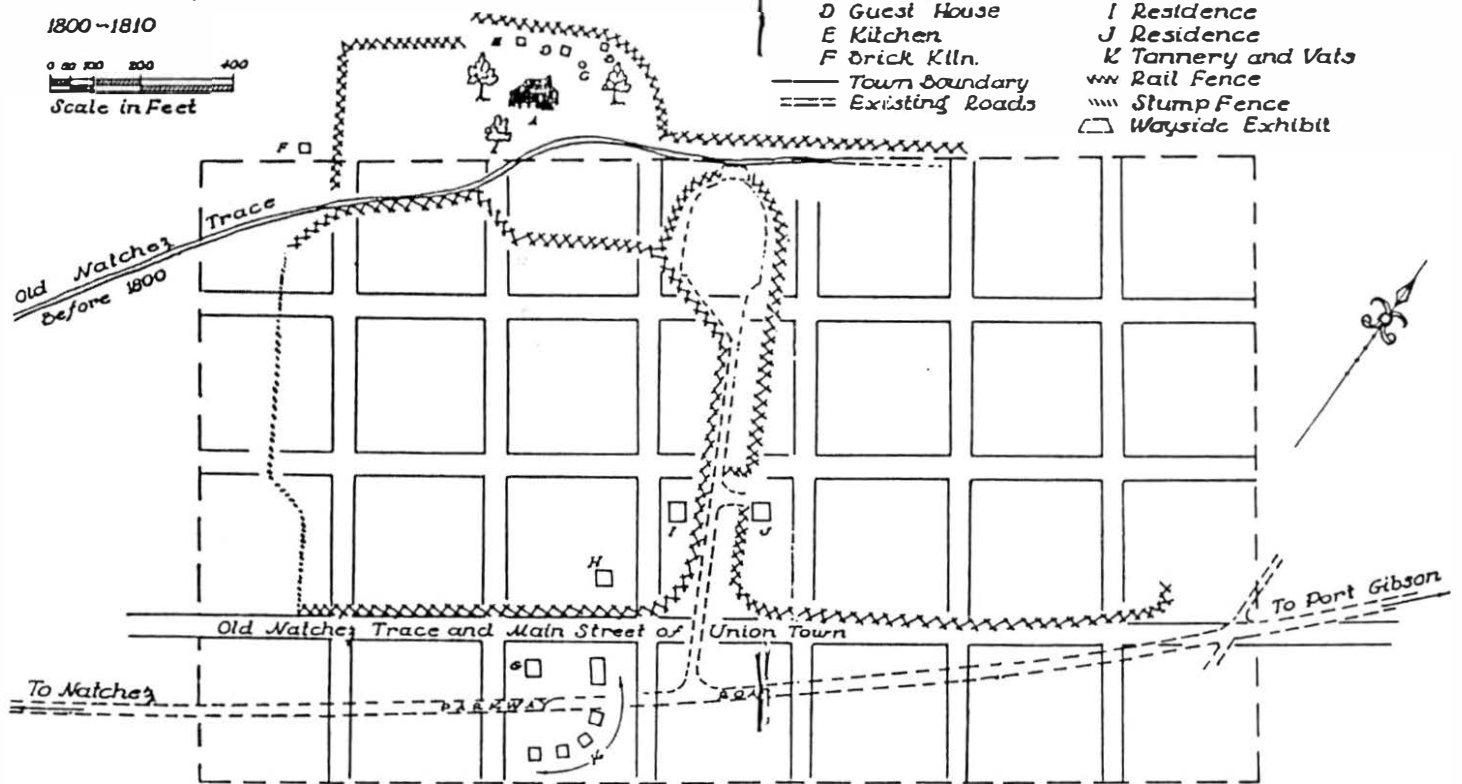
## Vicinity Map

1800-1810

0 100 200 400  
Scale in Feet

## Key to Map

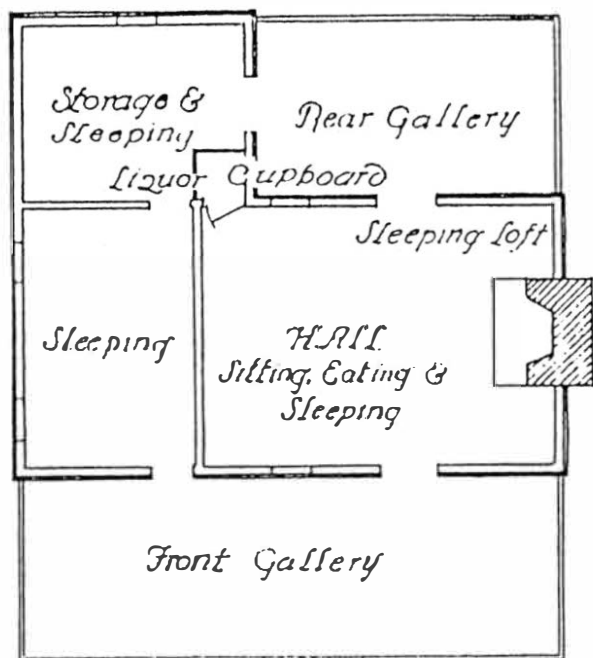
- |                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| A Mount Locust     | Union Town             |
| B Overseer's House | G Store and Inn (1807) |
| C Nursery          | H Doctor's House       |
| D Guest House      | I Residence            |
| E Kitchen          | J Residence            |
| F Brick Kln.       | K Tannery and Vats     |
| — Town boundary    | ~ Rail Fence           |
| == Existing Roads  | Stump Fence            |
|                    | □ Wayside Exhibit      |



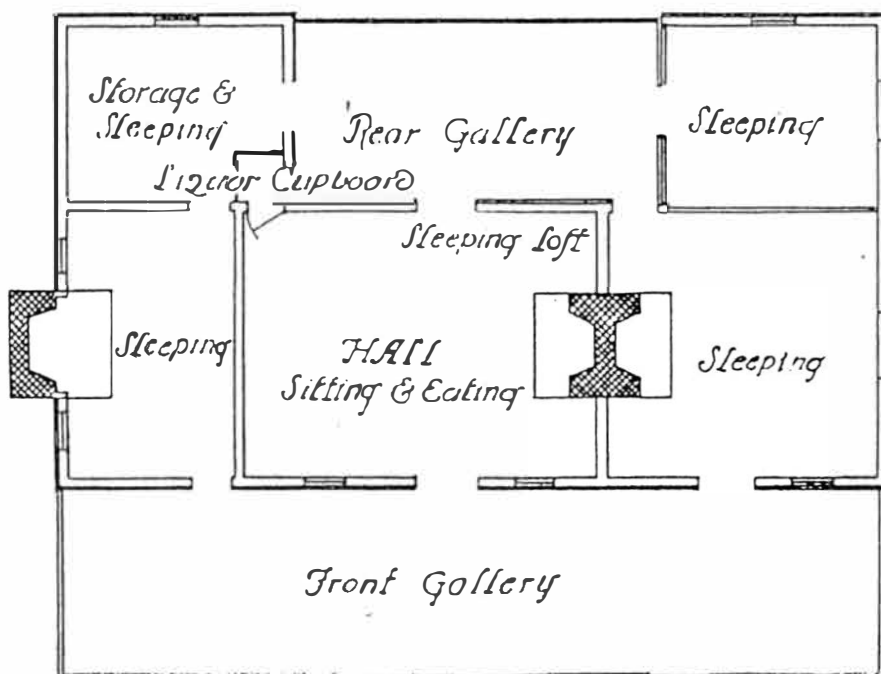
Union Town Plat. (NPS).



Mount Locust. Current Restoration to 1820's Period. (NPS).



Ca. 1780's



Ca. 1820's

Mount Locust Floor Plans. Scale 1:8. (NPS).

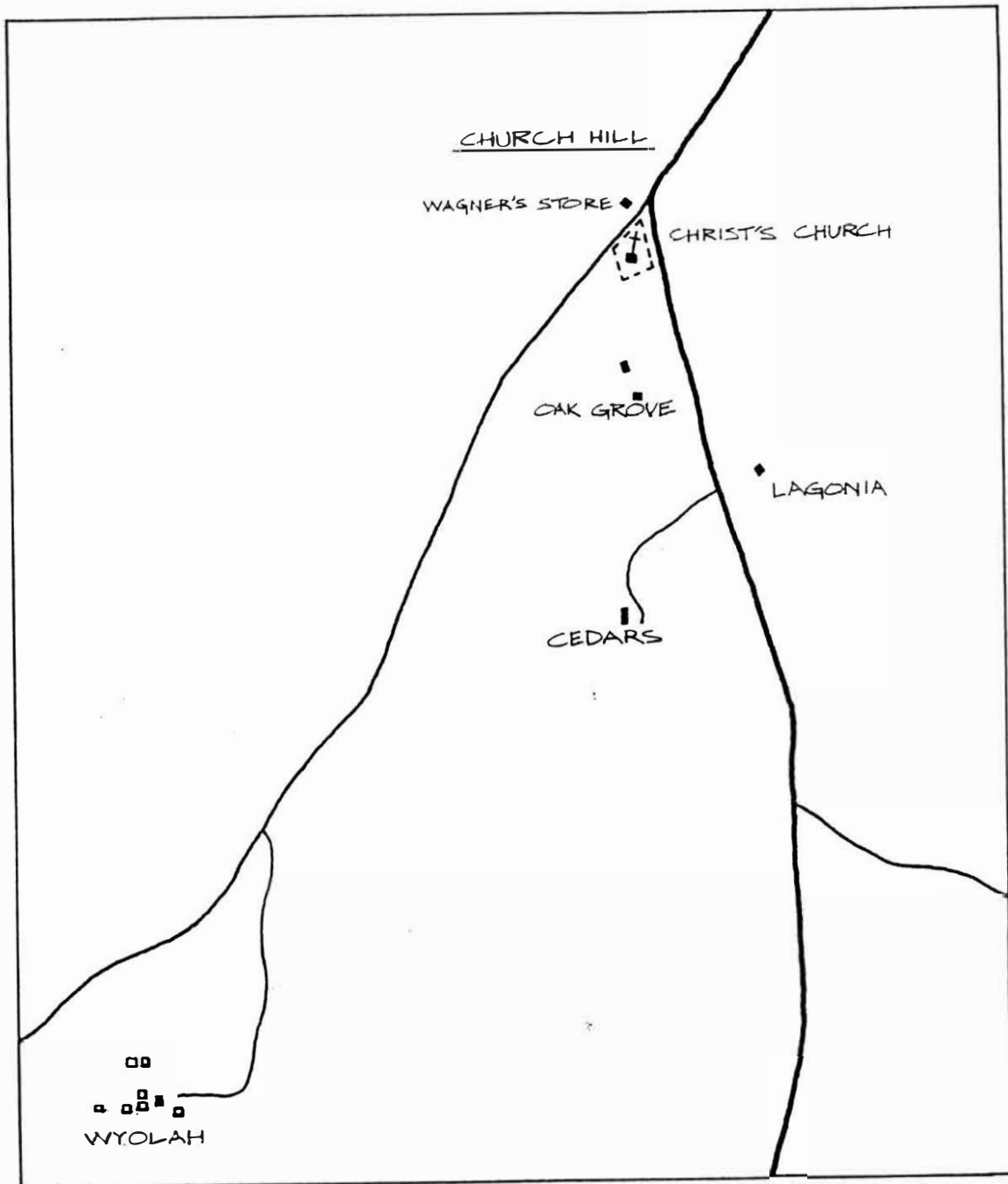
## CHURCH HILL

Church Hill is a rural hamlet that is centered around a brick Episcopal Church prominently and picturesquely situated on a steep loessial knoll, from which the community's name is derived. Immediately across the road is the nineteenth century store building, currently operated by the Adolph Wagner family. Until last year when it was discontinued, the Church Hill Post Office was operated in Wagner's store. Clustered to the south of the community center are four substantial plantation houses. Church Hill is still evocative of the numerous rural hamlets that once were ubiquitous throughout the District.

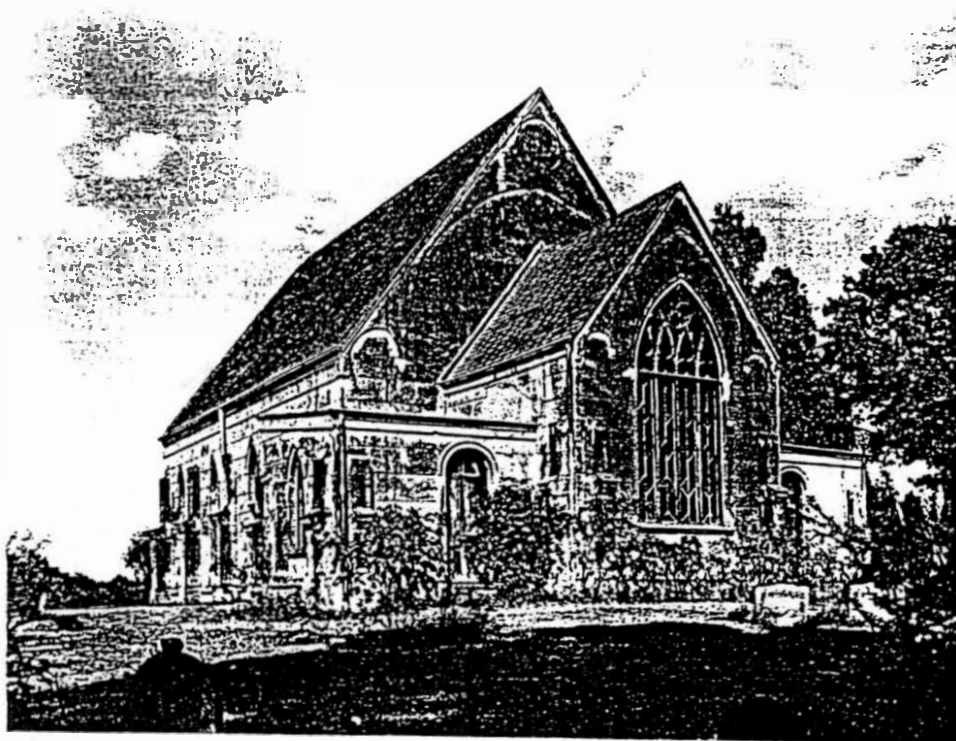
The congregation of Christ Church Episcopal Church dates to ca. 1820 when a log church building was constructed about a mile to the east of the present site. By 1829, a second building had been constructed on or adjacent to the present site. This church, located on such a prominent knoll, was evidently suggestive of the community name "Church Hill" which was given to the post office that was established in 1837. By 1856, the congregation was considering building a third building, that is the present one. At a vestry meeting in that year it was proposed that the new building be adapted "to the wants and tastes of a country congregation, consulting to comfort and convenience before architectural elegance and beauty." The new church that was completed in 1858 was designed by Natchez architect J. Edward Smith and constructed by Natchez contractor N.L. Carpenter. Of Gothic Revival design, the church is constructed of brick, but is stuccoed and scored to imitate ashlar masonry (Allen and Chronister 1976).

A simple rectangle, the nave is four bays long with narrow lancet windows set between buttresses that rise to the level of the interior hammer-beam braces, grained to imitate dark oak, and dated May 17, 1858. The entrance porch at the north gable, like the nave itself, is treated with buttresses, arched openings, drip stones, and a stucco representation of the interior hammer-beam ceiling. Two wooden columns at the north end support the slave gallery. The twin lectern and pulpit are semioctagonal and are carved with Gothic motifs. The altar, pews, chairs, and marble font are also original furnishings. Although inoperative for many years, the original pipe organ, reported to be of Scottish manufacture, remains in place. Alterations to the exterior structure have been limited to the removal of the pair chimneys, which served an original furnace below the nave, and the disappearance of all corbels from which the drip stones and hammer-beam representations sprang.

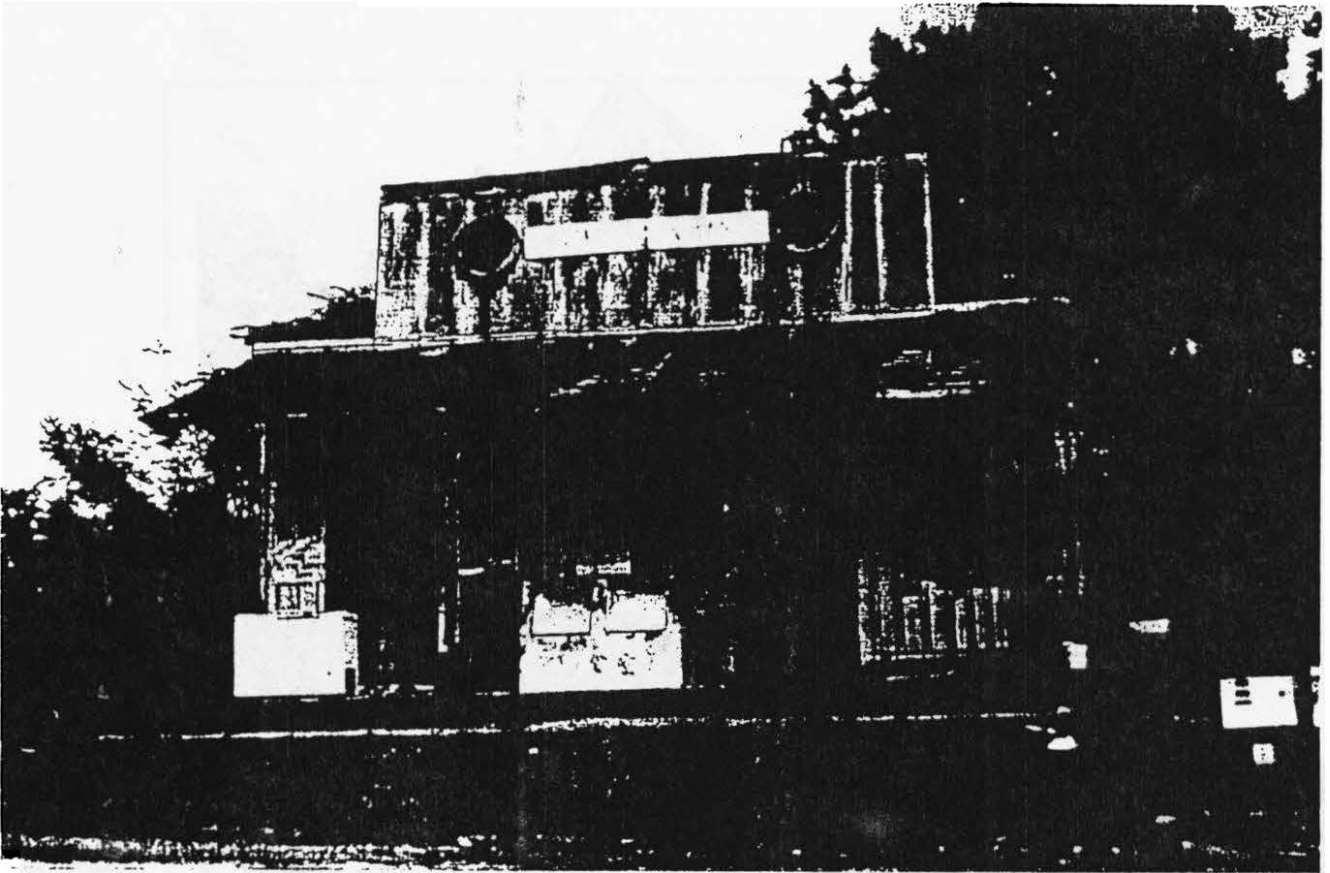
A picturesque nineteenth century cemetery is located to the rear and sides of the Church, typical of rural churches and graveyards.



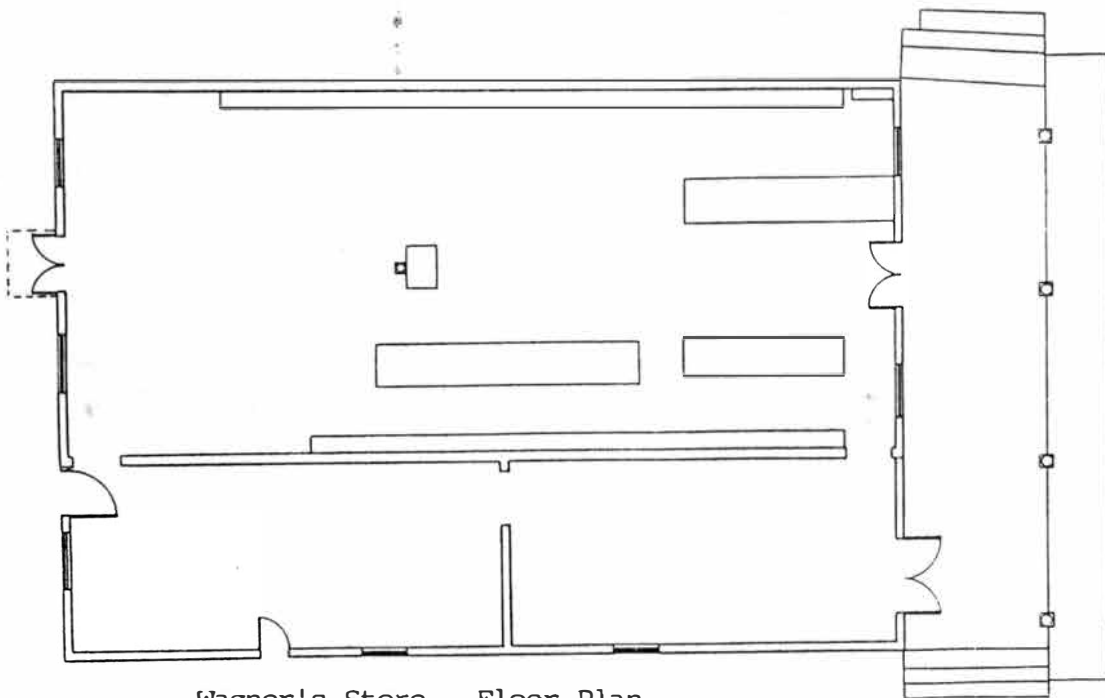




Christ Church, Church Hill (HABS)



Wagner's Store. Front Elevation. 1990.



Wagner's Store. Floor Plan.

## OAK GROVE

Oak Grove is one of Mississippi's most intriguing rural "retreats". The house has at its nucleus, a two-story vernacular dwelling with side-hall plan, enclosed staircase, and superbly carved, Adamesque mantel pieces that rank among the finest in the state. Two of the mantel pieces retain their original decorative painting in imitation of granite, and the staircase walls retain the original green paint. This portion of the house also features regionally unique exterior end chimneys linked by a chimney pent. These chimneys architecturally link the house to Maryland, from where many of the Church Hill settlers migrated. This early section of Oak Grove is traditionally believed to have been constructed 1928-30 for James and Jane Wood Payne. Jane Payne's father, Colonel James Gilliam Wood (1770-1845) of Maryland, was one of the earliest residents of the "Maryland Settlement" at Church Hill.

About 1840, the Paynes undertook a major Greek Revival enlargement and remodeling of their out-of-date, federal style, side-hall house. From the exterior, the completed product appears to be a two-story, five-bay, Greek Revival house fronted by double tiered galleries that are supported by Tuscan columns linked by a balustrade of turned Grecian balusters. The facade of the house give no indication that it was built in two major stages. However, the rear elevation presents clear evidence of the growth of the house, since the original double-tiered gallery of the older section is balanced on the new section by an ingenious mock gallery that attempts to treat the large, later addition as an extension of the original gallery, thus keeping the mass of the house somewhat symmetrical. Louvered blinds, alternated with twelve-over-twelve light windows on the first level, serve as the sheathing of the addition.

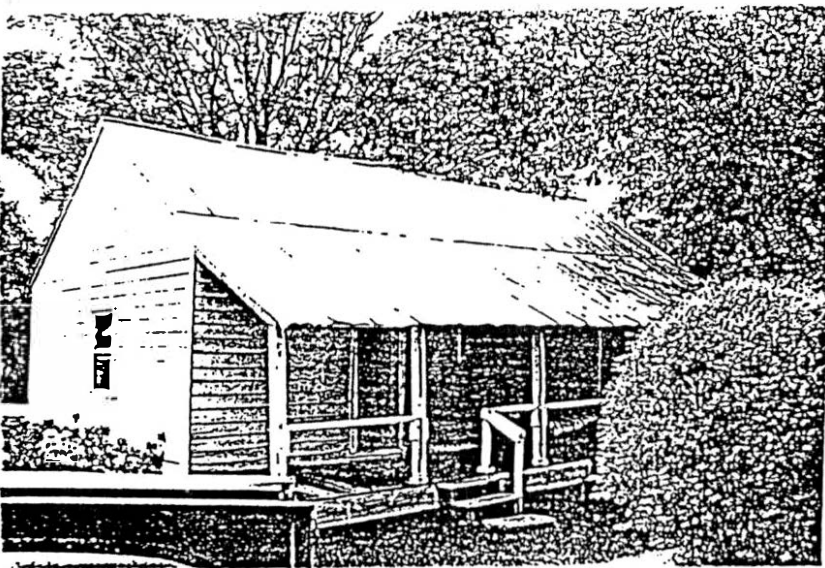
The two-stage evolution of the house is clearly evident on the interior, where the rooms of the older section retain early federal style trim. The Greek Revival ornamental plaster work is perhaps the finest of any rural plantation house except for Brandon Hall, located in the near vicinity. Oak Grove's ornamental plaster matches the ornamental plaster at the Natchez mansion D'Evereux, constructed in 1936. An unusual feature of the house are the central hall cabinets that flank the main entrance doorway. These cabinets feature glazed doors with hollow-sided diamonds that match the entrance sidelights. Oak Grove retains almost all of its original graining, door hardware, and some original paint colors.

A small, hipped-roof building, believed to have been a separate outbuilding, is now attached to the northern side of the house by a small clapboarded hyphen. A matching detached building was added in the 1970's to the southern side wall. One original outbuilding, believed to have been a slave cabin, is located to the rear of the main house.

Oak Grove passed from James and Jane Wood Payne to their daughter Maria Louisa Payne Shields, who in turn willed it to her daughter Lula Shields (1866-1967), who resided at Oak Grove for 101 years. the house and fifty acres were purchased from the heirs in 1973 by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Brandt, who are to be commended for their gentle touch on this important rural landmark. The house has been recently purchased by Mr. and Mrs. David Paradise.

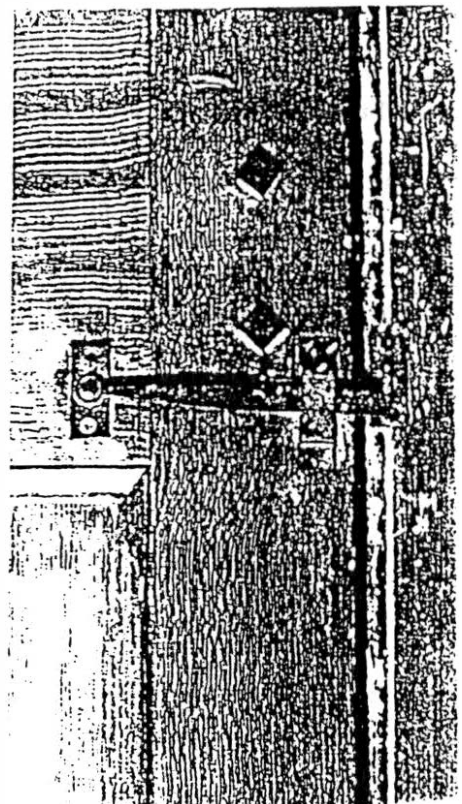


Oak Grove. Southeast View. (MDAH).



Oak Grove outbuiding

Oak Grove detail-hardware  
& graining.



## WYOLAH PLANTATION

Constructed in the mid-nineteenth century for Irish immigrant, Dr. Francis B. Coleman, Wyolah Plantation is one of the most significant plantation complexes in the State of Mississippi. This significance is based principally on the remarkable survival of so many of the original plantation outbuildings, which include a doctor's office, brick kitchen, commissary, carriage house, barn, corn crib, and two servant's houses and, to a lesser degree, on the character and outstanding integrity of the buildings themselves.

The main plantation house is a two-story, Georgian plan, frame structure with Greek Revival features. It has many features that are considered typical of Mississippi plantation architecture of the mid-nineteenth century such as the front and rear undercut galleries, the rear cabinet rooms of the first story, and the original interior decorative scheme consisting of white walls, oak-grained doors and bases, marbled bases and mantel pieces in the more formal areas and black mantel pieces and bases in the less public areas of the house.

The front and rear walls of the frame house, which are protected by the galleries, are stuccoed and scored in imitation of stone. Originally, on the facade, each block of scored stucco was painted a different shade of sandstone and the scoring lines were painted white. The face of the frame doctor's office retains this original decorative treatment. This treatment was fashionable during the Greek Revival period in Natchez, where the local builders sought to emulate the stone so favored for fine Grecian buildings. Only one Greek Revival building in Natchez -- the Commercial Bank (now the First Church of Christ Scientist) on Main Street -- can boast a real stone facade.

Natchez builders used stucco on both brick and frame buildings, in town and in country, and they sought to create the appearance of stone by painting the scoring lines to resemble dark or light mortar by tinting the blocks different colors, or even by marbling the individual blocks of stucco. The great mansions of Natchez as well as the plantation houses received similar treatment. Old photographs illustrate that the mansions Monmouth, Melrose, and The Elms originally exhibited stucco that was scored and tinted in varying shades of sandstone. The stucco of the great mansion Dunleith was once painted and veined to resemble marble, as was a rural plantation in Kingston called Sligo. Older, brick federal style houses like Gloucester often were updated during the Greek Revival period with a wash of paint and scoring lines applied to the facade.

The plan of Wyolah also exhibits a typical regional floor plan. The house has a double-pile plan with central hallway and rear "cabinet" rooms flanking each end of the double-tiered rear gallery. The "cabinet" room configuration of Natchez region floor plans continued from the eighteenth century into the early twentieth century. Wyolah also originally exhibited the typical interior decorative scheme of a mid-nineteenth-century rural plantation house in the Natchez region. The walls were bare or white-washed plaster the doors were grained in imitation of oak, and the bases and mantel pieces were painted either black, slate, or were marbled in imitation of stone. At Wyolah, the artist who marbled the baseboards added an interesting feature -- vertical lines were drawn at intervals to make the marbled baseboard appear more realistic.

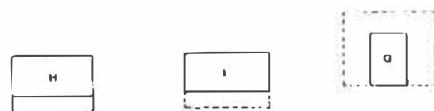
A remarkable collection of dependency buildings still survive at Wyolah. Just to the rear of the house is the plantation commissary or store. The detached two-room kitchen is the only brick building. Frame kitchens were not uncommon, but brick was the preferred and more common building material due to fire. For the same reason, the plantation smokehouse, like the one at Cherry Grove Plantation, was often constructed of brick. The slave houses of Wyolah, like those at Canebrake Plantation in Louisiana, are constructed of board-and-batten. Board-and-batten became the preferred surface treatment for dependency buildings in the 1850's. The surviving ca. 1820 slave cabin at Saragossa Plantation is finished in lap siding. The doctor's office located in front of the main house contains original oak-grained cabinets.

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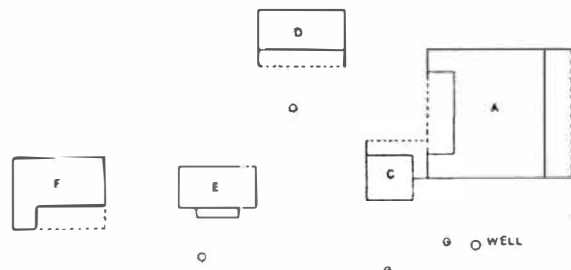
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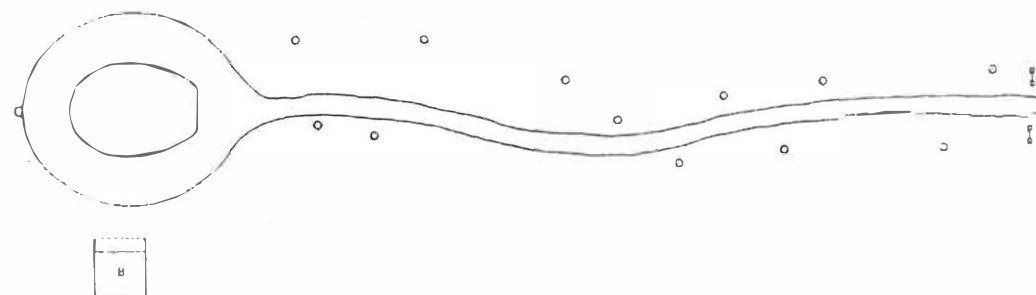


LEGEND	
A	MAIN HOUSE
B	DOCTOR'S OFFICE
C	COMMISARY
D	KITCHEN
E	CARRIAGE HOUSE
F	BARN
G	CORN CRIB
H/I	SERVANTS' QUARTERS
J	CHICKEN COOP
K	HAY FEEDER

o SEPTIC TANK

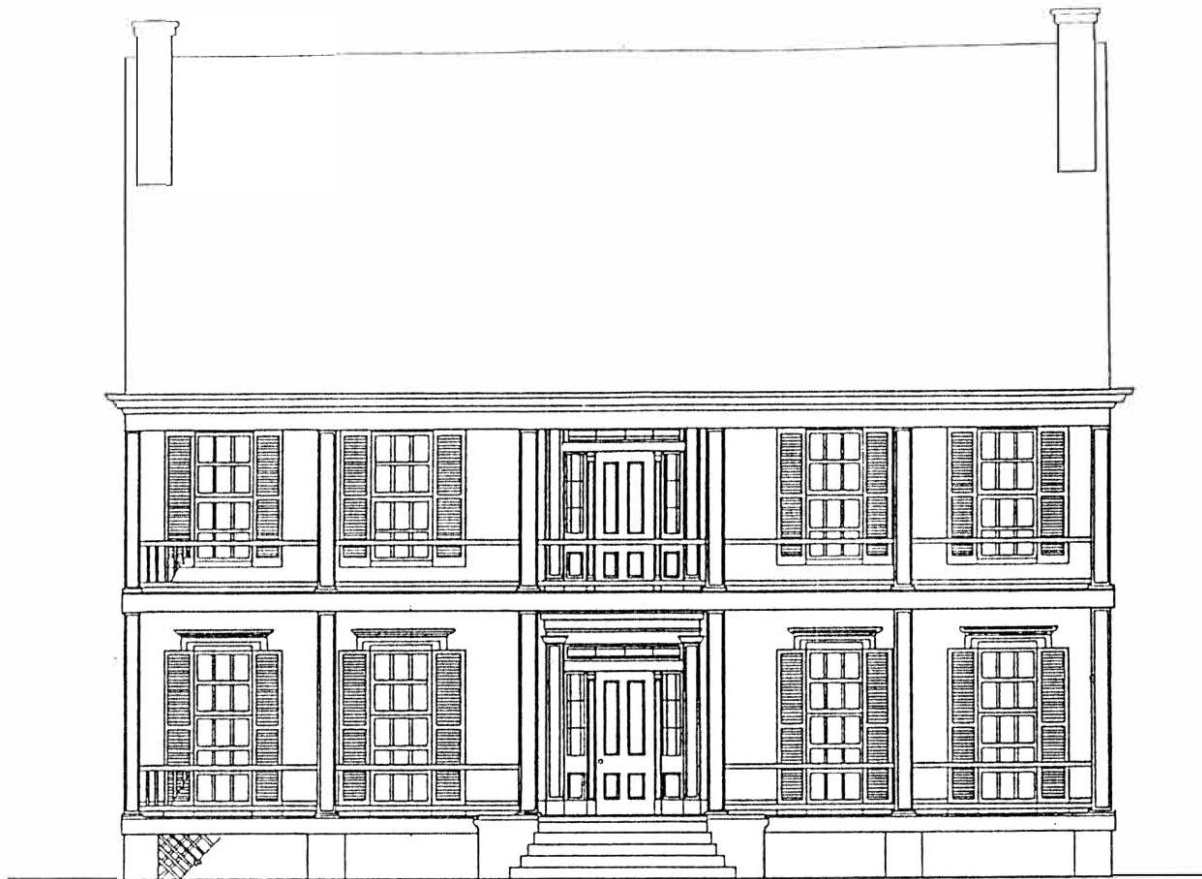


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Wyolah site plan



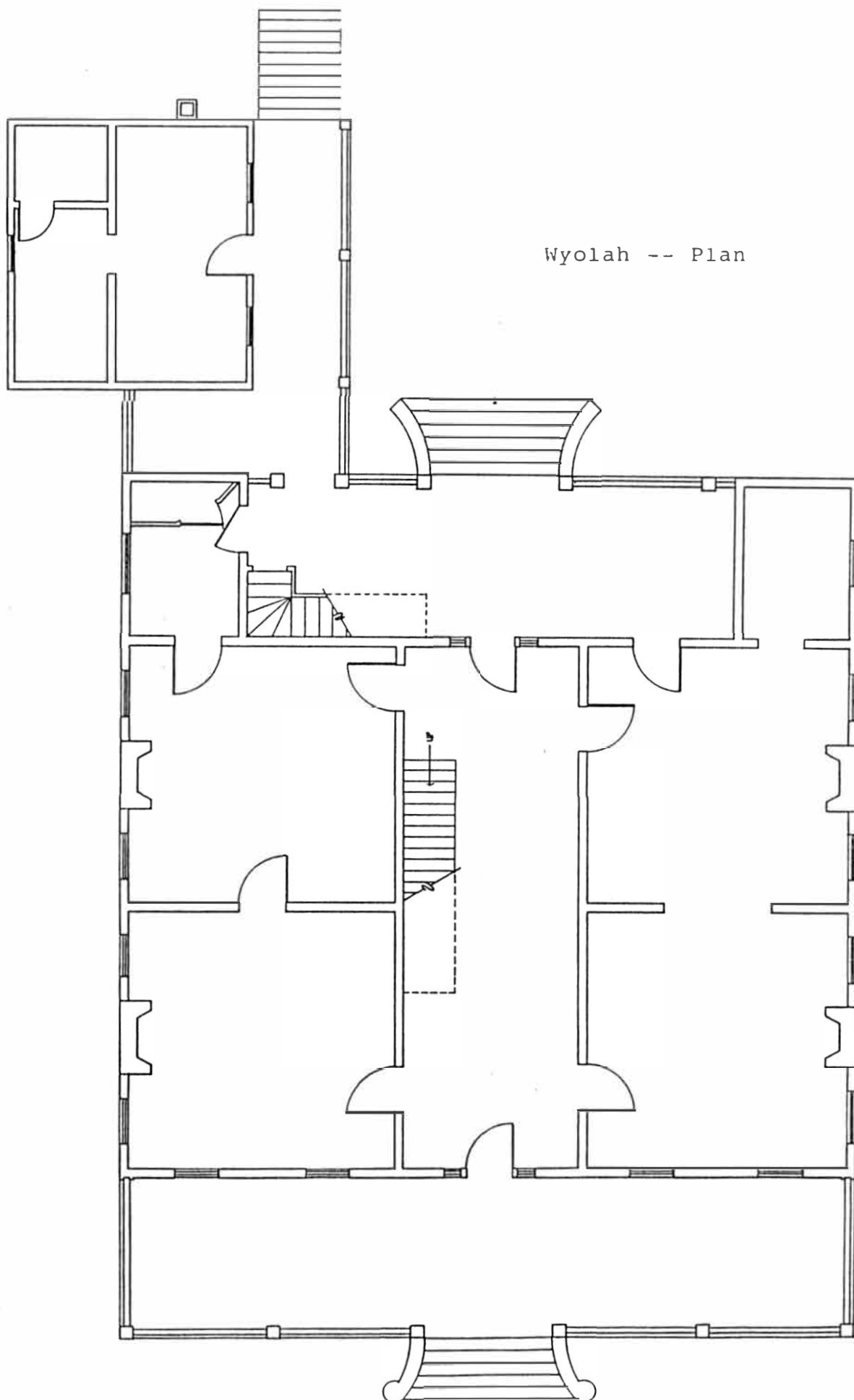


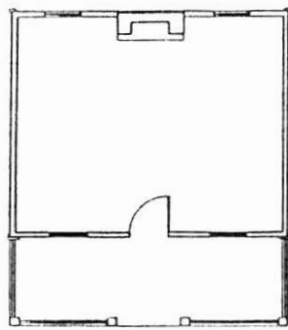
Front



Side

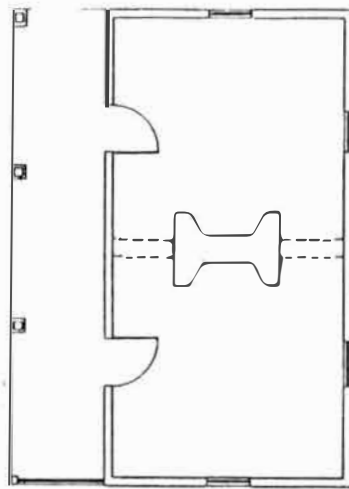






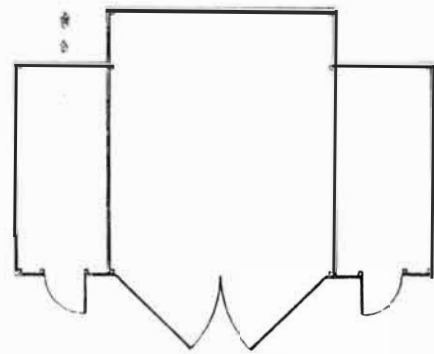
(B)

DOCTOR'S OFFICE



(D)

KITCHEN



(E)

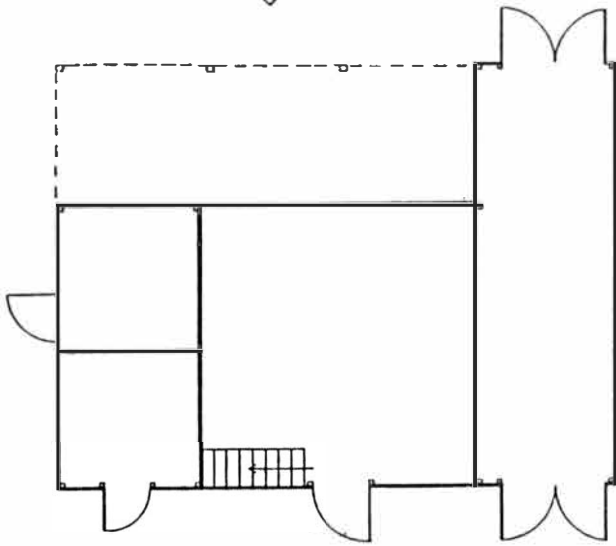
CARRIAGE HOUSE

Doctor's office

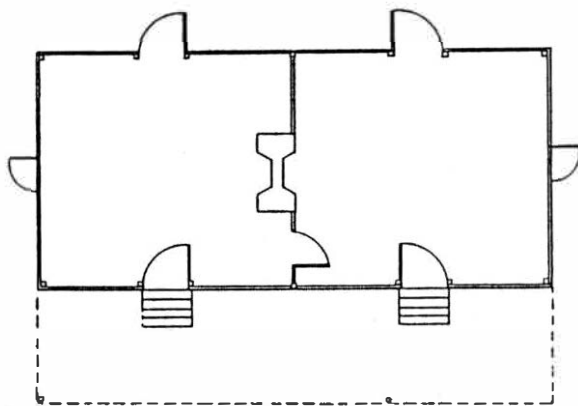
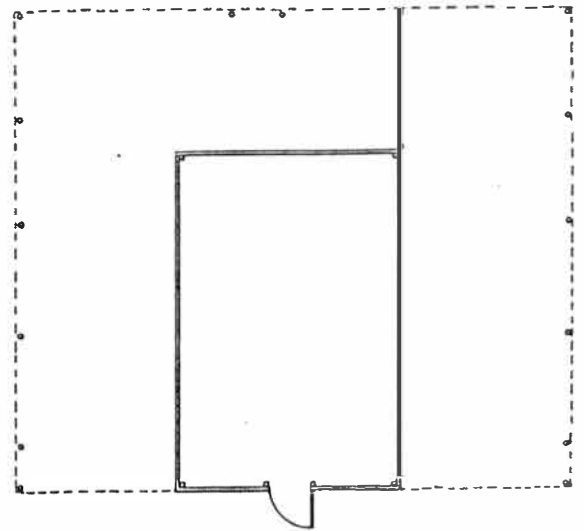


Wyolah outbuildings

F BARN



G CORN CRIB



H SERVANTS' QUARTERS

K HAY FEEDER

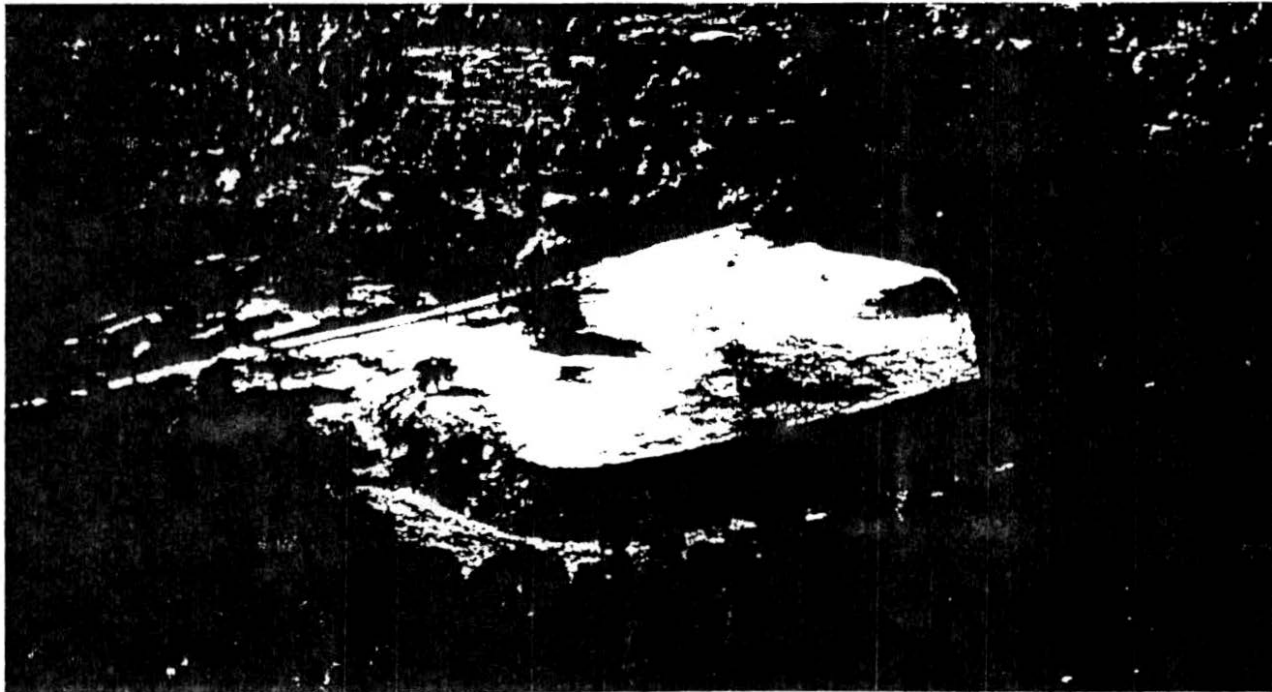


## EMERALD MOUND (SELSERTOWN MOUND)

Emerald Mound, a National Historical Landmark, is owned by the National Park Service and is maintained by the Natchez Trace Parkway. Its present name derives from the Emerald Plantation on which it used to be located, but was formerly known as the Selsertown mound by virtue of its proximity to that town. During its occupation the mound evolved from a village on a natural knoll into a major ceremonial center associated with the prehistoric Plaquemine culture and the historic Natchez culture.

Emerald is the second largest Indian mound in the United States, second only to Monk's Mound at Cahokia, Illinois. It consists of a large platform mound whose flat surface forms a plaza surmounted by two secondary mounds, one at either end. The platform mound is approximately 730 feet long (east-west) by 420 feet wide (north-south) and approximately 30 feet high. The western secondary mound is approximately 29 feet high while the eastern secondary mound is only about 10 feet in elevation. Early narratives indicate that as late as the nineteenth century there were six smaller secondary mounds, three along the northern side of the platform and three along the southern side. These six secondary mounds had disappeared erosion by 1917.

Archaeological research has defined a basic chronology of the site's development. The core of the mound is natural, loess knoll. During the Anna Phase (1200-1350 A.D.) a village was located on the knoll, but during the Foster Phase (1350-1500 A.D.), the village was abandoned and the knoll was transformed into a large ceremonial center. This was accomplished through the addition of fill dirt to the top of the knoll to produce a large platform. During the Emerald Phase (1500-1680), the mound attained its present size and form through the addition of more fill. Throughout its use as a ceremonial center the mound was occupied by temples and the home of the social elites. The mound possibly remained in use until as late as 1730. During this late, historic, phase it can probably be identified with the Natchez Indian ceremonial center called Jenzanque and was possibly visited by LaSalle in 1682.



Emerald Mound, second largest temple mound in the United States. Adams County. National Park Service. N.R. (Photograph by Bob Moulder).

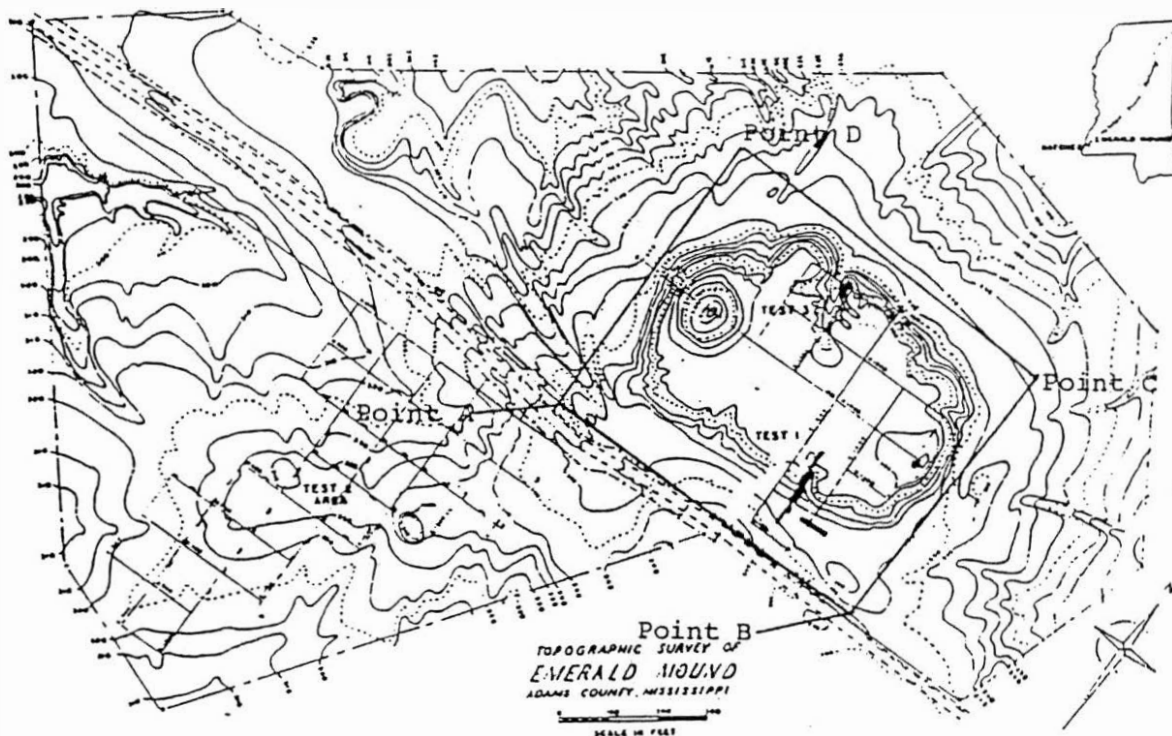


Fig. 10. Topographic map of Emerald mound.

Copied from Cotter (1951a:19), this shows the condition of the Emerald Mound Site prior to stabilization in the 1940s. It also shows the locations of the archeological investigations conducted by Cotter.

Note: The boundary outlined by Points A-D refer to the Verbal Boundary Description in Item 10.

Emerald Mound Topographical Map (MDAH).

## PLANTATION COMMUNITIES OF KINGSTON AND SECOND CREEK

The wealthiest planters of Natchez generally lived in great mansion townhouses or suburban villa residences that encircled the town. Although their principal agricultural production might take place in Louisiana, or as far away as east Texas or Arkansas, these planters preferred life near town to life on the plantations, and Natchez became their established commercial, cultural, and social center. Their near or far-flung plantations were under the daily management of overseers.

Another class of Natchez area planters, or farmers, lived close to the land on small plantations or farms outside the immediate vicinity of town. These plantations often formed a loosely knit, plantation community like Church Hill, Kingston, and Second Creek. These communities were never incorporated towns. The focus of a plantation community was often the rural church that was supported by the surrounding planting families. Examples of these churches are Christ Church at Church Hill, Kingston Methodist Church at Kingston, and Carmel Presbyterian Church at Second Creek.

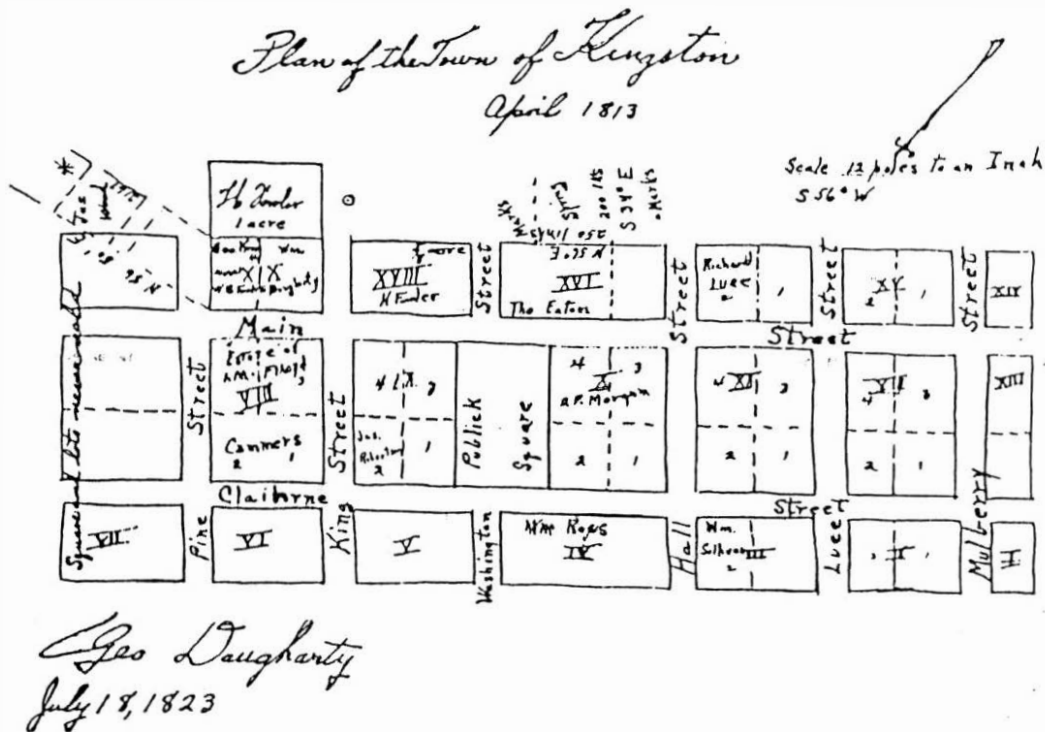
The two major plantation communities south of Natchez were Kingston and Second Creek. Kingston is often referred to as the *Old Jersey Settlement*, and, unlike Second Creek, it actually had a small village center that had already declined by the time of the Civil War. According to Joseph Holt Ingraham in *The South-West. By a Yankee* (1835), "Kingston, on the road from Natchez to Woodville, originally settled by a colony from New Jersey, is a small village, containing a church, post office, two or three stores, and several dwelling-houses."

J. F. H. Claiborne, in his 1880 *Mississippi as a Province, Territory and State with Biographical Notices of Eminent Citizens*, wrote a history of the Kingston settlement:

"As far back as 1768 the king had issued an order, or mandamus, to the governor of West Florida to have surveyed and allotted to Amos Ogden of New Jersey, a retired naval officer, 25,000 acres in one single tract. In 1772, Captain Ogden sold 19,000 acres of his claim to Richard and Samuel Swayze of New Jersey, at the rate of twenty cents per acre. They made a reconnaissance of the district, and located the claim on the Homochitto River, in the present county of Adams. In the fall of the same year the two enterprising brothers, with their families and a number of their kindred and friends, sailed from Perth Amboy [New Jersey] for Pensacola; thence, by the usual lake route, to Manchac; up the Mississippi, and then up the Homochitto to what is now known as Kingston. Samuel Swayze had been for a number of years a Congregational minister, and most of the adults who came with him were communicants. The faithful shepherd, as soon as he had provided a shelter for his wife and children, and planted corn for their bread, gathered up his fold and organized his society, undoubtedly the first Protestant pastor and congregation in the Natchez district. Under many drawbacks, growing out of Indian depredations, and discouragements after the county passed into Spanish hands, this pious teacher and his kindred met together on the Sabbath, often in the swamp and cane-brakes, for divine service. In 1780 the Indians became so troublesome and exacting that most of the settlers abandoned their homes and moved to the vicinity of Natchez. The venerable pastor settled on the east bank of St. Catherine, on what was long afterwards known as "Swayze's old field," on the left of the road from Washington to Natchez, and there he died in 1784. The Jersey settlement, begun in 1772, by men of intelligence, energy and high moral character, became prosperous and rich; densely populated; highly cultivated; distinguished for its churches and schools; its hospitality and refinement. And, in the course of years, it sent its thrifty colonies into many counties, carrying with them the characteristics of the parent hive. The Farrars, Kings, Corys, Montgomerys, Pipes, Foulkes, Colemans, Joneses, Callenders, Fowlers, Luses, Griffings, Hopkins, Nobles, Ashfords, and many others in Mississippi and Louisiana, are descended, in one branch or the other, from the brothers Swayze."

Approximately eight pre-Civil War plantation houses still survive in the Kingston Community--Beechland, Cedar Grove, Frogmore, Hillside, Magnolia Hill, Oakwood, Smithland, and Wayside. Others like Brick Quarters, Courtland, and Fairview, have been lost to fire or demolition. The Kingston Methodist Church is the only surviving pre-Civil War church building in the Kingston community.

The Second Creek plantation community consisted of the plantations that were located along Second Creek as it wound south from Natchez to the Homochitto River. Today, due to the construction of U. S. Highway 61 South which created a new man-made geographic boundary, people today tend to classify all the plantations east of the highway as part of Kingston. Among these is Cherry Grove Plantation, as well as Carmel Presbyterian Church. Many of the oldest and most aristocratic of the Natchez planting families had first settled in the Second Creek neighborhood. William Dunbar, Mississippi's territorial period counterpart to Virginia's Thomas Jefferson, established his Forest Plantation on Second Creek. Other extant plantation houses or complexes in the Second Creek neighborhood include Woodstock, Fair Oaks, Oakland, and Laurel Hill. In addition to Carmel Presbyterian Church, which served the Second Creek community, at least two Second Creek plantations had their own churches on the plantation. The church at The Forest no longer stands but photographs illustrate a building much like Carmel Presbyterian. The chapel at Laurel Hill Plantation has been preserved and is one of Mississippi's most romantic essays in the Gothic Revival style.



The Town of Kingston 1813, by George Daugherty. Copied by Louisa Drane for Birdie Noble Feiner's *The Antecedents and Descendants of Milton Bird and Leonora Dougherty Noble*, p. 51.





## KINGSTON METHODIST CHURCH

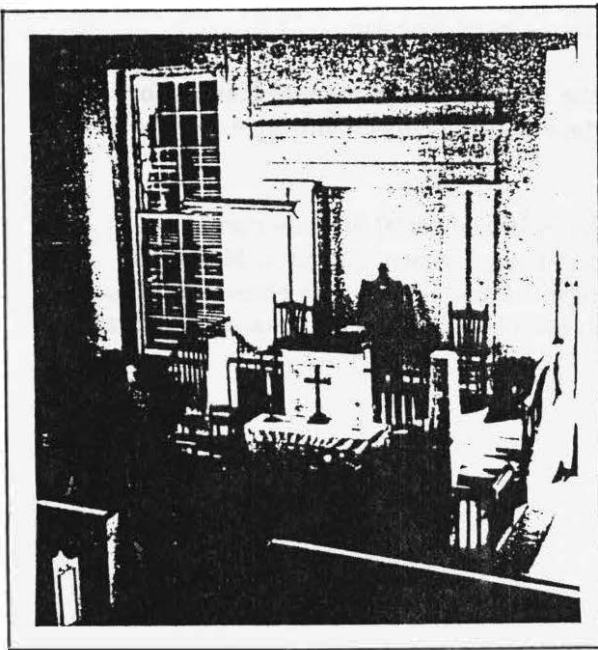
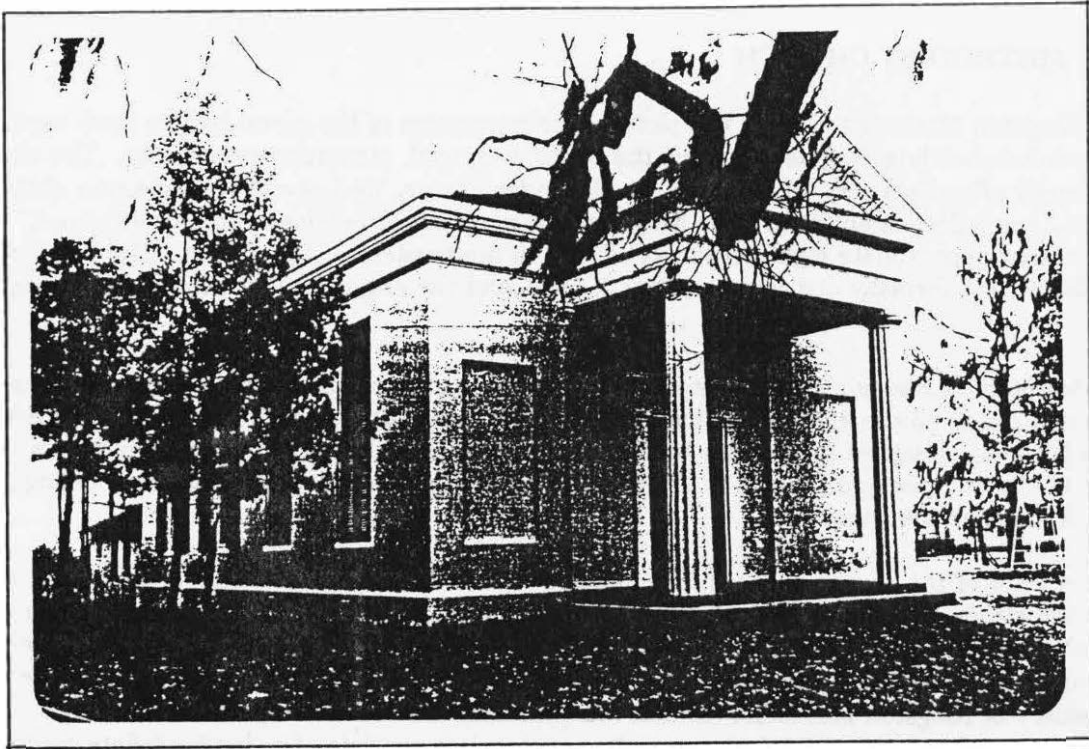
The Kingston Methodist Church is a picturesque expression of the grand temple form used for a small scale church building designed to serve the needs of a rural, plantation community. The church was begun shortly after February 13, 1856, when Alexander Farrar, "desirous of having a new church erected in the Jersey Settlement at or near Kingston for purposes of religious and moral culture," deeded the present approximate eight-acre tract of land to the trustees of the church. The Kingston Methodist Church was formally dedicated on May 3, 1857, and the original pulpit Bible still rests on the pulpit.

The architect of Kingston Methodist is unknown, although it relates architecturally in its use of blind recessed panels to the 1858 Zion Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church (originally Second Presbyterian Church), designed by Natchez architect and attorney J. Edwards Smith. Smith was also the architect of Christ Episcopal Church at Church Hill, Mississippi, and the Italianate remodeling of The Towers, a Natchez suburban villa.

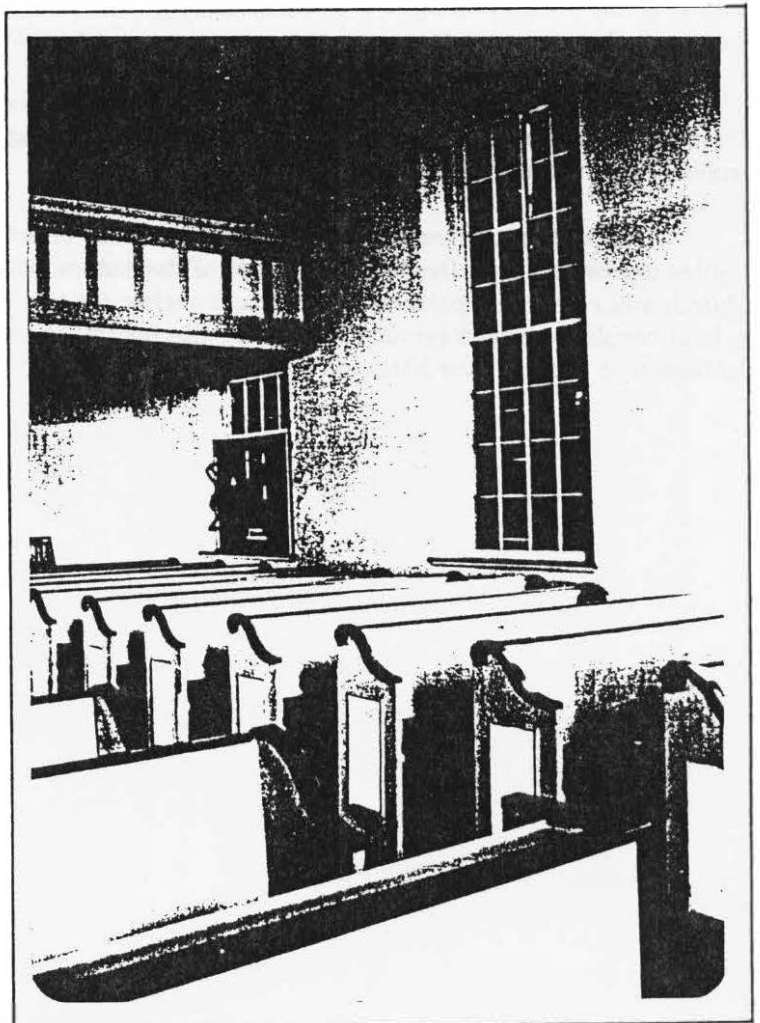
The interior of the church is beautifully detailed with a Greek Revival frontispiece behind the pulpit and a balustrade with turned balusters and newels defining the pulpit and altar areas. The rear gallery of the church is railed by molded panels which echo the molded panels of the pews and the original pew doors, removed and stored in the church basement. Typical of church galleries in the South, the gallery of Kingston Methodist Church was primarily used to seat slaves who attended church with their owners. An unusual plaster ceiling centerpiece consists of a circular foliate center section set within a square raised panel with ornamental corner decoration. The entrance doors retain their original wood graining and the original large box lock. Alterations to the church are limited to the removal of the pew doors and the conversion of a window into a rear doorway.

In front of the church building, close to the road, are the original pair of mounting steps for horse and carriage. The ground between the twin mounting steps and the church entrance retains its original herringbone brick paving.

During the nineteenth century, churches were often the center of social life in a rural plantation community. Despite the advent of the automobile and the television, Kingston Methodist Church still retains its position as a cultural anchor for the Kingston community. The church continues to hold regular religious services and is the site for the annual reunion of the descendants of the Jersey Settlers who founded the Kingston community.



Kingston Methodist Church



## CARMEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Carmel Presbyterian Church is one of Mississippi's most significant ecclesiastical essays in the vernacular Greek Revival style. The church was constructed about 1854 and replaced an earlier building that probably dated to the 1820's when the Carmel Presbyterian Church congregation was organized. The 1854 date is substantiated by a letter dated January 25, 1856 from a young doctor named Sam Grier to his brother, a young Presbyterian minister. About Carmel Church, Grier wrote:

I wrote you hastily yesterday advising you of the call from Carmel Church.... You remember where the old Carmel church stood. Well, passing by the old site, about 1/2 mile beyond, you come to the new Carmel Church, a pretty edifice built after the model of Forest Church but standing on an eminence. Across the road from it and about 150 yards distant stands the parsonage, a neat brick cottage 1 1/2 stories high, with five rooms on the ground floor, kitchen and stable and garden in the rear....(typescript copy of letters of Samuel Grier, Historic Natchez Foundation, Natchez, MS)

Additional support for the date is found on the Carmel Church sterling silver communion service which is dated 1854, possibly used for the first time at a dedication service for the new building. The church building and the communion service are now owned by the First Presbyterian Church in Natchez. Carmel Presbyterian is maintained by both the First Presbyterian and Westminster Presbyterian congregations in Natchez, and it is serving as a temporary home to a Baptist congregation. For many years it was cared for by the Ogden family who had been members since its founding.

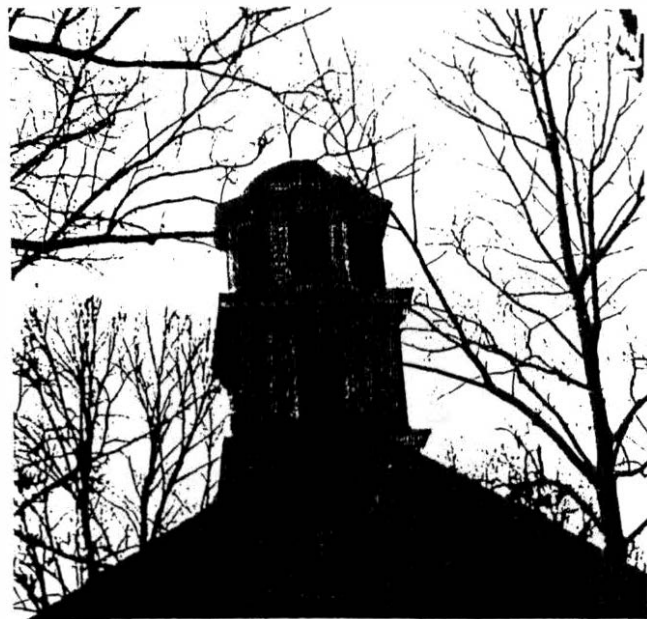
Carmel Presbyterian Church is a vernacular Greek Revival echo of the federal style First Presbyterian Church, considered to be Mississippi's finest federal style church building. The Roman Tuscan columns of the federal style tower of the First Presbyterian Church become Greek Ionic columns in the tower at Carmel Church. The federal, arched louvered openings of the octagonal stage of First Presbyterian's tower become square-headed openings at Carmel. On the interior, the pews and pew doors of the two churches are seemingly identical, and the Greek Revival frontispiece behind the pulpit and the pulpit itself closely match the pulpit and frontispiece installed in the First Presbyterian Church in an 1851 remodeling. In his 1856 letter, Sam Grier relates Carmel Church to a church that once stood on the Forest Plantation, perhaps also derived from the grander urban church in Natchez.

The architectural integrity of Carmel Presbyterian Church is outstanding with the only alteration occurring on the portico where the box columns have been cut at the bottom and placed on high brick piers that extend above the level of the portico floor. To the rear of the church is the Gillespie family cemetery, which was deeded to the church in the late nineteenth century. Gillespie family members owned neighboring Egypt, Hollywood, and Woodstock plantations.

First Presbyterian Church, Natchez



Carmel Presbyterian Church





## CHERRY GROVE PLANTATION

Cherry Grove Plantation was established in 1788 by Frenchman Pierre Surget on land granted by the Spanish government. Pierre Surget, originally a seaman by trade, was the patriarch of the Surget family in Natchez, a family that formed one of the largest planting dynasties in the entire South. Pierre's son Frank was described by one contemporary historian as the most extensive and successful planter in Mississippi. In addition to their plantations in Mississippi, Pierre Surget's sons and grandsons owned vast tracts of farmland in Louisiana and Arkansas. After the death of Pierre Surget, Cherry Grove was efficiently managed by his widow Catherine and eventually became the property of their son James. From James Surget, Cherry Grove passed to James Surget, Jr., who was responsible for the construction of the present residence and was considered to have been the best thoroughbred horse breeder in Mississippi. The plantation is today owned by James Surget, Jr.'s granddaughter and has one of Mississippi's longest histories of ownership by a single family.

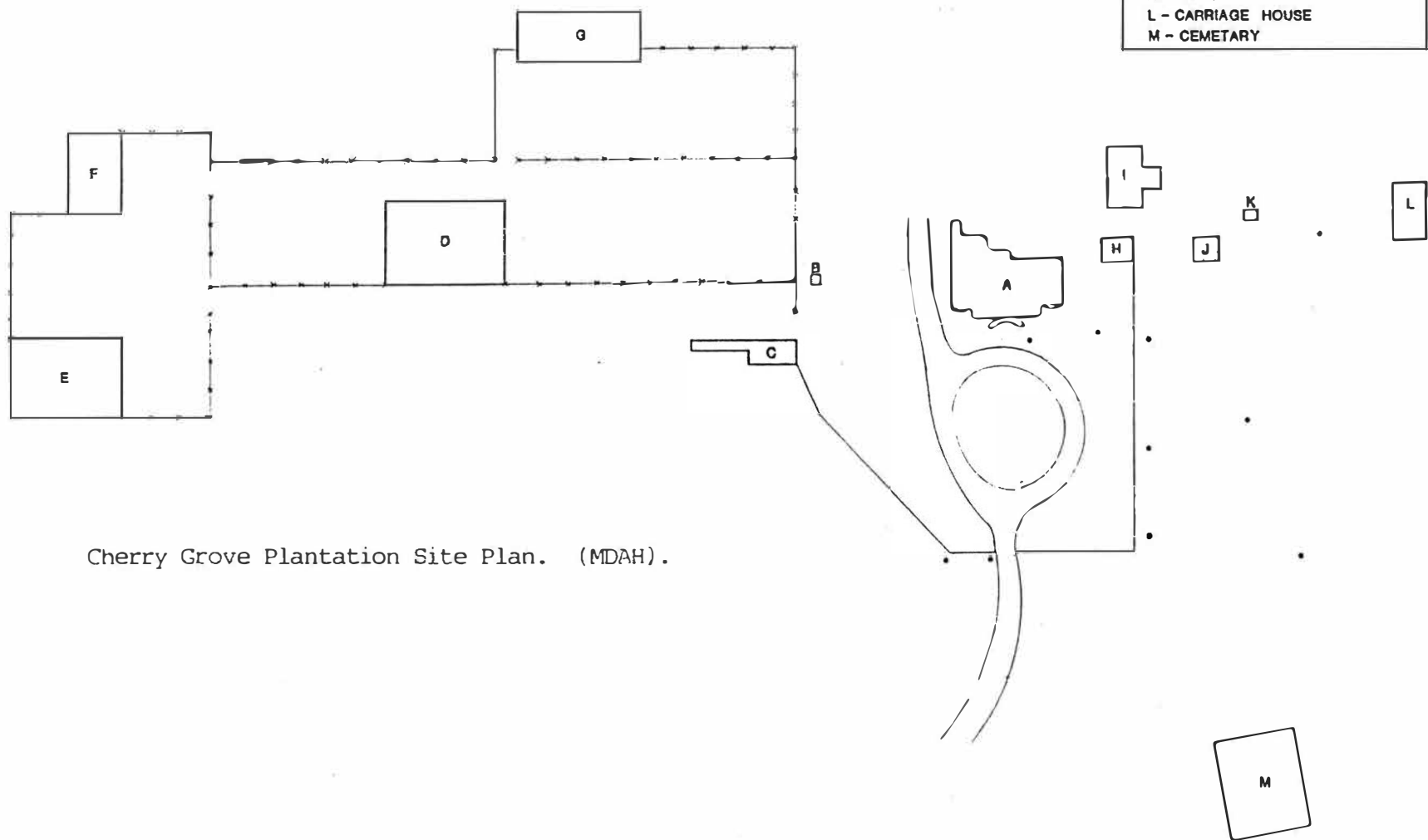
The original plantation house constructed for Pierre Surget and his wife Catherine burned in 1866, and the present picturesque and architecturally significant residence was constructed shortly after the fire by Pierre Surget's grandson James Surget, Jr. The fire was reported in the local newspaper:

We understand that the old homestead of Mr. James Surget, about six miles from town was wholly consumed by fire about midnight last Sunday night. It was among the oldest, if not the oldest, of the houses in the county. Mr. Surget barely escaped the fire with his life. (*The Natchez Weekly Courier*, September 17, 1866.)

Although constructed after the 1866 fire, the existing Cherry Grove house is constructed on a fully raised basement and exhibits a regionally early, single-pile plan (one room deep) with rear "cabinet" rooms enclosing each end of a rear gallery. Both front and rear galleries are inset beneath the slopes of the gable roof. These features suggest the possibility that the present house may have taken its basic form from the earlier house which burned. The original octagonal bays and gable-end balconies represent the concession of the builder or owner to the popular taste of the 1860's and 70's.

The collection of plantation outbuildings is exceptional and includes an unusual tenpin alley building with attached late nineteenth-century gymnasium. Tenpin alleys and billiard halls were common outbuildings to Natchez area plantation houses and suburban villa estates. Other surviving outbuildings include a smoke house, detached ca. 1900 kitchen, corn crib, stables, privy, sheep stalls, and barns. Hand-hewn cypress troughs for feeding and watering the stock are rare plantation survivals. The Cherry Grove Plantation cemetery containing the graves of Pierre and Catherine Surget is located within site of the main dwelling house.



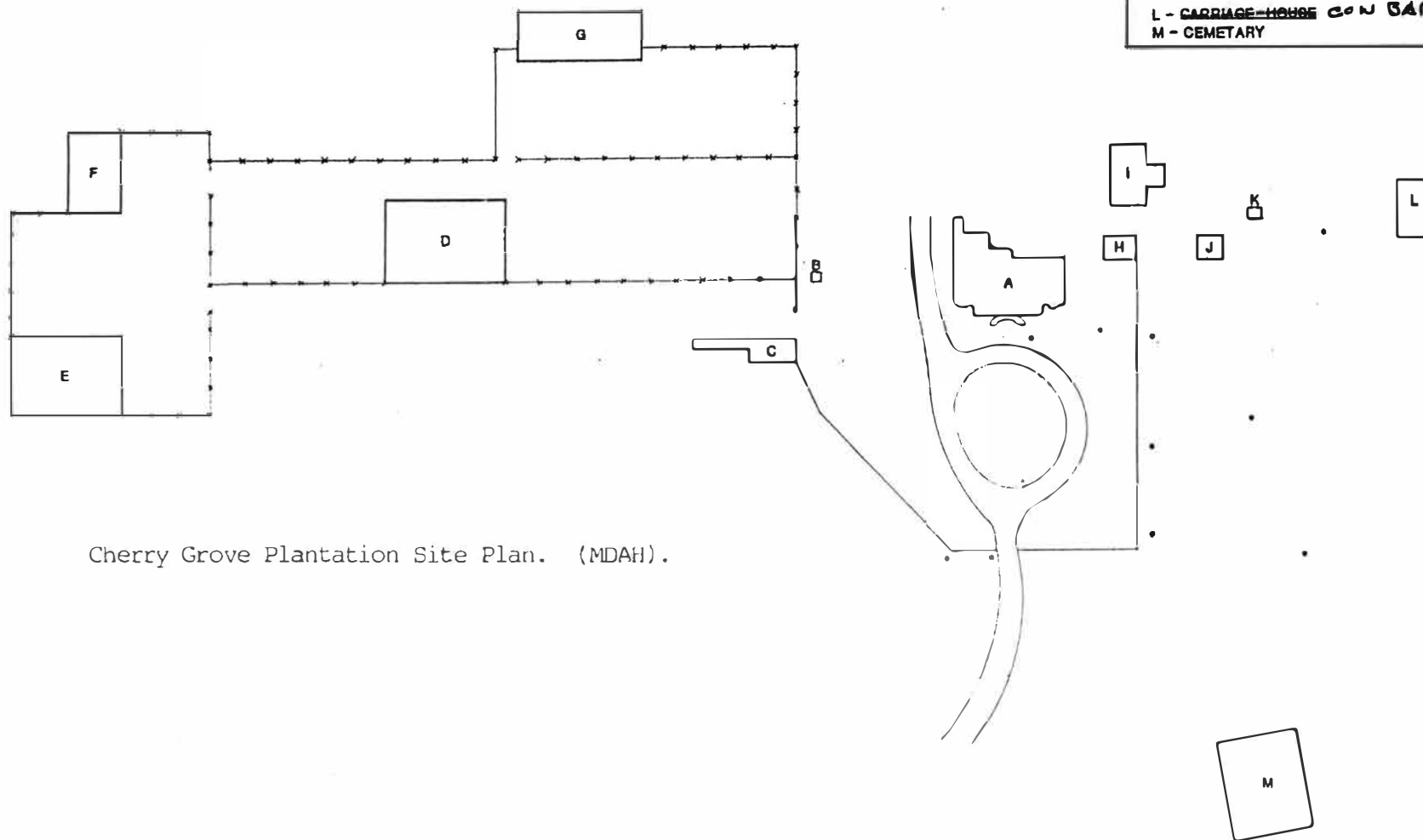


Cherry Grove Plantation Site Plan. (MDAH).

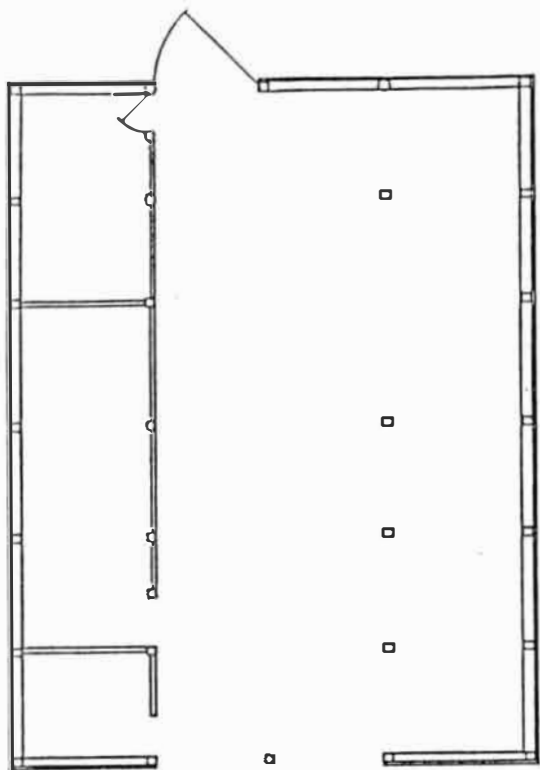


# LEGEND - CORRECTED BY OWNER

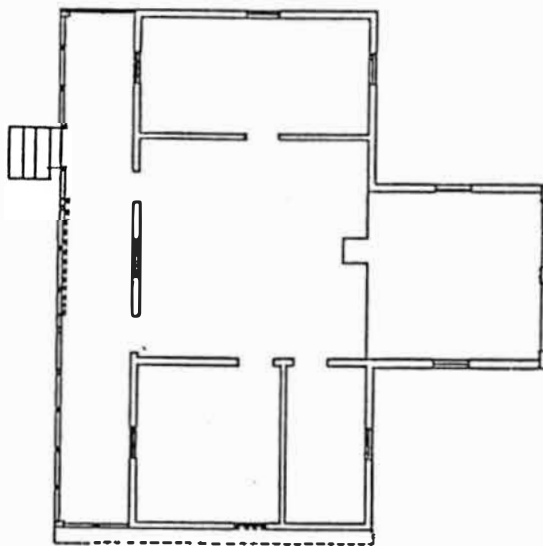
- A - MAIN HOUSE
- B - OUTBUILDING - POULTRY
- C - GYMNASIUM & TEN-PEN ALLEY
- D - BARN STALLION BARN (BEFORE 1910)
- E - HORSE BARN (1940)
- F - BARN SHEEP SHED
- G - ~~SHEEP SHED~~ CORN CRIB & PIGEONHOLE
- H - KITCHEN 1870 (BEFORE 1870)
- I - ~~SLAVE QUARTERS~~ BACHELOR HALL (AFTER 1870)
- J - SMOKE HOUSE
- K - PRIVY
- L - ~~CARRIAGE HOUSE~~ CON BARN
- M - CEMETARY



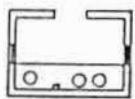
Cherry Grove Plantation Site Plan. (MDAH).



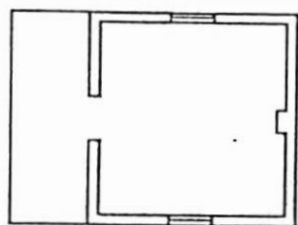
Barn (F).



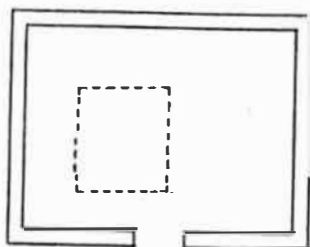
House (I).



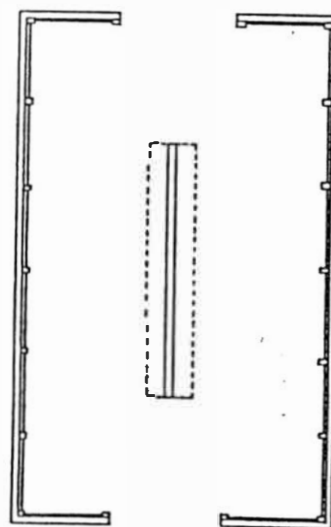
Privy (K).



Kitchen (J).



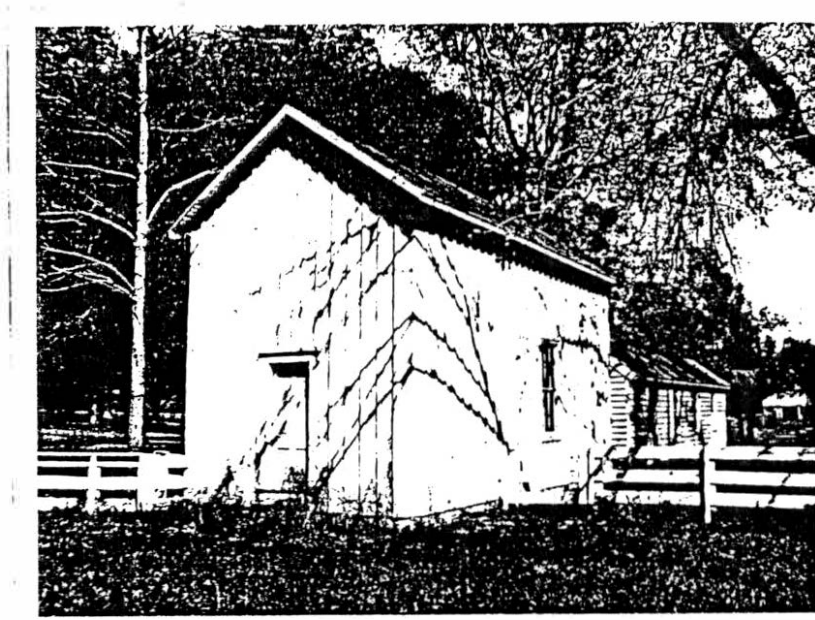
Smoke House (J).



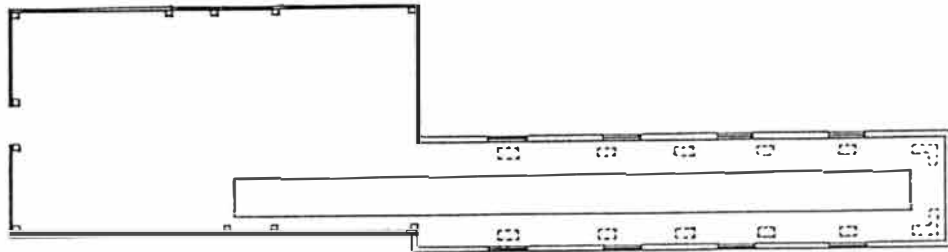
Carriage House (L).

Cherry Grove Outbuildings. Scale-1:16.

Cherry Grove outbuildings

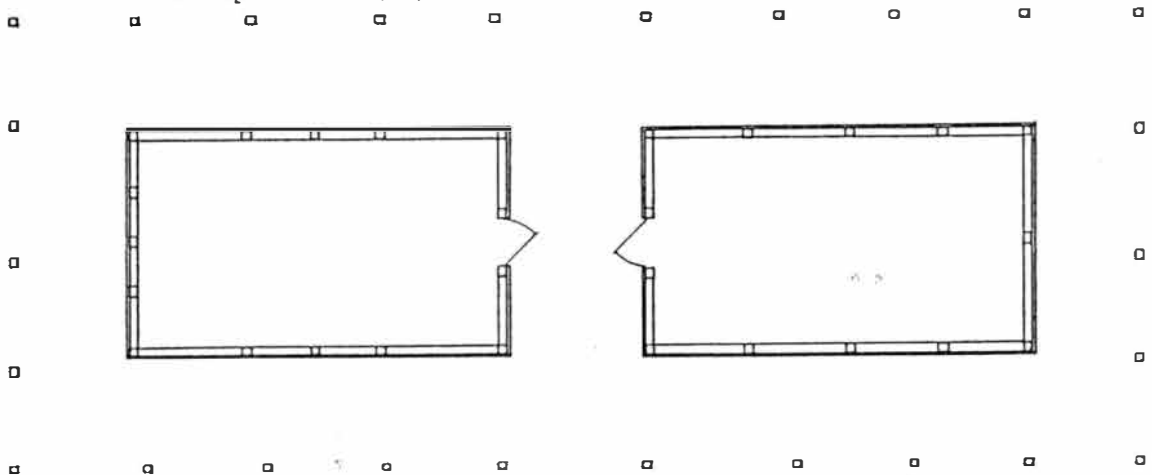


Gymnasium and ten-pin alley (C)



Scale 1:16

Sheep barn (G)



## CANEBRAKE PLANTATION

Canebrake Plantation is the most architecturally significant antebellum plantation complex in Concordia Parish, Louisiana. This significance is based on the survival and integrity of the slave cabins located in the "quarter lot" behind the main house and on the importance of the main house as a rare surviving example of an overseer's house on a plantation owned and operated by an absentee landlord who belonged to the planting aristocracy of Natchez, Mississippi. By the early nineteenth-century, Concordia Parish had become principally a planting province for the planters who resided in Natchez in grand townhouses or suburban villa residences. By 1860, over 81% of the parish land was owned by these absentee owners and 91% of the population consisted of slaves (D. Clayton James, *Antebellum Natchez* [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968], p. 148).

The main house on Canebrake is a good example of a raised Lower Mississippi Valley cottage with open central passage, or dog trot, and was constructed on the eve of the Civil War for Natchez planter Gerard Brandon. The work diary of William B. Scothorn records in early 1860 that work has begun on the Canebrake overseer's house for Brandon (xerox copy of typescript, Historic Natchez Foundation). The original architectural form of the house is also typical of the Lower Mississippi Valley--two front rooms separated by a hall with rear cabinet rooms flanking a loggia or inset porch. The front of the house is shaded by a full-width gallery also inset beneath the unbroken slope of the roof. One of the most unusual features of the house is the use of double-leaf, hinged doors to enclose the central passage.

Behind the overseer's house, which is raised physically, thus socially aloof, are the slave cabins, which were described as "double slave cabins" in the deed books, but are of the housetype known today as "saddlebag." Like the main house, the cabins are sheltered across the front by full-width porches set under the unbroken slope of the gable roof. Each room of the two-room buildings house an entire family. Like most plantation cabins, the floors are plank, the doors are board-and-batten, the windows were originally unglazed and closed by batten shutters, and a central chimney services two fire chambers without wooden mantel pieces, each designed for both heating and cooking. The walls are board and were covered by newspapers and magazines to keep out drafts. By contrast, the slave houses at a fine Natchez suburban villa like Melrose had tongue-and-groove floors, plastered walls, double-hung window sash, louvered shutters, and wooden mantel pieces.

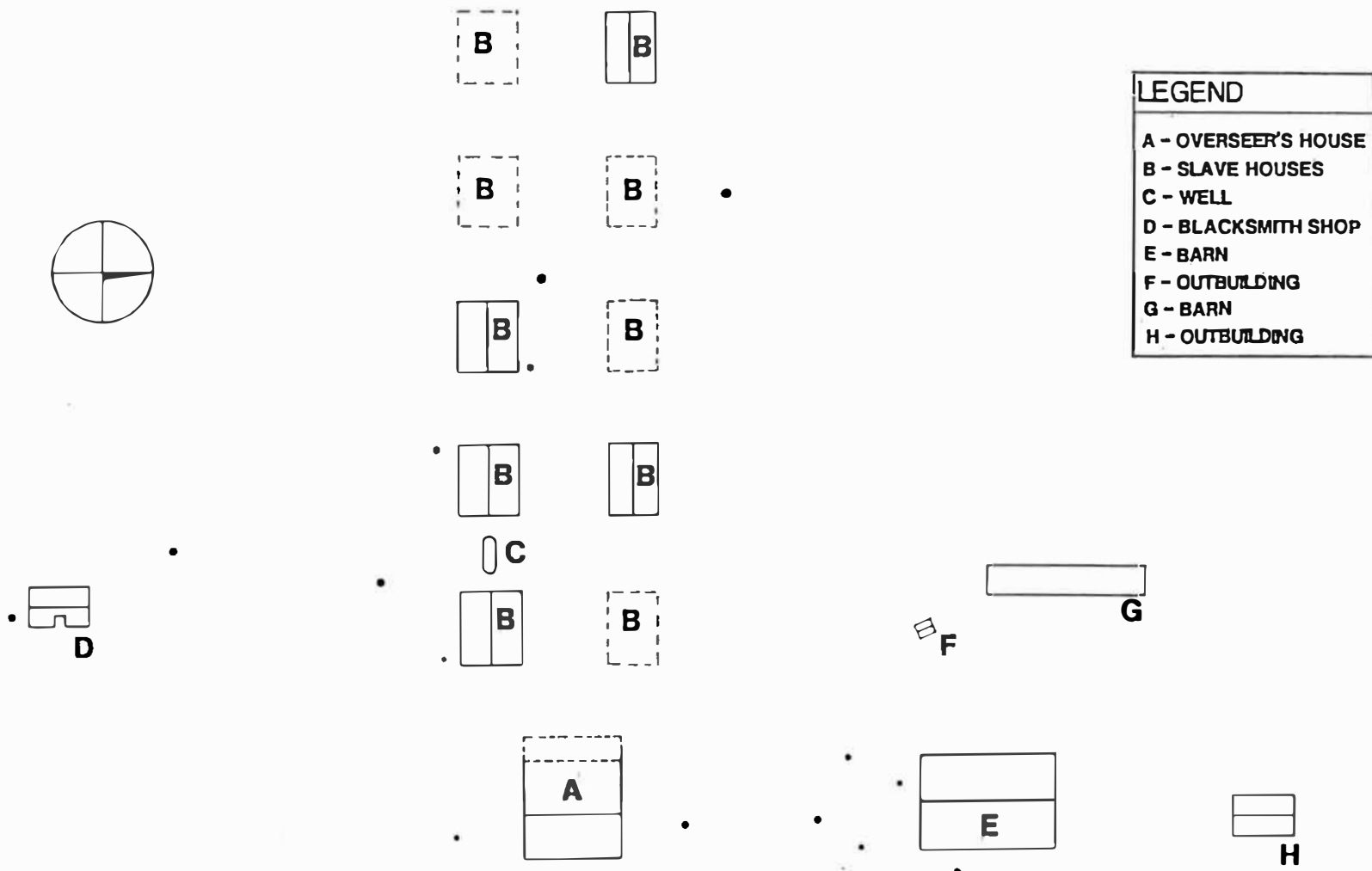
Canebrake was bought in 1910 by Arthur Meserve of Illinois and represents the acquisition of large numbers of Louisiana and Mississippi plantations by northern entrepreneurs, particularly from the mid-West. Such acquisitions began in the late nineteenth century and continued well into the twentieth. Canebrake Plantation is today owned by the Meserve's grandson Barry Maxwell who resides in the overseer's house.



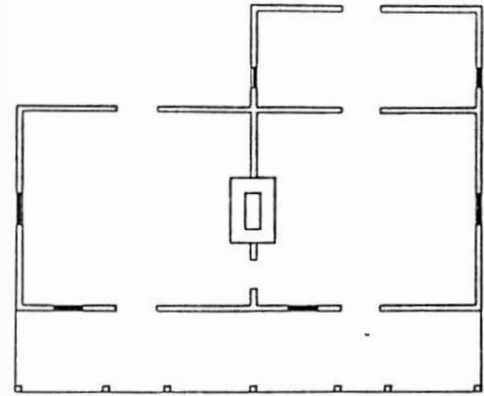
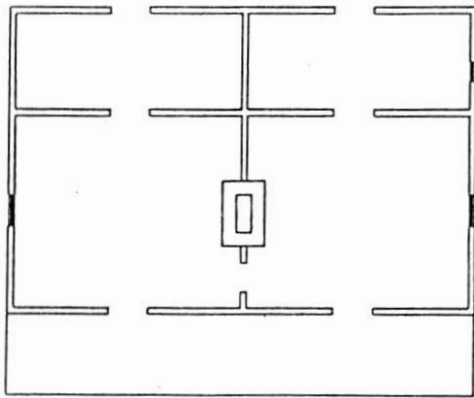
Overseer's house



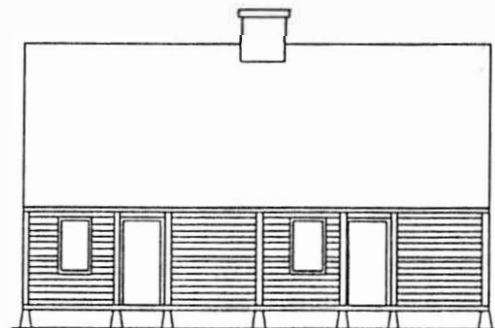
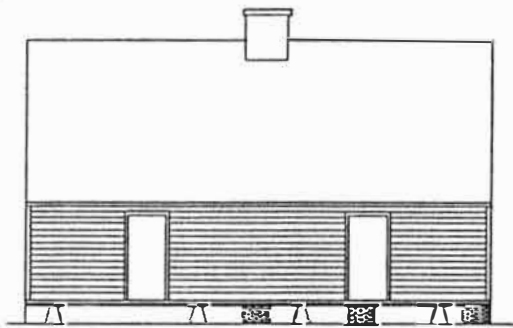
LEGEND	
A -	OVERSEER'S HOUSE
B -	SLAVE HOUSES
C -	WELL
D -	BLACKSMITH SHOP
E -	BARN
F -	OUTBUILDING
G -	BARN
H -	OUTBUILDING



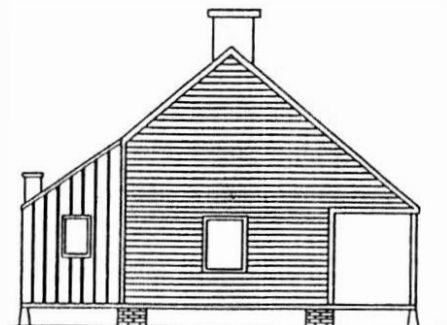
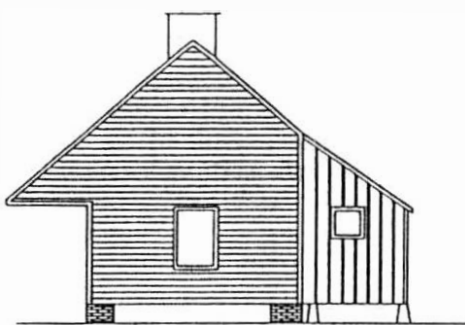
Canebrake--site plan



Plan



Front Elevation



Section

Slave Quarters at Canebrake

## AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY IN NATCHEZ AND THE WOODLAWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

Natchez provides one of the nation's richest resources for studying African-American history. Natchez was home to Ibrahima, the famous African prince who was captured, sold into slavery, and later returned to Africa. Natchez was also home to William Johnson, the "free man of color", whose published diary represents the most complete account of the life of a free African American in the antebellum South. Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, the famous nineteenth-century vocalist known as the "Black Swan," was born a Natchez slave. Hiram R. Revels, the first black man to sit in either house of Congress, went from the pulpit of a Natchez church to the United States Senate. John R. Lynch, United States Congressman, paymaster of the United States Army, the first African American to deliver a keynote speech at a national political convention, served as a house slave in the Natchez mansion Dunleith. Noted American author Richard Wright claimed Natchez as his place of birth. Natchez's rich African American history and the survival of its associated buildings and sites prompted *Newsweek* to name the town as one of the nation's top five destinations for African-American tourism.

The Woodlawn Historic District is one of the most architecturally and historically significant African American neighborhoods in Mississippi. Many of the late nineteenth-century houses were built as residences for African Americans who were born into slavery. The cottage at 23 Garden Street, for example, was built for Aaron Jackson, a former slave who was one of many who enlisted in the Union Army after Natchez was occupied by federal troops in the summer of 1863. His descendants still own the house and have the original deed, the mortgage payment book for the Colored Building and Loan Association, and Jackson's pension papers from his service in the Union Army. Jackson's wife, Queen Victoria, born when Queen Victoria assumed the British throne, was formerly a slave owned by William Mercer of Laurel Hill Plantation. The Colored Building and Loan Association financed the construction of many of the houses in the neighborhood and its president was Louis Winston, an African American attorney and insurance entrepreneur.

In the early twentieth century, the Woodlawn neighborhood was home to Richard Wright, noted author of *Black Boy* and *Native Son*. Wright spent part of his early childhood with his grandparents in the house located 20 Woodlawn Street. Author Anne Moody, who wrote *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, lived in the Woodlawn neighborhood while she was a student at Natchez College, established in the nineteenth-century to educate African-Americans.

The Woodlawn neighborhood is located in the old northern suburbs of Natchez and was developed from lands associated with pre-Civil War mansion estates like Woodlawn, Elmo, and Airlie. The houses built by former slaves and their descendants are small frame cottages with full-width porches fronting the street, shotgun houses of both brick and frame construction, and substantial frame dwellings in the Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and California bungalow styles. The houses are built close to the street and generally have narrow side yards. The neighborhood still retains at least two turn-of-the-century neighborhood store buildings of the type that were once sprinkled throughout most residential neighborhoods before the proliferation of the automobile made them unnecessary. Still in use is the neighborhood elementary school, Prince Street School, now serving as a neighborhood community center. A dominant element in the Woodlawn neighborhood is Natchez College, an African-American college founded in 1885 by the State Baptist Convention of Mississippi. The college is located on the grounds of the antebellum mansion Elmo, although the mansion itself was destroyed by fire not long after the college was established.

Before the establishment of suburban subdivisions, most African-Americans in Natchez lived in downtown Natchez among the white residents of the city or in the Woodlawn and St. Catherine Street neighborhoods, which were predominantly black. The St. Catherine Street neighborhood lost its unique architectural character and its sense of history through federal housing programs that focused on



demolition and new construction rather than restoration and/or renovation.

The City of Natchez, the Historic Natchez Foundation, and the residents of the Woodlawn neighborhood hope to revitalize the Woodlawn neighborhood. The focal point of a revitalized Woodlawn neighborhood is the house at 20 Woodlawn Street, which was the boyhood home of author Richard Wright. Initial revitalization efforts will concentrate on buildings in the vicinity of the Wright house and along Woodlawn Street, which is the neighborhood's major thoroughfare. The Historic Natchez Foundation is working on a National Register nomination for the Woodlawn neighborhood, which will increase private investment by making rehabilitation tax credits available to investors. Efforts will be undertaken to make the Richard Wright house a destination for sightseeing vehicles that tour the city. Increased tourism in the neighborhood will work to foster neighborhood pride and bolster private initiative in the revitalization effort. Other aspects of the comprehensive revitalization plan include the formation of a Woodlawn neighborhood organization and the publication of a brochure with site map and historical information about the neighborhood.



## WASHINGTON

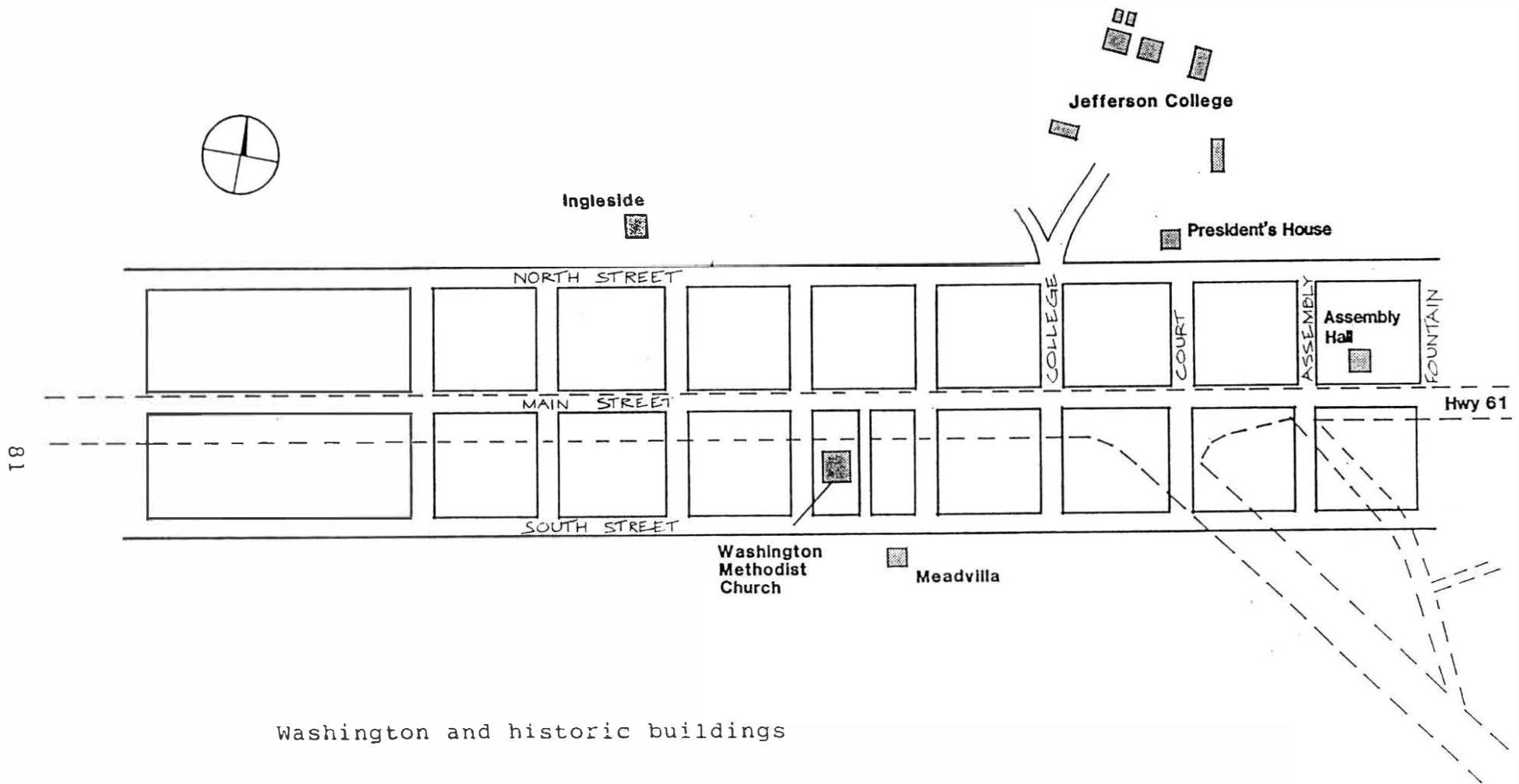
The unincorporated town and former Mississippi territorial capital of Washington, by virtue of proximity, is little more than a suburb of Natchez today. Most of the town is located on the area of the original plat which consisted of two rows of parallel blocks separated by Main Street which also serves today as Highway 61. During the early nineteenth century Main Street also served as a component of the Natchez Trace. Today there are a number of nineteenth century structures remaining, including the Methodist Church, Meadville, Assembly Hall, and Jefferson College.

The Washington town plat was surveyed in 1798 by Andrew Ellicott, who was also the surveyor of Washington, D.C., on the plantation of John Foster. Events leading to the establishment of the town as territorial capital reflect the dynamics of national politics and the rapid polarization of the former Spanish district into Federalist and Republican factions. The first territorial governor Winthrop Sargent was an appointee of the Federalist President John Adams. Based in Natchez, Sargent was surrounded by fellow Federalists in contrast to the countryside which was dominated by planters and farmers with Republican sympathy. With the election of Thomas Jefferson to the presidency, Sargent was replaced with a Republican governor W.C.C. Claiborne. The change in political power allowed the territorial legislature to move the capital in 1802 from Federalist Natchez to a place more acceptable to Republican sentiments, which happened to be the new town of Washington. The proximity of Washington to Natchez suggests that the move was more of symbolic than of geographical significance.

Although the territorial government remained at Washington for well over a decade, no capitol building was constructed. Instead the legislature met in buildings such as churches and residences. Located there were the U.S. land office, the Surveyor-General's office, the office of the Commissioners of Claims, and the U.S. Courts. For the defense of the territory a military cantonment, Fort Dearborn, was established across St. Catherine Creek from the town. In 1817 a convention met in the Methodist Church (not extant) in Washington to draw up a constitution for the new State of Mississippi. The convention also selected Natchez as the capital of the new state, although an outbreak of yellow fever resulted in the first meetings of the state legislature being held in Washington until the capital was returned to Natchez before its ultimate establishment in Jackson.

In 1808, Fortesque Cuming (1904:319) left a brief description of Washington: "Before supper I walked through the town, in which I counted thirty scattering houses, including one store, one apothecary's shop, three taverns and a gaol, all in one street on the Natchez road." The same year, 1808, Henry Kerr (1816:42) described Washington as "a small town with a court-house and a goal [sic], and is the seat of government for the Mississippi territory .... Washington is in a state of decline, owing to its distance from the river." In the early 1830s, J.H. Ingraham (1835:162-163) left a more detailed description:

[Washington] is a corporation one mile square, containing about four hundred inhabitants, of all sizes and colours. It contains a fine brick hospital and poor-house in one building, two brick churches, one of the Baptist, and the other of the Methodist denomination.... The inhabitants of the village are principally Methodists, a majority of which sect will be found in nearly every village in the south-west. Jefferson College, the oldest and best endowed collegiate institution in the state, is pleasantly situated at the head of a green on the borders of the village.....Washington is one of the oldest towns in the state, was formerly the seat of government, under the territorial administration, and once contained many more inhabitants than any other place except Natchez, in the territory. It was nearly depopulated by the yellow fever in 1825, from the effects of which it has never recovered. The public offices, with the exception of the Register's and Receiver's offices, are removed to Jackson. The town possesses no resources, and is now only remarkable for its quiet beauty, the sabbath-like repose of its streets, and its pure water, and healthy location, upon the plane [sic] of an elevated table land, rising abruptly from the St. Catherine's [Creek]...."



## JEFFERSON COLLEGE

Jefferson College, named for Thomas Jefferson, was incorporated in 1802 as Mississippi's first state-supported institution of higher learning. The college remained little more than a dream until 1811, when it began operation as a preparatory school in temporary headquarters. One of the school's early students was ten-year-old Jefferson Davis, future President of the Confederate States of America. However, by 1817, considerable progress had been made in fund-raising and work of collegiate grade was being offered. In that same year, the Constitution of Mississippi was drafted in a Methodist meeting house, that eventually became the primary school for the college and still later the campus stable, before being destroyed in a storm in 1873. This site within the grounds of Jefferson College is interpreted by a **commemorative marker**.

In August 1817, a contract was let to Natchez contractor Lewis Evans for the erection of the "**East Wing**" of the college from a design submitted by architect/builder Levi Weeks. Levi Weeks was the architect of the National Historic Landmark House, Auburn, whose classically correct, giant-order portico of 1812 marked it as one of the most architecturally influential houses in the South. The East wing of Jefferson College was completed in 1819. The three-and-a-half story brick building features a beautifully detailed, fanlight entrance doorway. During the 1820s, John James Audubon enrolled his two sons at Jefferson College.

In the mid-30s, the college turned its attention to its need for a **president's house**. Plans were drawn, but the college eventually acquired in 1837 an existing ca. 1828 house adjacent to the college that belonged to a Dr. Inge. This simple, federal style residence served as the president's house until the school closed in 1964. The unusually deep portico of the house was restored in the 1980s. This same depth is seen on the portico of a nearby house called Propinquity.

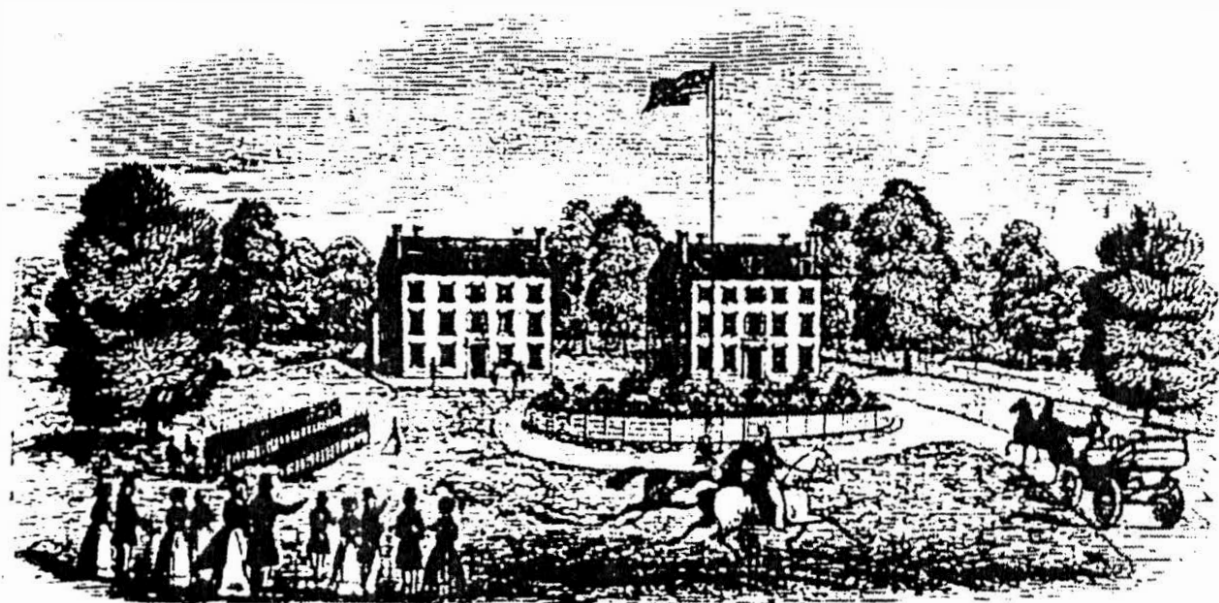
In 1837, the college trustees initiated work in the "**West Wing**" of the Jefferson College. The exterior of the new college was to correspond with the east wing in the dimension and conformation, and a space would be left between the two for a future center building. Montgomery and Keyes of Natchez were the contractors in charge of the property. In 1836, they had built one of the first purely Greek Revival residences in Natchez--The Burn. By 1839, the oldest buildings on Jefferson College's campus were completed--the East Wing, West Wing, and **two kitchen buildings** to the rear. In 1841; however, catastrophe struck and the East Wing was heavily damaged by fire.

Jefferson College first tried military training in 1829. After abandoning it for a while, it again became a military school in 1859. The college did not function the last two years of the Civil War. The college was never supported by rich Natchez planters who preferred to educate their children at Harvard, Yale, Amherst, and the like.

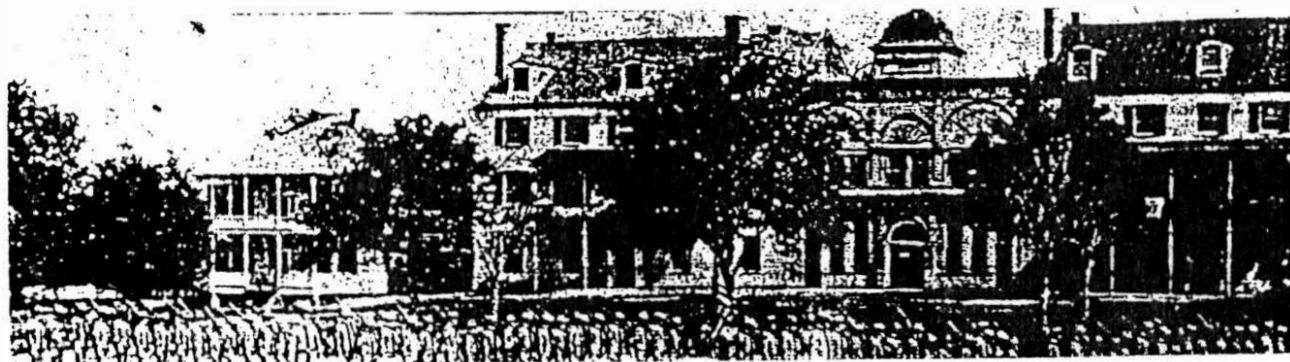
Jefferson College continued to operate as a preparatory school. In the 1890s, the college erected a gymnasium building with pressed metal facade in the space between the East and West Wings. This building was demolished in the early 1970s. In the twentieth century, several buildings were added to the Jefferson College campus--**Raymond Hall**, a dormitory, was built in 1915. **Prospere Hall**, a young boy's dormitory, was built in 1931. **Carpenter Hall**, another dormitory, was built in 1937.

By the 1950s, the college was in decline. The board of trustees decided not to accept an offer from a wealthy Texan who moved to Natchez and suggested that he might endow Jefferson College with real estate and mineral rights worth some \$50,000,000. The offer specified among other things, that the school would exclude Jewish and Negro students. The trustees refused the offer and then received an outpouring of donations, particularly from Jewish groups. By 1962, the college had fifty-nine students, and over half of the students were from Nicaragua, Venezuela, Guatemala, Panama, and El Salvador, for Jefferson

College became an important training center of Latin Americans. In 1964, the school closed. In 1971, the title to the college passed to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History who restored the complex and operate it as a state historic site.

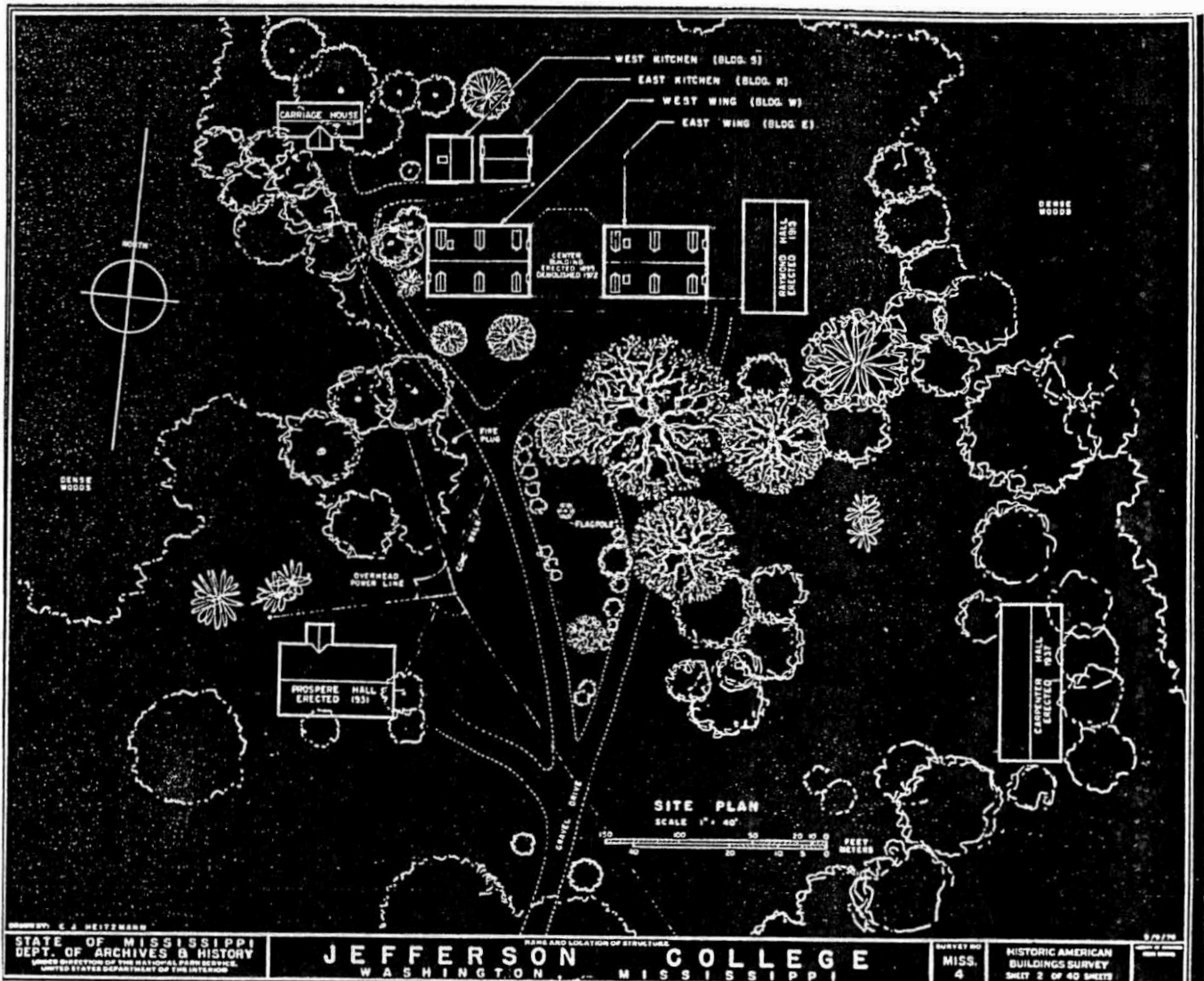


Jefferson College, from an advertisement ca. 1840



Jefferson College, ca. 1900

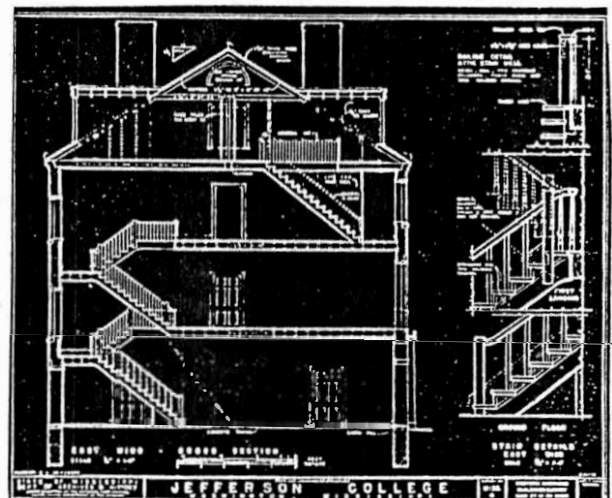
# Site Plan



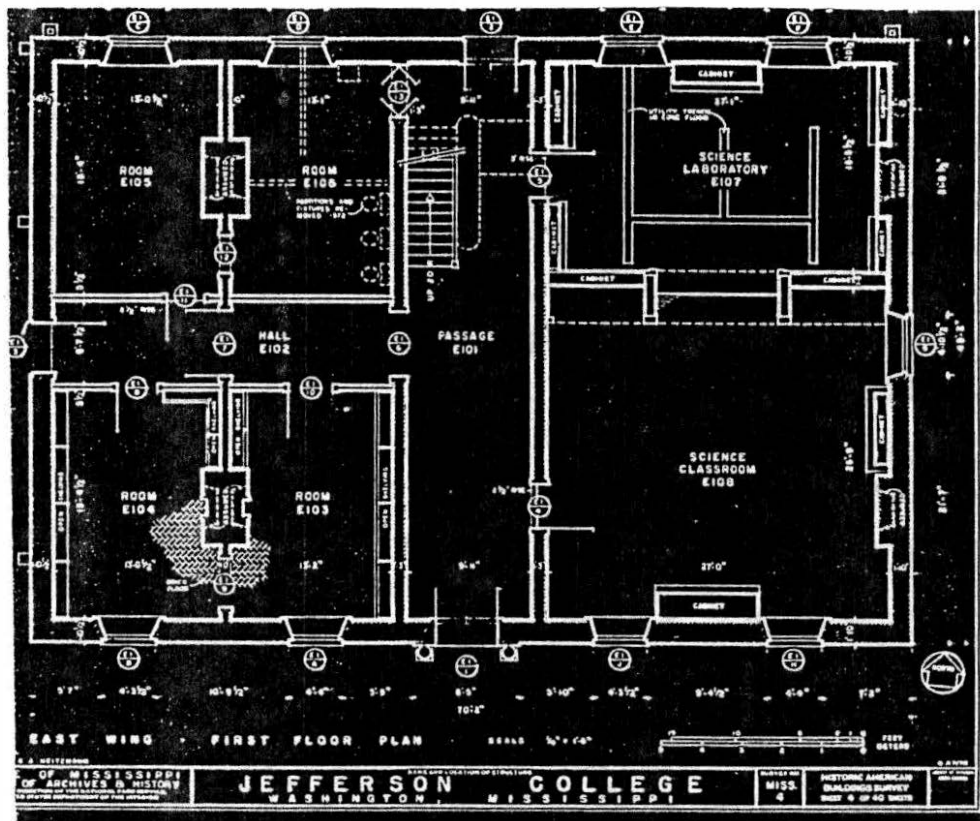
East Wing South Elevation (HABS)



East Wing Section (HABS)

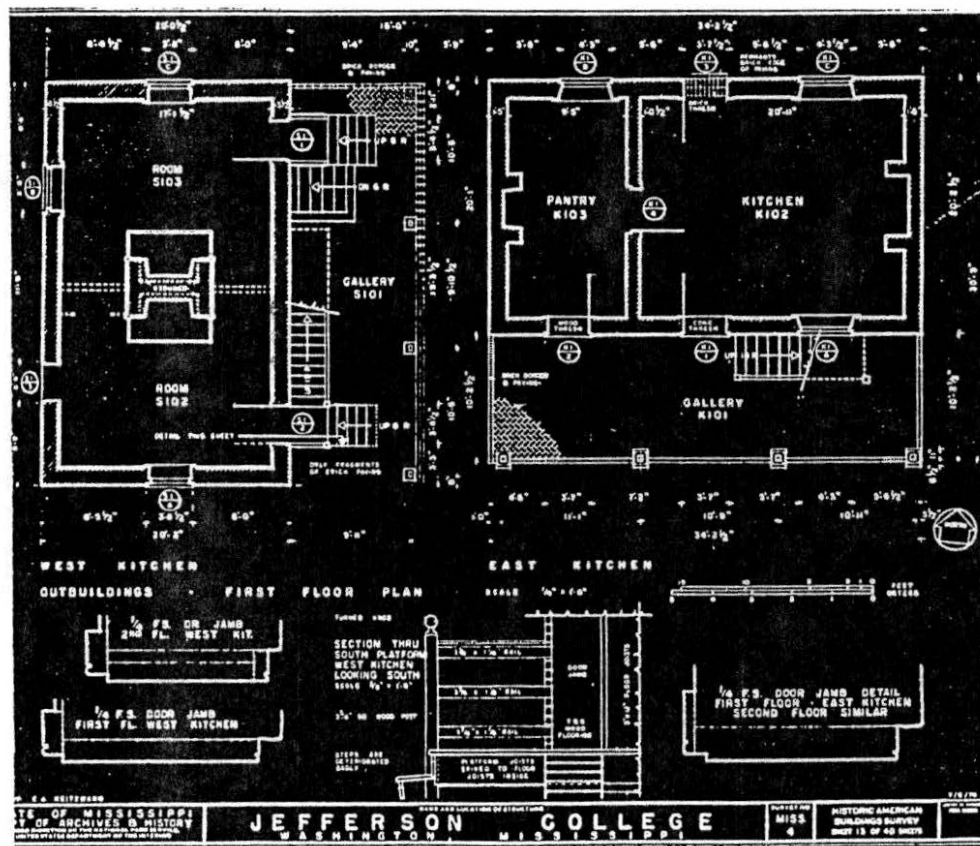






East Wing, first floor plan (HABS)

Kitchen plans (HABS)





## ASSEMBLY HALL (FLETCHER'S TAVERN)

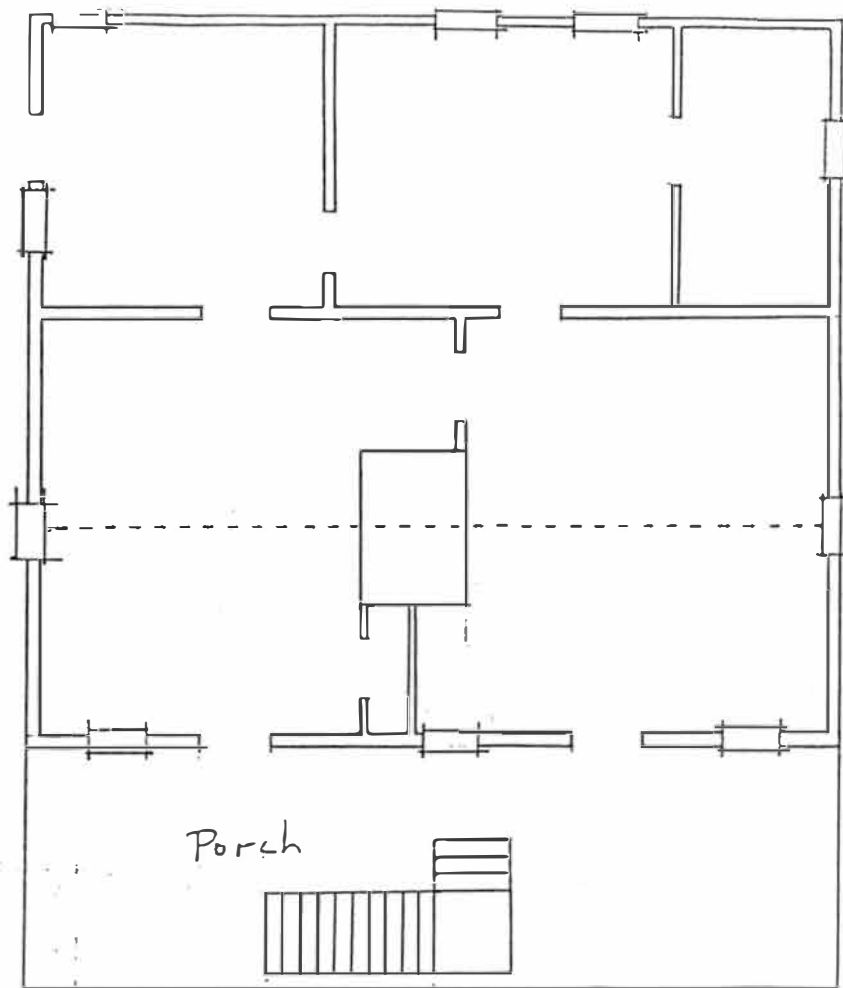
Assembly Hall is one of Mississippi's most important historic buildings dating to the territorial period. During the early nineteenth century it served as a tavern and probably was used as a meeting place for the territorial legislature, hence its name. Adjacent to the building is a store building that was constructed in 1929 and a smaller building that was formerly used as the Washington Post Office, built after 1929.

The building was probably constructed by Ebenezer Rees shortly after he purchased the lots on which it is situated in 1801. It was later sold to Charles DeFrance who apparently rented it to the legislature from 1808 through 1811. During the second and third decades of the century, Richard Fletcher operated it as a tavern.

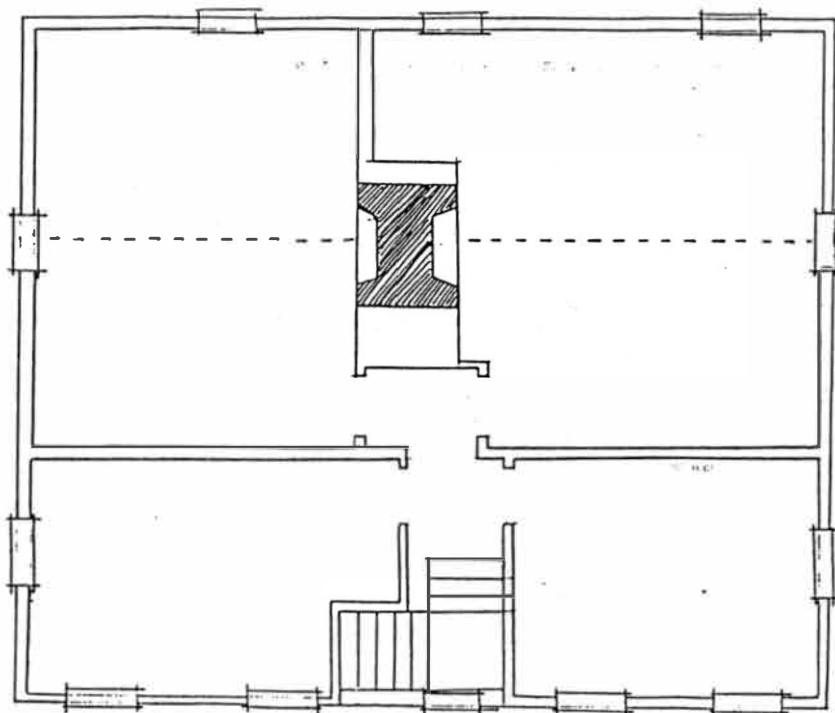
Assembly Hall's architectural integrity renders it an important document for studying architectural characteristics of the territorial period. The building originally exhibited an I-house form, an architectural form that was rarely used in the area. Attic framing reveals that the upper porch rooms on the front are a later addition, but they were added not long after the house was built. Like other buildings of the period, ceiling beams are beaded and are finished in horizontal tongue and groove boards. The house also retains its original Federal style mantel pieces and six-panel doors. Rare survivals are the wrought HL and strap hinges on interior doors.



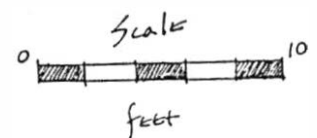
Assembly Hall, view to northeast (MDAH)



First floor



Second floor



Assembly Hall floor plans (MDAH)

## WASHINGTON METHODIST CHURCH

This brick church building, located on the south side of Washington's main street, was built about 1828. The congregation, however, had been organized in 1799 and had previously met in a number of other buildings. This church building was additionally used as a meeting place for the town of Washington. Jefferson College in particular used the building for its commencement exercises and for lectures during the 1830s by the Jefferson College and Washington Lyceum. Though altered, the building's original configuration is still discernable and is one of less than a half dozen extant Mississippi churches built in the Federal style. Its basic architectural form, gable-front, multiple front doors, high ceilings, and no steeple is characteristic of the time.

## MEADVILLA

Located on the south side of Washington's Main Street and almost behind the Washington Methodist Church is the house, "Meadvilla." Constructed between 1808 and 1813, the house served as a tavern and was later the residence of General Cowles Meade from whence its name was derived. Meade served as secretary of the Mississippi territorial government and as acting governor of the territory. Meadvilla was later the residence of Benjamin L.C. Wailes, one of the leading intellectual forces in Mississippi during the mid-nineteenth century. Wailes was the first state geologist, first president of the Mississippi Historical Society, charter member of the American Association of the Advancement of Science, and a trustee of Jefferson College.

The core of Meadvilla is an I-house, two rooms wide with no central hallway. Shortly after the house was constructed, small cabinet rooms were enclosed at either end of the first-story rear gallery and the second-story gallery was also enclosed. The interior millwork of Meadvilla is outstanding and ranks among the finest examples of Federal Style millwork in the Natchez area.



Meadvilla

## WILKINSON COUNTY AND WOODVILLE

Wilkinson county was the fourth county to be created within the Natchez District. It was organized in 1802 out of the southern half of Adams county which then constituted approximately the southern half of the district. Wilkinson county assumed its present size in 1809 when Amite county was created from its eastern portion.

A core population for the area that became Wilkinson county had been established as early as the 1770s under British rule at the Mississippi River bluffs known as the Loftus Heights. During the Spanish regime additional land grants were made in the area pushing the ecumene eastward. In 1798, with the withdrawal of the Spanish from the Natchez District, General James Wilkinson was ordered to establish a fort at Loftus Heights which was just north of the 31st parallel, the boundary between the Mississippi Territory and Spanish West Florida. Wilkinson county was named after General Wilkinson, the commandant at Fort Adams, as the fort was named, and the county seat was established adjacent to the fort. A town grew up here, serving as both river port and county seat, that was termed both Fort Adams and Wilkinsonburg, the latter name obviously deriving from the fort's commandant. In the long term the name Wilkinsonburg was abandoned.

Although Fort Adams might have initially been the best place for the county seat, settlement was moving eastward and with it moved the demographic center. In December 1809, the territorial legislature temporarily moved the county seat from Fort Adams to the house of one Randal Eldred while a board of commissioners selected and purchased a five acre parcel of land as a public square on which to locate a "Court-house, Jail, Pillory and Stocks." Their success is evidenced by the establishment of the town of Woodville, surveyed around a five acre public square and incorporated in 1811.

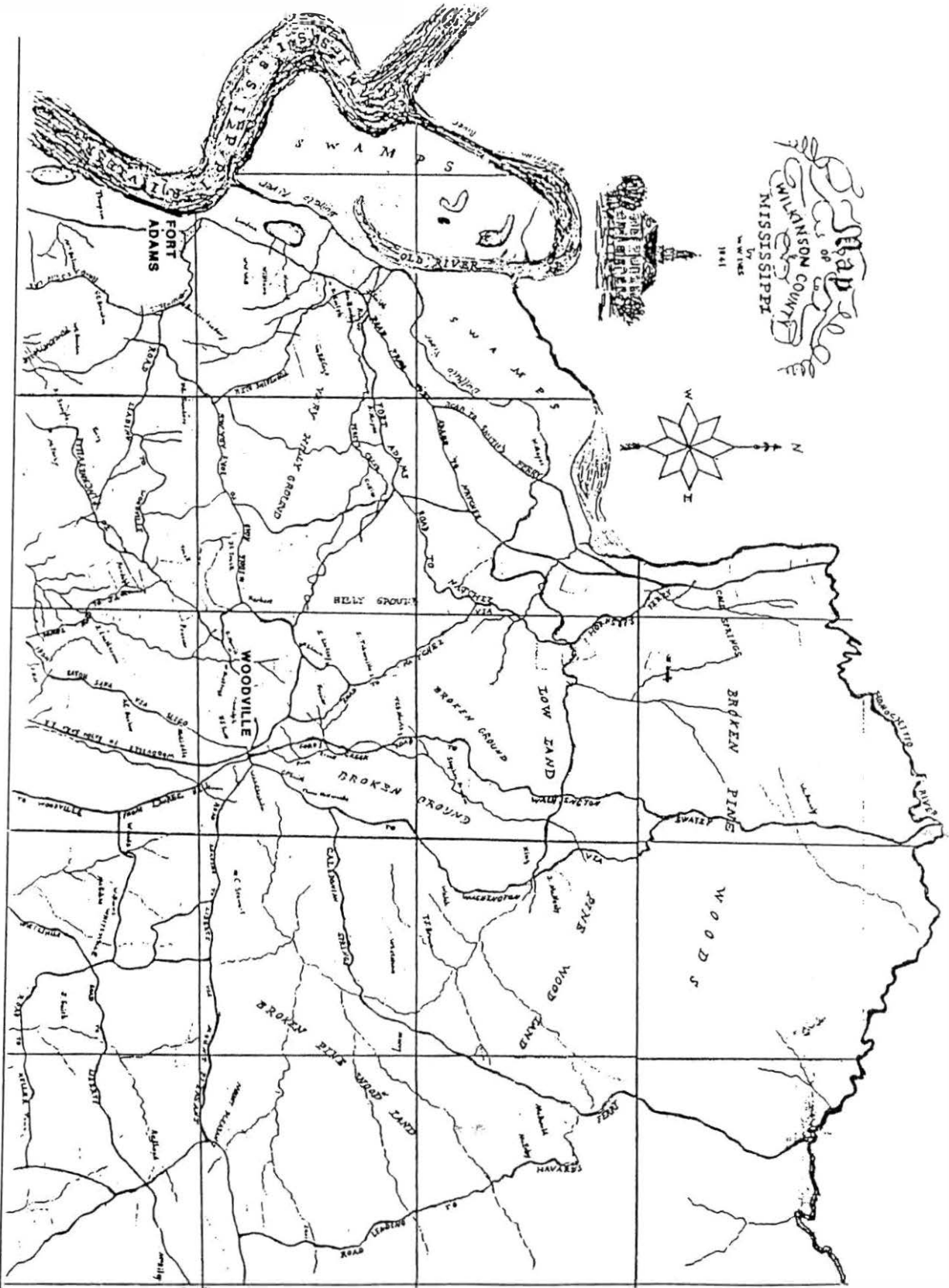
As the county seat, Woodville soon became the principal town of Wilkinson County. As was characteristic of towns that were established as county seats, the business district and the center of activity focused on the public square where the court house was located. Although it was not located on a stream that could serve as a transportation route for sending crops to market, its central location and its political role both encouraged its role as a trade and social center. Over the years, the population of Woodville has gradually increased from about 800 to about 1,500.

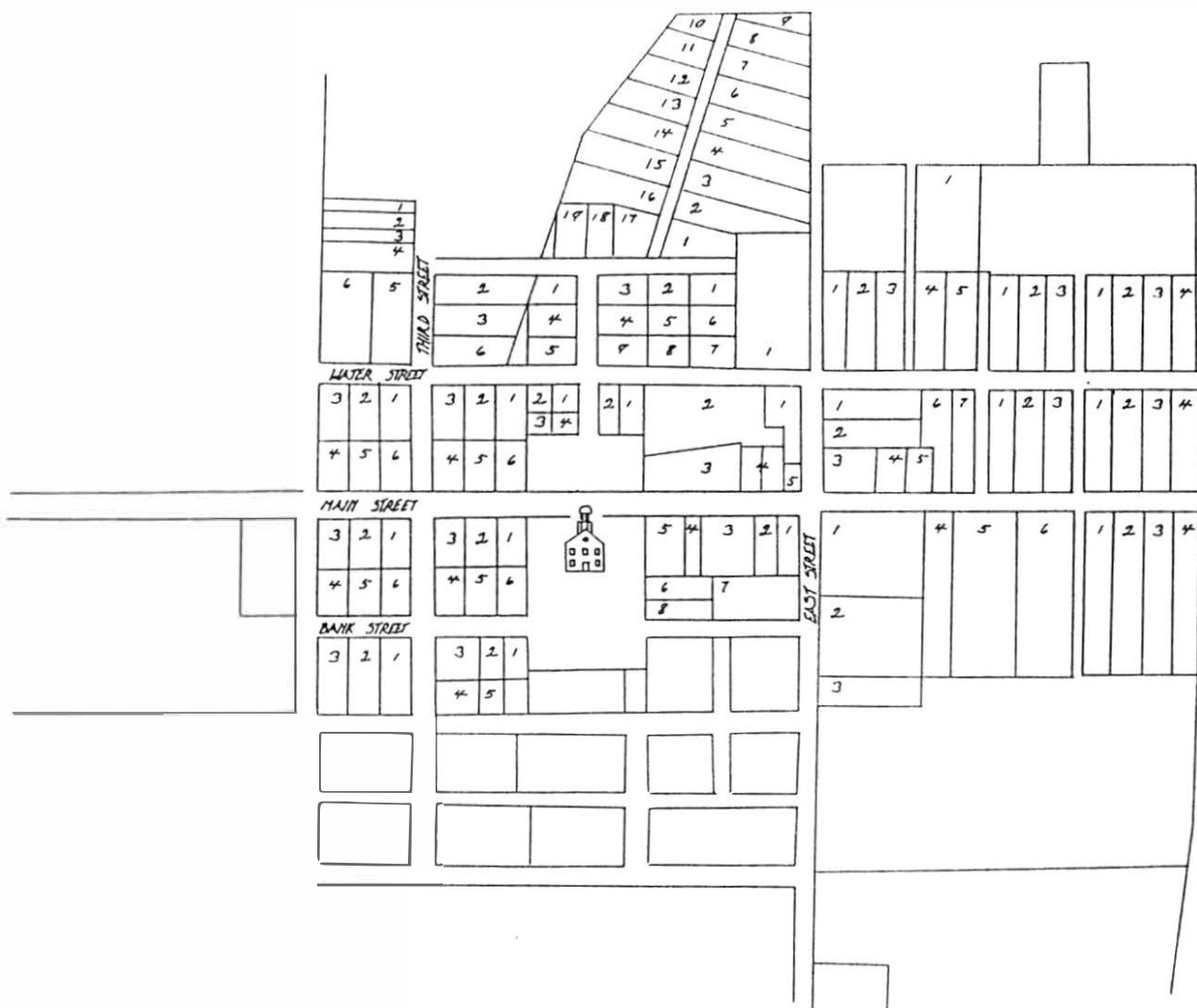
The importance of Woodville was further promoted when it acquired a railroad. Chartered in 1831 and constructed between 1836 and 1842, the West Feliciana Railroad connected Woodville with the Mississippi River port of St. Francisville in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana. The Office and Banking House of the West Feliciana Railroad was built on the square in Woodville in 1834. Although the railroad was dismantled several years ago, the two-store building with monumental Tuscan columns is still a local landmark in Woodville where it now houses the Wilkinson County Museum and the headquarters of the Woodville Civic Club.

In the early 1830s, J.H. Ingraham (1835:178-179) described Woodville:

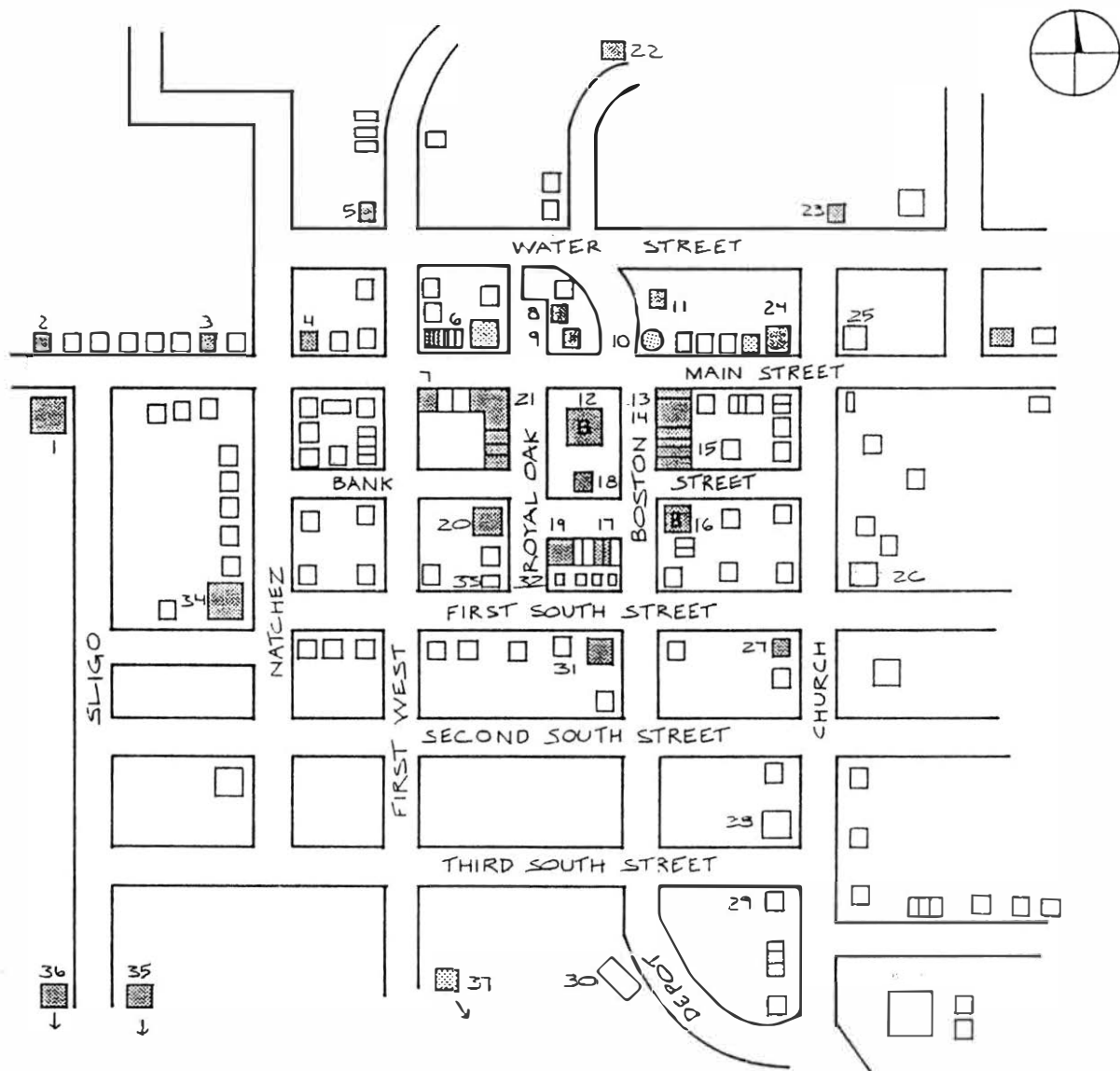
The most important settlement south of Natchez is Woodville, a beautiful village, built around a square, in the centre of which is a handsome court-house. Various streets diverge from this public square, and are soon lost in the forests, which enclose the village. There are some eminent lawyers who reside here, and the neighbourhood is one of the wealthiest and most polished in the state.... There are three churches in Woodville; a Methodist, Episcopalian, and Baptist. A weekly paper is published here, conducted with talent and editorial skill. The court-house, which is a substantial and handsome structure of brick, contains a superior clock. A market-house and a gaol are also numbered among the public buildings. There is a branch of the Planters' bank here, and an academy for boys and another for girls, established within a mile of the village, are excellent schools.... This village contains about eight hundred inhabitants, and is one of the healthiest in Mississippi.

Wilkinson County 1841





Copy of Map of Woodville



## **WOODVILLE WALKING TOUR**

- SHADED PROPERTIES ARE OPEN.
- B INDICATES BATHROOM FACILITIES.



## WOODVILLE WALKING TOUR

### 1. Southwest corner of main and Sligo (Open)

#### THE WOODVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

One-story frame, temple-form structure with Federal tower and octagonal belfry. One-story, one-bay porch with double-leaf paneled door, segmentally-arched transcom and cornice. Five-bay nave lit by Gothic Revival windows glazed with late-nineteenth-century glass. Property also includes a frame Fellowship Hall attached to the rear (south) and side (west) elevations. Ca. 1824.

### 2. 940 Main Street (Open)

#### THE JOHN WILLIAM GODDARD HOUSE

One-and-a-half-story frame residence, three-bay undercut gallery with rectangular columns, molded caps and braced pent. Pair of large bay windows flank central entrance door, transcom and side-lights. Paneled facade treatment considered unique. Ca. 187

### 3. 824 Main Street (Open)

#### THE CHISHOLM BOARDING HOUSE

One-story frame residence with five-bay undercut gallery, rectangular columns, molded caps. Four-over-six floor-length windows and entrance contained in pilastered frontispieces. Braced pent. Greek Revival. Ca. 1850

### 4. Northeast corner of Main and Natchez

#### THE OLD WILKINSON COUNTY JAIL

Two-story masonry building covered with stucco. Tile, gable roof. Arcaded three-day one-story gallery. Metal windows. Spanish Colonial Revival. Ca. 1930.

### 5. 710 Water Street

#### THE OLD ANDERSON HOUSE

One-and-a-half-story frame cottage with five-bay undercut gallery, plain columns and braced pent. Six-over-six windows, center door with transcom. Gable roof, exterior chimneys. Rear ell. Ca. 1830-1840.

### 6. 626-610 Main Street (Open)

#### THE MASONIC BUILDING; THE CITY DRUG STORE; EXPECT THE BEST GIFTS; AND BUD'S N BLOSSOMS

Two-story brick structure with cast-concrete trim. Fluted Art Deco panels define upper bays. Four retail spaces on street level characterized by glass display windows, splayed entrances, canopy and transcoms. Shed roof screened by low parapet. 1933.

### 7. 651 Main Street (Open)

#### THE PLANTERS MERCANTILE COMPANY BUILDING

Large, two-story ten-by-seven-bay brick structure. Cast-iron piers labeled "J. McConnell & Son, Jackson Mississippi. " Segmentally-arched fenestration on upper level, decorative brick cornice.

Excellent architectural integrity. Ca. 1900.

**8. 530 Main Street**

**THE WOODVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

One-story frame structure with side tower capped by a louvered belfry and cupola. Lancet windows, Gothic door panels, and sawn vergeboard are major decorative features. Late Gothic Revival. Ca. 1909.

**9. 510 Main Street**

**THE BANK OF WOODVILLE BUILDING  
THE WOODVILLE TOWN HALL**

Two-story brick structure with shed roof. Windows with leaded glass transoms, iron lentils and consoles. String course decorated with egg-and-dart moldings. Water tower located east of town hall. 1903.

**10. 504 Main Street**

**THE WOODVILLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

One-story frame structure, steeply-pitched gable roof, box cornice, double-leaf paneled door, lancet windows, louvered belfry. Original southwest tower with Gothic openings and bell-shaped finial no longer extant. Low, one-story frame addition made to east elevation. Small common-bond brick structure located east of church building. W. J. Smith, original contractor. 1909.

**11. Corner of Main & Boston**

**WOODVILLE WATER TOWER**

Typical of early twentieth century water towers built throughout the south in small towns.

**12. 525 Main Street**

**THE WOODVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Two-story masonry structure, all stretcher brick veneer, Greek cross plan with corner entrances. Dome on octagonal drum topped by an open peristyle. Composite pilasters with limestone trim articulate pedimented pavilions. Interior rotunda with two balconies, tile floor inlaid with county seal. Two-story chancery and jail added 1973. Beaux Arts. J. R. Gordon, architect. 1903.

**13. 109 Boston Row**

**POLK'S MEAT MARKET**

One-story frame structure covered with ship-lap siding. Stepped-parapet screens gabled roof covered with tin over original wood shingles. Center door, six-over-six windows. Ca. 1900.

**14. 117 Boston Row**

**JOHNSON'S HAMBURGER STAND**

Frame. One-story. Ca. 1950.

**15. 127-149 Boston Row (Open Downstairs)**

**THE OLD WOODVILLE HOTEL**

Large, two story brick commercial structure containing five stores defined by brick piers laid in Flemish bond. Late-nineteenth century store-fronts characterized by plate-glass display windows, splayed entrances, and double leaf doors. Second story added ca. 1920 to accommodate a hotel. Two-over-two segmentally-arched windows, shed roof, brick cornice.

**16. SE crnr of Depot and Bank (Open)**

**THE WILKINSON COUNTY MUSEUM**

Office and Banking House of the West Feliciana Railroad. Two-story stuccoed brick structure with monumental Tuscan porticoes on front and rear elevations. Important Federal woodwork survives in the upper residential level. Listed in National Register, 1977. Ca. 1834. (Bathroom facility open)

**17. 513 Commercial Row (Open)**

Two-bay, two-story frame structure, gable roof, box cornice, six-over-six windows on second floor, plate-glass windows above paneled spandrels on street level. Ca. 1840.

**17. 503 Commercial Row (Open)**

Southwest corner of Commercial Row and Depot. Five-bay, two-story frame structure. Paneled piers and spandrels, paneled and glazed doors. Gable roof, box cornice, six-over-six sash on upper floor. Champhered columns with molded caps support canopy. Ca. 1840.

**18. 539 Commercial Row**

**THE BRAMLETTE LAW OFFICE**

One-story law office constructed of five-course common-bond brick finished with an all stretcher veneer on the facade. Three-bay, segmental-arched fenestration closed by iron shutters. corbeled cornice. Excellent interior and exterior integrity. Ca. 1880.

**19. 543-557 commercial row (Open)**

One-story, eleven bay frame structure with gabled roof and box cornice. Mostly six-over-six windows, one twelve-over-twelve. Variety of paneled doors. Lean-to shed addition. Portion of west end removed in recent street widening project. Ca. 1830.

**20. Southwest corner of Royal Oak and Bank**

**THE BRANCH BANKING HOUSE**

Two-story stucco and brick structure with shed roof (replacement) and low parapet. Fine interior Federal woodwork. Listed in National Register, 1978. 1819.

**21. 613 Main Street (Open upstairs)**

**THE OLD FELLOWS BUILDING  
THE T. W. L. STORE;  
THOMAS ROSENBLATT LAW OFFICE**

Two-story, common-bond brick structure, plate-glass display windows with transoms and metal canopy on street level, paired six-over-six windows on upper floor. Attic story above three-course brick cornice. 1931.

**23. 384 Water Street**

**THE CAPT. AND MRS. D. C.  
BRAMLETTE HOUSE**

One-and-a-half-story frame residence with undercut gallery, braced pent, clapboard and flush siding. Nine-over-six windows, irregular fenestration. Ca. 1830.

**23. Ford's Creek Road (Open if not in use)**

**WATER PURIFIER**

Turn of the century water purifier, still in use as back-up purifier for city water system.

**24. Northwest corner of Main and Church**

**THE COHEN HOUSE**

Two-story, four-bay brick residence covered with scored stucco. Six-over-six windows fitted with jibs entering onto central, two-bay double gallery. One-story, two-bay wing with simple brick cornice attached to side (west) elevation. Large, two-story deteriorated kitchen located near northeast corner of the residence. Kitchen fronted by giant order brick columns and double gallery. Main house retains excellent original Federal woodwork. Ca. 1830.

**24. 430 Main Street**

**THE JACOB COHEN COTTAGE**

One-story frame cottage, three-bay gallery, flush siding, paired six-over-six windows on facade. Board-and-batten side elevations. Interior altered. Ca. 1840.

**25. NE Corners of Main and Church**

**THREE OAKS SERVICE STATION**

One-story brick structure, gable roof, stock pilaster frontispiece near shed addition. Ca. 1939. Typical of many small service stations built throughout the state in the 30's and 40's.

**26. 253 Church Street (Open)**

**ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

Southeast of Church and First South. One-story frame structure with low central tower capped by octagonal belfry decorated with fine federal pilasters and ogee roof. Small carpenter Gothic entrance porch with board-and-batten siding, sawn vergeboard, heavily paneled double-leaf door. East end of sanctuary lengthened one bay ca. 1840 and redesigned with gothic arcade to accommodate organ, chancel, and robing room. 1824.

**27. 320 Church Street (Open)**

**ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Southwest corner of Church and First South. Frame one-story structure, gable-end facade, five-bay nave. Small entrance porch with decorative stick style elements. Tall casement windows with pointed transoms approximating Gothic lancet windows. Simple interior finish: flush-board wainscot, cast-iron gallery columns, champhered cross-beam ceiling, stilted chancel arch. 1873.

**28. 458 Church Street**

**THE LEWIS HOUSE**

Two-and-a-half-story residence constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond on the facade and in common bond on the side and rear elevations. Formal five-bay facade dominated by three-bay portico of Tuscan columns, thin entablature, and steeply-raked cornice enriched with mutules. Blind, semi-elliptical window in tympanum. Twelve-over-twelve windows topped by decorated wooden lintels. Double-leaf entrance door surrounded by engaged columns, sidelights, elliptical fanlight and finely molded architraves. Large dining room and kitchen wing added to southeast corner, ca. 1914. Recessed rear galleries enclosed by rear addition, ca. 1950. Excellent woodwork preserved on the interior. Most distinguished example of neo-classical residential architecture in Woodville. 1832.

**29. 502 Church Street**

**THE VAN EATON HOUSE**

Southwest corner of Church and Third South. Long, low one-and-a-half-story frame residence with a spacious six-bay undercut gallery. North half constructed in ca. 1820, southern three bays added ca. 1840. Six-over-six windows, flush siding cut to imitate ashlar, interior end chimneys. Semi-octagonal bay added ca. 1890 to northwest elevation. Ca. 1820.

**30. Depot Street**

**Y. & M.V.R.R. DEPOT**

Woodville Depot. Deteriorated condition.

**31. Southwest corner of First South and Depot (Open)**

**THE FELTUS CATCHINGS  
HOUSE**

Monumental Two-and-a-half-story frame residence, five-bays wide, four-bays deep with rear additions. Giant order Tuscan portico shelters center three bays. Elegant Federal entrance with an elliptical fanlight, paneled door, sidelights, molded trim and carved keystone. One-bay balcony above originally extended the full width of the portico. Twelve-over-twelve windows, blinds with original hardware. Fine interior woodwork. Ca. 1820.

**32. Northeast corner of  
First South and Royal Oak**

**THE OLD STUTZMAN BLACKSMITH SHOP**

One-story frame storage building with vertical sheathing and metal roof. Deteriorated.

**33. 708 First South Street**

**THE OLD METZGER GROCERY STORE**

One-story brick structure with all stretcher veneer. Jerkinhead roof, metal covering. Double-leaf door sheltered by three-bay gallery. High single-pane windows on side elevations. Originally a store. Ca. 1930.

**34. Northwest corner of Natchez and First South**

**THE WOODVILLE  
BAPTIST CHURCH**

Temple form, three-by-four-bay structure with monumental Tuscan portico, thin entablature, steep pediment and blind lunette in tympanum. Low clapboard tower topped by an octagonal belfry. Seven course common-bond brick, evidence of penciling. Twelve-over-sixteen windows with jack arches. Ca. 1830.

**35. South Sligo Street**

**EVERGREEN CEMETERY**

Nineteenth century cemetery, still in use.

**36. South Sligo Street**

**JEWISH CEMETERY**

Mid-nineteenth through early twentieth century Jewish cemetery.

**37. Off South West Street**

**ALLEN CHAPEL A.M.E. CHURCH**

African American church constructed 1894, and still in use.



Commercial Row, Woodville, 1990



EAST ELEVATION - TOWN SQUARE, WOODVILLE, MISSISSIPPI 1963



NORTH ELEVATION - TOWN SQUARE, WOODVILLE, MISSISSIPPI 1963



SOUTH ELEVATION - TOWN SQUARE, WOODVILLE, MISSISSIPPI 1963



WEST ELEVATION - TOWN SQUARE, WOODVILLE, MISSISSIPPI 1963

Woodville Courthouse Square elevations (courtesy of Woodville Civic Club)



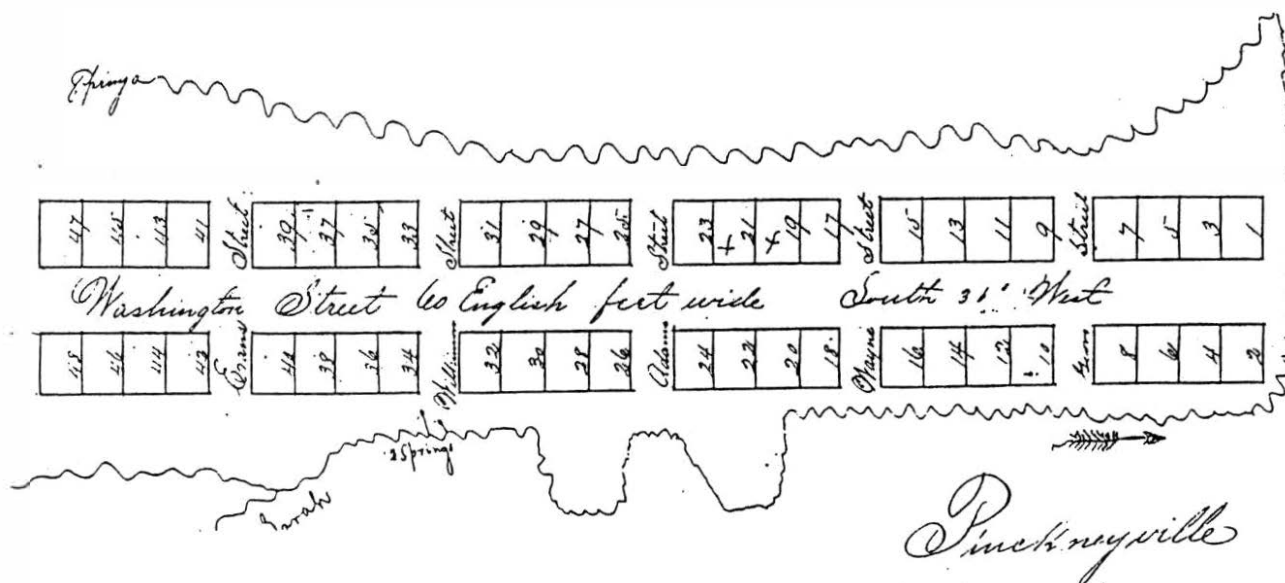
## PINCKNEYVILLE

"Pinckneyville" refers today to the area or "community" in extreme southwestern Wilkinson County. The center of the area was once a small platted town located only about a mile north of the 31st parallel which is currently the boundary between Mississippi and Louisiana. It was presumably named after Thomas Pinckney who as the representative of the United States had negotiated the Treaty of San Lorenzo ("Pinckney's Treaty") with Spain in 1795 establishing the international boundary at the 31st parallel. During the first decade of the nineteenth century, when the 31st parallel was the boundary with Spanish West Florida, Pinckneyville was the home base for the Kemper brothers in their raids against the Spanish which ultimately resulted in the West Florida revolution (Claiborne 1978:260-261).

The name "Pinckneyville" had come into usage by 1801 at which time the territorial legislature ordered that a public road be laid out to run from the Spanish border "near Pinckneyville" to Loftus Heights and then to the town of Natchez. By 1801, a town plat consisting of two parallel rows of lots separated by Washington Street had been surveyed by Christopher Bolling at the request of Thomas Dawson. Dawson specified that two lots were to be set aside for public use "on which to erect churches, Seminaries of Learning and other public buildings" (McBee 1979:459; Wilkinson County Land Book A, p. 40).

The town of Pinckneyville achieved little size and remained only a small local trade and social center. In 1808, Fortesque Cumin (1904:331) described it as "a straggling village of ten houses, mostly in decay, and some of them uninhabited. It is situated on a pleasant sloping plain, and the surrounding country is comparatively well cultivated. It has a little church, a tavern, a store and a post-office." During the early 1830s, J.H. Ingraham described it as "merely a short street, lined by a few dwelling-houses and stores...."

Today a county road still follows the route of Washington Street, although there is only one house (of twentieth century vintage) on the old town site. However, in the vicinity there are four antebellum plantation houses: Arcole, Cold Spring, Desert, and Greenwood.



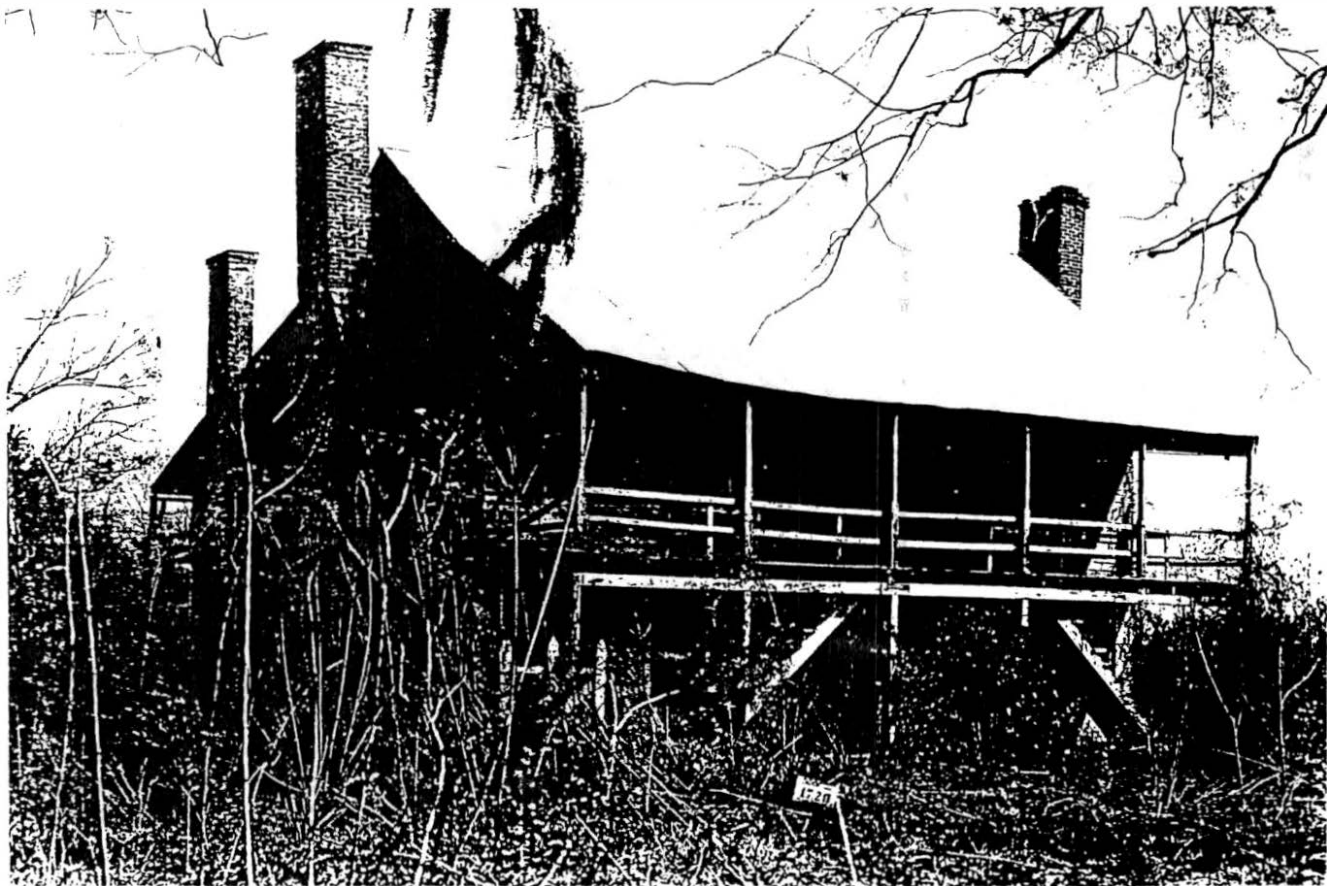
Plat of Pinckneyville (Wilkinson County Courthouse)

## WALL HOUSE (RICHLAND PLANTATION)

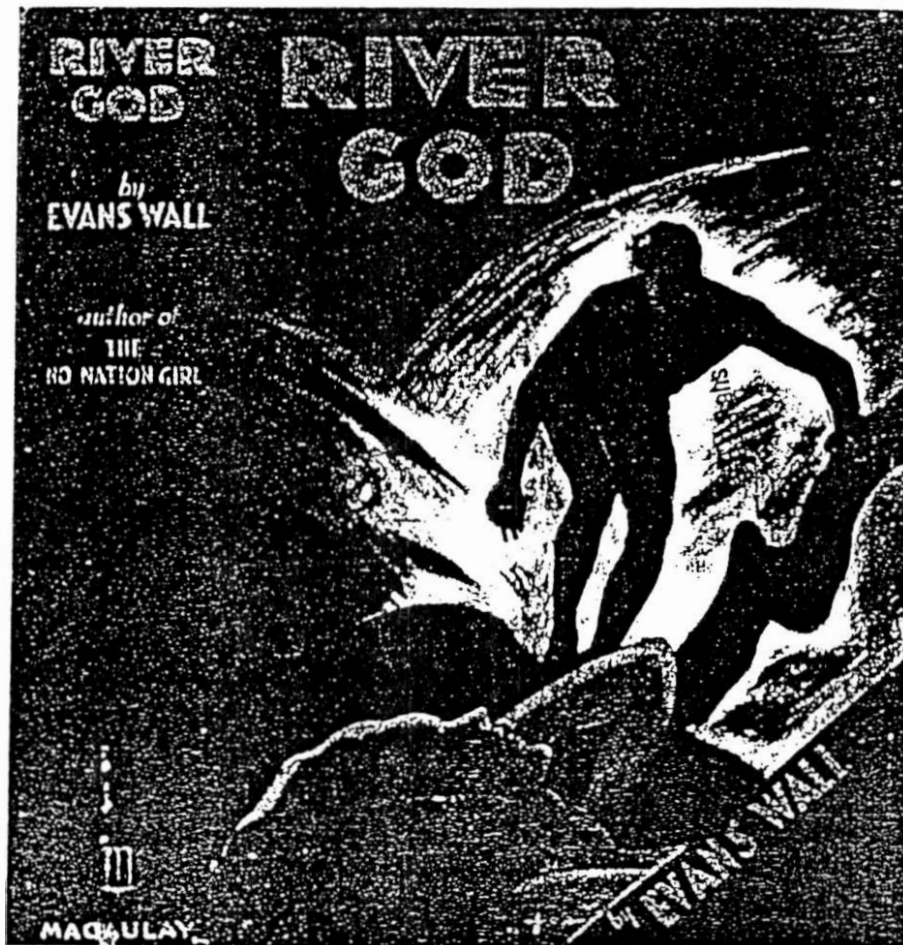
The Wall House was probably constructed during the late eighteenth century on a Spanish land grant. It is associated with John Wall who settled in the Natchez District during the Spanish reign, and it is still owned by his descendants.

In poor condition now, the house is a raised structure, that is it has a brick lower story while the second, or main, story is of frame construction with brick infill. The sash windows are 12 over 12.

During the early twentieth century the house was the home of a descendant of John Wall -- Evans Wall, a novelist and short story writer. Many of the works of Evans Wall are set in the Natchez District and in adjacent Louisiana. His novel *Lovers Cry for the Moon* uses the festivities associated with the Natchez Pilgrimage as a setting. Other novels include *The No Nation Girl* (1929), *Love Fetish* (1930), and *River God*. (1934).



Evans Wall House, Fort Adams vicinity, Wilkinson County  
front elevation  
HABS: Ralph Clynne, March 29, 1934



Price 75 cents  
These popular priced editions are made possible by the author's acceptance of reduced royalties, and for the use of plates of the original edition.

12-30

## RIVER GOD

By EVANS WALL

Author of "The No-Nation Girl"

RIVER GOD is an epic of rivers. The setting is Madeland Plantation in a bend of the Mississippi, but the feeling of the river is true of any river. The Mississippi in its changing moods is as real a character as Sand, the boy-baby whom the river cast on Madeland during a flood; as real as Ruth Delorme, for whom Sand was a playmate, or as her mother, Mercedes.

In some scenes this story is as frank as anything Evans Wall has yet done. He believes that there is no ugliness in nature. The boy and the girl, the men and the women are human, complete. The power of the sex motif in their lives is neither exaggerated nor understated; it is true to nature, to psychology, to the author's living models. Accordingly, RIVER GOD is an epic of rivers and of human passions.

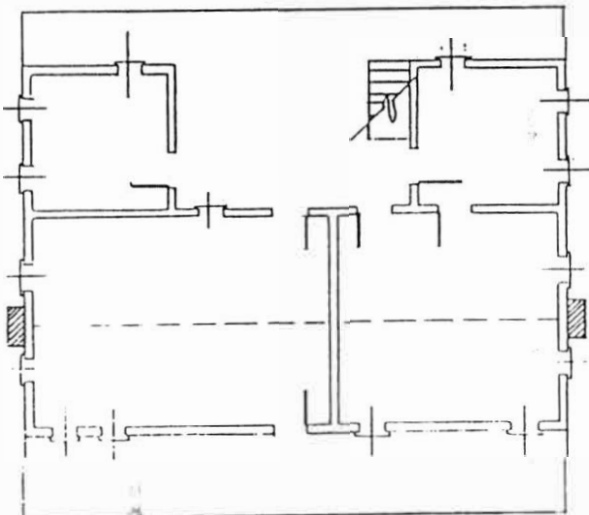
The girl, growing up, is prey to tabus and inner forces that she can neither overcome nor reconcile. The river, in its changing moods, can be friendly to man and equally cruel. And the man whom the river thrust into a heroic role returns from banishment to combat the unruly forces of the river and the conflicting currents in the girl's life. And thus the center of the drama is staged.

Evans Wall always has something new to say, and he manages to say it without himself getting in the way. And yet each of his novels reveals another part of the author's mind. Here is his demonstration of the beauties of life that are composed of contrast and conflict, and an example of his attitude toward life as a glorious adventure.

MACAULAY • Publishers • New York

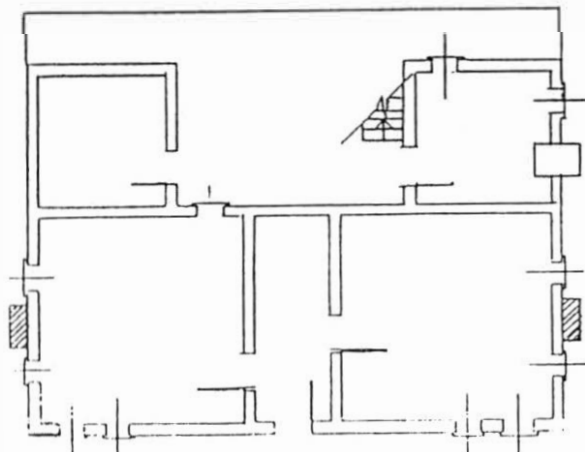
Book Jacket for "River God" by Evans Wall.

upper floor (frame)



Wall House Floor Plans. (MDAH).

lower floor (brick)



(not to scale)

## DESERT

Desert is a thousand acre parcel of land in the Pinckneyville area. Like so many other parcels of land in the Natchez District, it was formerly a plantation. The significance of the Desert Plantation house is based principally on the high quality and integrity of its architectural detailing, on the rarity of Federal style plantation residences in Mississippi, and on the unspoiled natural setting of the house within the 1000-acre tract of land that has been associated with the house since before the Civil War.

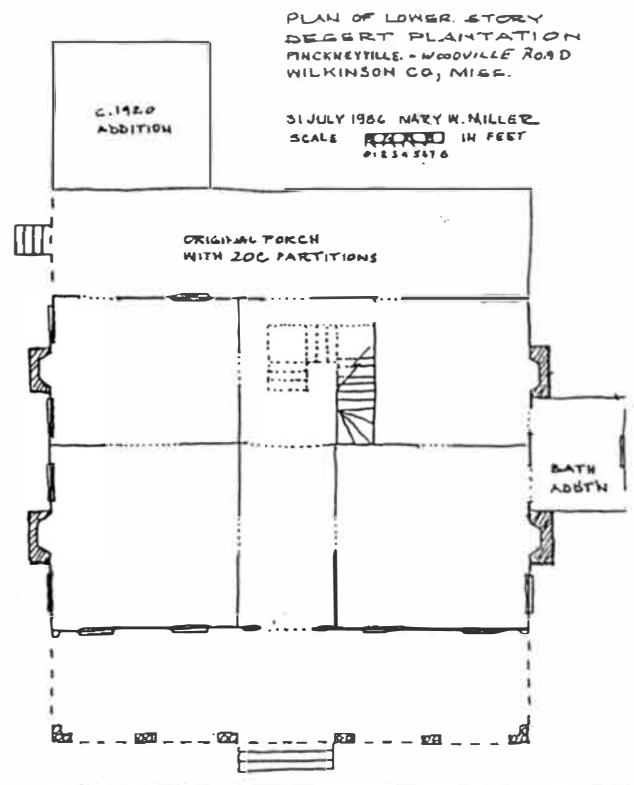
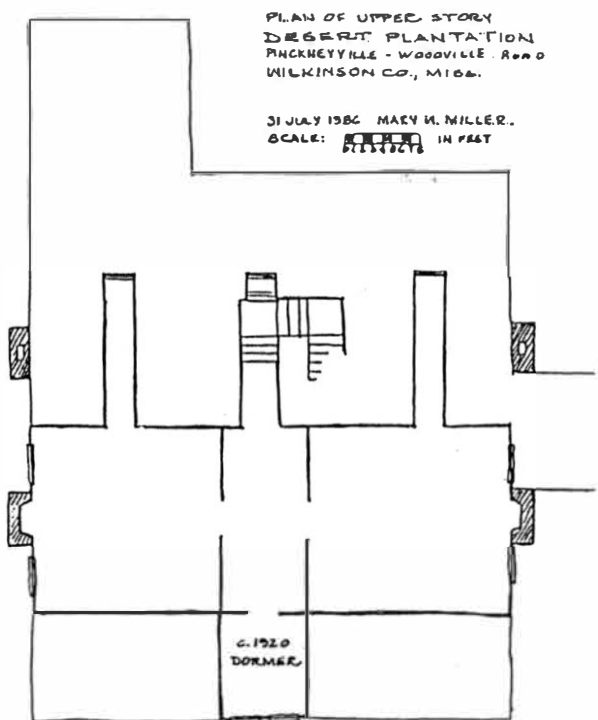
Desert Plantation was established early in the nineteenth century by wealthy Wilkinson County planter Robert Semple. Stylistically, the house dates from about 1825 to 1835, but local tradition assigns a date of 1808 to 1812. An improvement by Robert Semple is noted in a land description in 1814 (Wilkinson County Deed Book A:355), but, like many Mississippi planters, Semple may have first build a crude, smaller dwelling and erected a grander house as the planting economy expanded. He enlarged the present house about 1845 when he constructed a Greek Revival wing to the northeast side. His family owned Desert until 1885, when C. H. Norman acquired it and shortly afterwards sold it to an agricultural partnership formed by the McGehee and Merwin families. D. F. Merwin purchased the house in 1917 (Deed Book WW:561) for his family residence, and Desert is today the home of Merwin's daughter, Mrs. William W. Brandon, and her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. William S. Perkins.

The frame one-and-a-half story plantation house has a full-width undercut gallery and a Georgian plan (i.e. double pile with central hallway). The original six slender turned-wood columns, echoed at the front corners of the house by surviving original half columns with mortises for a round-section handrail, were cut off above their bases and set on brick piers at the corners of the gallery. Between the corners, similar but heavier columns from the Greek Revival side wing were arranged in four pairs atop brick piers. The five-bay front wall is sheathed in horizontal tongue-and-groove boards and trimmed with a molded base. In the center is the front doorway, the most outstanding exterior feature of the house. Beneath a molded elliptical arch with keystone, radiating muntins form a fanlight.

The house is elaborately trimmed in the original Federal style. All four downstairs rooms have mantel pieces, molded chair rails, six-panel doors with molded and fielded panels, and molded baseboards. All openings are trimmed with corner blocks. Some have architrave surrounds, others have symmetrical moldings, but only the parlor doors and windows bear reeded and pulvinated casings. An elliptical arch, supported by paneled and molded pilasters, repeats the shape of the front doorway and separates the front entry hall from the rear stair hall.

The large shingled front dormer and the roof overhangs, decorated with brackets at the sides and with exposed rafter ends at the front, were added about 1920 as part of a major renovation. The renovation included the demolition of a ca. 1845 breezeway and wing to the northeastern side, the reworking of the front gallery supports, and the removal of the three original front dormers, whose gable roofs and arched windows matched those of the three dormers that survive on the rear slope.

Probably, no more than two dozen Federal style plantation houses are extant in the state of Mississippi. Most of Mississippi Federal style buildings are urban and suburban structures found in towns in Adams, Claiborne, Jefferson, and Wilkinson Counties, along the Mississippi River in the southwest corner of the state. Of these, most are concentrated in Adams County, principally in Natchez and Washington. Only about a dozen Federal plantation houses are dotted throughout rural Adams County. Amite County has only two recorded buildings in the Federal style.



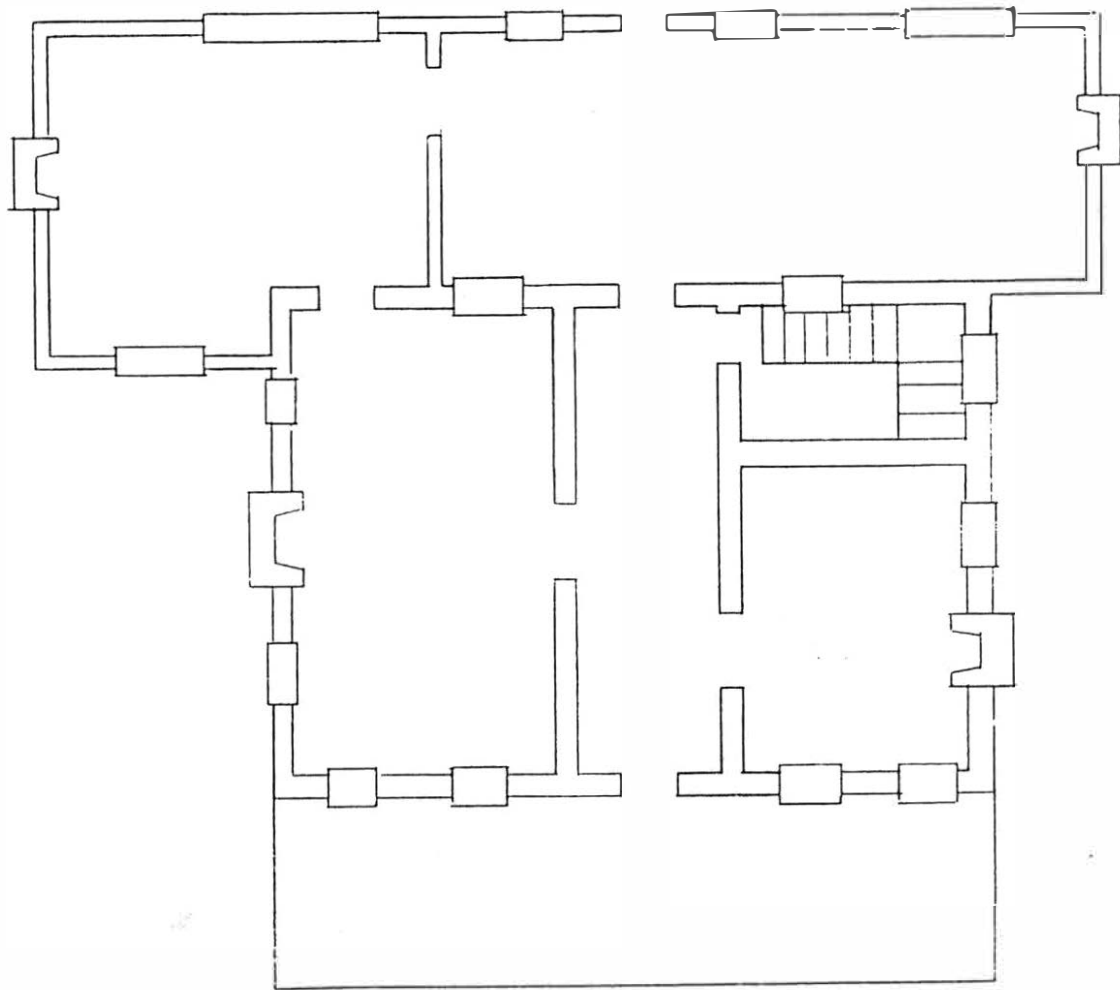
## COLD SPRING

Cold Spring is one of the surviving plantation houses that cluster in the Pinkneyville area. Predating the Civil War, Cold Spring has two-and-one-half stories and an undercut front gallery with monumental Tuscan columns. As were a number of other early houses, the first floor is of brick construction while the second is frame. Although the first floor is bisected by a central hallway, the second floor has no hallway, instead having a room that extends the width of the house that can be divided with folding doors.



Front Elevation





FIRST FLOOR PLAN — NOT TO SCALE



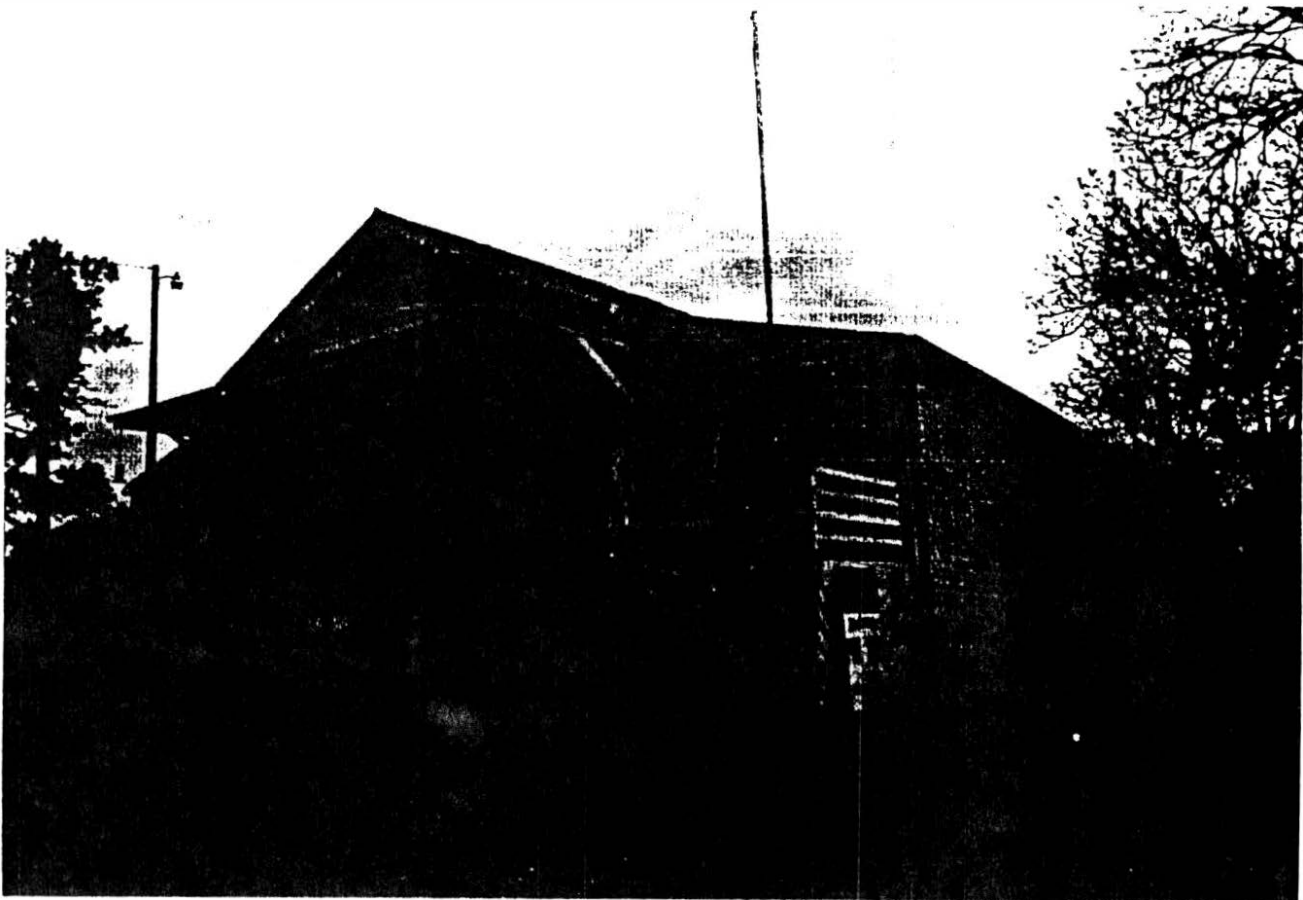
## POND STORE

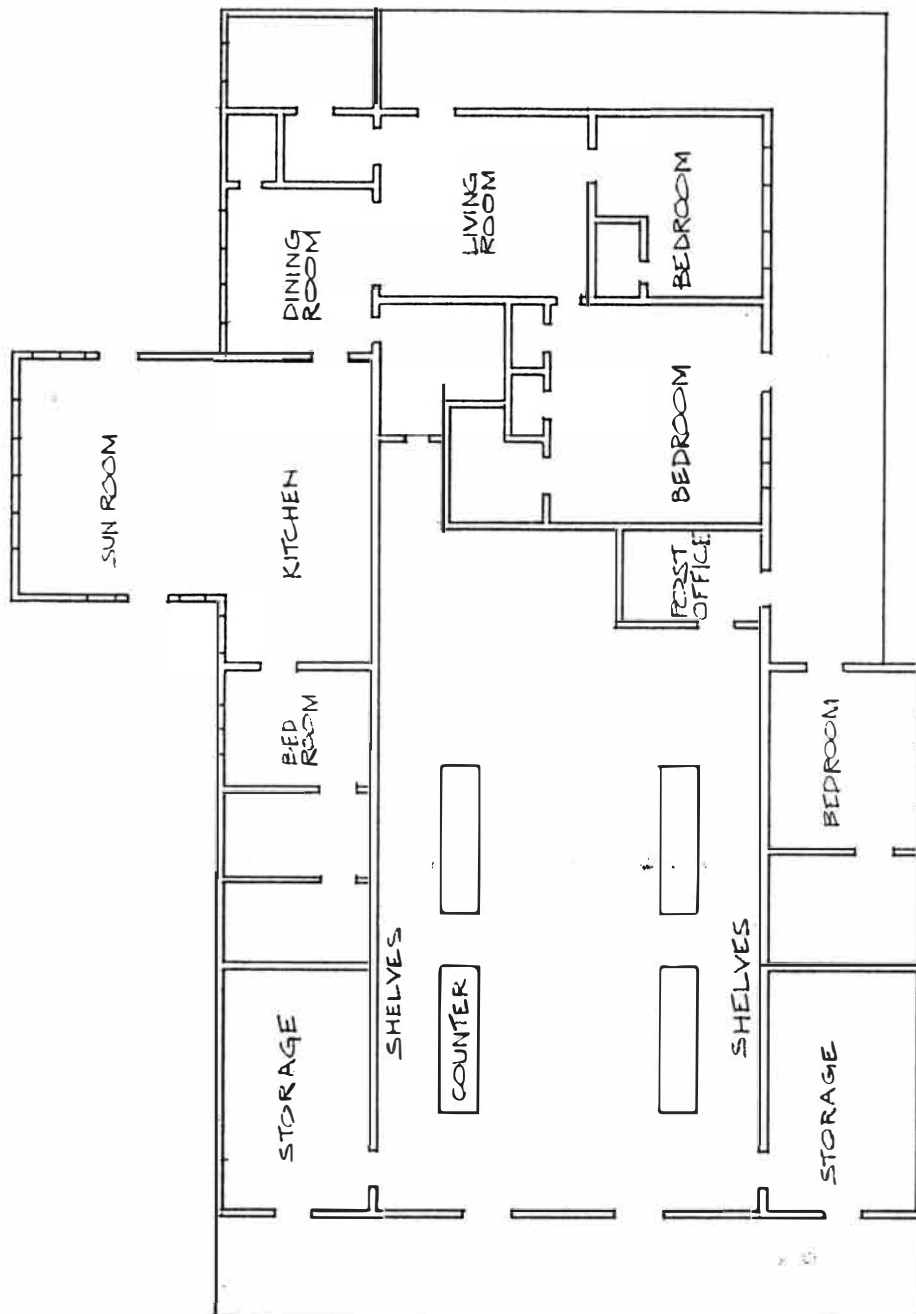
Built in 1881 by two Jewish brothers of the Lehman family, this building is a combination store and residence that occupies the site of a previous store that burned. The store is well-maintained and possesses exceptional integrity in the preservation of its historical commercial features and post office facilities (although the post office itself was discontinued in the 1970s).

Located at what was formerly a crossroads, the store and post office provided a nucleus for the surrounding area that was known as the "Pond community." The name "Pond" was derived from a pond that was excavated there during the nineteenth century. Today the few acres that constitute the parcel of land on which the store is located are immaculately maintained. The grounds with their pond and transverse crib barn appear like an oasis in a forest, rising upward to the peak on which the store sits.

The store is of the gable front form that was typical of country stores during much of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. While rooms in the rear served as the residence of the merchant and his clerk, the main and largest room was for displaying the store's wares in its numerous glass cases and the ceiling high shelves that line the opposing long walls.

Pond Store is presently owned, operated, and occupied by Liz and Norman Chaffin, who have succeeded Mrs. Chaffin's late father Carroll John Smith. Smith began as a clerk in the 1920s for a Jewish merchant Julius Lemkowitz before eventually purchasing the business. Lemkowitz had operated the store and served as the Pond postmaster for several decades.





Plan of Pond Store (not to scale)

## FORT ADAMS

Today Fort Adams is the fossil of a river port town, located at the base of the bluffs that were known as *Roche d'Avion* under the French and later known as Loftus Heights. During the nineteenth century the Mississippi River flowed almost immediately adjacent to the bluffs making the town site easily accessible to river traffic. Today, however, the town is adjacent to seasonally inundated floodplain while the river is over a mile away. There are only two businesses in Fort Adams today, a small modern store building and a beer joint/cafe, known as Fast Freddie's Green Bayou, located in an old store building. There are also four other old commercial buildings, two of which are used as hunting lodges, a Catholic Church, and an abandoned schoolhouse. The post office was discontinued in 1987. Although there is a small residential population, much of the present activity in Fort Adams is associated with the great numbers of hunters who converge on the area during the various hunting seasons.

Although land grants had tended to cluster in the area since the British reign, no real center developed there until 1798 following the Spanish withdrawal from the Natchez District when the Loftus Heights by virtue of their position overlooking the Mississippi River, and by virtue of their proximity to the 31st parallel which had just become an international boundary. At this time, the Mississippi River itself was also an international boundary with Spanish Louisiana on the west side. At that time President John Adams ordered Brigadier General James Wilkinson to establish a military post at this strategic point. By late 1799, over \$80,000 had been spent on constructing a fort that consisted of a battery of cannons, a barracks, and a magazine and that was named after President Adams. When completed the fort was situated on different levels ranging from the base of the bluff to the peak that was named Mount Washington.

During its early years Fort Adams served as a port of entry into the United States and collected duties on goods entering the country by way of the Mississippi River. In 1801, it was the site of a treaty between the United States and the Choctaw tribe, a treaty which affirmed the title of the United States to the Natchez District and permitted the usage of the Natchez Trace through the Choctaw territory. The strategic importance of the site was however diminished when the Louisiana Purchase transferred the land on the east side of the river along with New Orleans to American possession making New Orleans the major port of entry. Nevertheless the Spanish remained on the east side of the river south of the 31st parallel through about 1810 and thus the fort remained, with a reduced garrison, through that time.

A town plat was surveyed at the base of the bluff below the fort by 1802 (McBee 1979:459; for plat see Wilkinson County Land Book H, p. 229), and the town that developed there, termed variously "Fort Adams" or "Wilkinsonburg," served as the first county seat of Wilkinson County from 1802 through 1809. With the development of the cotton economy, the town served for decades as a shipping port for the fiber.

In either December 1800 or early 1801, James Hall (1909:552) described the fort:

Mount Washington, at the bottom of which stands Fort Adams, is 284 feet above the surface of low water.... Between [the bluff and the river] is a narrow flat of land on which is erected a handsome battery and several convenient houses for the officers' quarters. No regular barracks are yet built, but the soldiery lodge in detached cabins. Works are shortly to be erected on the top of the mount....

In 1808, Fortesque Cuming (1904:328-330) observed that:

Fort Adams or Wilkinsonburg is a poor little village of a dozen houses, most of them in decay, hemmed in between the heights and the river. The fort from whence it derives its first name, is situated on a bluff overhanging the river, at the extremity of the ridge of Loftus's heights. It is about one hundred feet above the ordinary level of the Mississippi, which is not more than three hundred yards wide here, so that the fort completely commands it, with several small brass cannon and two

small brass howitzers mounted 'en barbette.' The fort which is faced with brick, has only a level superficies large enough for one bastion, with a small barrack inside, the whole of which is commanded by a block-house a hundred and fifty feet higher, on the sharp peak of a very steep hill, which in time of war might serve as a look out, as well as a post, as it commands a most extensive view over the surrounding wilderness of forest....

Fort Adams, which on account of its insalubrity, is deserted by its garrison, a subaltern with a platoon being left in it, to guard the pass, and prevent smuggling--while the garrison inhabits a pleasant cantonment in the hills towards Pinckneyville, about five miles distant. A path descends gradually from the block-house to the town, along a very narrow ridge, about the middle of which is the burying place of the garrison....

The unhealthiness of its scite [sic] is probably the reason that Wilkinsonburg does not prosper, notwithstanding it is the capital of a county, and is a post town.

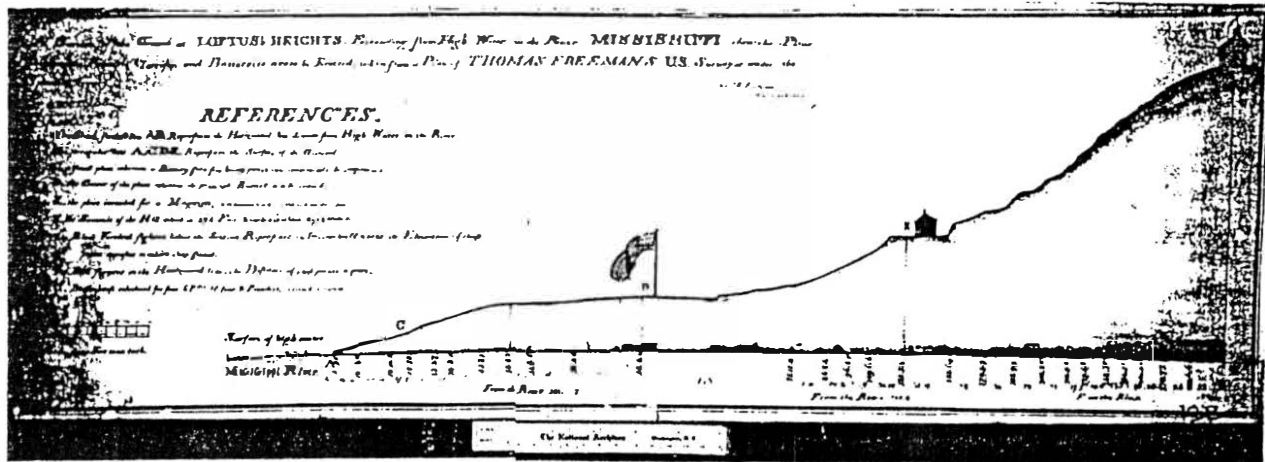
In 1811, Looe Baker (Lowry 1924:99) described Fort Adams:

On one of the highest,--300 feet above the level of the River,--stands a Block House. Immediately below is the Government Fort. Dwelling houses to the number of fifty are scattered around the small hill near the margin of the river, which are covered with Forest Trees tastefully left standing, thick enough for ornament and shade and not too near each other so as to obstruct the view. Opposite this place there is a bend of the River which forms a fine basin of Water below the Fort and Village. Upon the whole I have not seen a more romantic settlement on the Mississippi.

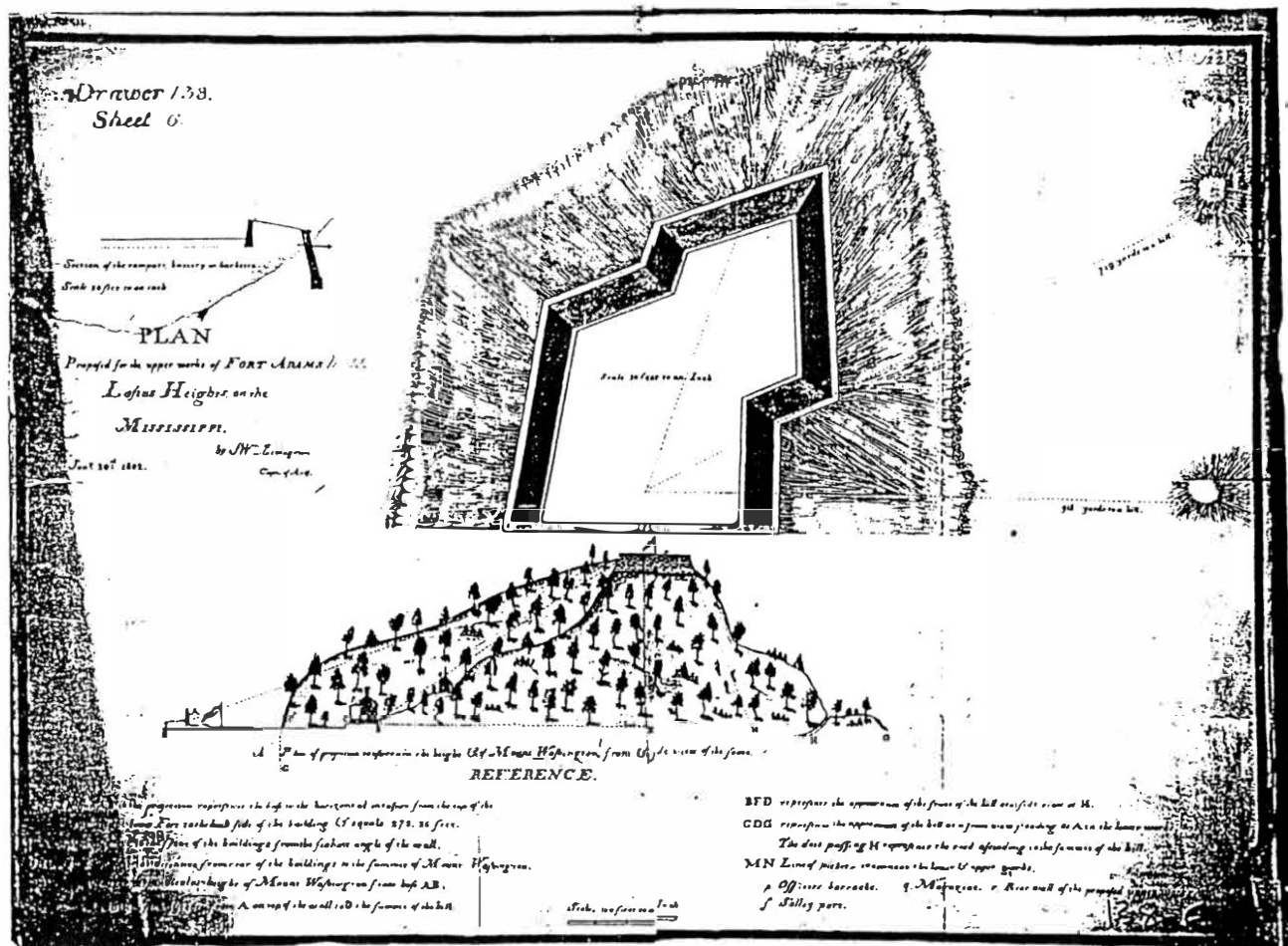
During the early 1830s, J.H. Ingraham (1839:38-39) described the town:

Fort Adams ... is a small village at the foot and scattered at the sides, of a collection of hills nearly two hundred feet high, covered with trees, and clothed with grass nearly to the water. Half-way to the summit of the principal hill of the group, stand the ruins of Fort Adams, consisting of a grass-grown, dismantled fortification of earth. Its site is well chosen, commanding a prospect, both up and down the river, for several miles.

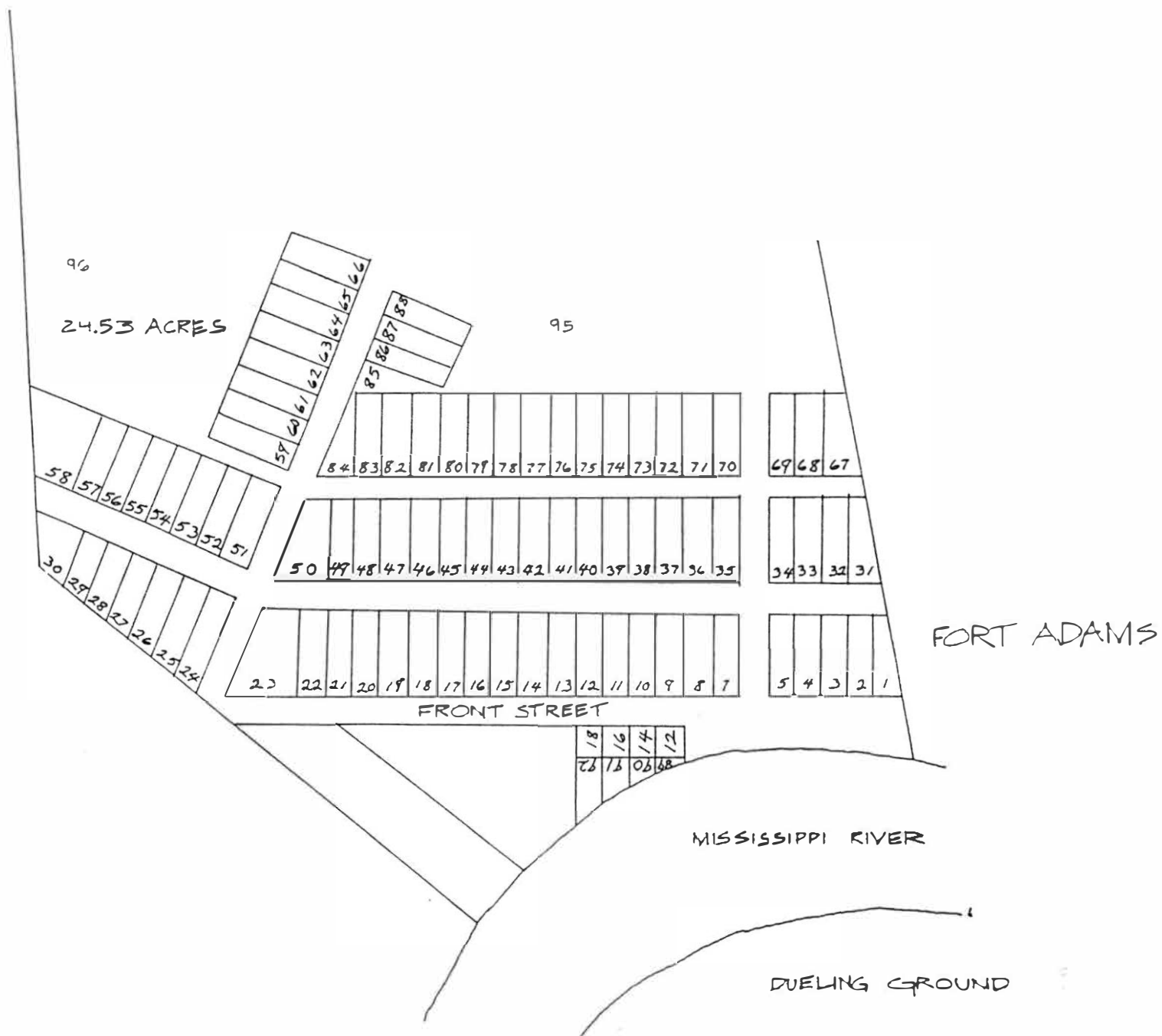
Fort Adams does not contain five hundred inhabitants, and its chief business is in shipping cotton; it is the mart of the adjacent cotton region. The amount of its business is not great. The hills of Fort Adams are a striking and romantic feature in this level region, standing alone like isolated promontories.



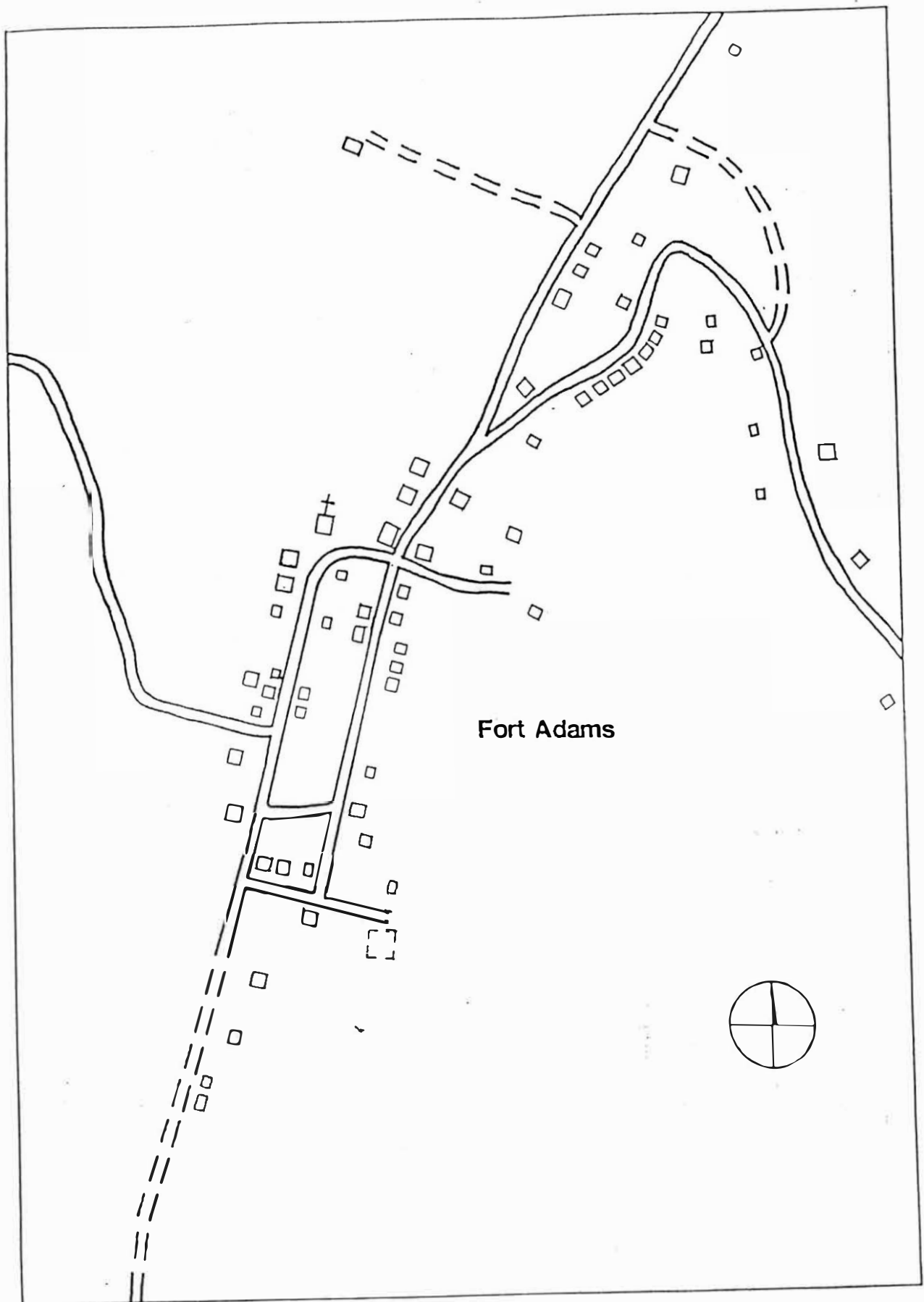
Section of Fort Adams (National Archives).



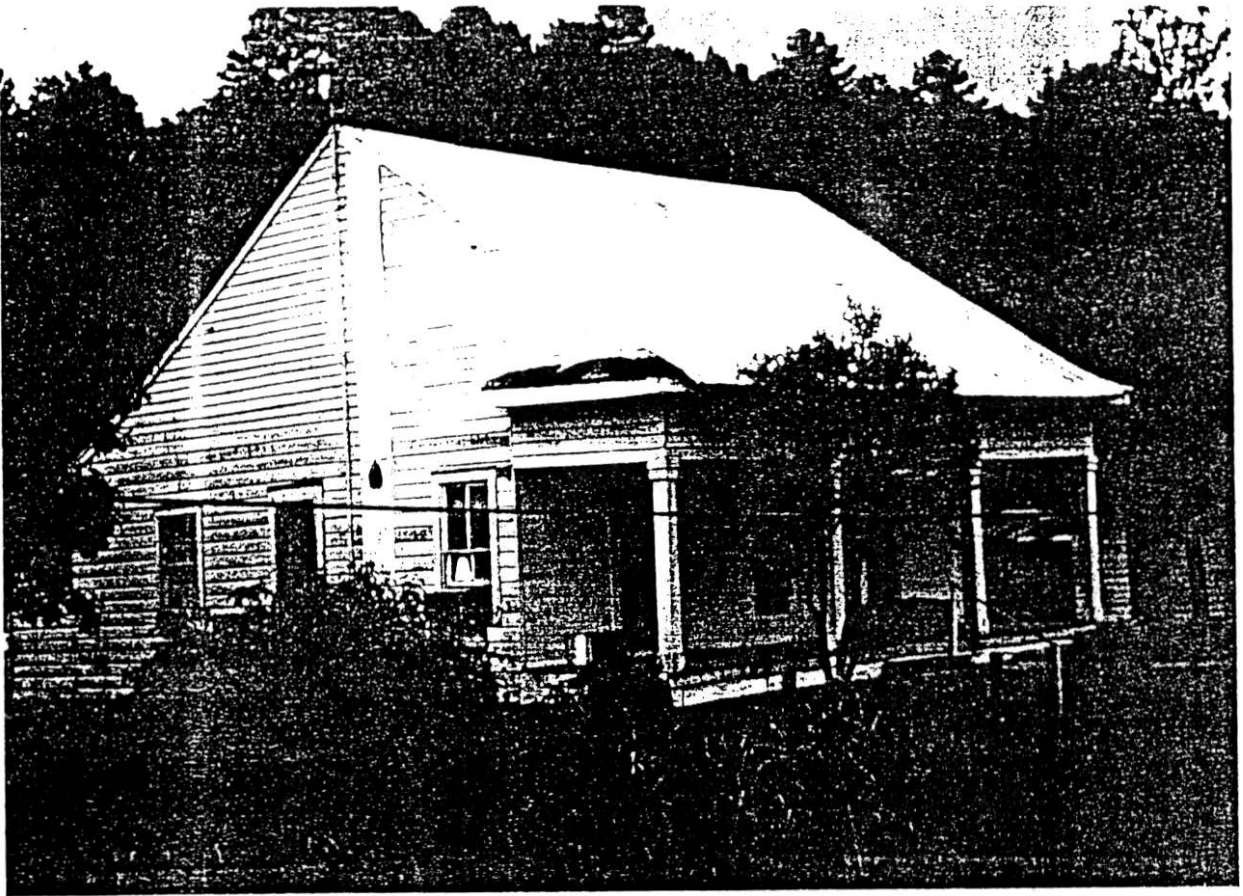
Plan and Elevation of Fort Adams (National Archives).



Fort Adams Plat. Map. 1833. (Wilkinson County Courthouse).







Swan House



Catholic Church, Fort Adams

## HOUSE ON ELLICOTT'S HILL

The House on Ellicott's Hill represents a sophisticated and grand example of early vernacular architecture of the Lower Mississippi Valley. The house exhibits a distinctive roof shape that was common in early Natchez--a central gable with surrounding shed attachments. This Anglo roof form is different from its French counterpart, which typically features a hipped roof with surrounding sheds and is often referred to as a French Colonial roof. This distinctive roof shape was an original feature on many Natchez houses and a product of remodeling on others like Saragossa.

The two-story facade, which is fronted by a double-tiered gallery, is created by a basement story dug into the side of the hill. This house form was described by Eliza Baker in a letter from Natchez dated November 25, 1805, to her New Jersey family as "the style which prevails in Southern countries, namely one-story, with this difference--that there is a lower story dug out of the side of the hill presenting two stories in front and but one in the rear....[with] a long gallery or piazza, partly enclosed by Venetian blinds." These long galleries were noted by Fortescue Cuming, who in his 1810 *Sketches of a Tour to the Western Country*, described Natchez as looking like St. Johns Antigua, "though not near so large as it. The houses all with balconies and piazzas."

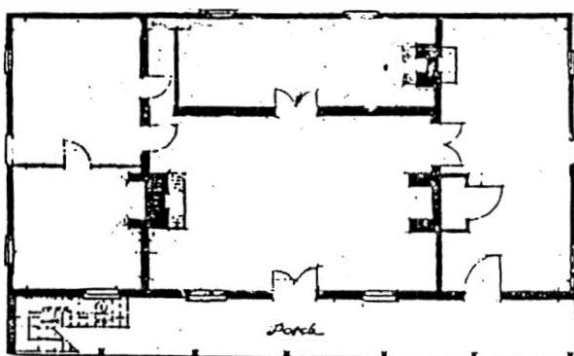
The House on Ellicott's Hill is one of the earliest territorial period buildings to exhibit the definitive characteristics of the federal style with its simple fanlighted doorways, gallery colonnettes (on pedestals on the second-story level), and nicely detailed interior millwork. Typical of Natchez, the facade of the house is finished in both plaster (first story) and horizontal tongue-and-groove boards (second story) where protected by galleries from the weather. The house also exhibits the rear cabinet room floor plan so typical of the Lower Mississippi Valley. The original rear loggia or porch, however, was enclosed not too many years after the house was built.

The House on Ellicott's Hill was built on property acquired in September 1797 by James Moore, a Natchez merchant. Moore probably did not begin construction on the house until after January 1798, when Isaac Guion is recorded as having camped on the same site previously occupied by Andrew Ellicott (Guion to Stephen Minor, January 3, 1798, Seventh and Eighth Annual Report, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, p. 60). That Andrew Ellicott encamped on the present site of the house is well established by a 1952 report on Ellicott's Hill prepared by Dawson Phelps, noted historian of the National Park Service. The year long drama that preceded the transfer of power from Spain to the United States in March 1798 was enacted on two hills in downtown Natchez--the hill where Spanish-occupied Fort Panmure (Fort Natchez) was located and the hill where Andrew Ellicott encamped, now known as Ellicott Hill. The Moore House was standing by 1801, when it was mentioned in a newspaper article as a point of reference for the location of a doctor's office (*Green's Impartial Observer*, February 21, 1801, p. 3).

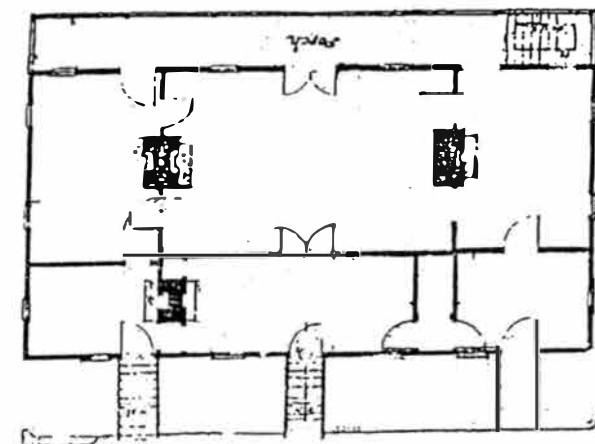
Restored in 1936 by the Natchez Garden Club, the house was the first restoration project undertaken by an organization in Natchez. A National Historic Landmark, the House on Ellicott Hill is operated as a house museum by the garden club.



House on Ellicott Hill



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

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1732 Map depicting the reconstructed Fort Rosalie. Copy courtesy of Samuel Wilson, Jr., New Orleans, Louisiana.

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