

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received NOV 4 1986

date entered DEC 4 1986

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

1. Name

historic John Frank Mathews Plantation

and or common Same

2. Location

street & number Intersection of U.S. 80 at George Smith Road N/A not for publication

city, town Prattsburg N/A vicinity of

state Georgia code 013 county Talbot code 263

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. James Tyrell, Jr.

street & number 7885 Fawndale Way

city, town Atlanta N/A vicinity of state Georgia 30360

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Talbot County Courthouse

city, town Talbotton state Georgia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Structures Field Survey:
title Talbot County, Georgia has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1976 federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Section, Dept. of Natural Resources

city, town Atlanta state Georgia

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The John Frank Mathews Plantation consists of a large, two-story, frame, four-over-four rooms with central hall main house with a detached kitchen, historic outbuildings, a family cemetery, a tenant house, a blacksmith shop, a garage/gas station, and the ruins of a sawmill, planing mill, grist mill, cotton gin, and dipping vat complex. The main house, built in 1859-1860, retains its original siding, columns, balconies, sidelights, mantels, stairs, and shutters. It is raised on a brick and stone foundation while the kitchen rests on rebuilt rock and stone piers. There is a cellar under the main house. Outbuildings immediately behind the house include a smokehouse, privy, and two-room kitchen/cook's house with central chimney. Away from the house are a large barn and a large corn crib. The family cemetery with a historic fence is across the road from the main house. The tenant house (Drane House) is a one-story frame house, ca. 1840, that is also across the road from the main house but closer to the main highway. The blacksmith shop directly fronts the main highway and contains many blacksmithing tools and supplies. The garage is covered in metal siding and has a very early gas pump. The industrial complex is in a pine forest about one hundred feet from the highway. Visible remains include a frame structure, a concrete dipping vat, foundations of a grist mill, millstones, and other foundations. All identified buildings, structures, and sites are historic and contribute to this nomination. The sites of tenant houses and a commissary (general store) are also known. The property is flat to gently rolling land in a rural area, although it adjoins a major highway. The community of Prattsburg now consists only of a few houses, a church, and a closed store. South of this property is a modern house built by the previous owner. The main house has been changed very little. It is now undergoing restoration as a second home.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1859-1860 **Builder/Architect** James D. Cottingham, Builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John Frank Mathews Plantation is significant in architecture for its good, virtually untouched example of a main house on a late antebellum plantation. It is the often-found four-over-four with central hall plan, Greek Revival-style structure. It is also significant because the original plans by James D. Cottingham still exist, the only ones known for a Georgia antebellum plantation house. The property is significant in historic industrial archaeology for the remains of the industrial complex that once contained a cotton gin, grist mill, sawmill, planing mill, and dipping vat, if not more. This complex served a wide area. In agriculture, it is significant as the central core of John Frank Mathews' once-thriving cotton plantation where over 100 bales of cotton were produced on the eve of the Civil War. It would have been one of the major plantations within the community of Prattsburg.

In terms of National Register Criteria "A", the property is eligible for its associations with Georgia's antebellum cotton economy. The prototypical Georgia plantation, this property was also one of the largest and most productive cotton plantations in the area. In terms of National Register Criteria "C", the property is significant for its overall layout as the structural core of a historic plantation, for its representative collection of buildings and structures, and for its archetypical Greek Revival-style plantation house. In terms of National Register Criteria "D", the property is significant for its potential, represented by the documented ruins and identified sites, to yield information about the industrial economy of Georgia's 19th-century plantations. Many Georgia plantations are believed to have had industrial complexes like this, but few have such obvious remains, and even fewer have been documented.

These areas of significance support the property's eligibility under National Register Criteria A, C, and D.

Historical Narrative

The John Frank Mathews Plantation rests upon land which was opened for white settlement with the 1827 Land Lottery; Talbot County was established the same year. Frank Mathews was born that same year in Baldwin County, Georgia, site of the then-state capitol of Milledgeville. He moved with his parents to Talbot County, and it was there in 1851 that he married seventeen-year-old Mary E. Parker. They obtained Land Lot 56, consisting of 202 and a half acres, after her father's estate sale in 1857.

The Mathews are said to have built this plantation house during 1859-1860, and to have moved into it in early 1861, the same day one of the local companies left for the Civil War. A local carpenter, James D. Cottingham, who was born in Virginia in 1808, was the builder/contractor. His signed plans and a list of the supplies he needed for the house from the local sawmill still survive.

(Continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Williams, Dr. Francis M., Jr. "John Frank Mathews Plantation." Historic Property Information Form, April 28, 1984, with additional updated information. On file at Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Davidson, William H. A Rockaway in Talbot, Vol. 2. West Point, GA: the author, 1985.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property ca. 55 acres

Quadrangle name Prattsburg, GA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	6	7	4	7	2	0	0	3	6	2	2	2	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

1	6	7	4	7	7	2	0	3	6	2	2	2	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

1	6	7	4	7	7	3	0	3	6	2	1	8	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

1	6	7	4	7	2	0	0	3	6	2	1	9	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property includes the known contiguous resources associated with the John Frank Mathews Plantation and is marked on the enclosed plat map. This is the portion of the plantation on which historic resources remain.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian
Historic Preservation Section

organization Georgia Department of Natural Resources date October 23, 1986
205 Butler Street, S.E.

street & number 1462 Floyd Tower, East telephone 404/656-2840

city or town Atlanta state Georgia 30334

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Elizabeth A. Lyon

Elizabeth A. Lyon

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date 10/29/86

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 12-4-86

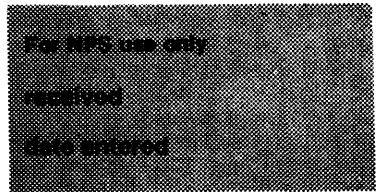
William H. Davidson
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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Between their marriage and moving into their new home, the Mathews lived at the nearby Drane-Mathews House (later used as a tenant house). In the 1860 Census, Mathews was listed as being a planter, with real estate valued at \$6,000. In their household, besides their own child, were Mrs. Mathews' orphaned three brothers and a sister. Some of the young couple's wealth, and especially slaves, came to them after her father's death in 1856.

There were 800 acres under cultivation and 225 acres not cultivated. Statistics show the Mathews had a variety of livestock on the plantation: horses, mules, milch cows, fifteen sheep, and 100 pigs. They raised, or grew, wheat, corn, and some vegetables, and they produced over 106 bales of cotton in 1859-1860, as this plantation house was being completed. Talbot County was the 8th largest cotton producing county in Georgia that year, and the Mathews' plantation was one of the major plantations in the county.

The Civil War affected the Mathews plantation in a major way. J. Frank Mathews was called to serve late in the war, in 1864, but was fortunate enough to survive and return to the "new south" of Reconstruction and the reorganization of society. With slaves now free, he had to contract with them in order to have a work-force to run the farm. In 1869, he was on the building committee and a trustee of the nearby Corinth Methodist Church. The 1870 Agricultural Census indicated that the farm consisted of 1,000 cultivated acres and 600 unimproved ones, with the same crops and livestock as in 1860, except that the cotton production was down to 67 bales a year. In his later years, Mathews was also a merchant, stock raiser, and stock dealer.

When Mathews died in 1888, at age 60, he left a plantation of over 4,000 acres, valued at around \$20,000. At that time the community of Prattsburg was variously described as a place where cotton was the principal crop, with two churches, Baptist and Methodist, and one common school. It also had a post office, several general stores, and one doctor. In 1883, the population was given as 100, with the nearest bank being in Columbus. There was a water-powered grist mill, four general stores, and a blacksmith. The industrial complex whose remains still exist on the Mathews' land is said to have included a family-operated sawmill and planing mill, both of which were run by the same overseer who also looked after a peach orchard. They also operated a grist mill, cotton gin, and community dipping vat. The blacksmith is said to have shod horses and mules and was also a wheelwright. The Mathews family operated the blacksmith shop as a community service from 1890 to 1955.

After J. Frank Mathews' death, his lands were divided between his wife and children, with the widow getting Land Lot 56 which included the main house. Land Lot 56 included, besides the house, the Mathews' general store, blacksmith shop, and another house. At her death in 1893, her property was divided among the children. The main house and surrounding land was occupied in 1901 by her son, Joseph Brown Mathews (1861-1957), who was named for Georgia's Civil War governor. His four daughters were married in the house. In 1896, he ran a general store as well as being a farmer. His daughter, Rosa (1893-1970), and her husband Herschel V. Williams, later made this their home. At her death, the main house and surrounding area went to her son, Francis Mathews Williams, who sold the house and most of Land Lot 56 to the present owners in 1985.

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Contributing/Non-Contributing Resources

Buildings: 7 - Main House
Detached Kitchen (connected tentatively to the main house)
Original Kitchen (outbuilding)
Barn
Drane House
Blacksmith Shop
Old Store

Structures: 3 - Smokehouse
Privy
Corn Crib

Sites: 4 - Family Cemetery
Industrial Complex: Mill Ruins, Dipping Vat, Gin House

NOTE: There are no non-contributing features on the property.

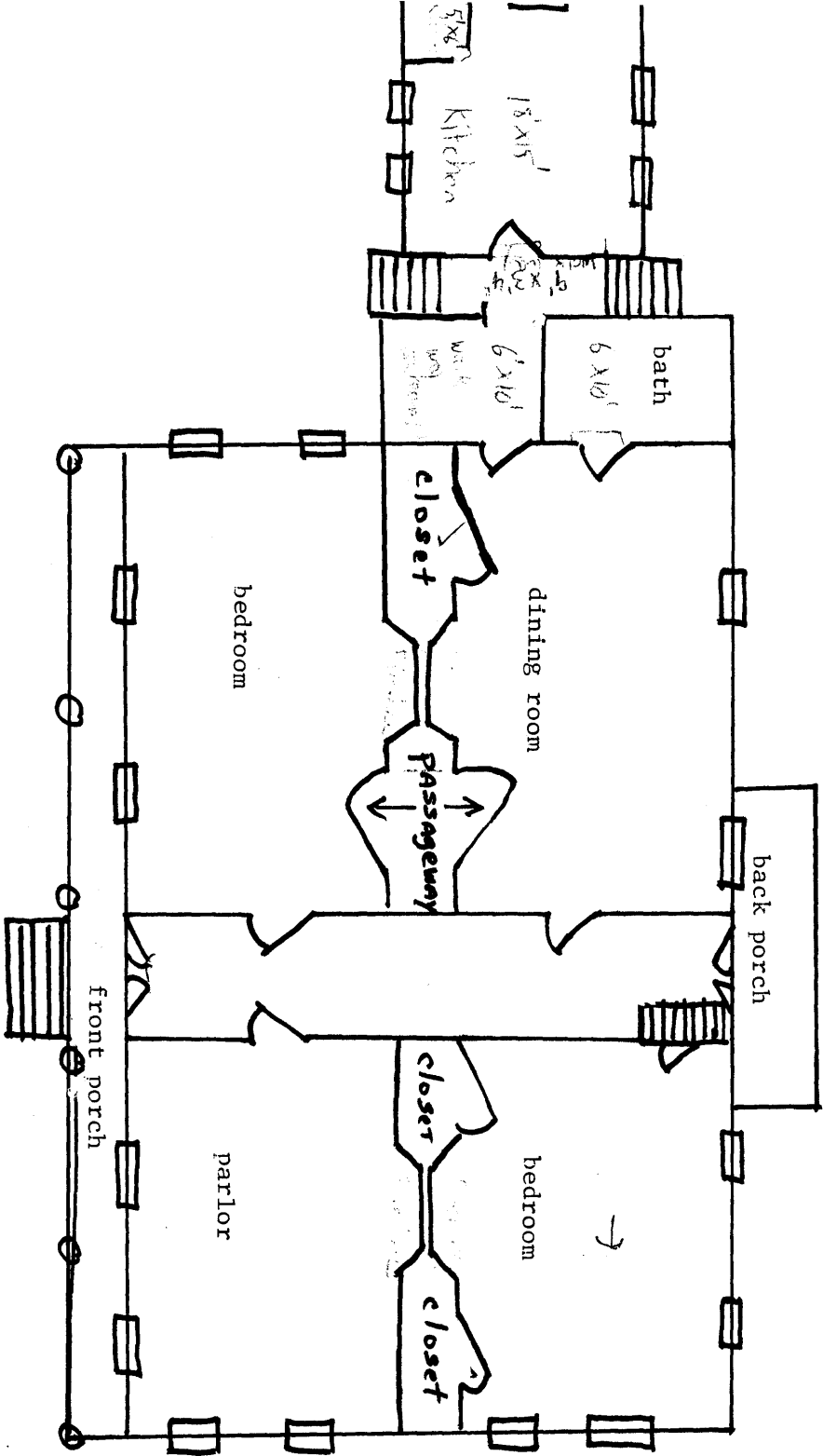
FLOOR PLAN

John Frank Mathews Plantation
Prattsburg, Talbot County, Georgia

Scale: Not to Scale

Source: Drawn by Dr. Francis M. Williams, Jr.
Date: 1984

Key: First Floor Plan



Arrows indicate direction
of camera

FLOOR PLAN

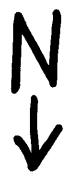
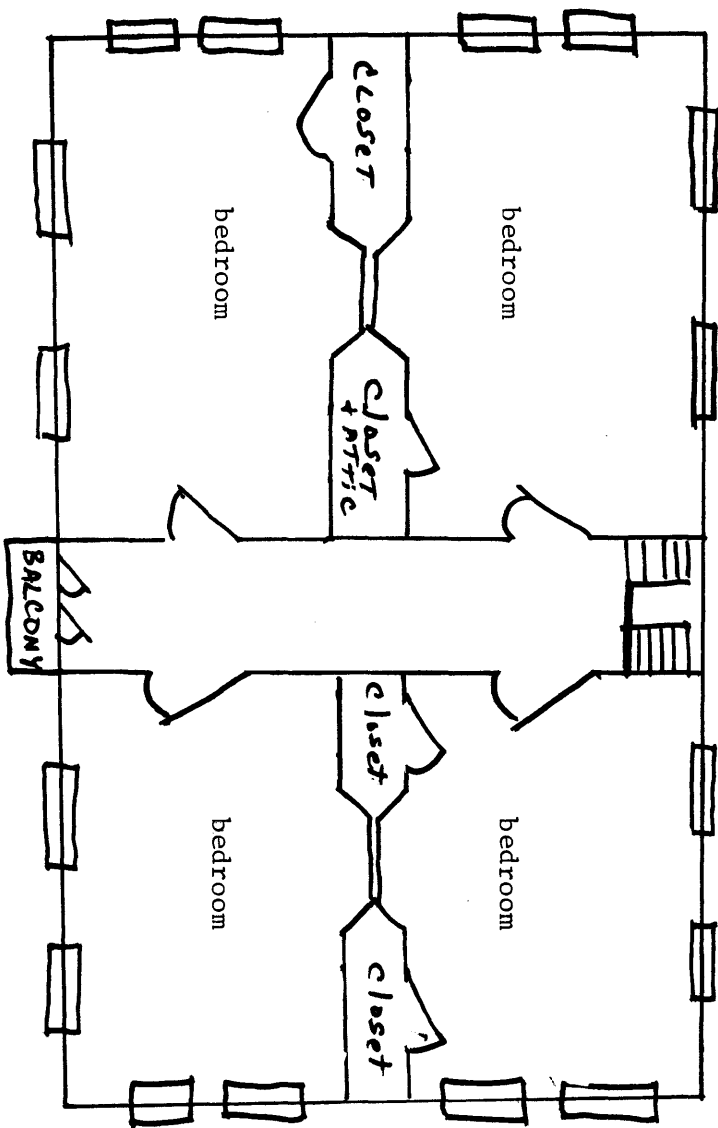
John Frank Mathews Plantation
Prattsburg, Talbot County, Georgia

Scale: Not to Scale

Source: Drawn by Dr. Francis M. Williams, Jr.

Date: 1984

Key: Second Floor Plan



Arrows indicate direction
of camera

PLAT MAP/SKETCH MAP

**John Frank Mathews Plantation
Prattsburg, Talbot County, Georgia**

Scale: As marked on the plat
Source: Private survey for new owner, drawn by J. Harold Smith
Date: 1985

Key: The nominated property is that part of Land Lots 75 and 56 outlined in a heavy black line. The historic properties within the nominated property are numbered and identified below:

- 1 = main house and detached kitchen, connected by breezeway
- 2 = cluster of outbuildings behind main house: original kitchen, smoke house and privy
- 3 = barn
- 4 = corn crib
- 5 = family cemetery
- 6 = Drane House (overseer's house)
- 7 = blacksmith's shop
- 8 = old store/gas station
- 9 = industrial complex (cotton gin, dipping vat, grist mill, etc)

FOR MAP, SEE OVER