

PA036176x

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| RECEIVED | APR 8 1976 |
| DATE ENTERED | APR 13 1977 |

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
 Joseph Wheeler Plantation *Whe*
 AND/OR COMMON
 Joseph Wheeler Home

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
 E of Courtland off AL 20
 CITY, TOWN
 Wheeler Courtland vic. VICINITY OF
 STATE CODE COUNTY CODE
 Alabama 01 Lawrence 079

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
 5

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input checked="" 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 | <input type="checkbox"/> 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
 Mrs. John O. LeGrand
 STREET & NUMBER
 The Whilton
 CITY, TOWN
 Greenwood VICINITY OF STATE
 Virginia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
 REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Office of the County Clerk
 STREET & NUMBER
 Lawrence County Courthouse
 CITY, TOWN
 Moulton STATE
 Alabama

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
 Historic American Buildings Survey
 DATE
 1936 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
 DEPOSITORY FOR
 SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress
 CITY, TOWN
 Washington STATE
 District of Columbia

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | | CHECK ONE | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED | DATE _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located 16 miles west of Decatur, Alabama, on Alabama 20, the Joseph Wheeler Plantation retains much of the atmosphere of postbellum southern plantation life. Moreover, the property contains residences representative of three 19th Century building styles. At one time Wheeler's holdings included 18,000 adjacent acres, most of which is owned presently by his heirs, but the historic buildings rest on a 100-acre tract. Oak, dogwood, redbud, Japanese cherry, crepe myrtle, and cedar trees from a grove around the marmade structures, and wisteria vines and English boxwoods grow in abundance.

The Log House. John P. Hickman settled first on the property and erected this one-room house of hewn logs about 1818. Shortly afterward he added a second room and a dogtrot. The house has a shaked roof and board floors, and each room contains an end fireplace and one shuttered, 15-over-15 sash window. Thought to be one of the earliest log houses in northern Alabama, the structure is in good condition.

The Log and Weatherboard House. Possibly as early as 1820, Hickman built this gable-roofed, rectangular-shaped, two-story log and weatherboard house immediately north of the first dwelling. The white-painted newer residence has a two tiered central porch, five bay front, 12-over-12 sash windows flanked by green louvered shutters, and two end chimneys that serve fireplaces on both floors. Entrance to the house is through double, paneled doors graced by side and transom lights. Apparently the central hall and U-shaped stairway divided the house initially into two wings of two rooms each, but several irregular single-story additions were made to the rear during the late 19th Century. A modern kitchen was attached more recently to the west end of the structure. The oldest portion of the house contains much original flooring and woodwork and some period furniture. At present two caretakers occupy the well-preserved dwelling.

The Frame House. Ownership of the Hickman property passed eventually to Col. Richard Jones, and Wheeler acquired it about 1870, after he and Daniella returned to Lawrence County from New Orleans. The Wheelers erected this two and a half story, white, frame house sometime prior to 1885, but the exact date of construction is not known. One of Wheeler's biographers proposes 1870 as the most likely time, while the recollections of Annie E. Wheeler, the general's daughter, suggests the period 1880-1884. Whatever the case, the structure stands only a few feet east of the log and weatherboard house, and the two buildings are connected by a covered walkway.

The frame house is little altered and in good condition. Weatherboarded and rectangular shaped, it is five bays wide at the front and rear and five bays wide at the sides. It sits on a stone foundation, and three red brick interior chimneys pierce the metal-covered, gabled roof. On the first two stories green louvered shutters border six-over-six sash windows. A front-balustraded, one-story veranda extends across the face of the house, and a two-tiered veranda spans the rear. Of particular interest are the six pairs of scroll-bracketed two-by-fours that support the front veranda. Also noteworthy is the balustraded, single-flight servant's stairway that connects the two levels of the rear porch. Except for evidences of modern plumbing, addition of a concrete floor to the lower portion of the rear veranda, and enclosure of the upper tier of that porch with screening, the exterior exhibits few changes.

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Double, paneled doors flanked by side and transom lights lead into both ends of a central hallway that is approximately 15 feet wide and 40 feet long. This passageway divides four 20-foot-square rooms into two wings. On the right are a bedroom and dining room, and on the left are two parlors. Entrance into the front sitting room and passage from it into the rear parlor is by large four-part folding doors. A single-flight stair leads from the hall to the second floor, which contains a central corridor and four bedrooms. An enclosed stairway provides access to the unfinished half story.

Small baths were built into four of the rooms about 1906, and more recently a furnace was installed in the first-floor hall. No other notable internal alterations have been made, however. Almost all of Wheeler's furniture remains in the house, along with his military uniforms and the family china and silverware. Original handmade curtains hang in the front parlor, and numerous portraits and photographs of the general adorn the white plaster walls.

Outbuildings. Located in close proximity to the three residences are six outbuildings erected during Wheeler's lifetime and one newer structure that covers a water well and pump. The older buildings include a gable-roofed, frame two and a half story cotton warehouse; a rectangular-shaped log barn with hay loft and tin gabled roof; a vertically boarded barn of similar design; the original frame well-house; a frame woodhouse; and hewn-log icehouse. Except for the latter structure, all are in poor condition. The relative position of all these buildings are indicated on the accompanying sketch map.

Cemetery. The Wheeler family cemetery is located at the rear of the property. Although Joseph Wheeler's remains lie in Arlington National Cemetery, the family plot contains an impressive spire monument to his memory.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1870-1906

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The General Joseph Wheeler Plantation, which is primarily significant for its associations with General Joseph Wheeler, retains much of its 19th Century plantation ambience and appearance and contains three structures representative of three generations of plantation life in 19th Century Alabama. The three main structures include: a one-story log house constructed around 1818 by the Hickman family which homesteaded the plantation; a two-story log and clapboard home constructed as the family's permanent residence during the 1820's; and a two and a half story frame home which was built by Wheeler during the latter portion of the 19th Century and served both as the center of his large and prosperous plantation and as his home until his death in 1906.

Joseph Wheeler symbolizes restoration of white rule in the postbellum South and political reconciliation between that section and the North. A renowned cavalry officer in the Confederate Army, Wheeler became an Alabama planter after the Civil War, and beginning in 1884 he won eight successive elections to the U.S. House of Representatives. Like many other so-called Bourbon Democrats, he maintained a paternal attitude toward blacks, opposed civil rights legislation, and called upon southerners to forget the war and devote their energy to industrialization. Wheeler never became a powerful figure in Congress, but his intelligent speeches on a variety of subjects made him one of the best known men in Washington. In 1898, while still a member of the House, he resumed his military career. To erase the last vestiges of sectionalism and make the Spanish-American War a national effort, President William McKinley appointed Wheeler a major general of volunteers. He became the only corps commander in U.S. military history who had held a similar position in the Confederacy.

Joseph Wheeler was born September 10, 1836, in Augusta, Georgia. Educated at Cheshire in Connecticut, he was appointed to West Point by a New York congressman. He graduated in 1859 and served in the Cavalry in Kansas and New Mexico, where he earned the nickname, "Fightin' Joe". When Georgia left the Union in January 1861, Wheeler resigned his commission and served briefly as a lieutenant in Georgia's forces then secured an appointment as a colonel in the Confederate Army.

Placed in command of the 19th-Alabama Infantry, Wheeler trained his regiment expertly and led it through the bloody Battle of Shiloh in April, 1862. He served thereafter as cavalry chief for the Army of Tennessee and rose eventually to lieutenant general. Wheeler led his cavalymen effectively on countless reconnaissance assignments and forays against Union supply lines. After Johnston surrendered the Army of Tennessee on April 26, 1865, Wheeler kept his men in the field and attempted unsuccessfully to reach Confederate President Jefferson Davis and prevent his capture. In May, Federal soldiers apprehended both Davis's presidential party and Wheeler's skeleton command.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Cosmas, Graham A., An Army for Empire: The United States Army in the Spanish-American War (Columbia, 1971).
- Dyer, John P., "Fightin' Joe" Wheeler (Baton Rouge, 1941).
- Marsh, W. H., "Recollections of 'Miss Ammie' Wheeler," Bulletin of the North Alabama Historical Association, II (1957).
- Morgan, Wayne, William McKinley and His America (Syracuse, 1963).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY circa 100 acres

UTM REFERENCES

LATITUDE LONGITUDE

NW 34° 39' 15" 87° 15' 30"

NE 34° 39' 8" 87° 15' 2"

SE 34° 38' 51" 87° 15' 8"

SW 34° 38' 30" 87° 15' 36"

| | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |

| | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| B | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| D | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

George R. Adams, Managing Editor and W. Warner Floyd

ORGANIZATION

American Association for State and Local History

STREET & NUMBER

1315 Eighth Avenue South

CITY OR TOWN

Nashville

DATE

April 1, 1976

TELEPHONE

STATE

Tennessee

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

Wilo B. Howard, Jr.

TITLE

SHPO Ala.

DATE

April 1, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

CHIEF

[Signature]

DATE

4/13/77

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

[Signature]

DATE

3/30/77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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After two months in a U.S. Army prison, Wheeler returned to war-torn Georgia to begin a new life. He found no suitable opportunity in his native Augusta, though, and in 1866 traveled to Courtland, Alabama and married Daniella Jones Sherrod, a young widow. After residing for four years in New Orleans, where Wheeler bought a partnership in a hardware and carriage firm, the couple returned to Daniella's father's plantation in Lawrence County, Alabama. Soon Wheeler became a successful planter, and in his spare time he studied law and passed the bar exam. By 1880, he had assumed a position as attorney for the East Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia Railroad Company.

In 1880 with the backing of northern Alabama's Democratic leadership, Wheeler was elected to Congress. The election, however, was contested by his opponent, William H. Lowe, an Independent running with the endorsement of Republicans and Greenbackers, and after 10 months in the National Capital, Wheeler was unseated.

When Lowe died before completing his term, Wheeler won a special election, returned to Washington in January of 1883. In 1884, he received little opposition in his bid for a seat in the 49th Congress and during the next 14 years he won re-election seven consecutive times. Wheeler overmade his opponents partly by accommodating the personal political needs of northern Alabama voters and partly by pursuing a middle course between Bourbonism and Populism. Wheeler was widely recognized for his sprightly manner and his ability to speak intelligently on a variety of subjects, and was one of the best known figures in Washington.

When hostilities with Spain seemed imminent early in 1898, he offered his services to the War Department. On April 25, 1898, Congress issued a declaration of war, and the following day President William McKinley summoned Wheeler to the White House. To heal sectional differences, make the war truly a national effort, and gain support for his administration, the President planned to extend military commissions to several ex-confederate officers. He gave the first and highest of these positions, major general of volunteers, to Wheeler. Subsequently, the War Department assigned him to command the cavalry in the impending expedition to Cuba. Wheeler served with distinction during the War and later was appointed head of the 4th Army Corps, gaining the distinction of being the only corps commander in U.S. history who had held a similar position in the Confederacy. In 1899, Wheeler saw duty briefly in the Philippines, and a year later he retired. He devoted most of the final five years of his life to travel and social activities and died in Brooklyn, New York, in 1906.

The plantation has remained in the hands of the Wheeler family and was managed by his daughter, Miss Annie Wheeler, until 1955, who served as a nurse in the Spanish-American War, the Philippine conflict, and the first World War. At her death, the plantation has been maintained by heirs who keep it open to the public for tours.

Joseph Wheeler Plantation
Wheeler, Alabama

Ala. 20 - U.S. 22 A

- A - Log House
- B - Log and Weatherboard House
- C - Frame House

- 1-Cotton Warehouse
- 2-Log Barn
- 3-Board Barn
- 4-Pumphouse
- 5-Wellhouse
- 6-Woodhouse
- 7-Icehouse
- 8-Cemetery

