

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Mathews, Nathan, House and Mathews Cotton Gin  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number Mathews Gin Road N/A  not for publication  
city, town West Point  vicinity  
state Mississippi code MS county Clay code 25 zip code 39773

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property		Category of Property		Number of Resources within Property	
				Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		<u>7</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local		<input type="checkbox"/> district		_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State		<input type="checkbox"/> site		_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal		<input type="checkbox"/> structure		_____	_____ objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> object		<u>7</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Clay County Multiple Resource Area  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Kenneth H. P. Poole SEPT. 19, 1991  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Patrick Andrews 11/15/91  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Industry: manufacturing facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Vacant: not in use

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Victorian vernacular

No style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick piers

walls weatherboard/metal

roof asphalt/metal

other wood porch

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Nathan Mathews House and the Mathews Cotton Gin are located in the prairie lands east of the city of West Point and west of the Tombigbee River. The buildings are separated by the north-south Mathews Gin Road and about one city block's diagonal distance. At the time of their construction, access to the community was by wagon roads north from old Waverly Road and south from the Columbus-Houston Road which passed through West Point. The existing blacktop road was put through the neighborhood in the mid-20th century. The present-day community consists of early 20th century buildings, mostly residences, interspersed with mid-to-late 20th century residences. With the exception of the two story gin, all the resources are one story frame vernacular buildings.

The gin has a three story section near the north end and gabled or shed roofed projections on all elevations but the southern. It is a frame structure with some board walls under metal siding. Only on the southern end, in the open area where the scales are located, is the exterior boarding visible. Though the scales may be original, the diesel engine located in a one story western wing dates from 1936, and the remainder of the gin equipment from 1949, when the gin was modernized. The roof was raised to accommodate new equipment, but the gable end of the original structure is visible on the south. The one story shed roofed area on the east side, originally open and used for storing baled cotton, has been closed in and extended within the last 15 years. (See photo #1.) A water trough and well house, part of the engine cooling system, are located just west of the engine shed. The ginning equipment is located in the mid-section of the building. The cotton press used to form bales is at the northern end. Outside the building, beyond the press, is an open, shed-roofed area where a scaffold and a pulley system were used to swing the pressed 500-pound bales out of the gin and onto transport vehicles. The floor of the scaffold area is located about six feet above the ground, so that wagons (and later, trucks) could be loaded by pulling alongside. The last cotton was ginned here in 1966, but the gin and the community were most prosperous between 1917 and the beginning of World War II, and began to decline with the cotton market.

The Nathan Mathews House is a one story, Victorian vernacular gable-and-wing house facing south onto a dirt lane which now connects a large farming operation to the east with Mathews Gin Road. Its weatherboard exterior has been covered by asphalt shingles, but its porch and trim remain intact. Its facade is three bay (window, door, window). The wooden shed-roofed porch follows the "L" shape formed by the main section of the house and the right-hand, projecting ell. It has relatively short, tripled wooden posts with plank tops and boxed bases, and a wooden floor. (See photo #2.) The entry door is five-paneled and the facade windows are 4/4 double hung sash in plain frames. A secondary entry door is located on the west

See continuation sheet

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce (See Historic Context.)  
Black Ethnic History

Period of Significance

1913-1941

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Black American

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Nathan Mathews

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Mathews Gin and the Nathan Mathews home are significant as the most important structural remains from an early 20th century Black enterprise community.

As explained in the Historic Context statement, the Mathews community was one of several established by Blacks in rural Clay County. Oral tradition throughout the county says that Blacks established thriving settlements and communities, most of them kin and agriculture based. Two gins owned by Blacks operated in the area just east of West Point. In addition to Mathews, the Wash Davis gin, store, and farm was a profitable early 20th century operation. It was located on the Columbus-Houston (Coffeeville) Road, now Highway 50, about five miles from West Point's business district. Its only remnants now are Davis family houses. Another prosperous early 20th century black-owned farming operation was that of Hugh Valentine, who farmed just east of Pheba. Although his descendents still live on a portion of his property, much of it has been sold. Many county residents remember other black families and communities that thrived between the turn of the century and World War II but have declined with the urbanization of America.

The Mathews Gin and Mathews house, and related buildings, are nominated as representatives of the other Black-owned enterprises which flourished between the turn of the century and World War II but have now largely disappeared. The gin and the house were the centers of activity for the community, with agricultural equipment to loan, storage barns, and farm produce for sale. Shingle-milling equipment was located under the storage shed at the gin, and Mathews did blacksmithing in a small wooden structure to the northeast. A store was in operation in the community up until Ivy Mathews's death in the mid-1960s. A grist mill was located in the building just to the east of Nathan Mathews's house. Vegetables were stored there, and equipment such as a log-splitter and a hay-baler were available for community use. The chicken house and the orchard to the north of the house were income sources for the Mathews and food sources for neighbors.

Other Black enterprises -- large farmsteads, lumber cutting operations, etc.-- once fairly common on the Clay County landscape, have not left easily identifiable structures, so though they survive in oral history, they cannot be recognized on the National Register. Nathan Mathews's house and gin are the best surviving associated structures to represent the development and success of early 20th century black enterprise communities.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

O.B. Mathews, son of Nathan Mathews. Interviewed by Joan Embree, preservation consultant, at his home on Mathews Gin Road, 4/26/89 and 8/9/89.

Finis Mathews, son of Nathan Mathews. Interviewed by Joan Embree, preservation consultant, at Mathews Gin and the Nathan Mathews House, 8/6/91.

Also, see historic context bibliography.

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

### Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

### Specify repository:

Miss. Dept. of Archives and History

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Less than one acre each

### UTM References

A 

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

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries for the Mathews Cotton Gin and Nathan Mathews house extend from the front of each building to the road. Boundaries at the house extend 100 feet from the exterior of the house to the east, north, and west and include outbuildings associated with the house: well-house, chicken house, out house, smoke house, and storage shed. Boundaries at the gin extend 50 feet in each direction from the exterior of the gin and include the blacksmith shop. Gin in S 21, T 17 R 7.  See continuation sheet House in S 22, T17, R7.

### Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the most important and intact remaining buildings in the Mathews Gin community and the land immediately adjacent.

See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joan E. Embree  
organization Preservation Consultant date 8/13/89 Revised 8/15/91  
street & number 20 Lake Valley Road telephone (601) 324-0410  
city or town Starkville state MS zip code 39759

Owner: Nathan Mathews Estate, c/o O.B. Mathews, Rt. 2, Box 261-A, West Point, MS 39773

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Mathews, Nathan House and Mathews Gin, Near West Point, Clay County, Mississippi

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DESCRIPTION, CONTINUED

side of the projecting ell; it opens directly into the "front room," in which tongue-and-groove walls (similar to others in the original three-room section) are dressed by the addition of a beadboard ceiling and a simple pine mantle. A shed addition across the rear (north) elevation houses two separate kitchens and an additional bedroom. The structure is supported on short brick piers. One corbelled-top brick chimney pierces the roof between the front room and the bedroom on the eastern wing. The two other original rooms were heated with coal heaters, still intact. The central hall between the western room and the eastern wing has been closed in at the rear to create a bathroom.

The gin and the house are set within a neighborhood of several homes, some of which were built in the early 20th century by Nathan Mathews's brothers Wesley, Vanderbilt, and Ivy, and some of which post-date Nathan Mathews's death in 1951. The structures most closely related to the early 20th century community are the deteriorating blacksmith shop located just east and north of the gin building and the outbuildings associated with the Nathan Mathews house: chicken house, outhouse, smokehouse, and vegetable storage/grist mill building. Of the early houses, only the Nathan Mathews home has preserved its original form and style. Though the Ivy and Vanderbilt Mathews houses survive between that house and the gin, they have both been altered and extended. Ivy Mathews's house is just north of the gin. He worked at the gin and ran a community store at the north end of his house. The home of Vanderbilt Mathews is a much-extended massed cabin south of the Nathan Mathews house. Wesley Mathews's house, to the southeast, is abandoned and falling in. Five additional houses and a large workshop have been built between the Nathan Mathews property and the gin to the southeast. A new barn has replaced the original on Nathan Mathews's property. (See community map.)

The house and the gin are nominated as associated buildings rather than part of a district because of the number of intervening, non-historic structures. Though the gin no longer serves as the economic base for the community, it still serves as the local landmark and namesake.

TO COLUMBUS.  
WEST POINT RD.



IVY MATHEWS

STORE



NATHAN MATHEWS

STORAGE /  
GRIST MILL

GIN



SHINGLE  
SPLITTER

VANDEBUILT  
MATHEWS

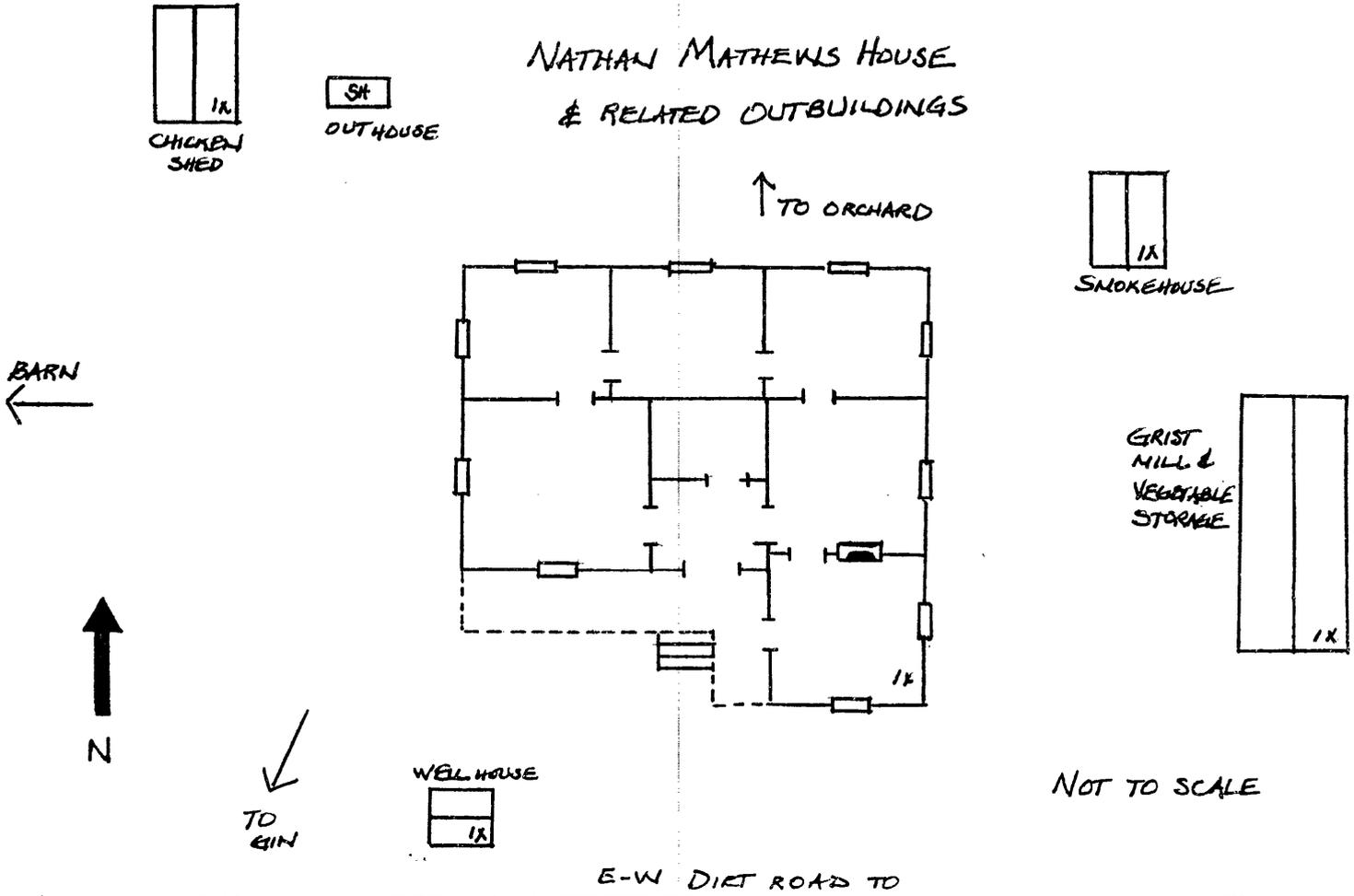
WESLEY MATHEWS

MATHEWS GIN  
COMMUNITY  
C. 1920

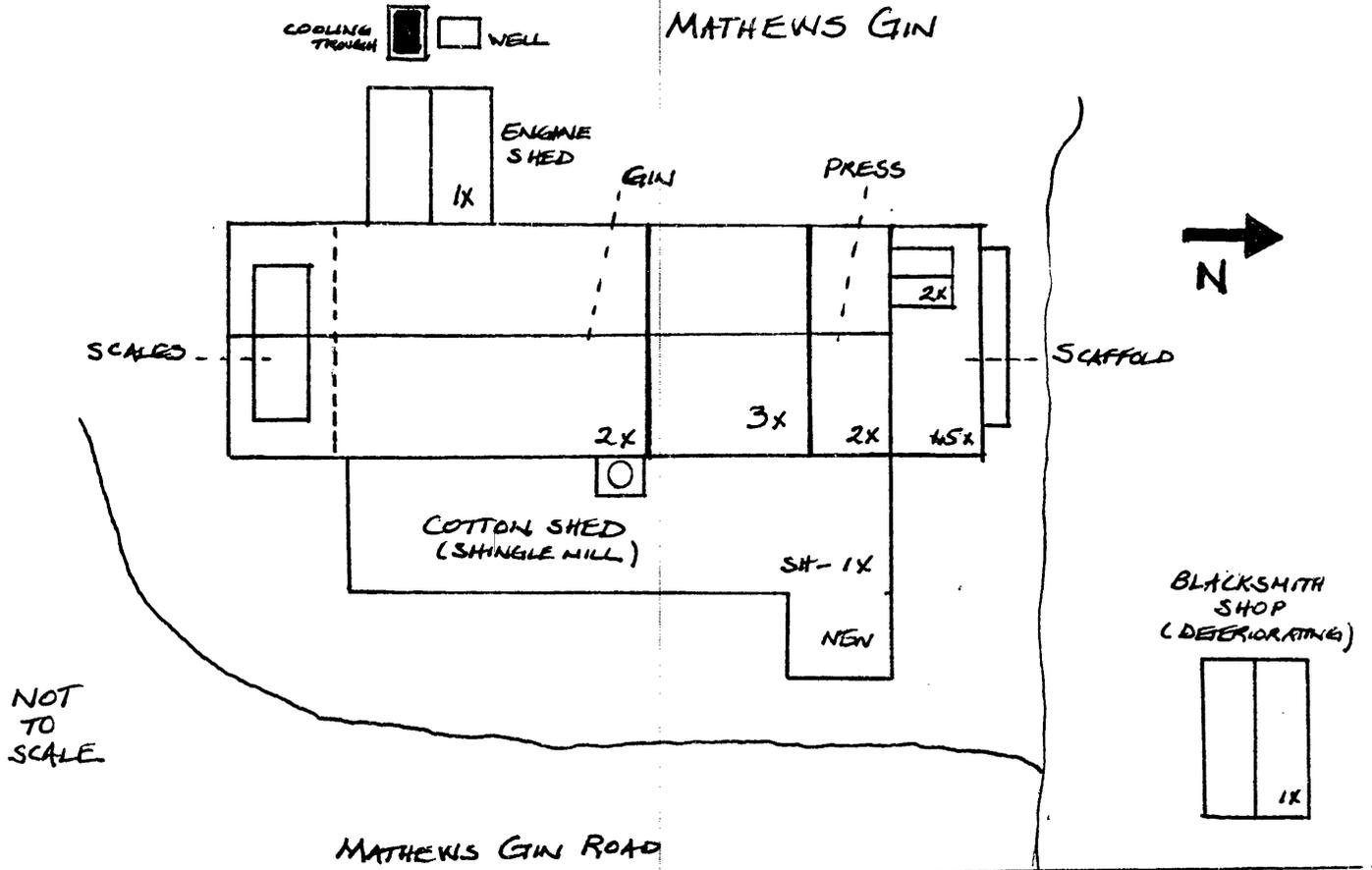
AS DESCRIBED BY  
MRS. IVY MATHEWS  
SEPTEMBER, 1990

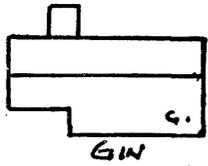
OLD WAVERLY ROAD

# NATHAN MATHEWS HOUSE & RELATED OUTBUILDINGS



# MATHEWS GIN

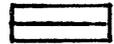




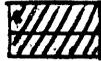
GIN



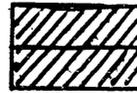
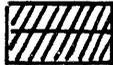
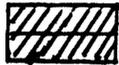
c.



IVY MATHEWS



MATHEWS GIN ROAD



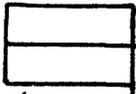
MATHEWS GIN  
COMMUNITY  
(NOT TO SCALE)



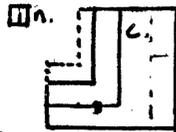
GRAVEL ROAD



WESLEY  
MATHEWS



(VANDERBILT  
MATHEWS)



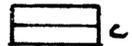
NATHAN  
MATHEWS



c.



c.



c.

FRUIT  
ORCHARD



POST-1951  
STRUCTURES

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

### SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91001638

Date Listed: 11/15/91

Mathews, Nathan, House  
and Mathews Cotton Gin  
Property Name

Clay            MISSISSIPPI  
County        State

Clay County MPS  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for   
Signature of the Keeper

7/10/92  
Date of Action

#### Amended Items in Nomination:

Section No. 3

This nomination was amended to show the wallcovering of the house as asphalt.

This amendment was confirmed by phone with the Mississippi SHPO (11/26/91).

#### DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)