

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	APR 1 1975
DATE ENTERED	MAY 2 1975

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

Old Slave Mart

AND/OR COMMON

Ryan's Mart, The Mart, Slave Mart

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

6 Chalmers Street

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Charleston

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1

STATE

South Carolina

__ VICINITY OF

CODE
045

COUNTY

Charleston

CODE

019

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. Judith Wragg Chase and Mrs. Louisa Wragg Graves

STREET & NUMBER

6 Chalmers Street

CITY, TOWN

Charleston 29401

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

South Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Mesne Conveyance

STREET & NUMBER

2 Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

Charleston

STATE

South Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina

DATE

1973

__ FEDERAL STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

South Carolina Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

1430 Senate Street, Box 11,669 Capitol Station - Columbia, South Carolina

STATE

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

EXTERIOR: Built in 1853 by Thomas Ryan and his partner, James Marsh, the Slave Mart has a stuccoed facade with octagonal pillars at either end. In Slave Trading in the Old South, Frederic Bancroft describes the building as "44 by 20 feet (with a) 22 by 18 foot yard in the rear. The facade resembles nothing seen elsewhere. On either side is an octagonal pillar more than 20 feet high, with a graceful arch between them. The Mart, a salesroom with a 20 foot ceiling, was light and airy, for the space below the arch was open, so that the auction table, about ten feet long and three feet high, might be placed lengthwise near it and allow room for the spectators to pass in and out and stand either inside of the building or in the street, according to the weather."¹

Stuccoed facade of the Slave Mart is unchanged. Alterations include extension of the rear of the building about 22 feet in 1922. In 1937 a wooden facade was inserted within the arch, a second floor added below the original roof, and the tile roof replaced with a tin roof.

Between the pillars is a central elliptical arch. Above the arch is a recessed panel. Area within the arch is of wood, and on the first level there are two doors flanking a 12/12 window. Above these bays is a recessed balcony of wood sheltering two plain wooden doors separated by 6/6 paired windows.

Following the War Between the States, the building was used as a tenement house and about 1922 was converted into an automobile salesroom. Old Slave Mart Museum was established in 1937.

INTERIOR: First floor consists of one room measuring 19 by 67 feet divided by a partition to separate office in the rear from the gift shop. Just inside the front door is an unenclosed staircase. Second floor (presently a museum) also consists of one room with a sloping roof and open-timbered ceiling. In the rear is a partition to enclose a storage area. Walls are of brick and stucco.

SURROUNDING: The Old Slave Mart, 6 Chalmers Street, is located within Charleston's Historic District. Chalmers Street is paved with cobblestones and has blue flagstone sidewalks. To the west of the Slave Mart is the German Fire Engine Company building, constructed in 1851. Brokers' offices once occupied the surrounding buildings. Area is presently residential and commercial.

Mart originally included two additional lots and three additional buildings, a jail or "Barracoon" to house slaves prior to sale, a kitchen, and a morgue. The back two lots were cut off in 1875 and the jail, kitchen, and morgue were demolished in the 20th Century. A parking lot is now located to the rear of the museum.

¹ Frederic Bancroft, Slave Trading in the Old South (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1964) pp. 170-171.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Black History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1853 BUILDER/ARCHITECT -----

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Now a museum devoted to preserving and interpreting black history, the Old Slave Mart was originally a commercial building used for slave trading and other transactions from 1853 until the War Between the States. The stuccoed building with its rounded arch entrance, an integral part of the Charleston Historic District, is a visual reminder of commercial activities of antebellum South Carolina.

ARCHITECTURE: The Old Slave Mart, built in 1853, has elements of Gothic and Romanesque revival architecture with its massive octagonal pillars and arched entrance. The building is a vital part of the streetscape and contributes to the overall quality of the Charleston Historic District.

BLACK HISTORY: This building is probably the only extant building used as a slave auction gallery in antebellum South Carolina. Built for former Charleston sheriff and alderman Thomas Ryan, the Mart was also used by other principal brokers (auctioneers) of the time. Goods sold at the Mart were probably varied since most of the auctioneers also advertised as "agents for the purchase and sale of real estate, stocks, and bonds."² During this period, advertisements for auctions held at the Chalmers Street mart appeared in newspapers of New Orleans, Memphis, and Galveston.

The Old Slave Mart is today a museum of black history and slave crafts, as well as a gift shop. Collections of the upstairs museum are being catalogued as a research source for projects on black history through a grant from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

² Frederic Bancroft, Slave Trading in the Old South (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1964) p. 173.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE One

"Inventory Planned for Black History Collection", THE NEW SOUTH CAROLINA STATE
GAZETTE, Vol. VII, No. 4, October, 1974. p.2.
Kelly, Gwen, "A Sense of the Past." PRESERVATION PROGRESS, Vol. VIII, No. 3,
May, 1963, pp. 3-5.
Register Mesne Conveyance, Charleston County, Deed Book A-13, p. 89.
THIS IS CHARLESTON: A SURVEY OF THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE OF A UNIQUE AMERICAN
CITY. Charleston: The Carolina Art Association, 1944. p.22.