

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Mississippi
COUNTY: Amite
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE MAR 27 1975

1. NAME

COMMON: Thomas Batchelor House
AND/OR HISTORIC: Beech Grove

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 5 mi E of Liberty on Ohio Rd Route 5 (Street - Ohio Road)			
CITY OR TOWN: Liberty <i>me</i>		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Third	
STATE Mississippi	CODE 39645	COUNTY: Amite	CODE 005

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both 	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Charles Douglas Lewis, Jr.			
STREET AND NUMBER: Beech Grove, Route 5			
CITY OR TOWN: Liberty		STATE: Mississippi	
		CODE 39645	CODE 28

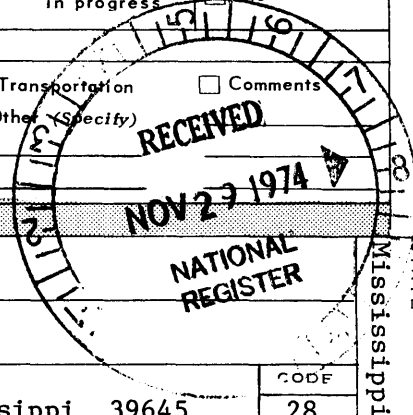
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Amite County Courthouse			
STREET AND NUMBER: Main Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Liberty		STATE: Mississippi	
		CODE 39645	CODE 28

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:			
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE:	
		CODE	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: Mississippi
COUNTY: Amite
ENTRY NUMBER: MAR 27 1975
DATE:

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

"Beech Grove" was built as a family residence on a working plantation, and as such was brought into touch with local requirements as well as imported standards of taste. To deal with the climate, it adopts the indigenous "raised cottage" form and asymmetrical five-bay arrangement which had been brought to Mississippi through Spain's architectural contacts in French Louisiana. That plan places the one-and-a-half story frame house on a typically shoulder-high network of brick pillars, above which the first floor is reached by straight steps front and back--the principal flight leading to a gallery which stretches across the entire facade or north elevation. A gable-end roof, flanked by end chimneys, extends over the front gallery, where it is supported by seven chamfered colonnettes. A central stair hall runs from the main door through the depth of the house, and a long single stair flight gives access to the hall and two large bedrooms (with service spaces) of the second floor. West of the lower hall is the dining room, and behind it a large pantry; a door in the west wall to the left of the central fireplace originally communicated with a separate western porch, allowing direct access to the dining room from the outlying kitchen. East of the hallway lies the considerably larger parlor, to the south of which there were two smaller rooms, perhaps once a downstairs bedroom and an office or study.

Although most of the finish inside and out is handled simply and even severely, in the three main first floor chambers it bursts forth in a restrained exuberance of plaster and pine, with a series of richly worked details using the full repertory of the Federal style.

Large double doors at each end of the stair hall turn a plain face to the weather but inside are paneled with a delicacy which is repeated in the fine casings of their side and top lights, and in the simple dado course encircling the room. The stair along the western wall is unsupported until the point where it intersects the dado; then a paneled casing, which prefigures that of the parlor, is carried around its base. The dining room is decorated with a different series of casing, dado and base moldings, and is distinguished by a large wooden mantel whose carved readings, panels, sunbursts, and columns are carefully and harmoniously executed. Two fine pairs of double doors lead east from the hall into the parlor, and it is this large salon which exhibits the best of "Beech Grove's" Federal detail. As in the dining room, the ceiling features a large oval medallion strongly molded of plaster, with a scalloped pattern in deep relief. There is no upper cornice, but the richly worked window casings carry their heavily fluted moldings high onto the walls, and each is bounded by corner blocks carved with deep rosettes. Similarly worked casings enclose the double doorway and two large paneled doors to the rooms on the south side, interrupting a course of slender wainscot panels which run behind miniature moldings between baseboard and dado all around the room. The parlor's triumph, though, is a tall, elaborately carved mantelpiece with paired colonnettes, sunbursts, and four different orders of reeding, above which moldings are piled upon reversed and inverted moldings to such a height that the designer seems here, while employing the waning Federal style, already to be prefiguring the mid-century Victorian mode which was to succeed the intervening Greek Revival.

Careful restoration of the Thomas Batchelor House was effected in 1959 by architect Beverley Martin of Natchez. At that time, the only major alteration to the largely intact fabric of the structure consisted of the removal of an

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) ca. 1827

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

With the consummation of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the Natchez region was opened for a period of intense immigration from all over the South. The land lying along the Mississippi River below Natchez had already been largely allocated under a system of Spanish land grants which were confirmed in turn by the United States. The territorial government then offered all undisturbed lands for public purchase, and settlement soon began to move inland from the River. Among the first pioneers to enter this untouched land further east along the thirty-first parallel was a group of several Gayden, Collins, and Wren families who were led by George Gayden from Kershaw County, South Carolina, to Natchez, where they arrived in the spring of 1804, and from whence they moved eastward to their eventual destination. In 1805 they were listed on the site of Beech Grove in the territorial census. The families had been joined at some point during their journey by a young man named Thomas Batchelor of whose background little is known save that he and his several slaves probably came from Charleston. He appears to have gained stature in the group almost at once, for he married leader George Gayden's daughter Rebecca in December, 1805, and seems from his later career to have influenced considerably the location of final settlement. This was well to the east of the Mississippi River, along the valleys of the smaller Beaver and Amite rivers and only some five miles above the border of Spanish West Florida's "Feliciana Country." The situation was good, the land was fertile, and the plantations were soon thriving.¹

Thomas Batchelor (1775-1858) emerges from his accomplishments in Mississippi as a man of solid and diversified abilities. Immediately after the arrival of the group of settlers on the Amite River, he became a proprietor in his own right, and beginning from lands contiguous with the several Gayden holdings, he maintained a frequency of purchasing territorial grants which established him in later years as one of the area's extensive landowners and most successful planters. With George Gayden, Batchelor worked for the creation of Amite County in 1809, and when the courthouse town of Liberty was established nine miles north of the Beech Grove community, he became the first clerk of the new county. In July, 1817, Batchelor was one of forty-seven delegates to the constitutional convention which met at Washington in Adams County to lay the foundations of statehood for the young territory, which status became official on December 10 of that year.²

Within ten years after his prominent role in the affairs leading to Mississippi's statehood, Thomas Batchelor had completed the construction of his

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi. Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1891.

Claiborne, J. F. H. Mississippi, as a Province, Territory and State with Biographical Notices of Eminent Citizens. Jackson, Miss.: Power & Barksdale, 1880.

Lewis, Charles Douglas, Jr. "Beech Grove" (privately printed pamphlet).

_____. Correspondence with Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

(continued)

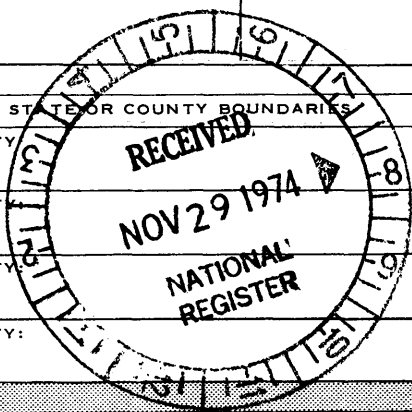
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	31	03	26	90	53	37			
NE	31	03	26	90	52	06			
SE	31	02	42	90	52	06			
SW	31	02	42	90	53	07			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 158

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



NO
OWN

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Elizabeth P. Reynolds, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION: Mississippi Department of Archives and History

DATE: Nov. 12, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:
P. O. Box 571

CITY OR TOWN: Jackson

STATE: Mississippi

CODE: 28

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Elbert R. Hilliard

Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date November 15, 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

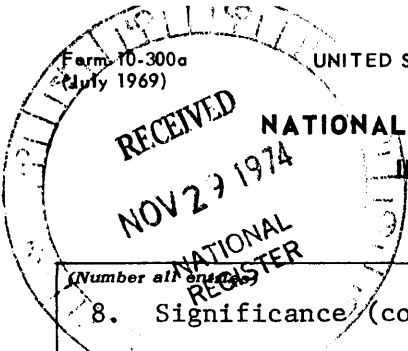
A. P. Warkentin
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 3/27/75

ATTEST:

[Signature]
Keeper of The National Register

Date 3-27-75



Form 10-300a
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Mississippi	
COUNTY Amite	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAR 27 1975

(Number all entries)

8. Significance (continued)

"mansion house" at Beech Grove,³ an architectural specimen which attests to the extreme precocity of the flourishing society which grew up on the fringes of the Deep South before the Civil War. The abundant world over which cotton was king rested on foundations rarely more than fifty years old in any locality, and these new counties of the far southwest could claim a past only half that age. But by 1827, the "wilderness" of rolling hills inland from the Natchez district was populated with newly prosperous planters who were everywhere demonstrating a restless ambition to establish themselves--commercially, politically, and architecturally--in the forefront of American society. Only this spirit could have prompted the multitude of European borrowings that were called to grace their emerging civilization; only some such impulse could have produced the house which Thomas Batchelor erected that year in the "southern wilderness."

As a beautiful and widely prevalent building form, the Federal style persisted as the favorite in rural areas long after it was elsewhere being rapidly submerged under an increasingly romantic interpretation of the Greek Revival. The style's vitality is strikingly illustrated in Thomas Batchelor's "Beech Grove," for here, in the then uttermost corner of the country, was raised a house whose simplicity and delicate detail still proclaimed the vigor of the Federal tradition. As one of the finest and most sophisticated of such houses erected during the 1820s and 1830s in southwest Mississippi, the Thomas Batchelor house stands today not only as a monument to its prominent builder and the generations of his descendants who have continued to own and occupy it, but also as a landmark of unquestionable importance to the cultural and, more specifically, the architectural history of Mississippi and the ever-widening American frontier.

FOOTNOTES

¹This information and much of the text of the "Statement of Significance" is taken from research findings of the owner of the Thomas Batchelor House, printed in a privately produced pamphlet entitled "Beech Grove," 1959. Author and owner C. Douglas Lewis, Jr., is currently curator of Sculpture at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

²J. F. H. Claiborne. Mississippi as a Province, Territory and State, vol. 1 (Jackson: Power and Barksdale, 1880). A list of delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1817 appears on p. 352.

³C. Douglas Lewis, Jr., in a letter to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (August 12, 1974) refers to ". . . the traditional completion of Thomas Batchelor's 'mansion house' at Beech Grove in March of 1827, a date preserved only in the oral history of the family after accidental burning in the late nineteenth century of the original account and journals said to have been kept of the construction."

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Mississippi	
COUNTY Amite	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	NOV 27 1973

(Number all entries)

7. Physical Appearance (continued)

1892 Victorian facade gable and the subsequent reconstruction of the original three single-window dormers, according to clear evidence extant in the timbering of the roof. An accumulation of additions to the back of the house was also removed at the time of restoration and replaced with two modern rooms.

9. Major Bibliographical References (continued)

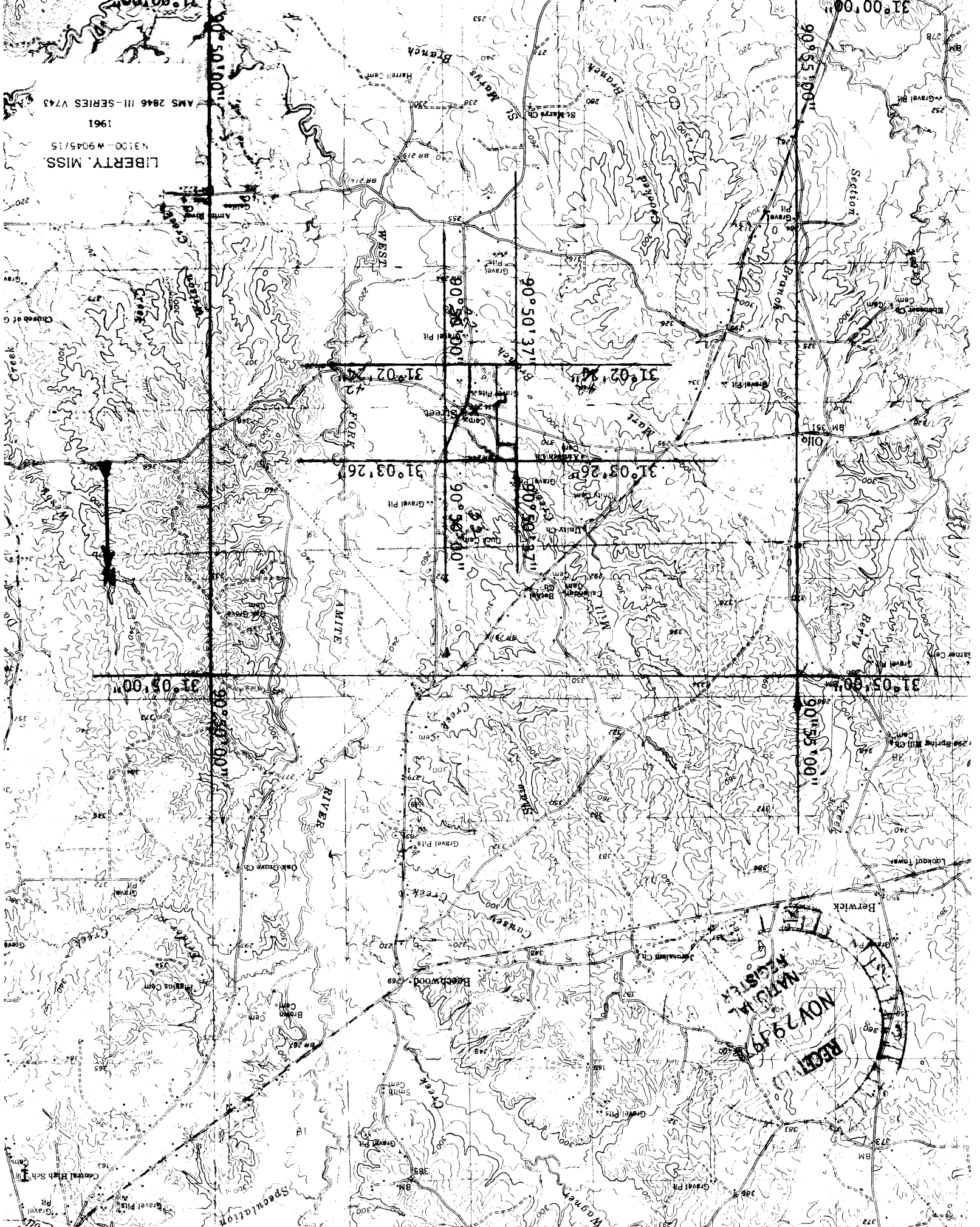
Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Subject file, "Constitutional Convention of 1817.

Personal inspection of Thomas Batchelor House by Ronald W. Miller, Architectural Historian, spring, 1974.

Rowland, Dunbar. History of Mississippi: The Heart of the South. 4 vols. Chicago - Jackson: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1925.



709 708 707 706 704 702 (FELIXVILLE) 701 700 55° 59' 55" 55° 59' 55"



LIBERTY, MISS.
N 3100-W 9045/15

1961

AMS 2846 III-SERIES V743

RECEIVED
NOV 29 1961
NATIONAL ARCHIVES