

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received SEP 30 1985

date entered OCT 31 1985

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

1. Name

historic Jones-Banks-Leigh House

and/or common Leighcrest

2. Location

street & number 824 Seventh Street North N/A not for publication

city, town Columbus N/A vicinity of

state Mississippi code 28 county Lowndes code 87

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 type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

4. Owner of Property

name Frank M. Leigh

street & number 824 Seventh Street North

city, town Columbus N/A vicinity of state Mississippi

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Chancery Clerk  
Lowndes County Courthouse

street & number 501 Second Avenue North

city, town Columbus state Mississippi

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Survey of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1974  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Mississippi Department of Archives and History

city, town Jackson state Mississippi

# 7. Description

**Condition**  
 excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**  
 unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**  
 original site  
 moved

date N/A

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Leighcrest property consists of a main central structure and several outbuildings described individually below. The site is located on Pleasant Ridge, a geological structure that stretches northeastward from the bluffs of the Tombigbee River to its location on high ground where Seventh Street curves around and below the property, following the top edge of the ridge. The site is heavily wooded with formal gardens leading from the old carriage stop on Seventh Street to the front entrance of the main house.

Leighcrest is a two-story Greek Revival building with a full undercut gallery supported on four square pillars across the south facade and single-tiered gallery on the west facade. A one-story addition across the rear (north) facade connects to a semi-detached one-story kitchen. The plan is a three-bay, two room deep central hall plan. Construction is wood frame with clapboard siding (original construction date was ca. 1841). Tripartite windows with nine over six center sash and three over two flanking sash are unique to Columbus. Where the windows open to original porches, they have "jib" operable sills. Interior doors were grained and a doweled wooden screen was installed in the downstairs hall. The front entrance and downstairs hallway were remodeled in the 1890s in the Eastlake style. Fireplace fronts in the downstairs are of marble. The house was the subject of a renovation under the Tax Reform Act of 1976.

## Other Buildings on the Property:

- (1) The Servants' Dwelling is a three-bay, one-story, wood-frame structure with front undercut gallery, gable ends and plain Doric columns. The exterior finish is clapboard siding. The interior consists of two interconnected rooms with central back to back fireplace. The roof structure was repaired in 1982. Interior moldings and doors are characteristic of pre-Civil War construction in Columbus and match moldings in the main house.
- (2) The Smoke House/Barn is a one-story, two-bay, wood-frame structure with full undercut galleries at front and rear. The north room of the structure has a solid brick foundation wall around its perimeter and is purported to have been a smokehouse. The south room is supported on piers and the dividing wall between the two rooms. There is a stair leading to a loft over this room. The south room was probably a tackroom and storage space.
- (3) The Playhouse is a single-bay, gable-end, single-story, one-room structure built as a children's playhouse. Exterior wood lattice surrounds three sides.
- (4) The Well House Site is the location of a reconstructed two-bay, single-story, wood-frame well house and storage cellar. The south end is open on three sides as a cover over the brick lined well. The north end is enclosed, with stairs leading down to a recessed food cellar.
- (5) Other structures on the site consist of a storage shed and carport shed, apparently of twentieth-century vintage.

## 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** ca. 1841

**Builder/Architect** "Tentatively Attributed to James S. Lull"

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Leighcrest house, constructed ca. 1841, is one of the earliest surviving structures in Columbus, Mississippi, to employ the masculine interpretation of Greek Revival which during the 1840s and 1850s became the hallmark of the city's Grecian influenced architecture. Believed to have been an early commission of James S. Lull (Columbus' most prominent mid-nineteenth-century architect) Leighcrest displays a heavy unpedimented entablature, pilastered facade, and massive square paneled pillars, all of which are traits common to Lull's designs. The use of tripartite window units on the facade and side elevations is also unique in Columbus.

The house is also significant as an example of the stylistic evolution of Columbus residences in the nineteenth century. About 1890, Leighcrest was significantly "modernized" by the addition of an Eastlake/Stick Style main entrance; of a spindled arch and two pairs of dark woodgrained pocket doors in the central hall; of a Victorian Italianate castiron mantel in the parlor; and of beaded board wainscoting with chair rail and wooden coffered ceiling in the dining room.

The property now known as Leighcrest was at the corner of and contiguous with the farm property owned by the Leigh family. As such, it is a rare example of a city dwelling with its outbuildings that also served as the main farmhouse. Most other city dwellings of the nineteenth-century planters in Lowndes County were far removed from the farm property and were supplemented by a farmhouse and outbuildings on rural property. Of the numerous town estates that once dominated Columbus' residential areas, Leighcrest is the last to retain enough land and early outbuildings which allow it to preserve the ambiance of its original setting. Among the original support structures remaining on the estate are the kitchen (attached to the main house ca. 1890), a servants' quarters, a smokehouse, a barn, a storage structure, and a children's playground. Remains of a well/ice house are on the grounds.

The Leighcrest property is located in the original boundaries of Columbus, which was nominally the 16th Section of Township 18 South, Range 18 West, Huntsville Meridian. As leasehold land from the Board of Trustees of Franklin Academy the property does not appear in the records of Federal land sales. The first recorded transaction involving the property occurred September 9, 1841 (Lowndes Co., Miss. Deed Book 18:251 and subsequently on November 16, 1841 (Deed Book 20:517) when the property was conveyed to Cordelia A. Jones for \$850.00, apparently to satisfy a court judgement. Cordelia Jones was the wife of Aurelius N. Jones, a physician, druggist, and former state representative. Local sources place the construction of the main house in 1841. The property was leased in October, 1842, from the Franklin Academy "with appurtenances" for \$20.00 per year which supports the 1841 date. In May, 1844, a right-of-way was secured across Block 132 immediately to the west for the "Carriage road leading from the residence of Cordelia A. Jones on Square 131."

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Banks, Mrs. J. C., daughter of James O. Banks. Interviewed by Sam Kaye at Columbus, Miss., June, 1985.

Census and Church Records, Card File, Lowndes County Library, Columbus, Miss.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.5 acres

Quadrangle name Caledonia, Miss.

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UTM References

A 

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

B 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

C 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

D 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

E 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

F 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

G 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

H 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

All of Square 131 north of Main Street in Columbus, Lowndes County, Mississippi

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

state	N/A	code	county	code

state	N/A	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Samuel H. Kaye, AIA

organization Samuel H. Kaye, Architect

date September 18, 1985

street & number P. O. Box 48

telephone (601) 327-6241

city or town Columbus

state Mississippi 39701

## 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

Kenneth H. P. Pool

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date September 27, 1985

For NPS use only

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

for Shelores Eyer  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 10-31-85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Leighcrest, Lowndes County,  
Continuation sheet Mississippi

Item number 8, 9

Page 1

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

In November, 1853 (Deed Book 27:596), the land was sold to James O. and Martha C. Banks along with some nine squares of land (15 acres) within the city limits for \$3,500.00. James Oliver Banks is listed in the 1860 agriculture census as owning 3,600 acres of land worth \$100,000.00. His second wife was Lucy Young, daughter of Colonel Young, builder of Waverley. Banks later purchased the home now known as White Arches (Mrs. J. C. Banks, daughter of James O. Banks, interviewed by Sam Kaye, architect, at Columbus, Miss., June, 1985).

In October, 1865, Banks sold the property along with an eight-acre tract in Section 3, Township 18 South, Range 18 West to William W. Whitfield for \$10,00.00 (Deed Book 34:32). The property was subsequently conveyed to Thomas W. Yates on March 1, 1872, for \$6,000.00. Yates sold the property to James Sykes on December 29, 1876, and the same day the ownership was transferred to F. M. Leigh (Deed Book 51:452-453). The amount of the transaction is not clear but appears to be around \$4,000.00. Since 1876 the property has remained in the Leigh family.

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Lipscomb, William Lowndes. A History of Columbus, Mississippi During the Nineteenth Century. Birmingham: Press of the Dispatch Printing Co., 1909.

Lowndes Co., Miss. Chancery Clerk. Deed Books 18, 20, 27, 34, 51.