

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

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

For NPS use only
received **AUG 8 1984**
date entered **SEP 7 1984**

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

1. Name

historic FONSYLVANIA

and/or common same as above

2. Location

street & number Fisher Ferry Road (12 miles south of Vicksburg) N/A not for publication

city, town Vicksburg X vicinity of

state Mississippi code 28 county Warren code 149

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 type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<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"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name William Reynolds Ferris, Jr.

street & number Route 1, Box 179

city, town Vicksburg X vicinity of state Mississippi 39180

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number P. O. Box 351, Cherry Street

city, town Vicksburg state Mississippi

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1977 federal state county local

depository for survey records Mississippi Department of Archives and History

city, town Jackson state Mississippi

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Fonsylvania is a one-and-a-half-story, frame, vernacular Greek Revival plantation house built in 1825 in southeastern Warren County, Mississippi. The main part of the dwelling is rectangular in plan, one room deep, has a gabled roof and sits on brick piers with intervening lattice panels. A large ell projects off the rear to one side. The eight-bay principal (east) facade features an undercut gallery supported by six square, slightly battered wooden columns with molded caps and simple bases. The columns are spaced in an unusual a-b-a-b-a pattern corresponding to the divisions of the facade, which originally had an open breezeway or dog-trot in the central bay. The single-room 'pens' to each side of the breezeway retain their separate, centrally positioned, paneled doors with four-light transoms and flanking six-over-six windows. All fenestration on this and other elevations exhibits reduced molded surrounds of simple profile and scale. Though the remainder of the exterior is covered in clapboard, the principal facade is in horizontal flushboard. Both gabled ends on the front section feature exterior end chimneys flanked by two six-over-six windows on each floor; additionally, the north elevation has a small nine-light window over the gallery.

In the 1920s the breezeway was enclosed at both ends with the front facade receiving an off-center door flanked by a mullioned window of paired six-over-six units. A prominent gabled dormer containing two six-over-six windows was also added at this time. The simple balustrade of rectangular members has recently been restored on the principal gallery and wide wooden steps front the central bay.

The rear elevation of the main block contains a three-light door where the building intersects the ell, flanked by four six-over-six windows, all added when the breezeway was closed up in the most recent rehabilitation in 1983.

The ell is divided into two rooms which are serviced by a central interior chimney. Each room has a separate doorway entering out onto a partially hipped roof porch which extends along the entire southern elevation of the house. The north side of the ell has a similar porch and both are supported on attenuated, chamfered post columns. The rear (west) elevation of the ell originally contained a central door, now removed.

The interior of Fonsylvania has a quarter-turn staircase in two runs located toward the front of the original breezeway. Windows and doors in the principal rooms exhibit simple pedimented surrounds with unmolded backbands. Some mantelpieces are original and are a vernacular interpretation of the Grecian mode with unadorned pilasters.

The smokehouse and barn in close proximity to the house are ca. 1900, and the original cistern is located to the rear of the dwelling. A number of fossils and other geological samples collected by B.L.C. Wailes remain on the front lawn, and the setting is further enhanced by mature live oaks, cedars, and crepe myrtles planted in the nineteenth century.

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

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Fonsylvania, Warren County,
Mississippi

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

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date entered

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Jackson. Mississippi Department of Archives and History. B.L.C. Wailes Collection.

McLemore, Richard Aubrey, editor, A History of Mississippi. 2 vols. Jackson: University and College Press of Mississippi, 1973. 1:310,318,340-341,493-494.

Rowland, Dunbar, History of Mississippi: The Heart of the South. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1925. 1:39-40,289-291,342; 2:512,515-517,666.

Sydnor, Charles S., A Gentleman of the Old Natchez Region: Benjamin L.C. Wailes. Westport, Connecticut: Negro Universities Press, 1938.

Vicksburg, Miss., The Vicksburg Sunday Post, May 14, 1978.

Vicksburg, Miss., The Vicksburg Sunday Post, August 4, 1968.

Who Was Who in America, Historical Volume 1607-1896. Chicago: Marquies Publishing Company, 1963.

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 checked="" 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 1825 **Builder/Architect** Judge Alexander Covington, builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Fonsylvania is significant as a residential expression of antebellum plantation architecture in Warren County exhibiting a strong alliance to the emerging formal Greek Revival Style while retaining significant features of its basically vernacular origins. It is also important for its historical association with Benjamin L. C. Wailes, one of Mississippi's most illustrious early-nineteenth-century-citizens.

Fonsylvania was built by Judge Alexander Covington on land he had acquired by a government grant in 1822, and was so named because of the many springs located on the heavily wooded tract (Warren Co., Miss.; Deed Book 246:434-443, and Charles S. Sydnor, A Gentleman of the Old Natchez Region: Benjamin L.C. Wailes [Westport, Conn.: Negro University Press, 1938], p. 92). The house, built with slave labor, was originally of log construction and corresponds in plan and form to the present structure, which has since been weatherboarded. The breezeway, or dog-trot, is the most outstanding of the vernacular details and is indicative of the relatively unsophisticated, though functional, character of the house as executed in a style that was still in its formative years in 1825. Other original, salient features still to be seen include the symmetrically arranged doors and windows on each single-room pen and the staircase located within the central passageway. Subsequent enclosure of the breezeway represents a typical evolution in this type house as additional sheltered space was required, though the retention of separate doors instead of a more formal central entry is less common in Mississippi.

The plantation gains added significance in its association with Benjamin L. C. Wailes, whose wife, Rebecca Covington Wailes, was a niece of Fonsylvania's original owner, Alexander Covington. After Judge Covington's death in 1848, Wailes was made guardian of Covington's grandson, Turpin Covington, who had inherited the property, and assumed supervision of the plantation from 1848 until 1850. Upon Turpin's death in 1855, and after a series of legal disputes with his widow, Rebecca Wailes acquired ownership and B.L.C. continued in his managerial role until his death in 1862 (Sydnor, p. 92, and Wailes Collection, Diary, January 5, 1855, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson). Though Wailes' permanent residence was at Meadville in Washington, Mississippi, he made numerous trips of short duration (usually two to three days) to Fonsylvania to direct the agricultural concerns there and frequently supplied Meadville with supplies shipped downriver from the plantation (Sydnor, pp. 97-98). In 1860, just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, Wailes contemplated selling his house in Washington, probably intending to make his home at Fonsylvania in order to better manage the plantation. The move was never made, but Wailes did spend extended periods of time on the plantation in the last years of his life (Sydnor, pp. 117-118). Scholar, surveyor, first State Geologist, founder of the Mississippi Historical Society--Benjamin L.C. Wailes' position and contributions in the early years of Mississippi's statehood is inestimable.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bailey, Robert J. and Priscilla M. Lowrey, editors, Historic Preservation in Mississippi, A Comprehensive Plan. Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1975. pp. 39,42,44,45.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2 acres

Quadrangle name Big Black, Miss.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	5	7	0	5	4	6	5	3	5	6	3	6	7	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

The nominated property, encompassing Fonsylvania and two acres of land, is located on a 40-acre site, itself located in Section 16 of township 14 North range 4E Warren County, Mississippi. The boundaries are drawn to place Fonsylvania in the middle of a 2 acre square plot with each side of the square measuring approximately 420 feet.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shelby Ferris and Hester Magnuson

organization N/A date April, 1984

street & number Route 1, Box 179 telephone 636-2771

city or town Vicksburg state Mississippi 39180

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 August 2, 1984

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 9-7-84

J. Alcorn Byars
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration