

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 15 1979  
DATE ENTERED JUN 19 1979

**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 Mount Repose  
AND/OR COMMON Mount Repose

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
Route 2, Box 105

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN  
Natchez

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Fourth

STATE  
Mississippi

CODE  
28

COUNTY  
Adams

CODE  
1

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Mrs. Irene Godfrey, Mrs. Caroline Sessions, Dr. Joseph Shields, III

STREET & NUMBER  
Route 2, Box 105

CITY, TOWN  
Natchez

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Mississippi 39120

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, Office of the Chancery Clerk  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Adams County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER  
Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN  
Natchez

STATE  
Mississippi 39120

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Statewide Survey of Historic Sites

DATE  
June 8, 1977  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
Mississippi Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN  
Jackson

STATE  
Mississippi 39205

# 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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated on an approximately 242-acre tract in the Pine Ridge community seven miles north of Natchez, Mount Repose faces southwest (commonly referred to as southerly) and is entered from Pine Ridge Road, which intersects the property. Mount Repose is basically a two-and-one-half-story frame dwelling with recessed one-story wings which are approximately symmetrical. Attached to the end wall of the westerly wing is a recessed one-story frame addition connecting the house to a one-story brick dwelling which at one time served as the kitchen.

As originally constructed in the Federal style in 1824, Mount Repose was a two-and-one-half-story single-pile house with central hall. On the front of the house was a two-story gallery five bays wide; on the rear was a one- or two-story gallery five bays wide. Two exterior end brick chimneys were at either end of the house. A few years after its construction, the house was extended on the first-floor level by enclosing the rear gallery and removing the windows from the northerly walls of the downstairs rooms. Clapboards on the gable ends of the house indicate that a second-story gallery, which was either original or added when the first floor was extended, remained open. Also supporting the existence of an upstairs gallery on the rear of the house are the transomed interior doorways located in the northerly walls of the upstairs front bedrooms.

Soon after the downstairs gallery was extended, the upstairs rear gallery was enclosed. The moldings of the exterior doorways in the two rooms of the downstairs enclosure match the moldings in the later enclosed rooms of the upstairs gallery, indicating that the addition of a rear one-story gallery occurred at the same time as the upstairs gallery enclosure. Within approximately ten years of its construction, Mount Repose had evolved into a two-and-one-half-story double-pile house with central hall.

Mount Repose achieved its final form before the Civil War. Two additional outside brick chimneys were added to each end of the house, behind the original chimneys. The matching mantels, located in the small rear rooms of the first and second stories, are later in design than the trim in these rooms, indicating that the fireplaces were built at the same time as the chimneys and later than the rooms they service. About the same time that the chimneys were added, two nearly symmetrical Greek Revival wings were recessed at either end of the house. Construction details indicate that the wing on the easterly side may have been added first and then extended and remodeled to balance the interim addition of the wing on the westerly side. Around 1860 a new brick kitchen and a frame addition connecting the kitchen to the end wall of the westerly addition were constructed. Since then, the exterior of Mount Repose has remained basically unchanged.

# 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 checked="" 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		

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SPECIFIC DATES	1824 (plus later additions)	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Thomas Rose worked on the house ca. 1860
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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Mount Repose, the second oldest extant dwelling constructed by the prominent Bisland family of the Pine Ridge area seven miles north of Natchez, is that rare example of a historic house which has remained in the family of the original builder and has never been "restored." Constructed in 1824, the outstanding example of a plantation house underwent several enlargements prior to the Civil War and has accommodated the changing needs of Bisland descendants without relinquishing its integrity of setting or architectural detail.

William Bisland, for whom Mount Repose was constructed, was born in Adams County, Mississippi, in 1797<sup>1</sup> and died in 1847.<sup>2</sup> He was the son of John Bisland, a Scottish immigrant who settled in the Pine Ridge area ca. 1776<sup>3</sup> and by the turn of the century had become one of the largest landholders in Adams County.<sup>4</sup> After completing his education in Glasgow, Scotland, William Bisland married Mary Louisa Lavinia Witherspoon<sup>5</sup> in 1820. Family tradition maintains that the couple constructed Mount Repose in 1824 after residing for a time at Mount Airwell, the home of John Bisland.<sup>6</sup> The Bisland family Bible substantiates this tradition because the births of the first two children of William and Mary Louisa Bisland are recorded as having occurred at Mount Airwell. The birth of their child, William, is recorded as having occurred at Mount Repose in 1826.<sup>7</sup>

Mount Airwell no longer survives, but Mistletoe, constructed in 1807 for William's older brother Peter,<sup>8</sup> and Edgewood, constructed in 1859-60 for William's daughter Jane and her husband, Samuel H. Lambdin,<sup>9</sup> are open to the public, as is Mount Repose, as part of the Natchez Pilgrimage which has been held annually in the spring since 1932.

Like his father and brothers, William Bisland was a planter, and Mount Repose was constructed on land bequeathed to William at his father's death in 1821.<sup>10</sup> Although the Bislands were among the earliest families of the Adams County cotton aristocracy, they did not take an active interest in the political and civic affairs of the Natchez area. They were, however, staunch supporters of the Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church, where John Bisland was among the first communicants in 1807.<sup>11</sup> William Bisland was an elder in the church, and his obituary expressed well his devotion to his church and to the country life of the Pine Ridge community. The writer of the obituary hoped that William Bisland's tomb in the Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church cemetery would serve as a "remembrance of his virtues and dispenser of the light of his example over the church and vicinage which in life he loved so well."<sup>12</sup>

The architect of the original center portion of Mount Repose is unknown. However, a mechanic's lien dated April 10, 1860, was taken out between Samuel H. Lambdin, William Bisland's son-in-law, and Thomas Rose, the designer and builder of Stanton Hall, a National Historic Landmark.<sup>13</sup> This lien specifically referred to "work at Mrs. Bislands,"<sup>14</sup> where the Lambdins resided from their marriage in 1842<sup>15</sup> until the completion of their home, Edgewood, in about 1860. It is possible that Thomas Rose designed the Greek Revival wings

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Adams County, Miss. Chancery Clerk. Deed Book NN:661.

Adams County, Miss. Chancery Clerk. Deed Book 1:221.

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

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 242 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Pine Ridge, Miss.-La.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	5	6	5	7	7	5	0	3	5	0	1	8	6	0
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B 

1	5	6	5	7	7	5	0	3	5	0	0	4	5	0
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    ZONE EASTING NORTHING

    ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 

1	5	6	5	6	2	8	0	3	5	0	0	4	5	0
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D 

1	5	6	5	6	2	8	0	3	5	0	1	8	6	0
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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See attached sheet. On xerox of county tax maps 147 and 184, the nominated property is outlined in red. Mount Repose is located on map 184, block 1, parcel 21, and also map 147, block 1, parcels 75, 75A, and 75B.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mary Warren Miller, Research Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Private consultant

DATE

September 25, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

506 High Street

TELEPHONE

601-442-9786

CITY OR TOWN

Natchez

STATE

Mississippi 39120

# 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

Edward B. Willard

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

January 10, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: [Signature]  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
[Signature]  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

6-15-79

DATE

6/18/79

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

7 - DESCRIPTION

The clapboards of the five-bay central portion of Mount Repose rest upon a low brick foundation wall and are topped by a gabled roof. The facade of this portion is fronted with a five-bay double-tiered gallery located under the broken slope of the roof. The gallery columns are paneled box columns with molded capitals and no bases; rectangular-sectioned balusters with molded handrail connect the columns on the second-floor level only. Constructed between 1835 and 1845, this gallery probably replaced an earlier one.

The front wall of the house on both levels consists of matched boards, with molded bases and pilasters at each end that match the box columns of the gallery. The windows of the facade are filled with six-over-six double-hung sash on the first floor and nine-over-six double-hung sash on the second floor. Both sets of facade windows are closed with shutter blinds attached with strap hinges.

The upper and lower doorways are identical except that the upstairs doorway is shorter to accommodate a decreased ceiling height. The doorways consist of an elliptical fanlight, side lights set over molded panels and flanked by attached fluted columns, and a single-leaf door with six molded panels.

Both front rooms of the center section of Mount Repose have pilastered black marble mantelpieces in the Greek Revival style. One of the original mantels used in these rooms appears to be the Federal mantelpiece located in the dining room of the westerly Greek Revival wing. The window and door surrounds are deeply and delicately molded with a foliated pinwheel design in the corner blocks. The windows are set over molded panels, and the rooms are trimmed with a simple beaded base. The ceiling of the easterly front room is adorned with a plaster centerpiece of concentric circles and a plaster astragal molding with hollow corners that defines an area slightly smaller than the ceiling itself.

The two back rooms of the central portion have similar pilastered Greek Revival mantels in wood with round-arched openings. The windows and doors have a molded architrave trim, and both rooms have delicate chair molding. Interesting features of the westerly rear room are two original closets located under the staircase, one with its original beaded shelves.

The hall is decorated with a paneled wainscot and a chair railing that matches the chair railing of the rear rooms. Molded door trim matches the trim of the front two rooms, and the doors are six-paneled and molded. The hall ceiling is decorated in a manner identical to that of the ceiling in the easterly front room. The door at the end of the hall is surrounded by a transom and flanking side lights set over molded panels. The stair, which runs from back to front along the westerly wall of the hall, is entered by a short flight of open stairs and winders located at the rear of the hall. It terminates at a small landing on the second floor and continues to the third floor hall in an open-string straight flight

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

7 - DESCRIPTION

that runs from front to back along the westerly wall of the second-story hall. The stair has delicately turned balusters and newels and is adorned with applied ornamental brackets on the short straight flight of the first floor.

The two front bedrooms of the second story have original Federal-style mantels and are trimmed like the two downstairs rear rooms except that the windows are set over molded panels. The upstairs rear rooms have moldings different from those of the other rooms, but the doors and windows still have molded architrave trim and the same chair railing used elsewhere in the house. The upstairs hall is trimmed like the front bedrooms, and a structural beam is exposed at the point of the upstairs rear extension. The third story consists of two rooms and a hall, and the woodwork is simple and beaded. The windows contain no sash and are closed by shutter blinds.

The Greek Revival wings at each end of Mount Repose have three-bay facades and are topped by gable roofs with bracketed overhang. The central bays of the wings consist of a molded eight-panel door with cornice supported by unmolded pilasters. On the westerly wing only, pilasters are adorned with an incised Greek key design. For the most part, the windows of these wings contain six-over-six double-hung sash and are closed by shutter blinds. The westerly wing houses the formal dining room, and one of the original Federal mantels of the downstairs is used for the fireplace. The door and window surrounds are unmolded and adorned with an incised Greek key design and projecting corner blocks. The easterly wing originally contained two rooms, now further divided, and is trimmed like the dining room. The mantel-piece from the easterly wing has been removed.

Attached to the westerly wing is a one-story frame addition that connects the house to a one-story brick building now converted to a garage. The frame addition is three bays wide and has molded and paneled doors and plain window and door surrounds. The brick building, like the addition, appears to have been constructed ca. 1860. The windows and doors are topped with segmental brick arches. The cooking fireplace remains intact in the room on the northerly end.

An outstanding feature of Mount Repose is a hexagonal brick outbuilding unique in the Adams County area. Believed to have been used variously as a dairy, a smoke house, and, at one time, the kitchen, the building appears structurally original to the 1824 central portion of Mount Repose. Other outbuildings have been constructed in the twentieth century and consist of a barn, a gate house, a large frame dwelling house, small frame dwelling house, and several sheds.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

at Mount Repose and/or constructed the later brick kitchen and connecting rooms which appear to have been built ca. 1860. Rose was definitely the contractor for the construction of Edgewood.<sup>16</sup>

The present owners of Mount Repose, Mrs. Caroline Sessions and Mrs. Irene Godfrey, are both descendants of William Bisland. Part of the Mount Repose property is owned by another relative, Dr. Joseph Dunbar Shields, III. Mount Repose houses an outstanding collection of documents pertaining to the Bisland family and the residents of Mount Repose. (Other family papers housed at Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge constitute a significant contribution to an understanding of the social and economic history of the region.) The house also features one of the area's two known painted canvas floor cloths still in its original position;<sup>17</sup> pieces of a Limoges dinner service ordered when the house was new and decorated in gold with the words "Mount Repose;"<sup>18</sup> and a large collection of family portraits. Many of the portraits, including those of William and Mary Louisa Bisland, were painted by the noted nineteenth century Philadelphia portrait artist James Reid Lambdin, brother of Samuel H. Lambdin.

Notes

<sup>1</sup>Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Adams County, Miss., grave marker.

<sup>2</sup>Obituary, Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Daily Gazette, September 8, 1847, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Sarah Shields, "John Bisland, An Original Member of the Mississippi Cotton Aristocracy," microfilm copy of history paper dated May 2, 1967, Armstrong Library, Natchez, Miss.

<sup>4</sup>D. Clayton James, Antebellum Natchez (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), p. 52.

<sup>5</sup>Bisland family Bible, Mrs. Irene Godfrey, Mount Repose.

<sup>6</sup>According to Mrs. Irene Godfrey, Mount Repose.

<sup>7</sup>Bisland family Bible, Mrs. Irene Godfrey, Mount Repose.

<sup>8</sup>Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mistletoe nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

<sup>9</sup>Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Edgewood nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

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

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 & 9 PAGE 4

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

<sup>10</sup> Adams County, Will Book 1:221.

<sup>11</sup> Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church records, microfilm copy, Armstrong Library, Natchez, Miss.

<sup>12</sup> Obituary, Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Daily Gazette, September 8, 1847, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Daily Gazette, April 5, 1858, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Adams County, Miss., Deed Book NN:661.

<sup>15</sup> Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi (Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1891), II, 1092.

<sup>16</sup> Adams County, Miss., Deed Book NN:661.

<sup>17</sup> The painted canvas floor cloth is located beneath the hall flooring laid over the original flooring in the twentieth century, according to Mrs. Caroline Sessions. The other floor cloth still in its original position is located at Melrose, home of Mr. and Mrs. John Callon, Natchez, Miss.

<sup>18</sup> According to Mrs. Irene Godfrey, Mount Repose.

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bisland family Bible. Mount Repose. Adams County, Miss.

James, D. Clayton. Antebellum Natchez. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968

Miller, Mimi. Personal interview, Mrs. Irene Godfrey, Mount Repose.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson. Edgewood and Mistletoe nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.

Natchez, Miss. Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Daily Gazette. September 8, 1847.

Natchez, Miss. Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Daily Gazette. April 5, 1858.



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CONTINUATION SHEET **Mount Repose** ITEM NUMBER **8 & 12** PAGE **6**

8. The 242-acre tract of land nominated in conjunction with Mount Repose is the remaining acreage of the original homestead tract. The homestead tract has been reduced only by the portion which was carved out to become Edgewood (see National Register nomination) and by the donation of sixteen acres to Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church from the present owners. Mount Repose possesses one of the most unspoiled settings of any property in Adams County, and the Mount Repose acreage adjoins the ninety-acre tract that comprises Edgewood. As stated previously in a justification for nominating Edgewood in its entirety, working plantations were not common in Adams County after the 1820's, when planters began to relocate their working plantations upriver in the Delta and across river in Louisiana where the soil was more conducive to cotton growing. However, Mount Repose has always been, to some extent plantation. The land is still used for agricultural purposes today. The boundary was delineated by acreage, UTM references, and a xerox of the county tax map.
  
12. Enclosed is a photograph of the hexagonal outbuilding which the Mississippi Dept. of Archives and History inadvertently failed to submit.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 5

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9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church Cemetery. Adams County, Miss.

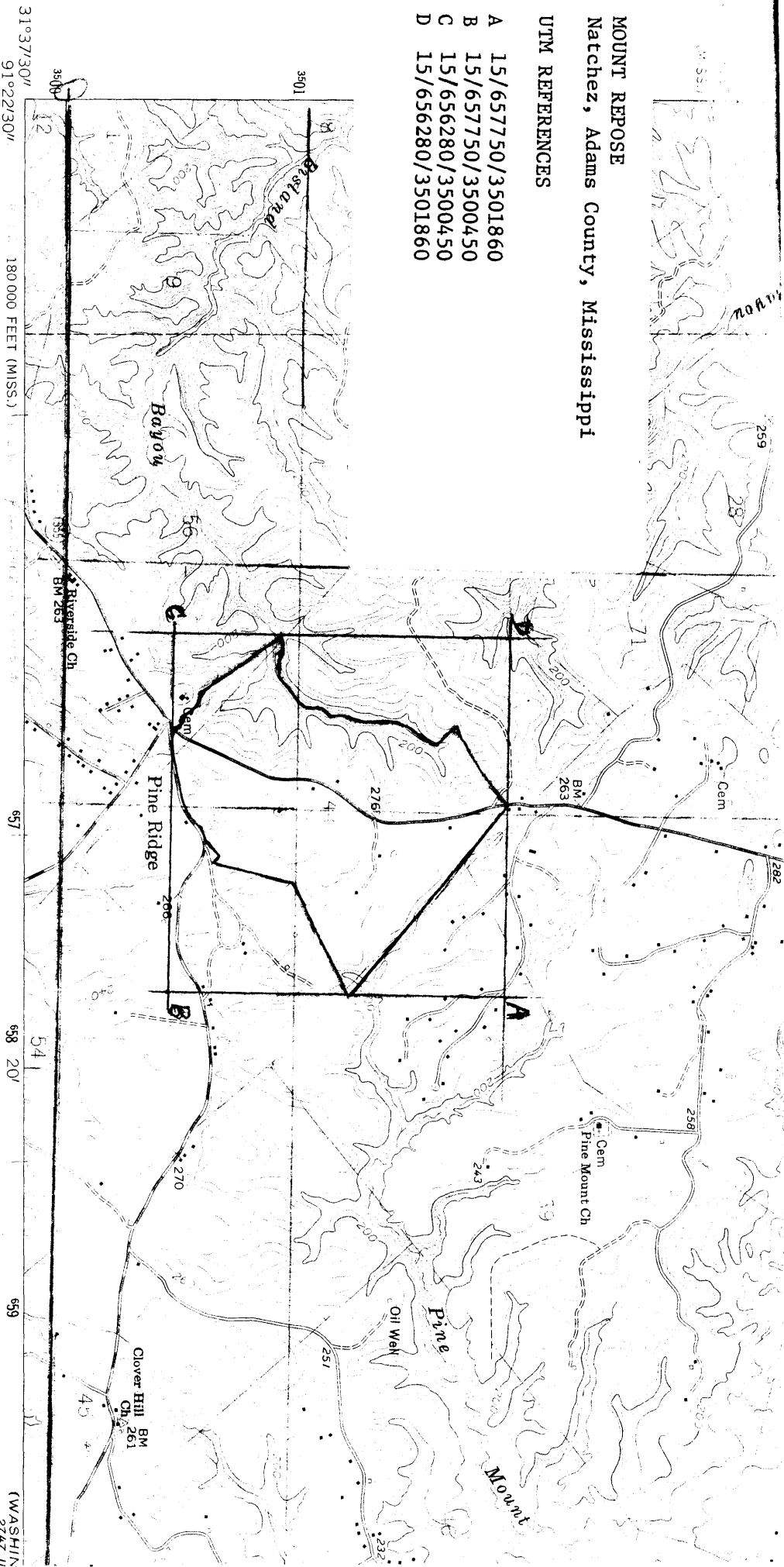
Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church Records. Microfilm copy at Armstrong Library, Natchez, Miss.

Shields, Sarah. "John Bisland, An Original Member of the Mississippi Cotton Aristocracy."  
Microfilm copy of history paper dated May 2, 1967, Armstrong Library, Natchez, Miss.

**MOUNT REPOSE**  
**Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi**

**UTM REFERENCES**

- A 15/657750/3501860
- B 15/657750/3500450
- C 15/656280/3500450
- D 15/656280/3501860



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, USCG&S, USCE, and Louisiana Geodetic Survey

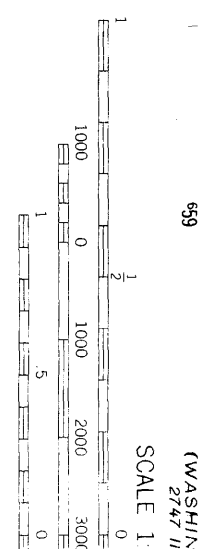
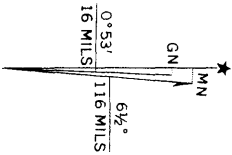
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1962 and planetable surveys 1963

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum 10,000-foot grids based on Mississippi coordinate system, west zone and Louisiana coordinate system, north zone

1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue

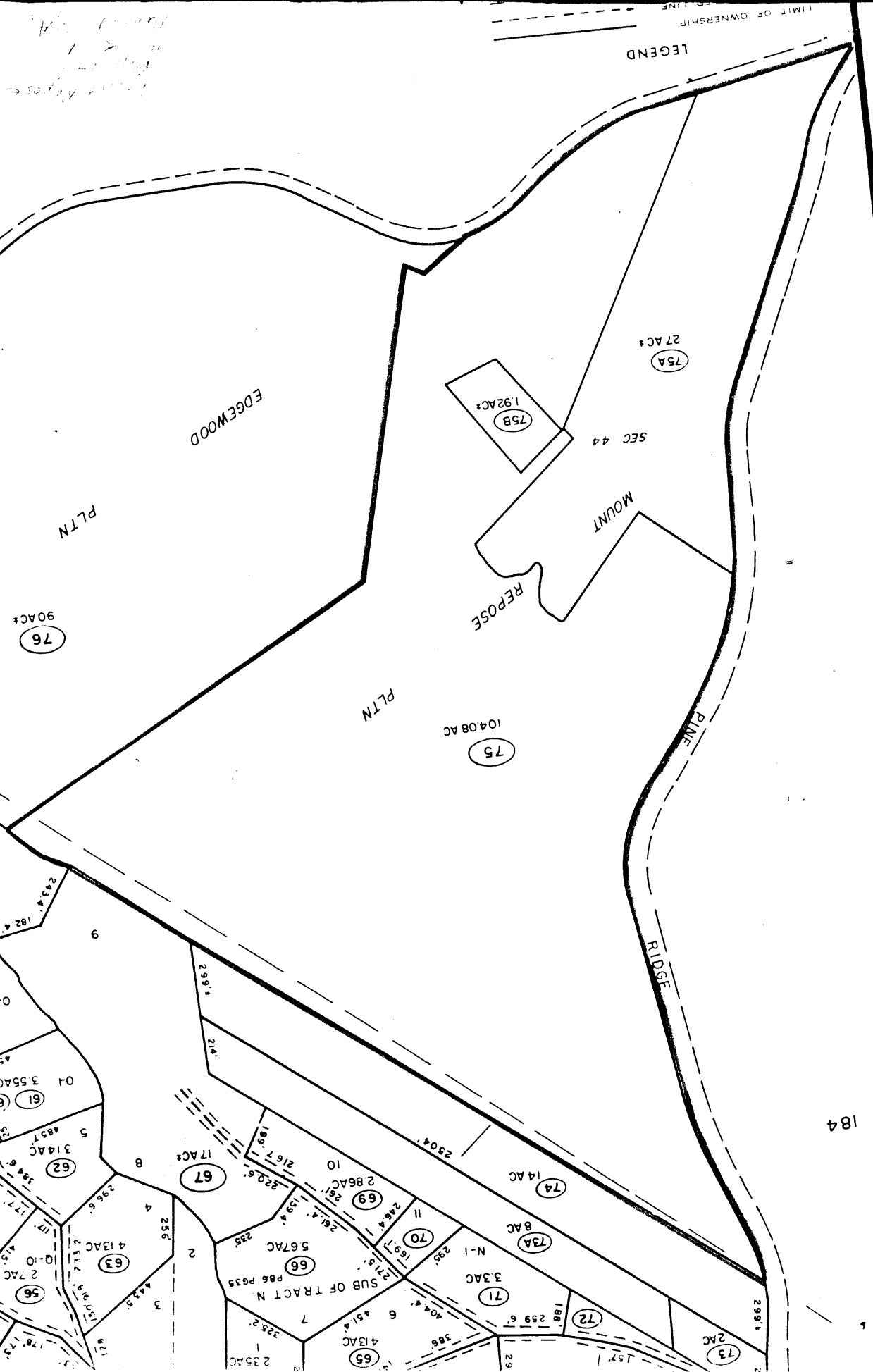
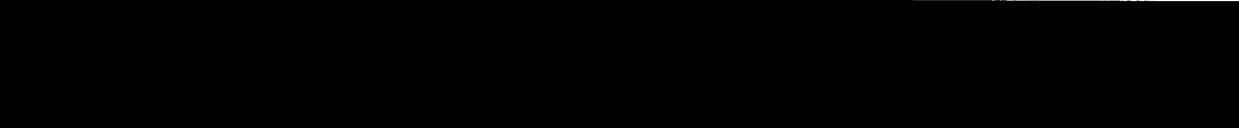
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

UTM GRID AND 1963 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL  
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER,  
 AND STATE OF LOUISIANA, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS

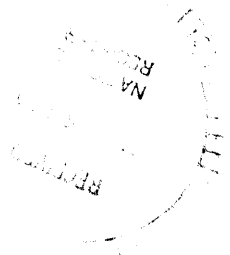
(MATCHED)  
 2747 III SW



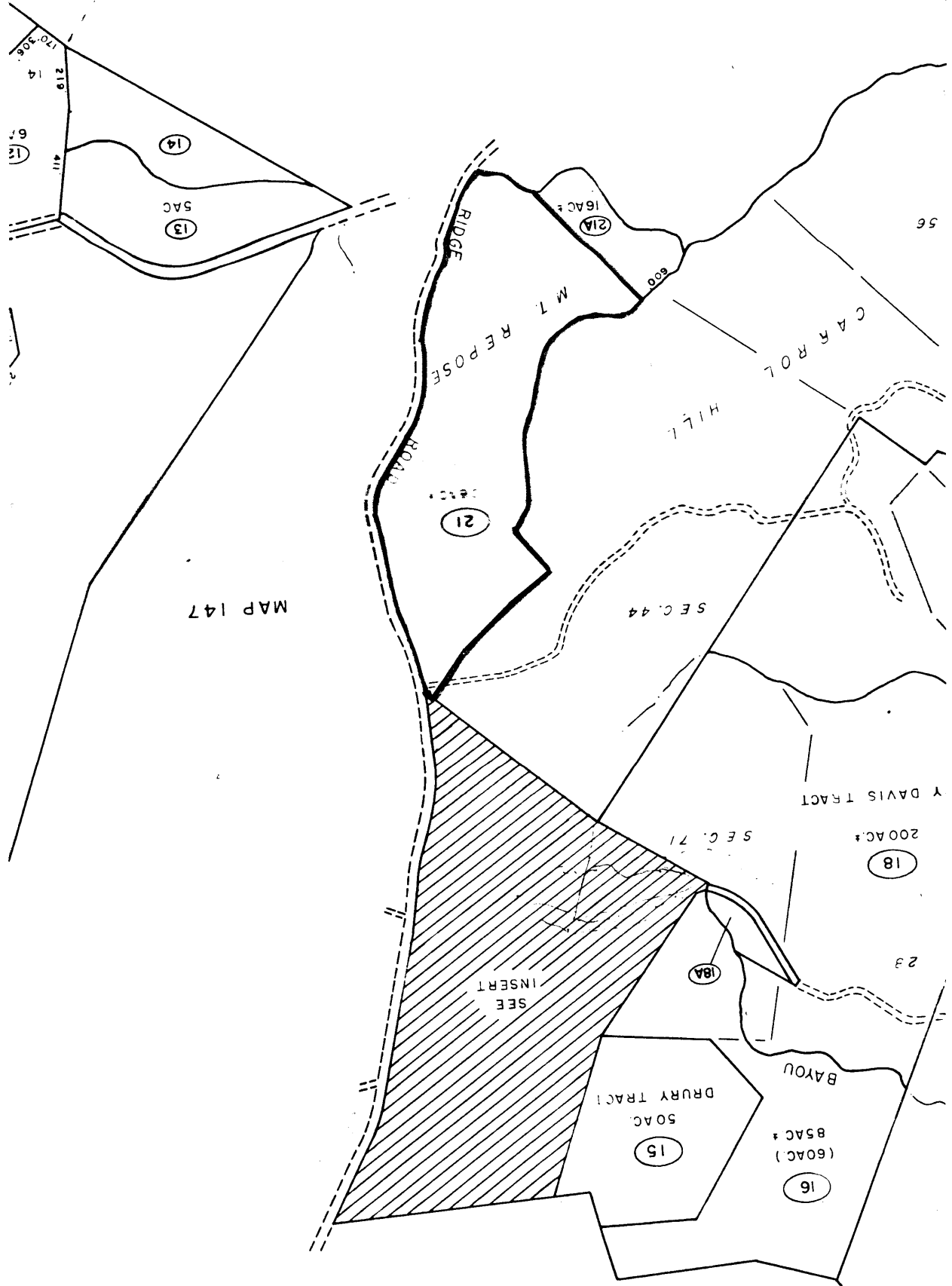
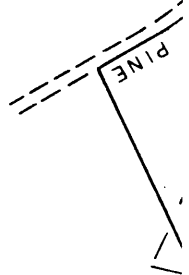
184

1

Map 184  
Block 1



INSERT  
1" = 400'



MAP 147

SEE  
INSERT