

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0235172

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
 RECEIVED JUL 22 1975  
 DATE ENTERED OCT 10 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

Montpelier Female Institute

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Thomaston Road (State 74)

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Macon [17 miles West]  VICINITY OF

3rd

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Georgia

Monroe

**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

J. Freeman Hart Junior

STREET & NUMBER

340 College Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Macon

VICINITY OF

Georgia

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Monroe County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Forsyth

Georgia

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

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

Montpelier Female Institute lies in rural Monroe County 17 miles west of Macon and 14 miles from Forsyth on a private dirt road directly off State Road 74. The site is surrounded by thickly wooded land which are dotted with mineral springs, ponds and abandoned fields. At one time the site included Chase and Lamar Halls, the college chapel, the Bishop's residence, a bathing house, greenhouse, gardens, stables, slave cabins and various outbuildings. Of the extant structures, Montpelier Chapel is in the best state of preservation. North of the chapel are the ruins of Chase Hall, brush and kudzu overgrowing the orange stuccoed brick structure. Directly across from the entrance road to Montpelier is the J. Freeman Hart, Jr. House. This was built in the 1930's on the foundations of Lamar Hall, destroyed by fire. Some 60-70 yards northwest of the chapel is a 4-room brick structure (c.1850) which was used as a piano room, pianos located in each of the rooms.

Cornelia Jones Pond, in her journal Life on a Liberty County Plantation, described Montpelier Institute as she knew it in 1849. The "chapel was a long building with dormitories at one end that was called 'the studio'. The chapel was a long room that was carpeted. A cushioned bench extended along the sides. There was a piano and a lecture where the chaplain read prayers for us every morning before breakfast... There were two other small one story buildings of four rooms each. In each room was a piano upon which the girls practiced. Then there was another building consisting of a long room in which Miss Way from Augusta taught drawing and painting. On the grounds was a large garden in which were rare potted plants. There were two gardens... The Montpelio Springs was in a ravine between the hills where was the Bishop's residence and the Institute grounds. A long, narrow bridge spanned it."

Of the structures mentioned by Cornelia Pond Jones, only the chapel and one of the two four-room piano buildings still remain. The ruins of the Bishop's home are still to be found, the ruins of Chase Hall remain, slave cabin ruins are located near the entrance gate and the present J. Freeman Hart, Jr. House is built on the foundations of Lamar Hall.

Montpelier Chapel, built c. 1843, is a Greek temple form frame structure with flushed vertical sidings. Four Doric columns support the gable on the front portico of the chapel. On the pediment above the double doors is a cross-shaped vent, rare to the Georgia area. The front portico extends the width of the chapel, with 9-light windows located to either side of the doors.

The original chapel plan was based on the Greek temple form which allowed for one large room with dormitories in the area immediately to the rear of this room. Since that time a wall has been added in Room #2, [See Accompanying Maps] breaking up the large central chapel room where as many as 150 people would gather. The porches to either side of the house are additions, dating to c. 1880. The two rooms (#6 and #7) are similarly additions, dating to c. 1930. The chimney separating these two rooms from the original chapel is also an addition.

# 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 checked="" 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**

c. 1843

**BUILDER/ARCHITECT**

Unknown

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The early history of Monroe County is closely tied to Montpelier Springs which served Middle Georgia in varying capacities from health resort to female college to private school. The 250 acre tract nominated for the National Register as Montpelier Female Institute is located in Land Lots 3 and 32 of the 13th District in Monroe County. Because of the mineral springs in the area, the site developed as an early health resort called Montpelier Springs. Ownership of the tract of land here passed from Brittain Smith of Walton County who drew the land in an 1823 lottery to Matthew Lasseter of Jasper County on December 3, 1823. Lasseter bought all of Land Lot 3 for \$450. When he sold 50 acres in the N.E. corner of the lot to Nicholas Childers on December 16, 1830, he received \$1,250, indicating improvements had been made on the site and that the springs were already being used as a health resort.

One year later Childers sold this same N.E. corner of Land Lot 3 to John B. Turner for \$1,200, "including the Mineral Springs with all its privileges, rights, immunities..." However, Childers had sold "the 4th part" of Land Lot 3 to Robert Kelton in 1830 for \$5,000. This deed describes Kelton's tract as "being the place known as the Montpelier Spring." Kelton later sold to Charles Williamson a portion of Land Lot 32 and one-eighth of Land Lot 3, the latter "being the place known as the Montpelier Springs." A writ of fieri facias was leveled against Williamson in 1834 and his property (#32 and N.E. corner of #3) sold at public outcry to John L. Woodard for \$1,800.

On December 1, 1836 Woodard sold this property to Henry J. Chalmers for \$4,500. This deed mentions that there were present on the property at this time houses, buildings, gardens and stables. Thomas B. Gorman acquired the land from Henry Chalmers in 1837 and it was he, who on December 2, 1840, conveyed the property to the Trustees of the Episcopal Church of Georgia. Among the trustees were John M. Berrien, Robert Habersham, Ambrose Baber, N.C. Monroe and J. Hamilton Couper. Gorman sold "The Mount Pelier Spring Tract" containing 250-acres in the 32nd and 3rd land lots to the church for \$4,000.

The school, the second chartered female college in Georgia, was originally known as The Georgia Episcopal Institute and Christ College. Its early history is connected with Bishop Stephen Elliott, under whose management the school commenced operations in 1842. In a letter of 1842 Elliott writes the "Girls' School is flourishing beyond all expectations, there being forty-three students." Teachers at this early stage included an English woman named Mrs. Roberts, the Charles Fays who were in charge of the boys' school then under construction,

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Interview with J. Freeman Hart, Jr., April 18, 1975

Malone, Henry Thompson. The Episcopal Church in Georgia. Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Atlanta. 1960  
The Macon Telegraph and News  
Monroe County Records: Court of Ordinary Records, Deed Books, Estate Inventories  
Tax Digests, Wills

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 200 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A | 17 | 23,05,2,5 | 3,44,095,0

B | 1,7 | 23,05,2,5 | 36|3,975,d

ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
C | 1,7 | 22,985,0 | 36|3,975,0

ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
D | 1,7 | 22,98,5,d | 36|4,d95,d

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at Highway 74 on the dead end road leading to Montpelier Springs, boundaries are as follows: continue due west c. 2000 ft parallel to highway 74; turn due north for c. 3500 ft; due east for c. 2500 Ft.; due south for c. 4000 ft. and then continue c. 750 ft. west to the beginning point.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Morton R. McInvale, Historic Analysis Unit Manager

June 30, 1975

ORGANIZATION

Historic Preservation Section

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

270 Washington Street, S.W.

TELEPHONE

404-656-2840

CITY OR TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

# 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

TITLE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

JACKSON O'NEAL LAMB

DATE

June 30, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

10/10/75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

10/9/75

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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The ceilings in what was originally the large central room (Rooms #1, #2, #3) are approximately fifteen feet high. Floors are of yellow pine and remain in good condition. The interior in these rooms is of stark simplicity. The walls have been plastered and there is only a simple baseboard. The wooden mantels are hand-planed designs with a plain frieze supported by 2 pilasters. The doors opening onto the side porches off the main room were apparently added c. 1880. Originally, these two apertures were windows which were cut out and the door added for access to the porches. The windows on the porch sides of the chapel are long two-story apertures with a horizontal section separating the 9-light windows on the second floor from their 9-light continuation below the first floor. Apparently, this curious window design is original.

Rooms #4 and #5 are apparently what Cornelia Jones Pond referred to as "dormitories". The ceilings here are approximately ten feet high and the baseboarding (probably not original) is of a dark red color. Mantelpieces are located in both rooms and follow the design of the mantels in the rooms to the front of the chapel.

A hall runs on the northeastern side of the chapel between Rooms #3 and #4 parallel to the side porch and providing entrance to the chapel's rear rooms. A 12-step staircase of brown-painted wood leads from the hall to the upper story of the chapel. There are no balusters on the staircase which does appear to be original.

The attic floor extends above the lower floor from Room #3 to Room #6. At the southeastern end of the original chapel a brick chimney was constructed and a pantry and kitchen added below c. 1930. On the attic floor the chimney obscures an original fanlight located here. The attic floors are of the same yellow pine as the first floor and appear to date with the original chapel. The ceilings are much lower than below. A single fireplace is located upstairs in the rearmost of the two attic floor rooms.

In addition to the later chimney added about 1930, there are two stuccoed brick chimneys original to Montpelier Chapel. The frontmost chimney projects from Room #2 and originally provided the fireplace for the central room in the chapel. The second chimney projects from Room #4, its fireplace original by serving the two rooms to the rear of the chapel.

The chapel rests on foundations of fieldstone and plantation-made brick. A hip roof overlaid with metal top Montpelier Chapel.

Three wooden outbuildings flank the chapel. Beautiful crepe myrtle border the entrance road leading from State Road 74 to Montpelier. A path originally

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led from the chapel across this road to the woods where Bishop Stephen Elliott has his home on the hill above the main Montpelier Spring. Giant old cedar, tulip poplar, mulberry and oak flank the chapel.

The four-room brick structure northwest of the chapel is of American bond brick. The roof has fallen in and the wooden shutters in the windows appear to date to c. 1850. There was originally another building similar to this where the Montpelier girls practiced piano. It, as well as the cottage used by Reverend Seneca G. Bragg, have since been destroyed. Ancient cedar and poplar surround the brick building.

The J. Freeman Hart, Jr. House is partially screened from Montpelier Chapel by the gardens and crepe myrtle bordering the entrance road. The house, built c. 1930, is a frame cottage with steep pitched roof and fieldstone chimneys. It is built on the foundations of Lamar Hall, one of the central buildings of the Montpelier Female Institute.

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Mrs. J.W. Cambell, who was Governor Clark's daughter, a Mr. Berner who had graduated from Leipzig and George M. Messiter, graduate of Oxford. A later addition would be Polish noblewoman Sophie Soshowski.

During 1843 improvements were being made at the college, including work on Lamar Hall, a new schoolhouse, the construction of Chase Hall. Bishop Elliott also constructed a home nearby. By 1845 the boy's school was forced to close. In the year 1843 the church at Montpelier Springs, believed to be the extant chapel, was admitted to the diocese of Georgia. The name of the female college had been changed to Montpelier Female Institute by 1849, with accomodations for 86 students. Schoolrooms, music rooms, drawing rooms, painting rooms, chemical and physical laboratories, a greenhouse and a chapel with seating capacity of 150 were on the college grounds.

Historian Rev. George White praised the school: "The visitor needs only to see its extensive lawn, majestic groves, shady walks, beautiful gardens, and spacious buildings, to be in love with the spot. The course of instruction is thorough, embracing every item that can contribute to fit a lady for the first stations in society." No grades were kept at the college but records were kept on the quality of recitation, improper behavior, disobedience, church absences, going to the bathing house without permission, and the like.

Whenever Bishop Elliott was absent from Montpelier, Reverend Seneca G. Bragg took charge of the school. During times of drought in Middle Georgia, Bragg was known to have tried his hand at rainmaking. In 1850 Swedish authoress Frederika Bremer visited Montpelier. Burdened by debts, however, Montpelier soon faced ruin. Joseph L. Fay had a writ of fieri facias levied against the school's trustees and on September 3, 1850, he bought at public auction Land Lot 32, the east half of Land Lot 3, the south portion of Land Lot 4 including "all the estate, right, title, interest, property, claim and demand of the said Trustees" for \$11,000. One year later on May 31, trustees Robert Carter, Dr. James L. Green, Dr. Ralph E. Elliott, William Habersham and John E. Ward purchased the land from Fay and the church resumed control.

A fire in 1854 destroyed the smaller buildings at Montpelier. Yellow fever swept the coast and many parents withdrew their daughters from Montpelier. At a meeting of the Board of Trustees in December 1855 it was unanimously determined to close the institute.

Bishop Elliott retained close ties with the school throughout 1866. Ownership of Montpelier passed from the Trustees to Professor C. B. Martin, Reverend John L. Pryse, and finally Ben Polhill. The Hart family purchased the land from Polhill's descendants in 1879. J. Freeman Hart, Junior, is the

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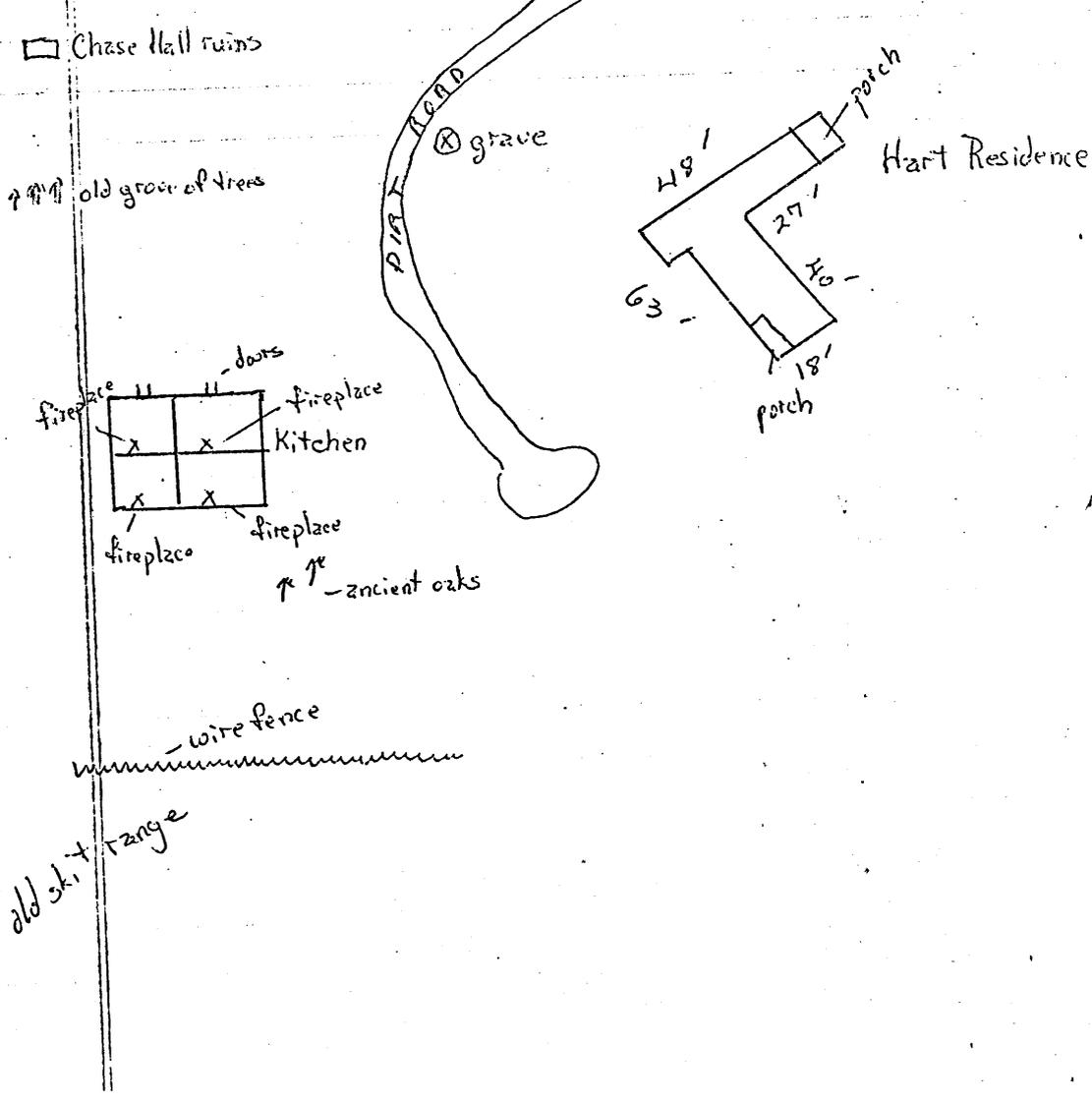
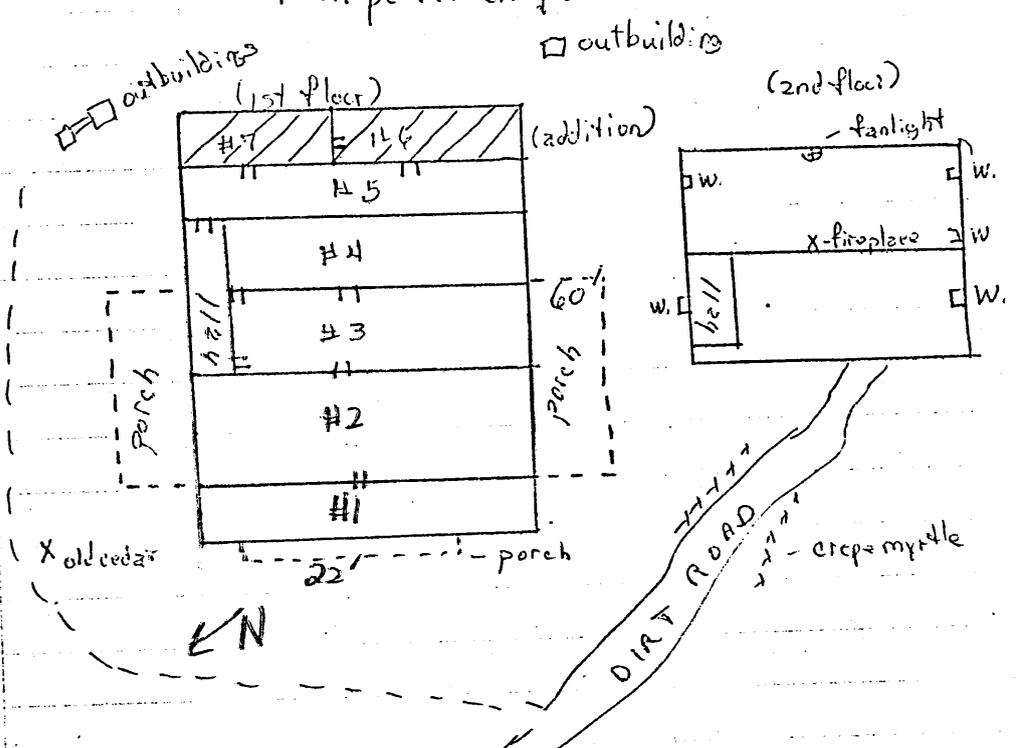
CONTINUATION SHEET Significance                      ITEM NUMBER 8                      PAGE 3

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current owner.

The site is architecturally significant, especially for the Greek temple form of the chapel. The site, with the remnants of other 19th Century structures on the grounds, has great present-day architectural merit. As health resort, school and college, Montpelier Springs played a leading role in the history of Middle Georgia.

# Montpelier Chapel



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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Montpelier Female Institute

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN Macon (17 miles west)  VICINITY OF COUNTY Monroe STATE Georgia

**3 MAP REFERENCE**

SOURCE Morton McInvale

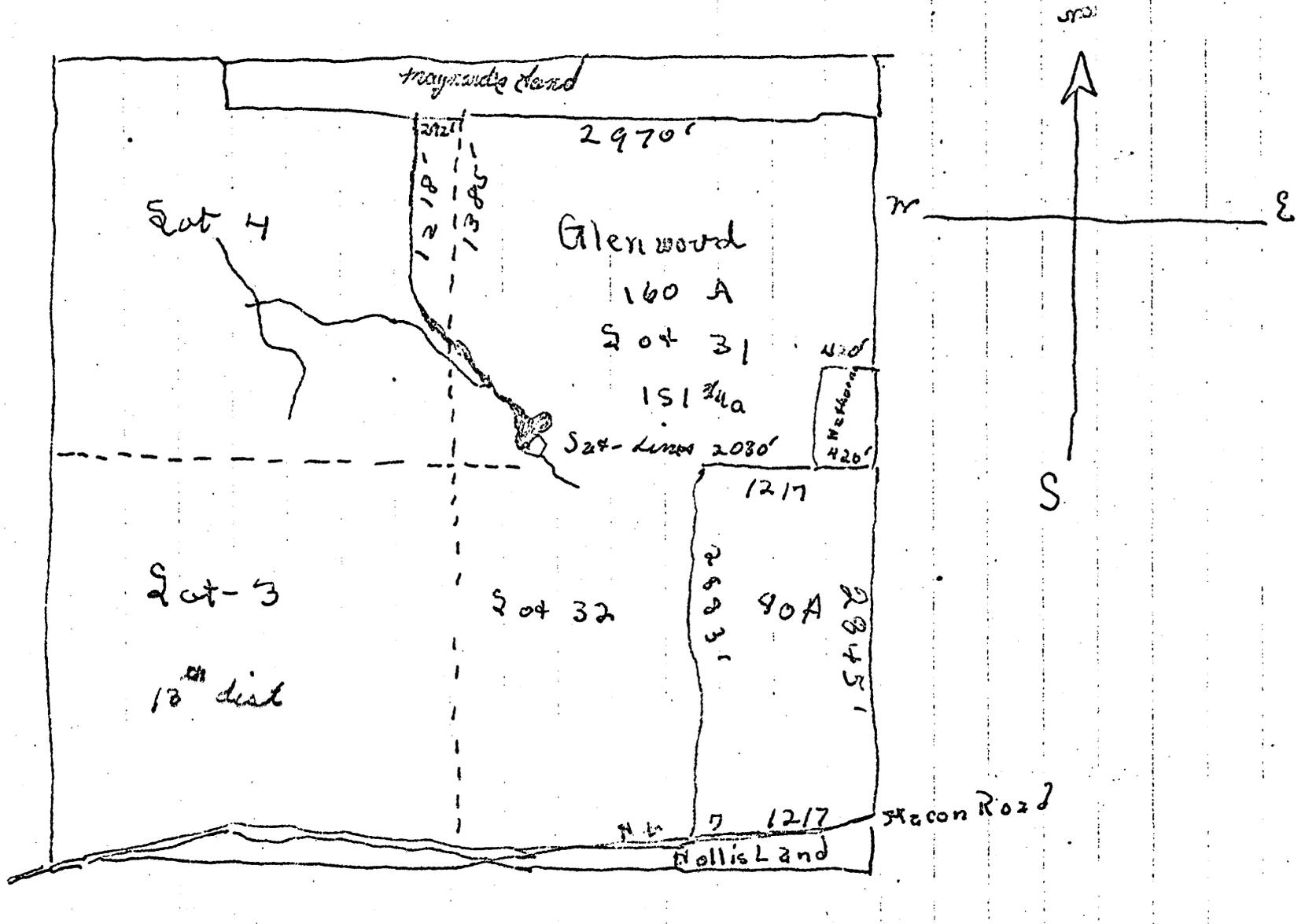
SCALE no scale DATE April 1975

**4 REQUIREMENTS**

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES

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# Montpelier Springs

