United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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 Jh	e Cliffs Plantation	ı		
	The Cliffs Planta			
	ation S c			
		'2 miles south of Na	tchez and entered	not for publication
		The Road to the wes		Fourth
state Missis	sippi co	de 28 county	Adams	code]
3. Clas	sification			_
Category district X. building(s) structure site object	Ownership public private both Public Acquisition in process being considered	Status X_ occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park X private residence religious scientific transportation other:
4. Own	er of Prope	rty		
name Mr. a	and Mrs. Meade Huff	ord		
	Route #3, Box 156			
city, town Nat	tchez	vicinity of	state	Mississippi 39120
_		al Description		
courthouse, regi	stry of deeds, etc. Ad	ams County Courthous	Se	
	Courthouse Square			
••••			state	Mississippi 39120
	resentation	in Existing		11331351pp1 39120
title		has this pro	perty been determined el	egible? <u>yes</u> <u>n</u> nc
date			federal sta	te county loca
depository for su	irvey records			
city, town			state	

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Che
X excellent	deteriorated	unaltered	_X_
good	ruins	_X_ altered	
fair	unexposed		

Check one _X_ original site ___ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Cliffs is a one-and-a-half story, square, frame, Greek Revival plantation residence set upon a brick basement that is fully raised at the rear. The gabled roof is pierced by two, inside-end brick chimneys on the front slope, one at each side, and by two, interior brick chimneys on the rear slope. The house is fronted by an undercut gallery that is supported by wooden box columns with molded capitals that are linked by rectangularsectioned balusters with molded handrail. The five-bay northeasterly facade is plastered and finished with a molded base having two fasciae. The windows contain six-over-six, doublehung sash and are closed by many of the original shutter blinds. A plain peaked surround defines the central entrance which consists of a single-leaf door, sidelights set over molded panels, and a transom.

The interior features a double-pile floor plan with central hallway and "cabinet" rooms located at each end of the recessed rear gallery, now enclosed by glass. The rooms are identically trimmed with doors that are four-paneled and molded, architrave door and window surrounds, molded bases with two fasciae, and pilastered wooden mantel pieces. The double parlors on the northerly side are separated by sliding doors. Evidence of the original interior decorative scheme of the principal floor still survives. The mantel pieces and baseboards were painted black, the doors were grained in imitation of oak, and the walls were left bare plaster or white washed. The rear chimneys of the house service the "cabinet" rooms and the larger rear rooms of the main floor, and this fireplace configuration is unusual for houses with this characteristic Mississippi floor plan. Most commonly, the "cabinet" rooms were unheated. Remnants of a plaster cornice survive in the front parlor.

Originally, the stairway to the upstairs was entered in the recessed rear gallery, made a quarter turn with winders, and continued in a straight flight along the southerly wall to terminate in the unfinished second story. Although the stairway is still in the same location, only the upper portion is original with the winders having been replaced by a landing. A stairway leads to the basement area beneath the stairway to the upstairs. The basement floor of The Cliffs is divided into four large rooms with central passage. The basement rooms have been totally renovated to accommodate modern bedrooms, bathrooms, and a kitchen, and almost no original millwork has survived. The rear gallery on the basement level has been enclosed with glass to serve as a modern den.

To the rear of the main house is a large barn with a broken slope, gabled roof that is possibly original to the main house. No other outbuildings are included within the nominated property boundaries, and no outbuildings on the surrounding acreage, once a part of The Cliffs Plantation, appear to be contemporary with the main dwelling house.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric archeology-historic agriculture X architecture art commerce communications	community planning conservation economics education engineering exploration/settlement	Iandscape architecture	e religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1850's	Builder/Architect		

1850's

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Cliffs is an excellent example of a Greek Revival, Mississippi plantation dwelling of one-and-a-half stories with undercut gallery. The house was probably constructed in the 1850's as the plantation residence of John W. Henderson, one of the most prominent citizens of nineteenth-century Natchez. Evidence of the original interior decorative scheme still survives, as the first renovation did not occcur until approximately 1970. The doors were grained in imitation of oak, one oak-grained door still surviving; the baseboards and mantel pieces were painted black; and the plaster walls were left bare or white washed.

John W. Henderson was the grandson of Scotchman John Henderson I, who immigrated to Natchez in 1787. A prominent merchant, Henderson wrote the first book published in the territory, was one of the founders of the First Presbyterian Church, and was the person for whom the two National Register houses The Elms (ca. 1805) and Pleasant Hill (ca. 1835) were constructed (Mary Warren Miller, Pleasant Hill, Adams Co., National Register File, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson). One of John Henderson I's sons was Thomas Henderson, a wealthy planter and cotton broker, for whom the ca. 1858 Henderson-Britton House was constructed (Mary Warren Miller, Henderson-Britton House, Adams Co., National Register File, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson). The Henderson-Britton House is currently being restored by the Natchez Garden Club under a Federal grant program.

In 1828, Thomas Henderson and his brother Alexander purchased part of Mount Hope Plantation (Adams Co. Deed Book Q:135), expanded this purchase into what would eventually become an antebellum plantation of 1,446 acres, and named it The Cliffs (Will Book 3:251 and Deed Book PP:91). In his will dated 1857, Thomas Henderson refers to having already given "to my son John W. the Cliff [sic] Plantation with the slaves, stock & farming utensils thereon and money . . . (Will Book 3:251)." No mention is made of having given John a pre-existing dwelling. The circular saw marks on the structural timber of the house definitely point to a post-1848 date of construction, as Andrew Brown's saw mill in Natchez did not own such a saw until 1848. Circular saws are not considered to have been widely used until the late 1840's and 50's (John Hebron Moore, Andrew Brown and <u>Cypress Lumbering in the Old Southwest</u> [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967], pp. 54-56). In addition, the track for the sliding doors separating the double parlors is located above, and the earliest documented overhead door track is found at Stanton Hall, ca. 1857.

The house was probably begun about 1856, the year of John W. Henderson's marriage to Ellen Newman (<u>The Natchez Democrat</u>, Aug. 19, 1916, p. 2), and completed about 1857 or 58. In an 1868 deed of sale, the property is described as being "the same plantation of land upon which the said John Henderson has resided and cultivated for more than ten years past (Deed Book PP:91)." John Henderson's obituary states that he graduated from Oakland College (now Alcorn University) in 1853 and subsequently received a master of arts degree and from that time until the Civil War was engaged in the planting business (The Natchez Démocrat, Aug. 19, 1916, p. 2).

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached continuation sheet.

	nical Data		VERIFIED
Acreage of nominated property Quadrangle name <u>Kingston</u> UMT References	A 8.26 acres	REAGE NOT V	ERIFIED uadrangle scale 1:62500
A 1.5 Zone Easting	3 4 8 1 5 6 5 Northing	B Zone	Easting Northing
C] []] [E] []] [G] []] [D F H	
right angle corners and of the roof ridge of th nouse.	l equal sides of 6 ne house. The sid	00 feet each w les of the figu	operty forms a four-sided figure wi ith the center being the center point re are parallel to the walls of the
List all states and counties state	s for properties overla code	county	code
state	code	county	code
name/title Mary Warren Mi	riter/itescuren con	Surcure	
			nte September 24, 1979
			nte September 24, 1979 Nephone (601) 442-9786 or 442-2500
street & number 506 High city or town Natchez	Street	te st	lephone (601) 442-9786 or 442-2500 ate Mississippi 39120
street & number 506 High city or town Natchez	Street	te st	lephone (601) 442-9786 or 442-2500
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FHR-8-300A (11/78) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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John W. Henderson was born in Natchez in 1832 and died in 1916. During his long life, he was a planter, a Civil War hero, a merchant, county school superintendent, and an ordained Presbyterian minister. He attained the rank of First Lieutenant in the Confederate Army and returned to Natchez after the war to abandon his planting career in favor of assuming the management of his late father's brokerage and mercantile firm. He later became manager of the Natchez mercantile firm of Stockman and Newman. After the S. B. Newman & Company of New Orleans failed and forced the closing of the Natchez branch in 1880, Henderson became county superintendent of education, a position he held for thirty-four years. An ordained minister, he never assumed the pastorate of a church but was content to assist the local congregations (<u>The Natchez Democrat</u>, Aug. 19, 1916, p. 2).

In 1868, John W. Henderson, having entered the mercantile world of downtown Natchez, sold The Cliffs Plantation to John Coulson (Deed Book PP:91). From Coulson, Henderson purchased Belvidere, a ca. 1840 residence located on Homochitto Street (Deed Book PP:94), that is today owned by the great-granddaughter of Henderson. For several years after John Henderson sold The Cliffs, it was owned by mercantile firms who sold the crops and leased the house to men who managed the plantation. Eventually the house became the long time residence of the Brown family, descendents of Thomas Mason of the firm Pollock and Mason. The Brown family obtained the property after lengthy litigation involving the heirs of Thomas Pollock.

In 1979, The Cliffs was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Meade Hufford who are renovating the house to serve as their permanent family residence.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Adams Co., Miss. Chancery Clerk. Deed Books Q, PP.

Adams Co., Miss. Chancery Clerk. Will Book 3.

- Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson. National Register File. Adams Co. Pleasant Hill (Mary W. Miller).
- Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson. National Register File. Adams Co. Henderson-Britton House (Mary W. Miller).
- Moore, John Hebron. <u>Andrew Brown and Cypress Lumbering in the Old Southwest</u>. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967.

The Natchez Democrat, Aug. 19, 1916.

