

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

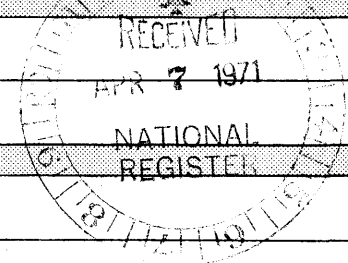
(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:  
**Mississippi**

COUNTY:  
**Adams**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
<b>71.5.28.0003</b>	<b>5/6/71</b>



1. NAME

COMMON:  
**King's Tavern**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Bledsoe House**

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**611 Jefferson Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Natchez**

STATE <b>Mississippi</b>	CODE <b>39120</b>	COUNTY: <b>Adams</b>	CODE <b>001</b>
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <b>Awaiting restoration</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments <b>use to be determined</b>			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Pilgrimage Garden Club**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**401 High Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Natchez**

STATE: <b>Mississippi</b>	CODE <b>39120</b>
STATE: <b>Mississippi</b>	CODE <b>28</b>

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

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

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Market Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Natchez**

STATE <b>Mississippi</b>	CODE <b>39120</b>
STATE <b>Mississippi</b>	CODE <b>28</b>

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Historic American Buildings Survey**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1934**  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Division of Prints and Photography**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Library of Congress**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Washington**

STATE: <b>District of Columbia</b>	CODE <b>11008</b>
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Mississippi  
COUNTY: Adams  
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

King's Tavern, or the Bledsoe House, apparently standing prior to 1789, is a primitive two-story structure of brick and poplar and cypress clapboards, resembling the block-houses of the American frontier days. Its timbers were hewn to size and fitted together with wooden pegs and beams. All of the rooms have low ceilings and the windows and the heavy doors have narrow frames.

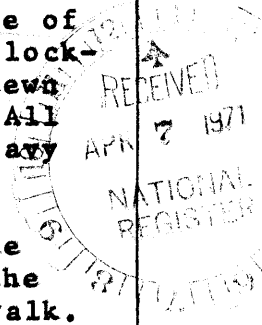
The structure was originally entered through the basement (approximately thirty-six by forty-four feet), the brick walls of which rise directly from the present sidewalk. There were two front doors and a window but at some later date the westernmost doorway was walled up with brick. The remaining front door leads to a small brick-floored room; the room adjacent to it is about twice as large and has an earthen floor.

The first floor was originally one room measuring approximately twenty-two by twenty-four feet. It features a fireplace on the west wall, horizontal cypress paneling, and exposed beams. A gallery with slender square wooden columns and balustrade originally surrounded the first floor on all sides but the west. It was enclosed on the north and east sides in the early 1820s. Two of the rooms thus created were heated by the double fireplaces of a chimney built at the same time. A twentieth-century addition on the northwest corner of the first floor provided space for a kitchen.

The second floor, reached by a narrow half-turn stairway with winders, measures twenty-two by twenty-four feet and is divided into two rooms and a passageway. A fireplace is on the west wall.

The attic is floored with wide, thick cypress boards but is not ceiled. Originally there was one small-paned window facing east; at a later date another was added on the opposite wall. Roof timbers, their axe and fro marks visible, are held together by large pegs through the rafters. With no other braces or supports for the rafters and forced by a leaning chimney, the roof has leaned to the east. The building has been structurally strengthened in that position to prevent further misalignment.

The lot measures ninety by one hundred sixty feet and is now a tangle of plants, bulbs and other native flora. The garden, located to the west of the house, is hidden from Jefferson Street by a picket fence, measuring approximately eighteen feet in length. The fence rests atop a continuation of the brick retaining wall which supports the house. Entrance to the garden is made by opening the picket gate and climbing the worn brick steps.



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**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **ca. 1789**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal                | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric               | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                   | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture               | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                 | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian       | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                   | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation              |   |  | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

King's Tavern, located on the north side of Jefferson Street between Union and Rankin streets, is regarded as the oldest building in Natchez. The earliest known record dealing with the ownership of King's Tavern and grounds is a Spanish grant to Prosper King on May 31, 1789. The grant is written in archaic Spanish phraseology, and it "concedes" an entire square of grounds and buildings which strongly indicates that the building antedates the King ownership. Sometime later the property was transferred to Richard King, a member of the King family of Southhold, Long Island, New York, several of whom emigrated to Mississippi during the English regime. King was one of the pioneers of Natchez racing, having created a subscription organization in 1794, for stake quarter horse races. A search of provincial land grants, wills and court records in the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, however, failed to reveal ownership records prior to 1789.

The tradition that the tavern was operated by Richard King is confirmed by the fact that on June 6, 1799, he applied for and was granted a license "to keep a public house." The building apparently remained in King's ownership until his death when it passed to an heir, Samuel King, who sold it on September 2, 1817, to Charles B. Green, who was a gubernatorial candidate in 1821. Green mortgaged it to the Bank of Mississippi on December 27, 1823, which in turn foreclosed the mortgage. Shortly thereafter the house belonged to Elizabeth Morgan Postlethwaite, widow of Henry Postlethwaite. At her death it was deeded to Emily Postlethwaite and to Mrs. Mary Anne Bledsoe when it became known as the Bledsoe House, and it continued to be known by this name for the next six generations.

Samuel Postlethwaite, son of Henry and Elizabeth, accumulated vast wealth and owned Myrtle Bank, the Elms, and built Clifton, his residence until his death in 1825. Samuel Postlethwaite served as Mayor of Natchez and as President of the Bank of the State of Mississippi during the last ten years of his life. His wife was the former Ann Dunbar, daughter of

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cooper, J. Wesley, Ante-Bellum Houses of Natchez. (Natchez: Southern Historical Publications, Inc., 1970), 184.  
 Kane, Harnett T., Natchez on the Mississippi. (New York: Bonanza Books, 1947), 63-64, 77-78.  
 Natchez Ariel, November 7, 1825.  
 Natchez Democrat, Pilgrimage edition, March 6, 1971.  
 Natchez Mississippi State Gazette, July 14, 1821.  
 Oliver, Nola Nance, Natchez: Symbol of the Old South. (New York: Hastings House, 1940), 58-59.

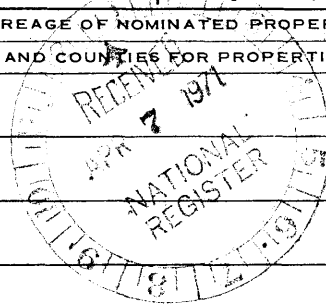
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		31° 33' 38"	91° 23' 57"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **90' x 160' (.3 acres)**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Carl A. Ray, Senior Historian**

ORGANIZATION: **Mississippi Dept. of Archives and History** DATE: **April 1, 1971**  
**Division of Historic Sites and Archaeology**

STREET AND NUMBER: **120 North State Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Jackson** STATE: **Mississippi 39205** CODE: **28**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: *R. A. McLemore*  
**R. A. McLemore**  
 Title: Director, Miss. Dept. of Archives and History  
 Date: April 1, 1971

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

*Ernest A. Connelly*  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
**MAY 6 1971**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ATTEST:  
*William B. Smith*  
 Keeper of The National Register  
 Date: **APR 16 1971**

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(Number all entries)

8.  
Sir William Dunbar, pioneer scientist of Mississippi.

The property remained in the possession of the descendants of the Postlethwaite family until December, 1970, when the Pilgrimage Garden Club of Natchez purchased it from Mrs. W. W. Maxie, an heir of the Bledsoe family.

King's Tavern served as the mail and stage coach station at the end of the Natchez Trace and it was over the Natchez Trace to King's Tavern that the first United States mail was delivered, and from this point the mail was then distributed. The Trace which passed King's Tavern was infested with bandits; therefore, the Tavern became a haven for the weary travelers who had traveled the dangerous Natchez Trace. At King's Tavern the travelers joined a heterogenous group including the lusty river men who had brought their cargo down the Mississippi River on flatboats. The taproom served as a gathering place where stories of the Harpe brothers, Sam Mason and John Murrell, who had all acquired fame along the Trace, were told. The dangers on the Trace became the dangers of Natchez. Gayoso, the Spanish Governor, organized a mounted police force with Captain Richard King as its commander to remove the threat of security of citizens and travelers in his district. Vague but persistent stories which have been handed down by word of mouth tell of killings in the doorways at night and of attempts by marauders to raid the house.

9.  
Phelps, Dawson A. and Jennings, Jesse D., "A Preliminary Study of the Natchez Trace, Proposed Locations of the Natchez Trace Parkway, and Historical and Archeological Sites In and Near Natchez, Mississippi." 24-25. Manuscript Collections. Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Tyree, Mrs. Raymond, Natchez Ante-Bellum Homes. (Natchez: Tom L. Ketchings Company, 1964), 76.

Van Court, Catherine, In Old Natchez. (Garden City: Doubleday, Dorn & Company, Inc., 1938), 27-28.

