

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only
received FEB 23 1982
date entered MAR 25 1982

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

1. Name

historic John Dicks House

and/or common same as above

2. Location

street & number 802 North Union Street N/A not for publication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
<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 type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input checked="" 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 Mr. and Mrs. John U. Miller

street & number 802 North Union Street

city, town Natchez N/A vicinity of _____ state Mississippi 39120

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Natchez state Mississippi 39120

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title City of Natchez Landmark Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1973-81 federal state county local

depository for survey records Office of City Planning Director/Municipal Building

city, town Natchez state Mississippi

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated on the western side of North Union Street in the old northern suburbs of the town of Natchez, the John Dicks House is a two-story, frame residence constructed on brick foundation piers and topped with a hipped roof. The roof is pierced by two interior brick chimneys with corbeled caps, and the attic is lighted by dormers with hipped roofs. The L-shaped body of the house is crowned with a full, molded entablature with wide, bracketed, box cornice. The exterior of the house features shiplap siding on the first-story level and shingle siding in an imbricated pattern on the second-story level and the attic dormers. A one-story porch with balustraded roof extends from the angle of the L-shaped facade and wraps around the southern elevation of the house breaking forward at the corner to form an octagonal enclosed porch with unglazed openings, both arched and trabeated. Broad horizontal bands are established on each story by treating the wall covering in a different manner at the dado level. On the first story, some of the siding is applied in vertical bands in the dado, with a double fascia base. On the second-story, the shingle pattern is reversed in the dado with a double fascia base. The molded cap of the upper dado continues across the facade as the handrail of the balustrade and the heavy turned balusters of the rail are interrupted over the paired, Roman Doric columns which delineate the entrance and at the angles of the octagonal porch by sections of shingles which match the shingled dado. All windows of the house contain one-over-one, double-hung sash except for two, leaded-glass windows with fixed sash on the facade. Most of the windows of the house feature original exterior shutter blinds, and the interior wooden blinds for the windows are stored in the attic for future installation.

The main entrance to the house is delineated by the two gallery columns set atop paneled pedestals, and access to the interior is provided through heavily molded, double-leaf oak doors. A secondary entrance is located in the southern elevation of the projecting bay and consists of a single-leaf, molded door and transom. The interior of the house is one of the most elaborately detailed interiors in Mississippi. The most outstanding architectural feature of the house is the entry hallway with its two-story high domed ceiling and curving staircase. The staircase, which is composed of a square newel topped with a crystal sphere and adorned with decorative gilt carving, heavy turned newels, and a richly molded handrail, is entered on the southern hall wall and makes a continuous curve around the hallway walls to form an S-curved railed balcony which serves as the major second-story hallway. The hallway dome, which is banded by elaborate plaster decoration with a plaster center piece at the apex, was originally decorated with painted stars in constellations and a half moon. The first-story millwork features dados of molded panels in the entrance hallway and dining room, molded panels beneath the windows, four-paneled and molded doors, door and window surrounds that are symmetrically molded with corner blocks, bases with two fascia and molding arranged to create triple banding at the top, and beautifully detailed wooden mantel pieces, no two of which are alike. All formal first-story rooms contain plaster cornices and ceiling center pieces with the most elaborate plaster work located in the dining room. An ornate plaster center piece is surrounded by a panel of astragal molding with recessed corners, and an unusual plaster ceiling frieze of pears and grapes with their original blue and cream painting completely encircles the room.

On the second-story, the baseboards are topped with two molded bands instead of three, the doors are four-paneled and molded, the mantel pieces are more delicate but still highly individual, the windows are set over molded panels, and every bedroom has its own lavatory which was originally supplied with water from a copper holding tank in the attic.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Natchez, Adams Co., Mississippi

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The integrity of the house is outstanding. Almost all original light fixtures have survived and the original hardware is intact. The only alterations to the house have occurred in the first and second-story rear porches and the kitchen area and bedroom above the kitchen. The original first-story rear porch has been extended and enclosed to form a modern den, the original kitchen has been modernized but the butler's pantry with original cabinets is intact, the second-story rear porch now houses an elevator shaft, and the second-story bedroom above the kitchen was altered slightly for the installation of an additional bathroom.

The only outbuilding on the nominated property is a two-story, frame garage that is not original.

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 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 1888-89

Builder/Architect McKim, Mead & White/Sidney V. Stratton

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John Dicks House is one of the most architecturally significant residences of post-Civil War Mississippi. The house was constructed from 1888-89 and was designed by Sidney V. Stratton of the architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White (Mrs. John U. Miller, 802 North Union Street, Natchez, Mississippi, photostat of letter of advertisement for sale dated 1893). The significance of the house rests primarily upon its outstanding degree of architectural finish, the reputation of the architectural firm which designed it, its location in the South where examples of McKim, Mead & White architecture are scarce, and its association with Sidney V. Stratton, a native of Natchez. According to Leland M. Roth, in his published work on McKim, Mead & White:

For several years during the mid-1880's, the office had what might be described as an 'adjunct partner.' This was Sidney V. Stratton, another highly skilled draftsman who had become acquainted with McKim while the two were in Daumet's atelier in Paris. They both returned in 1870 and shortly afterward Stratton became friendly with Mead and White as well. He had a separate practice, though he sublet rooms from the firm and his name appeared for a few years on the office stationery, below the names of the partners and separated from them by a line. Moreover, the Bill Books indicate that fees for a few commissions were to be send directly to Stratton, suggesting that he was fully responsible for their design. The arrangement had ended by 1886 when Stratton went his own way, though he remained close to the partners thereafter (Leland M. Roth, The Architecture of McKim, Mead & White 1870-1920 [New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1978], pp. xxv-xxvi).

Although the plans for the house have been lost, a granddaughter of John Dicks, for whom the house was constructed, recalls having seen the plans and has recorded the information that Stanford White's name was on one side and Sidney V. Stratton's name on the other (Mrs. John U. Miller, affidavit of Mrs. Aileen Dicks Suchanek, granddaughter of John A. Dicks). The original specifications are in the possession of the present owner. The specifications cite Mr. S. V. Stratton as the architect and list his address as 57 Broadway, New York, the address of the McKim, Mead & White firm (Roth, pp. xxiv-xxv).

Sidney V. Stratton was born in Natchez on August 8, 1845, and died in Natchez on June 17, 1921 (tombstone, Natchez City Cemetery, Natchez, Mississippi). He was the son of the Rev. Joseph Buck Stratton and his first wife, Mary Vanuxem. Dr. Stratton, a native of New Jersey, was pastor, and later pastor emeritus, of the First Presbyterian Church of Natchez from 1843 until his death in 1903. Dr. Stratton kept a detailed diary of his sixty years in Natchez and provided some information on Sidney Stratton's architectural career. During the Civil War, Sidney Stratton had an assignment in the engineering department of the Trans. [sic] Mississippi Department (Joseph Buck Stratton, his unpublished diary, Louisiana

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property Approx. 1 acre

Quadrangle name Natchez, Mississippi

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	5	6	5	2	3	4	5	3	4	9	3	2	4	5
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 See attached xerox of city of Natchez tax map with nominated property outlined in red. Nominated property is located on City Tax Map 12, block 3, parcel 22.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary W. Miller

organization Historic Natchez Foundation

date August 5, 1981

street & number Box 1761

telephone (601) 442-2500

city or town Natchez

state Mississippi

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date February 2, 1982

For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the National Register date

3/25/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, entry dated July 13, 1863 and June 11, 1865). Stratton studied in Europe from 1865 until 1869 (Stratton, entry dated June 30, 1869) and began work shortly after his return as an architect in the office of Richard Morris Hunt in New York (Stratton, entry dated October 23, 1869). According to Stratton family members, Stratton returned to Natchez in the early 1900's and died there in 1921. The John Dicks House is the only building in Natchez known to document Stratton as a designer. Buildings that Stratton is known to have designed, at least partially, during his association with McKim, Mead & White are the Brooklyn Riding and Driving Club in Brooklyn, N. Y. (1890), residence for Mrs. Clemence S. B. Fish in New York, N. Y. (1887), residence for James K. Gracie in Oyster Bay, N.Y. (1884), residence for Charles Oliver Iselin in New York, N. Y. (1882), Quogue Episcopal Church, Quogue, N. Y. (1884), and the Elliott Roosevelt house renovations, New York, N. Y. (1884) (Roth, pp. 209-10). Roth also cites a residence designed for James M. Waterbury to be built in the South, but it is not known whether it was ever built (Roth, p. 162). Possibly, the house designed for Waterbury was ultimately constructed for John A. Dicks of Natchez.

John A. Dicks, the first owner of the house was a prominent Natchez businessman in the insurance business (Complete Directory of the City of Vicksburg, also Business Directories of Yazoo City, Jackson and Natchez [Vicksburg, Mississippi: A. C. Tuttle, Publisher, 1887], p. 233). Due to the ill health of his wife, Dicks put the house on the market in 1893 and finally sold the house in 1895 (Adams County Deed Book 3M:242), two years after the death of his wife (The Daily Democrat [Natchez], September 23, 1893, p. 2). Photographs of the original interior of the house, taken for marketing purposes, and an inventory of the Dicks household furnishings are in the possession of the present owner.

The house had a succession of owners until it was purchased in 1920 by Luther Whittington, mayor of Natchez and a state senator. The Whittington family sold the house in 1956 (Deed Book 7Z:85), but, in 1973, Mrs. John U. Miller, Whittington's daughter, was successful in purchasing the house in which she was reared. The integrity of the house is outstanding, and the respect given the house by Mr. and Mrs. Miller and their children will insure its future preservation.

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Adams County, Mississippi. Chancery Clerk. Deed Books 3M, 7Z.

Complete Directory of the City of Vicksburg, also Business Directories of Yazoo City, Jackson and Natchez. Viskburg, Mississippi: A. C. Tuttle, Publisher 1887.

The Daily Democrat [Natchez], September 23, 1893.

Miller, Mrs. John U. Affidavit of Mrs. Aileen Dicks Suchanek, granddaughter of John A. Dicks.

Miller, Mrs. John U. Photostat of 1893 letter of advertisement of sale.

Miller, Mrs. John U. Specifications for the residence of Mr. John A. Dicks.

Miller, Mrs. John U. Photographs of the interior of the John A. Dicks residence during the Dicks occupancy.

Miller, Mrs. John U. Inventory of the John A. Dicks residence made by John A. Dicks.

Roth, Leland M. The Architecture of McKim, Mead & White 1870-1920. New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1978.

Stratton, Joseph Buck. Unpublished diary. Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

