

JUN 14 1987

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUL 23 1986

For NPS use only

received MAY 12 1987

date entered JUN 18 1987

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 Dave Patton House

and/or common Dave Patton House

2. Location

street & number 1252 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Mobile N/A vicinity of congressional district 1

state AL code 01 county Mobile code 097

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 type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Trustees of the Stewart Memorial C.M.E. Church

street & number 1266 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue

city, town Mobile N/A vicinity of state Alabama 36603

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mobile County Probate Court

street & number 109 Government Street

city, town Mobile state AL

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alabama Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1970-present federal state county local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Dave Patton House is a two-story frame building, basically rectangular in plan, with a two-story full-width front porch, an off-set two-story side porch/porte cochere on the east elevation and a small two-story porch projecting at the rear. All porches are included under the roof which consists of intersecting hipped sections. The roofing material is red tile and the eaves project slightly and are accented by profiled projecting rafters.

The front and side porches are primary design features of the house. The front porch is supported by large brick piers at the first story with panelled pilasters attached at the wall. The second-story level has square panelled wood piers at the outer corners flanked by a round column at both the side and front elevations. A plain pilaster is attached at the wall along the second story. Two sets of paired round columns form the three bays between the end piers. A balustrade with moulded handrail and turned balusters of a fairly elaborate design is present on the front second-story level.

Design elements of the front porch are repeated on the side porch with the first-story piers forming a porte cochere. The rear two-story one-bay porch extends over a third of the rear elevation. Paired classical posts define the corners of the bay and attached pilasters are present against the wall. The second story is balustraded while the first story is lattice enclosed.

Windows throughout the building are either 9/1 light double sash windows or take the form of French doors (10 light door panels with each door surmounted by a transom) which open onto the porches.

The interior plan and details reflect the Craftsman aesthetic of the period. Built-ins such as a bookcase in the living room, recessed, panelled alcoves with bench seats for storage reflect the period's penchant for removing clutter from interior spaces.

Blended, however, with Craftsman features are classical details such as the egg and dart and dentil motifs found in the cornice mouldings.

Original ceiling light fixtures, wall sconces, wood mantles, picture mouldings and 3" pine flooring are in place throughout the house.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) black history

Specific dates c.1915 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

CRITERION B - Black History

The Patton House is significant as the only primary structure known to be associated with Dave Patton (1879-1927), a particularly successful black businessman in Mobile during the early 20th century. Patton conducted a hauling and wrecking business from a downtown office on Royal Street. In a 1910 article by C. F. Johnson in a local newspaper, Patton was noted as one of Mobile's most outstanding contractors in the dray business in Mobile with a fourteen-year-old booming business which employed 40 mules and 80 hands. The construction of his home five years later attests to the fact that Patton's dray business apparently continued to prosper, and it survives as evidence of at least one successful black-owned business in Mobile during a period when most failed.

CRITERION C - Architecture

The Dave Patton House is significant as a particularly fine example of early 20th-century domestic architecture rarely attributed to black ownership during this period. A large scale residence unique to its setting in this neighborhood, the Patton House is an eclectic mixture of the Craftsman and Neo-Classic styles. It bears the quality of an architect-designed building, specifically in relation to its classically-detailed exterior porches. Undocumented oral history attributes the design to local architect George B. Rogers, who was active in Mobile 1901-45. Rogers, locally noted for his employ of informal eclecticism, designed in a number of styles and may well have been responsible for this design since classically-detailed and Mediterranean-derived buildings predominated in his work.

GEORGE B. ROGERS (1870-1945)

A native of Chicago, George Rogers came to Mobile in 1901 and remained until his death in 1945. A local pioneer of reinforced concrete construction, Rogers designed Bellingrath Gardens (N.R.H.P., 10/19/82), Davis Avenue Public Library (N.R.H.P., 12/22/83), and Scottish Rites Temple (N.R.H.P., 1/5/84), and was the first architect in the South to design buildings on a floating foundation. There is no evidence to confirm that Rogers had any formal training; he did, however, apprentice in the office of Willis Becker and A. W. Scaville, and worked in Boston, New York and Hartford, Connecticut.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one _____

Quadrangle name Mobile

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	6	3	9	8	1	1	8	1	0	3	3	9	6	6	1	1	0
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 Part of Block 6, Fisher Tract bounded by Hickory Street, Davis Avenue, Live Oak Street and Hercules Street. Begin at the northwest corner of Davis Avenue and Hickory Street, run west along north side of Davis Avenue 125'± to a point, run north 175'± to a point, run east 125'± to the (continued)

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shirley Qualls, Cultural Resources Coordinator, AHC Editor
Anne Sieller, Assistant Director, Mobile Historic Development Commission

organization Mobile Historic Development Commission date 2/10/87

street & number P. O. Box 1827 telephone (205) 438-7281

city or town Mobile state Alabama 36633

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

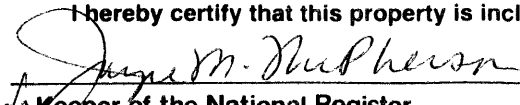
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 5/7/87

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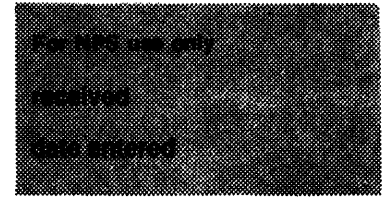
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 Keeper of the National Register date 6/12/87

Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet

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HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Dave Patton (1879-1927) was a successful businessman who owned a dray business in Mobile with offices located on Royal Street. He later expanded his business to include wrecking and contracting services. Dave Patton is mentioned in a 1910 Mobile Register newspaper article enumerating prominent black doctors and businessmen in Mobile: "He is one of the foremost contractors in this particular line (hauling) in Mobile. He owns forty mules. Dave says he employed eighty hands last winter. He had only one team fourteen years ago." For years, Patton's dray business provided the mules which pulled Mardi Gras floats, and his men carried the flambeaux which illuminated the floats during parades.

The design of the Patton House has been attributed to several people. Oral accounts have credited the design to Patton himself, while others have suggested a designer from Tuskegee Institute and a local white architect. The first two possibilities have not been substantiated; however, retired Mobile architect, C. L. Hutchisson has identified George B. Rogers as the architect of the Patton House.

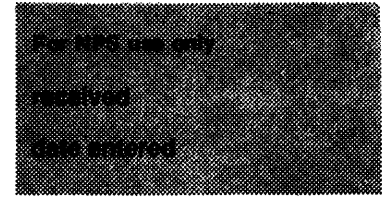
After 1880 a black middle class greatly influenced by Booker T. Washington and his concept of a separate black economy emerged in Mobile. David Ernest Alsobrook, in his Auburn dissertation of 1983, deals with the emerging black middle class and Dave Patton as a prominent member of that class. Many of those considered to number among the black elite of the 1900-1915 era came from the professions--doctors, attorneys, ministers, real estate and insurance sales, and it appears that the ownership of property set these "successful" blacks apart from the general black population. Patton apparently acquired real estate holdings other than this home in the city. Aside from his residence, Patton had numerous real estate holdings including rental property and a stable for his mules.

Although people in these professions might have been able to afford houses of a comparable quality to Dave Patton's, it appears that their residences were not of the same scale. In fact, most no longer exist to invite comparison. Many blacks involved with Booker T. Washington at the turn-of-the-century were, it seems, not independent businessmen (as noted in a list of 67 black businessmen sent to Booker T. Washington by A. N. Johnson in 1905), but were rather, laborers, teachers, postal workers, etc., whose earnings would not have permitted them to occupy a residence of the scale of the Patton House. As the Patton House stands today it is unique in the neighborhood, being surrounded by small one-story houses, which speaks of the rather unique economic situation of the Patton family among blacks in Mobile of the period.

Several sources indicated that Patton maintained a close relationship with Washington. However, the two men apparently did not share the same business philosophy. Actually, Patton disregarded the precepts of Washington's National Negro Business League which advocated the establishment of a separate economy based on blacks conducting business exclusively with blacks. Patton appears not to have severed his connections with white clients and, in fact, depended on a largely white clientele. This practice seemed to insulate his business from the failure experienced by many black businesses in the South. For it was during this period that many blacks left

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Mobile for larger cities. As a result, most of the black businesses dependent predominantly or exclusively on black trade failed.

After Patton's death in 1927 his business was taken over by his son, Dave Patton, Jr., and most of his real estate was sold soon after by his wife and son. His son may not have had the same shrewd business sense that his father possessed, because the business failed. However, the increased prevalence of the automobile also significantly served to cause the demise of the business.

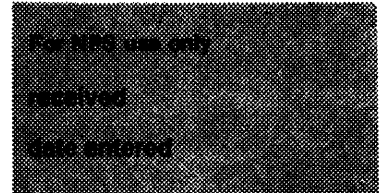
According to local historian J. Higginbotham in Mobile City by the Bay, Patton is said to be Mobile's "first black philanthropist." The issue of Dave Patton as philanthropist, however, has been a difficult one to resolve. The exact nature of his philanthropy has never been established. He is said to have donated the square of land on which Lyons Park is located to the City of Mobile. Patton, however, never owned this square of land. He did own, however, a square of land south of Davis Avenue on which he may have established a park for neighborhood children. This park no longer exists, and there is no documentation confirming its actual existence or exact location.

The Patton House was owned continuously by the Patton family from the time of its construction until 1979 when it was purchased by the Stewart Memorial C.M.E. Church for use as a parsonage.

Dave Patton is interred in Magnolia Cemetery, square 17, 3rd row, lot 7.

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Records of the Mobile County Probate Court including deeds and wills;
City Directories, City of Mobile;
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of 1915 and 1925;
Tax assessment records, City of Mobile;

Mobile Register articles:

Obituary, Booker T. Washington, November 15, 1915.

C. F. Johnson, "The Colored People of Mobile," September 1, 1910.

A. F. Owens, "Mobile Colored People Set Good Example," September 1, 1904.

Alsobrook, David Ernest, Alabama's Port City: Mobile During the Progressive Era, 1896- 1917, dissertation, Auburn, Alabama, 1983.

Higginbotham, Jay, Mobile City by the Bay, The Azalea City Printer, Mobile, 1968.

Oral History: Marguerite Franklin, L. P. Holmes, Josephine Allen Gray and C. L. Hutchisson.

Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, Deceased.

Elsie T. Withey and Henry F. Withey. New Age Publishing, Los Angeles, 1956. (p.520)

"George B. Rogers: Mobile Architect, 1901-1945"

Unpublished manuscript. Gypsey Van Antwerp, 1979, Mobile Public Library.

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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DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10

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Verbal boundary description (cont):

west side of Hickory Street, run south along the west side of Hickory Street
to the place of beginning.