

PH 0689971

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| RECEIVED | NOV 27 1978 |
| DATE ENTERED | JAN 22 1979 |

**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

Neibert-Fisk House

AND/OR COMMON

Choctaw

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

310 North Wall Street

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Natchez

__ VICINITY OF

Fourth

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Mississippi

28

Adams

001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

__DISTRICT

X PUBLIC

X OCCUPIED

__AGRICULTURE

X MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

__PRIVATE

__UNOCCUPIED

__COMMERCIAL

__PARK

__STRUCTURE

__BOTH

__WORK IN PROGRESS

__EDUCATIONAL

__PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

__ENTERTAINMENT

__RELIGIOUS

__OBJECT

__IN PROCESS

X YES: RESTRICTED

__GOVERNMENT

__SCIENTIFIC

__BEING CONSIDERED

__YES: UNRESTRICTED

__INDUSTRIAL

__TRANSPORTATION

__NO

__MILITARY

__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Natchez

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 1185

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Natchez

__ VICINITY OF

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

STATE

Natchez

Mississippi 39120

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Statewide Survey of Historic Sites

DATE

1973

__FEDERAL X STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Jackson

Mississippi 39205

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Neibert-Fisk House, an imposingly monumental brick residence, is located at the southwest corner of High and Wall streets in downtown Natchez, Mississippi, on an elevated lot that drops steeply at the rear to afford a sweeping view of the Mississippi River. Set on a high basement and built to the street, the two-and-one-half-story dwelling is laid in Flemish bond with queen closers and is sheltered by a graceful hip roof crowned by a large, low frame belvedere glazed with rectangular Greek Revival sash. The central three bays of the five-bay facade are stuccoed and scored beneath a giant-order portico of Roman Ionic columns raised on high pedestals and supporting a delicately proportioned entablature which continues around all elevations. An oval window with radiating tracery fills the tympanum, and a handsome balustrade in the wheat sheaf motif encloses both levels of the portico. A double flight of steps set behind a solid balustrade ascends from the ground level to the principal floor. Filling the central bay is a single-leaf two-panel door surrounded by an elegant Grecian frontispiece featuring paneled antae detailed with anthemias and free-standing Doric columns carrying a simple entablature. Unusual four-part jibs are set under the six-over-six sash windows sheltered by the portico.

Extending the full width of the stuccoed rear elevation is a five-bay inset portico of Tuscan columns set on high pedestals and enclosed by a plain balustrade. Flared steps service the central entrance on the main level, which is set with a simple Grecian pedimented frontispiece around a single-leaf two-panel door, an arrangement also used on the second level. The southwesternmost two bays of the first level of the portico have been enclosed and screened with louvered blinds.

With the exception of the delicately detailed late-Federal staircase, rising in a cantilevered spiral from the rear stairhall portion of the central hall, the detailing of the generously proportioned double-pile interior of the Neibert-Fisk House is in the Grecian mode. Divided from the entrance portion of the hall by an elliptical arch springing from stylized pilasters, the stairhall is open to the attic and illuminated by the belvedere. Pilastered frontispieces surround the double-leaf two-panel sliding doors linking the front parlors with the central hall as well as the triple-leaf folding doors connecting the southwest double parlors. The principal first-level rooms are embellished with foliated centerpieces, molded plaster cornices, and eared architrave pieces with shelves reproduced in scagliola during the 1939-1942 restoration.

No outbuildings are extant.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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

1836

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Neibert-Fisk House was completed ca. 1836 for real estate speculator and developer Joseph Neibert and later was the home of prominent merchant and philanthropist Alvarez Fisk. It is a late but highly significant example of the Neo-Classical style first employed in the Natchez region early in the second decade of the nineteenth century. Both the Federal massing of the brick house and the use of the giant Roman orders endow the exterior with a Jeffersonian quality, while the interior detailing is predominantly Grecian in mode. Positioned to emphasize the dramatic verticality of the portico, the handsome dwelling is the only important Natchez mansion built to the street.

Joseph Neibert purchased the 160-by-160-foot lot on the corner of High and Wall streets from Archibald Dunbar in 1836 for \$4,800. In 1826 Dunbar had inherited the property, then valued at \$5000, from his father, William Dunbar (Deed Book X:69-70). Although Neibert is traditionally held to have built the house which was designed for him by James Hardie, a Scottish immigrant, the sharp increase in the value of the property during Dunbar's ownership suggests that he had added some improvements.

Joseph Neibert and his partner Peter Gemmell invested and speculated heavily in real estate in and around Natchez. The firm is known to have built the frame houses at 506 and 508 High Street by 1837 (Miller interview, April 15, 1978). Financially ruined in the Panic of 1837, both partners died within a few weeks of each other during a yellow fever epidemic in the fall of 1838 (Natchez, Mississippi Free Trader, October 3, 1837). Neibert's widow, Sarah, continued to reside in her house until 1844, when she sold the property to Alvarez Fisk to settle the debt-ridden estate of her late husband (Deed Book II:295). A native of Massachusetts, Fisk (1783-1853) became one of the community's most successful commission merchants in the 1840s as well as an outstanding philanthropist. In addition to his activities on behalf of the Mississippi Colonization Society, dedicated to resettling free Negroes and manumitted slaves in Africa, and the First Presbyterian Church, where he was a trustee, Alvarez Fisk was instrumental in the establishment in 1845 of the Natchez public school system. His donations of property and funds facilitated the founding of a public school, the Natchez Institute. Attendance averaged 610 students from 1845 to 1852 (McLemore, p. 370), and the school operated within the Natchez city school system until 1927.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| RECEIVED | NOV 27 1978 |
| DATE ENTERED | JAN 22 1979 |

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 & 9 PAGE 1

8 - STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Neibert-Fisk House was purchased in 1855 by attorney George Malin Davis, who developed the once-renowned casually landscaped terraced gardens located to the southwest of the house. The property remained in the Davis family until 1920, when it was sold by Davis's grandson George Malin Davis Kelly, who owned and resided at Melrose in Natchez. From 1909 to 1915 the mansion housed Stanton College, a school for young ladies that began in 1894 at nearby Stanton Hall. A large brick two-story dormitory/classroom facility was constructed to the rear of the mansion ("Stanton College Catalogue," 1904-05).

The demise of Stanton College doomed the Neibert-Fisk House to several decades of uninterrupted decay since the house and surrounding buildings were converted into tenements. In 1937 the City of Natchez purchased the property as the intended site of a city auditorium. The gardens gave way to the Georgian Revival auditorium completed in 1940, but the mansion was carefully restored between 1939 and 1942 under the auspices of the American Legion, with Works Progress Administration labor directed by architect Jack Canizaro of Jackson. Although badly deteriorated by that time, enough of the original fabric had survived to facilitate a successful restoration. The Natchez Art Association leased the upper floors of the mansion in 1973 and refreshed them for use as an art gallery and house museum, while the American Legion continues to maintain the ground floor.

In March, 1978, a fire severely damaged the ground and first level of the portico and facade. Plans are underway by the City of Natchez to effect a careful restoration and construction of the damaged fabric.

9 - BIBLIOGRAPHY

McCahon, Mary, architectural historian. Personal interview with Mary W. Miller, Natchez, Mississippi, April 15, 1978

McLemore, Richard A., ed. A History of Mississippi. Hattiesburg: University and College Press of Mississippi, 1973.

Natchez, Mississippi. Free Trader, October 3, 1837.