

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAY 12 1976

DATE ENTERED NOV 7 1976

**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

The Elms

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

215 South Pine Street

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Natchez

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourth

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Mississippi

CODE

28

COUNTY

Adams

CODE

001

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY** DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT**OWNERSHIP** PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION** IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS** OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE** YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO**PRESENT USE** AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mrs. Alma C. Kellogg

STREET & NUMBER

215 South Pine Street

CITY, TOWN

Natchez

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Mississippi

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Chancery Clerk, Adams County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Market Street

CITY, TOWN

Natchez

STATE

Mississippi

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Adams County Landmarks Inventory

DATE

1974

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Natchez Metropolitan Planning Commission

CITY, TOWN

Natchez

STATE

Mississippi

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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 Elms is a large, two-and-one-half-story brick and frame dwelling set in a spacious park at 215 South Pine Street, Natchez, Mississippi. As it exists today, the house is the product of three major building phases and several remodelings which have combined to give it a varied and picturesque appearance. To complement the asymmetrical architecture, the grounds are landscaped into irregular, informal gardens and terraced lawns. An octagonal lattice-between-pier gazebo, the only one of three to survive, is the most prominent garden structure.

The nucleus of The Elms was started in 1804 by John Henderson, who paid \$400 for the lot (Adams County Deed Book D, p. 50). He constructed a small two-and-one-half-story dwelling of brick laid in Flemish bond with neatly finished raked mortar joints. Double galleries with slender Doric columns were placed on the front (south) and rear elevations with an exterior stair providing the only access to the upper levels. The facade was divided into four irregular bays with two six-paneled doors per floor flanked by windows with twelve-over-nine double-hung sashes on the first level and twelve-over-twelve on the second. The interior was arranged according to the late medieval hall-parlor plan with a central chimney serving all rooms. Recent repair work revealed whitewashed ceiling joists on the ground floor, an indication that this level originally served a purely utilitarian function--possibly as kitchen and buttery. Corresponding rooms above with higher ceilings probably served as a parlor and a bedchamber. A fine Federal wooden mantel designed with paneled pilasters supporting an uncarved frieze and returned cornice survives as the finest interior feature dating from the 1804 period.

In 1815 The Elms was sold to Lewis Evans, a prominent planter and builder, who continued to hold title to the property for the next three years (Adams County Deed Book H, p. 300). Because of Evans's interest in building, the second construction phase at The Elms may be attributed to him. At this time, the rear (north) gallery was enclosed with brick walls laid in common bond and the entire exterior was stuccoed, scored and painted a soft beige color. A thin partition divided the newly created space into two rooms on each floor and the entire first level was retrimmed using delicately molded architraves.

Between the second and third phases of construction, various minor remodelings took place at The Elms. During the 1830s, for example, a bedroom was created by partitioning a small space in the east end of the 1815 addition. A peculiar mantel, which is eighteenth century in form but detailed with Greek Revival moldings, was installed at that time.

Late in 1849, The Elms was purchased by David Stanton, who had occupied the property since moving to Natchez in 1844 (Adams County Deed Book HH, p. 46; Book WW, p. 111). A major addition-remodeling program undertaken by Stanton in c. 1856 gave The Elms its final form. The principal elevation was reoriented from the south to the west with the building of a two-story stucco-on-frame wing just south of the main block. The gallery between the two structures was enclosed and a cast-iron staircase was installed in the new entrance hall. Decoratively pierced treads, risers, and step-ends contribute to the delicacy of the staircase which is thought to be the only one of its kind in Mississippi. The addition provided for a parlor on the first floor and a bedroom on the second. Typical of other Natchez interiors of the period, the parlor was treated with a large plaster cornice and centerpiece, tall six-over-nine double-hung windows which when opened give access to the galleries, and an arched marble mantel with a carved cartouche keystone. Hanging from the centerpiece is an elaborate bronze chandelier complete with armed cupids of lead and original glass globes.

(continued)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

While the c. 1856 wing was being built, Stanton updated the 1804-1815 house by adding simple arched marble mantels to the ground floor fireplaces and by installing a single pilastered marble mantel in the original parlor on the second level, which became a bedroom. Baseboards were added throughout, and the house was equipped with gas fixtures. Small sash windows of the ground floor parlors were extended into glazed French doors which open out onto the galleries surrounding the building. To give the appearance of three full floors, a long, three-bay pilastered dormer was added to the west elevation of the older block. Stanton's extensive remodeling was completed when the entire exterior was painted the deep pink color which exists today. The only changes affecting The Elms since the Stanton ownership occurred on the rear (east) elevation, when the galleries were partially enclosed to accommodate modern kitchens and baths.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES

1804

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Elms is one of the oldest, most unusual, and most prominent "suburban villas" in Natchez, Mississippi. Although it began as a small vernacular residence, various additions and remodelings have resulted in a large structure containing many sophisticated architectural features. Because The Elms was not the product of a single, unified design, the house defies any useful stylistic label. Instead, it is considered a highly significant example of "picturesque eclecticism" achieved through a variety of mass and irregular outline.

In addition to its architectural interest, The Elms is significant as the residence of several figures important in the early history of Natchez. John Henderson (1755-1842), who began construction of The Elms in 1804, was a prominent Natchez merchant, auctioneer, and lawyer. A native of Scotland who migrated to the Natchez region in 1787, Henderson served as one of the first elders of Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church, thought to be the oldest Presbyterian church in Mississippi. In 1817, he was instrumental in the establishing of the First Presbyterian Church of Natchez. In addition to his commercial and religious activities (Goodspeed, Biographical and Historical Memoirs, p. 906), Henderson also served as postmaster of Natchez (1805) and receiver of public monies for sale of lands west of the Pearl River (Rowland, Courts, Judges and Lawyers of Mississippi, pp. 55-56).

In 1815, The Elms was sold for \$5000 to Lewis Evans (Adams County Deed Book H, p. 300), who had migrated to Natchez c. 1790 to engage in planting and construction enterprises (Mississippi Department of Archives and History, National Register File, Adams County, Arlington). During his ownership of The Elms, Evans was occupied with several building projects, the most notable of which was the construction of the East Wing of Jefferson College, an architecturally and historically significant structure, begun in 1817 according to the plans supplied by local architect Levi Weeks (Maddox, "Buildings and Grounds of Jefferson College in the Nineteenth Century," pp. 40-41).

In 1818 Samuel Postlethwaite acquired title to The Elms, which he continued to hold for the next seven years (Adams County Deed Book K, p. 179). Postlethwaite, a native of Pennsylvania, was an active member and ruling elder of the Presbyterian church and president of the Bank of Mississippi from 1815 to 1825 (Natchez, Miss., The Ariel, November 7, 1825). Shortly before his death in 1825, Postlethwaite sold The Elms to his son-in-law, Rev. George Potts (Adams County Deed Book W, p. 376), and for the next ten years The Elms served as the Presbyterian manse. During his pastorate, Potts was able to expand the number of Presbyterian communicants from 49 to 135 and to erect a substantial brick church (Goodspeed, Historical and Biographical Memoirs, p. 162).

In 1835, Potts moved to New York City and sold The Elms to Joseph Sessions, a native of North Carolina who had been living in the Natchez area since 1801. Sessions was active in territorial and early state politics, having been a member of the territorial legislature and the 1817 constitutional convention, and a representative and senator from Adams

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Adams County, Mississippi. Chancery Clerk. Deed Books D, H, K. W. BB, HH, KK, NN, WW, 4J. Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Microfilm.

Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi. 2 vols. Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1891.

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10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 2

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	6,5,2	1,9,0	3,4	9,2	1,0,0	B						
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING							
C							D						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

William C. Allen, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

DATE

March, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 571

TELEPHONE

(601) 354-6218

CITY OR TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi 39205

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

Elbert R. Hilliard

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE May 7, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 11/7/96

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 11/2/76

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

County (Claiborne, Territory and State, p. 355). After the death of Joseph Sessions, The Elms was sold to his son-in-law, John Baynton, who had dealt in land speculation in Natchez before moving to Philadelphia in 1857 (Mississippi Department of Archives and History, National Register File, Adams County, Williamsburg). Beginning in 1844, the house was rented to David Stanton, who purchased the property five years later (Adams County Deed Book HH, p. 46). A native of Belfast, Ireland, Stanton received a degree from Jefferson College and engaged in agriculture before moving to Natchez in 1844. His additions and alterations to The Elms gave the house its final appearance. In 1859, New Orleans architect T. K. Wharton, a guest at The Elms, described the house and grounds during the Stanton ownership as :

beautiful exceedingly--the air gushes thro the noble trees, and the choice shrubbery with a purity and freshness unknown in the airiest parts of the city below--a bold well gravelled carriage drive leads from the entrance gates to the mansion, and a fine ample billard room stands off to the right amid the rich foliage of the garden while on the left a double terrass [sic] rises above the level of a sloping lawn and backs a richly clothed ruin covered with English ivy and consisting of three arches--the remains of a conservatory that was destroyed by the Tornado of May 7, 1840--Fine galleries round the house 9 to 14 feet wide--Every where, exquisite order and tasteful arrangement (unpublished diary of T. K. Wharton, New York Public Library).

To supplement his verbal description, Wharton drew a "fine outline of the house and grounds, taken from the South Entrance-Gate-." Dated August 23, 1859, this detailed sketch is a valuable document which illustrates the remarkable architectural integrity of The Elms. In 1878, the property was sold to Caroline Drake, whose descendants now occupy the house. Long active in historic preservation, the current owners continue to respect and maintain the architectural and landscape fabric of The Elms.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 4

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Wharton, T. K. Unpublished diary. New York Public Library.