

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED 11 SEP 1979

DATE ENTERED

NOV 13 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

Davis-Felton Plantation

AND/OR COMMON

Mossy Hill

LOCATION

NW of Henderson on

STREET & NUMBER

Felton Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Henderson

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

X VICINITY OF

3rd - Jack Brinkley

STATE

Georgia

CODE

13

COUNTY

Houston

CODE

073

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:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. George Felton

STREET & NUMBER

2417 Clayton Street

CITY, TOWN

Macon

VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

31204

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE.

Superior Court

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Houston County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Perry

STATE

Georgia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

4

# 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		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Davis-Felton Plantation contains the main house and associated out-buildings, small peach-packing plant, several tenant houses and prehistoric and historic archaeological components on 1,772-1/2 acres of land. This acreage is the historic acreage of the plantation that has been intact since 1864.

The main house of the Davis-Felton Plantation is a two-story, Italianate structure. The northern (front) elevation is three bays across. Entrance is gained through the central recessed bay with palladian motifs. The east front bay is dominated by the ground-floor, full-story projecting bay window. The second story is capped by a triangular gable. The west front bay contains the third-story tower typical of Italianate Villa design. Also typical of this type of architecture, the massing is irregular. The plan is essentially L-shaped, with the western elevation extended in the rear of the house to form storage area on the ground floor and extra bedrooms on the second story. The eastern rectangular mass contains two bedrooms over double parlors. Across the central hall from the double parlors are the dining room and study, while across from the two bedrooms on the second story are the master bedroom and small bedroom. Stairs leading to the tower room are in this front small bedroom.

Detailing is essentially renaissance, marked by corner pilasters, dentil molding and brackets under the eaves and the three front window entablatures. Interior detailing includes ear molding which frames the doors. Also noteworthy is the trompe l'oeil stenciling designed to look like wainscoting, which backs the small straight staircase leading into the tower room. The central entrance staircase which leads to the second story is a graceful reflex curve backed by a two-story curved wall.

Behind the main house is a board-and-batten, 18'x16' smokehouse, farther back is a more recent wooden barn. To the west of the house is a small, 1930s peach-packing plant operation that includes several wooden structures and a concrete silo. Also on the property are several wooden tenant houses built before 1925 and a more recent concrete-block house with trailer, occupied by the manager of the plantation.

The plantation land itself is gently rolling and is mainly planted in soybeans and peach trees with some timber.

Although the Feltons currently own more land than is being nominated, the boundaries of the nominated property conform to the historic acreage and configuration of the Davis plantation.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" 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 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 ca. 1855-present                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT probably William Mayzck Davis

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Davis-Felton Plantation is significant in Georgia architectural and agricultural history. In addition, the nominated property contains both pre-historic and historic archaeological components.

William Mazyck Davis (1820-1870) moved from South Carolina to Houston County, Georgia, in the early 1850s in search of new cotton land. In 1854, he purchased the major portion of his new plantation, and by 1864, he owned all of the nominated property. Davis family tradition records that all lumber used in the construction of the main house was cut on the property and allowed to season for several years. In 1859, Davis moved his family to the plantation, which was called Mossy Hill.

The main house is a unique, early, and virtually unaltered example of domestic Italianate architecture of which very few survive from the pre-Civil War period in Georgia. Few Italianate plantation houses were built in the state during this time, and it has been suggested that the Classical tradition retained its dominance during this period because of its relationship to the increasingly adamant and strained defense of slavery. The Davis-Felton house thus survives as an excellent example of a little-practiced style in pre-Civil War Georgia.

According to Davis family tradition, William Mazyck Davis designed the house and oversaw its construction by his own skilled slaves and the slaves of his brother Edward. The design is not dissimilar to several in Andrew Downing's The Architecture of Country Houses (1850).

Davis was a major planter in Houston County. The slave census of 1860 records that he owned 94 slaves, while the 1864 tax digest lists the number of slaves as 110. During the Civil War, Davis organized and served as captain of Company H, Henderson Rangers, 45th Regiment.

Immediately after the war, the Davis family, like many other planter families, suffered financial difficulties. Davis was declared bankrupt at the time of his death, and his land was sold in February of 1870 to his son,

[continued]

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

On-site inspection by Richard Cloues and Steve Henson, February 5, 1979.

Hickson, Bobbe Smith. A Land So Dedicated, Houston County, Georgia. Houston County Library Board, 1976.

"The William Mazyck Davis Family." Unpublished typescript, n.d. Copy on file at Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1772-1/2

QUADRANGLE NAME Perry West and Henderson, Georgia QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	2 3,3 1,4,0	3,5 8,7 9,4,0	B	1,7	2 3,6 7,8,0	3,5 8,7 8,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,7	2 3,6 6,7,0	3,5 8,5 0,7,0	D	1,7	2 3,3 0,4,0	3,5 8,5 2,3,0
E				F			
G				H			

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

All of Land Lots 117, 118, 119, 139, 140, 149, 150 and the eastern half of Land Lot 138, the western half of Land Lot 148, and the western half of Land Lot 141, plus the northern half of the eastern half of Land Lot 141. [continued]

**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

Steve Henson, National Register researcher

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Preservation Section, Dept. of Natural Resources June 29, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

270 Washington Street, S.W. (404) 656-2840

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Atlanta Georgia 30334

**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

*Elizabeth A. Lyon*

7

TITLE

Elizabeth A. Lyon

DATE

9/4/79

Acting State Historic Preservation Officer

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Carol D. Shuck*

DATE

11-13-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *W. F. Imke*

DATE

11/12/79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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CONTINUATION SHEET    Significance    ITEM NUMBER 8    PAGE 2

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William Richardson Davis. The nominated property was owned by the Davis family until 1926, when it was purchased by William H. Felton. It thus represents an intact plantation owned by only two families since the 1850s. The land has been in continuous agricultural production since that time.

The changing agricultural production of this plantation records an important evolution in Georgia agricultural history. Davis purchased the land in the 1850s for a cotton plantation. Although there were other foodstuffs grown on the land, primarily for self-sufficiency, the agricultural censuses during the late-nineteenth century reveal that cotton was the primary cash crop, and that there were no orchards on the property. By the 1920s, the boll weevil had spread into central Georgia, making cotton a very risky crop. Wheat and peaches replaced cotton as the primary agricultural products. In the early 1970s, soybeans were introduced. The agricultural evolution of this plantation traces the broader agricultural evolution of middle Georgia.

No formal archaeological survey of the property is noted in the literature. However, during a brief walkover of the property, at least one concentration of projectile points and worked stone material was observed. A tenant on the property also pointed out two rock shelters which he reported as having been associated with prehistoric Indians. Although not documented in available maps or literature, historic archaeological resources were also noted by this tenant, which include the site of slave cabins, detached kitchen for the main house, and an auxiliary farm complex.

The exceptional architecture of the main house and the integrity of the agricultural evolution of this intact plantation make Mossy Hill a significant property in Georgia history.

8

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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CONTINUATION SHEET Verbal Boundary ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

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All in District 14, Houston County, Georgia. This boundary is described by a heavy black line on the enclosed two quadrangle maps, viz., Perry West and Henderson.