

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Clay County Multiple Resource Area

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Clay County's Early River and Road Based Settlement, 1834-1865

Post-Bellum Clay County and the Rise of the Railroads, 1880-1917

Clay County in the Early 20th Century, 1918-1940

C. Geographical Data

Clay County is located in the northeastern quadrant of the state of Mississippi. Its easternmost border is defined by the west bank of the Tombigbee River between the northeast corner of section 24, township 16, range 7 and the confluence of Tibbee Creek with the Tombigbee at the southeastern corner. The county juts to the north at the northwest corner of section 19, township 16, range 6 east, and continues north to the northeast corner of section 1, township 15, range 5. Its western boundaries begin at the northwest corner of section 6, township 15, range 4, east, and go south to the southwest corner of section 30, township 15, range 3, east. Southern boundaries go south again to the southwest corner of section 26, township 20, range 12 east, then to the northeast corner of section 26, township 20, range 14 east; then to the place on Tibbee Creek nearest the southeast corner of section 25, down the meanderings of Tibbee Creek to the southwest corner of section 18, township 19, range 16 east, east to the southeast corner of section 14, township 19, range 16, east, to Catalpa Creek, down the creek meanderings to its junction with Tibbee Creek, and down those meanderings to Tibbee Creek's junction with the Tombigbee. (State & County Boundaries, WPA Historic Records Survey, 1942.)

☒ See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

Kenneth H. P. Pool

Signature of certifying official

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

SEPT. 18, 1991

Date

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Patrick Anderson
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

11-15-91
Date

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA, CONTINUED

So defined, the county encompasses two major distinctive areas. The part of the county lying east of West Point and west of the floodplains of the Tombigbee River is Black Prairie land, historically and currently prime agricultural land. The large plantations of the early settlement era were located here. West of West Point, the land is divided by a number of northwest to southeast creeks draining toward the Tombigbee, and numerous hills. This section was settled by landowners operating on the scale of the family farm.

Alternate Highway 45 divides the county into these two main sections on a north-south line. Highway 50 runs east-west across the entire county, connecting Columbus, in Lowndes County to the east, with Houston, in Webster County, to the west. Highways 46 and 47 begin their northwestern routes out of Clay into Chickasaw County at Highway 50, west of the Chuquatonchee Creek. They run on opposite sides of Town Creek, a major tributary of the Tombigbee. Highway 46 goes through the communities of Griffith and Montpelier and then turns west toward Mantee, in Webster County. Highway 47 goes through the communities of Siloam, Palo Alto, and Brandtown before entering Chickasaw County. State Road 389 runs through the county south-north at the western side. Beginning at Starkville in Oktibbeha County to the south, 389 runs northwest to Pheba, then north to Montpelier, and then north from Montpelier into Chickasaw County. The Columbus & Greenville and the Illinois Central railroads traverse Clay county, the former generally east-west, the latter, north-south.

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

INTRODUCTION AND ORGANIZATION

Three broad context areas cover the types of resources which will be nominated in the multiple property submission for Clay County, Mississippi. The chronological historic contexts arising from a complete county survey are: Early River and Road Based Settlement, 1834-1865; Post-Bellum Clay County and the Rise of the Railroads, 1880-1917; and Clay County in the Early 20th Century, 1918-1940. Clay, a county created out of portions of four earlier counties, was legally established in 1871 and began business in 1872, the county designation coming some 42 years after the Choctaw and Chickasaw Cessions opened the land for non-Indian settlement. Surveyed and nominated resources include resources both predating and postdating county establishment. Three categories -- homesteads, commercial establishments, and educational facilities -- represent nearly all of the historic resources remaining in Clay County outside the county seat, West Point, which was covered in an earlier Multiple Resource Area nomination.

PREHISTORIC CLAY COUNTY

Occupation of the Clay County area began as the ancestors of the modern Indians crossed the Bering Strait and wandered down into North America. The first definite evidence of occupation of North America was by the PaleoIndians during the latter part of the Wisconsin glaciation (ca. 15,000-8,000 B.C.), although Indians might have been present millennia earlier. The Clay County area was apparently occupied continuously from the PaleoIndian period and through the succeeding Archaic, Gulf Formational, Miller, and Mississippian periods to historic contact. The time frame, encompassing approximately three millennia, saw the Indians evolve from nomadic hunters and gatherers into sedentary agriculturalists. To date there are 495 recorded archeological sites in Clay County, the overwhelming majority of which are prehistoric in origin. (Sparks, Prehistoric Settlement Patterns in Clay County, MS.)

EXPLORATION AND PRE-CESSION SETTLEMENT

Hernando DeSoto, the Spanish explorer who ventured into the recently-discovered American continent in the mid-sixteenth century, is said to have crossed the Tombigbee into what is now Clay County either at the place now called Barton's Ferry or at Columbus, depending on where Chicasa, the Chickasaw's main community, was located. (Ward, "Mississippi Archeology, December, 1986.) DeSoto stayed part of the winter in and near Chickasaw Indian villages north of what is now Clay County. He supported the Chickasaws in a conflict between chieftains, which may have brought him south again to Lyon's Bluff, a main camp of the Chocchuma Indians. (CC History, p. 3)

The next encounter among the Chickasaws, Choctaws, and European adventurers came as French and English explorers began claiming the local Indian territories and fighting, with Indian allies, to hold the land. Settlement by white men began in earnest after the French and Indian War and the conclusion of the American Revolution. Limited numbers of settlers made their way into the Clay County area in the mid-18th to early 19th centuries. Many were traders, whose names appear on early 19th century lists at the Choctaw Factory at St. Stephens (south along the

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EXPLORATION AND PRE-CESSION SETTLEMENT, CONTINUED

river). Some white families located within access of early roads and navigable streams. Gaines' Trace, Doak's Stand Road, and Andrew Jackson's Military Road opened territory inland from the river. Settlement of the area began in earnest, however, only after the Choctaw and Chickasaw Cessions in 1830 and 1832 and the departure of the Indians. Only one altered structure is known to have survived from this period, the much-modernized Burney-Henley House near Una, a now-enclosed log structure linked to a Chickasaw family whose son became Governor of the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma later in the 19th century. Other remnants of the Indian culture surviving to the present are burial mounds and portions of Indian trails incorporated into current routes. (Historical Geography/Tombigbee, p. 30)

CLAY COUNTY'S EARLY RIVER AND ROAD BASED SETTLEMENT, 1834-1865

The earliest settlements following the Treaties of Dancing Rabbit Creek and Pontotoc were made on the western banks of the Tombigbee. Among them were Waverly and Colbert. Other settlements developed at Tibbee, Siloam, Palo Alto, Cairo, Palestine, and other locations along early roads. The earliest roads added through the newly opened territory were the north-south Starkville-Houston Road, the Columbus-Coffeerville Road running from southeast to northwest, Doak's Stand Road (Now White's Road) from Athens to what is now West Point, and the Columbus-Mayhew Mission road to the northwest.

In their study Historical Geography of the Upper Tombigbee Valley, David Weaver and James Doster illustrate how river-oriented towns and roads in the area were augmented, in order, by "early trans-sectional highways, local farm-to-market roads, county seat connectors, and stage coach and post roads." Maps in their study show roads in 1820 leaving Columbus to go northwest toward the Mayhew Mission and Coffeerville, and north to Plymouth, west across the Tombigbee from Columbus and then almost due north to Cotton Gin Port. The sites of Plymouth and Cotton Gin Port, neither located in the present Clay County have long since been abandoned as towns. An 1840 map shows a revised road system, with a road due west to Starkville, a road due north to Athens, and a revised road to the northeast crossing the Tombigbee at the town of Colbert and continuing toward Houston. Many of these routes are in use as coach roads according to their 1860 map, but by 1880, railroads and several new market-based and county seat connecting roads appear. (Ibid. pp. 35-36, 40-41.)

Colbert, the first river based community on the west bank, and its successor, Barton, are described in detail in the nomination which put them on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. The only physical remnants of these communities are abandoned roads, the Barton Ferry site, and Cedar Oaks, an early dog trot home near Barton. The Waverly Plantation House, a National Landmark, was built on land purchased in 1836 by George Hampton Young, who, until his mansion was built about 1857, lived on property north of the present day West Point. A detailed

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EARLY RIVER AND ROAD BASED SETTLEMENT, CONTINUED

description of the mansion and its place in local history is part of its nomination to the National Register. Vinton, a river town begun about 1850, to the north of Barton's Ferry, was prosperous prior to the Civil War and was surviving as late as the 1890s, but the only evidence remaining is the Vinton Cemetery and portions of the road system in the northeasternmost area of the county.

Most early communities associated with roads developing through the newly opened land have met fates similar to those on the river. In the eastern part of the county, Tibbee retains its identity as a community, though the vandalized cemetery of its earliest settlers is the only remaining evidence of antebellum occupation. Other road-based communities, mostly to the west of the county seat, have largely survived in name only. Names of places where early groups of settlers are recorded include the following:

- Siloam, a community established about 1850 near the Siloam Baptist Church, is still a residential community, but with no commercial center, still oriented around Baptist and Methodist churches of early establishment but recent construction. Two altered antebellum structures survive, the H-plan Miller-Kerr house from 1857 located on Pea Ridge Road and the c.1859 Sloan-Robinson House a mile south toward Highway 50.
- Palo Alto, a trading center established in the 1840s, has as visible evidence the Palo Alto Cemetery north of the townsite. The townsite is listed on the National Register as a potentially rich site for historical archeology. The only antebellum structure here was moved from the City of West Point in 1986.
- Cairo, a settlement rather than commercially-focused community, was a recognized "place" from the 1850s. The William M. Gosa House, built nearby in 1854 beside the Starkville-Houston Road is the single remaining associated antebellum structure. A post-bellum remnant is the Cairo Cumberland Presbyterian Cemetery (1870s).
- Palestine, a loosely settled community, was associated most closely with a Methodist Church established there and with a cemetery and annual campground meetings. A school operated there in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The cemetery is the only intact physical survivor of this community, though a decayed two-story antebellum log house and the Turnage dogtrot are within the area.
- Tampico, a post office located somewhere near the intersection of State Road 389 and the Cedar Bluff-Henryville-Walker's Gin Road, apparently served plantations as far south as the late 19th century town of Pheba. Weekly newspaper columns were still being written from Tampico as late as the 1880s.

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EARLY RIVER AND ROAD BASED SETTLEMENT, CONTINUED

- Big Springs, a once-thriving community in the Kilgore Hills area, has nearly disappeared. Its cemetery's earliest burial is that of James Clark in 1858. The community once had a post office, professional medical and dental care, a Baptist church, a tannery, and flour and grist mills. The cemetery, a recently-built Baptist Church and a few homes are the remaining traces of the community.
- Clear Springs, also in the Kilgore Hills, to the north of Big Springs got its post office in 1847. Benjamin Kilgore, the doctor whose name is associated with early development in the area, ran the post office. Nothing remains of the homes, tanneries, store and school that were located in Clear Springs. Only the Kilgore cemetery remains as visible evidence of the town.
- Barr's Mill, settled about 1860 on Houlka Creek in the northern edge of the county, was just south of the present Brandtown community. No structural evidence remains of Jacob Barr's grist mill, sawmill, and gin operated by water power. A store and post office was also located here, then moved to Caradine.

Later communities established on increasing market and county seat roads and on the only antebellum railroad to cross the territory include:

- Old Montpelier, a community that "followed" a transient post office for several years, located on or near the old Starkville-Houston Road. To the south of the intersection where the Post Office started, the Old Montpelier Church and cemetery from about 1870 are the only remnants of the community.
- Griffith, late in developing a commercial focus, was an early area settled in the center of western Clay County. Three log or log-based houses remain in the general area, all of which may be ante-bellum: the Swinson one story, double pen dogtrot has been converted into a barn; the J.L. Stephens one and a half story log dogtrot has been remodeled recently by descendants of the original family; the frame and log one story dogtrot house built by members of the Watkins family has been abandoned. No schools, churches, or stores remain.
- Henryville, established at the crossing of the Starkville-Houston Road and the Columbus and Coffeetown Road, has as its monuments the recently remodeled Mt. Hebron Baptist Church and associated cemetery. In the late 1880s, when the Georgia Pacific was coming through the area, the town had several stores, two blacksmith shops, three schools, two gins, a woodworking shop and a molasses mill.

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EARLY RIVER AND ROAD BASED SETTLEMENT, CONTINUED

- Cedar Bluff, also located on the Columbus-Coffeeville Road was a community centered on a post office (established 1847) until the Georgia Pacific Railroad came through about 1889 and a small town was founded on the railroad. No railroad or commercial structures remain except for a waiting shelter moved from the tracks to a back yard and put into use as a storage shed/greenhouse. Several houses remain from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but many have been altered enough to prevent district nomination.
- Pine Bluff, a loosely-settled community centered on a church (and in the late 19th century, a school), has as its main visible focus, the Pine Bluff Cemetery.
- Belle-Una was settled in the first few decades after the Indian Cessions. The Una community's first focus was a store, post office, and gin at Belle, about two miles east of the present town. When the post office moved, so did the community, and Una grew to incorporate a brick kiln, churches, stores, a livery stable, a cotton gin, a grist mill, and a blacksmith shop. A decaying log and frame house which belonged to the early Lawson family is the oldest structural remnant. The Una School, an early consolidated county school for white students, the teacher's house, and two other late 19th and early 20th century homes are the historical buildings left in Una. A now encapsulated log house built c. 1900 and the Burney-Henley log house are east of Una.
- Brandtown, an agricultural community located on the land of one family, the Brands, is nominated as a district in this document. The "town" consists of a gin, a commissary store, and the homes of the landowners and their tenants. The community flourished in the years following Reconstruction and up to World War II.
- West Point, the county seat of Clay County, became an entity when the Mobile & Ohio Railroad paused there in the winter of 1858. The city's history is documented in nominations for the Central City and Court Street Historic Districts and in the recent West Point Multiple Resource Area nomination.

Few structures survive from this settlement period in Clay County history. The ones that do are residential. Other rural settlement types are agricultural, commercial, religious, and educational. No commercial, agricultural, educational, or religious structures from this early period survive in recognizable form. Detailed information on individual residential examples from the era is presented in the Residential Property Type section of the nomination (pp. F 1-3).

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POST-BELLUM CLAY COUNTY AND THE RISE OF THE RAILROADS, 1880-1917

Rural Clay County was most highly developed along expanding road systems and railroads after the Civil War. Once the Indian lands were opened to white settlers, the "civilization" of the area was accomplished quickly. In addition to the early settlement period, when cotton production was the primary economic force, the period following Reconstruction was full of expansion and activity. From the 1880s, when two new rail lines crossed the county, until about World War I, Clay County growth was substantial. The same categories of resources were important in this era: residential, agricultural, educational, religious, and commercial.

Nearly all of the surviving resources of this period are one or one-and-a-half story frame structures of the sort that sprang up nationwide along rail lines and an improving network of connecting roads. Rather than the "hand-made" nature of the earliest buildings, the homes, stores, churches, and schools of this period were more likely to be built of standard parts accessible at increasing numbers of railroad communities. Until brickyards became more common at the end of the 19th century, almost all building types were essentially light balloon-framed structures with shake shingle roofs, weatherboard or board and batten exteriors, and brick or stump footings. Surviving structures from this period are most often clustered in communities or the remnants of communities established during the rail expansion and agriculture fueled times of prosperity. Communities established in Clay County during this period follow.

- Caradine, a late 19th century version of Barr's Mill, was named for the owner of the cotton gin and grist mill that centered the community. The community southwest of Brandtown included a store and post office, a grist mill, and a school. A few older residences remain in the area of Caradine.
- Abbott, the product of one man's ambition, survives today in one well-kept house and a few decaying and abandoned stores and houses. F.M. Abbott was a former northern soldier who returned to the Palo Alto area and served for a time in Mississippi's Reconstruction government. Abbott built up a town in the 1880s that boasted a hotel, four stores, a gin, a school, a doctor, a grist mill, harness and blacksmith shops, and several residences. F.M. Abbott owned the town and rented its facilities. His efforts to bring a railroad line or spur through Abbott failed, and he moved to Selma, Alabama about 1900. By the middle of the 20th century, Abbott had become a ghost town.
- Montpelier, the current community, was established at the end of the 19th century. A cross roads town sprang up, and the often-moved Montpelier Post Office settled there with a gin and a few existing stores in 1891. The history of Montpelier and its

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POST-BELLUM CLAY COUNTY AND THE RISE OF THE RAILROADS, CONTINUED

remaining structures is detailed in the attached nomination for the small Montpelier Historic District.

- Pheba, a railroad-created town built in the late 1880s and 1890s, is described in the attached nominations for the Pheba Post Office /McCarter's Store and West Clay County Agricultural School.
- Mhoon Valley, on land settled before the Civil War, became a busy community when the Georgia Pacific Railroad established a station there in the late 19th century. Its only remnants are a waiting shelter provided for passengers in the mid-20th century, after the depot had been closed, and some old residences. Among the latter is the Cooper/Millard log house, nominated individually.
- Westbrook, the northernmost community in Clay County, being immediately south of the Chickasaw County Line west of Una, was a small collection of stores and residences. The remaining historic structure in Westbrook is a rural store, now closed and vacant, and the foundations of what area old-timers describe as a "coffin house." The community also had a cotton gin and a blacksmith shop.

Commercial and agricultural development in rural Clay County is, with one exception, represented in existing one story frame, rectangularly massed store buildings and two story frame cotton gins with metal exteriors. The one exception to the frame construction is the brick U.S. Post Office, formerly a bank, located in Pheba. Virtually all of the resources represent late 19th or early 20th century commercial enterprises. No great variety exists in these buildings. That, taken in combination with the spare number of rural commercial resources, is the best measure of the impact that the convergence of three railroads at West Point had on the remainder of the county. West Point was essentially a new community begun in 1858, when the Mobile & Ohio Railroad reached the intersection with the Columbus-Houston-Coffeeville Road. The additions of the Canton, Aberdeen, & Nashville Railroad in 1884 and the Georgia-Pacific in 1889, both with stations in West Point, created numerous feeder station communities which flourished into the 1920s.

The surviving commercial buildings at Pheba are creations of the activity stirred by the Georgia-Pacific when it passed through a settled, but not commercially focused, area. Pheba's store and post office are the best remaining commercial remnants of a once-thriving small town, a town created when a local woman, Miss Pheba Petty, donated the land to encourage development. All of the town's resources date from the last decade of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th.

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POST-BELLUM CLAY COUNTY AND THE RISE OF THE RAILROADS, CONTINUED

Montpelier and Brandtown, though not connected with the railroads, were also phenomena of the agricultural economy and the farm-to-market system operating up until between the World Wars. Montpelier was located where two important roads diverged in the northwestern section of the county. Brandtown, also built near a crossroads, was the commercial project of a single family, the Brands. The latter was a community consisting of a cotton gin, commissary, and residences associated with the owners and the workers of the gin. The Brands are reported to have been in the area prior to the Civil War, but the community represented by the existing buildings is a late 19th and early 20th century community.

Remaining community religious resources from the period are so few and in such fragile condition that none have been included in this nomination. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church at Cedar Bluff (moved and rebuilt c. 1894) the Methodist Church at Pheba (c. 1896), and the Old Montpelier Missionary Baptist Church (c.1870) are the surviving structures. Of the three, only the Methodist Church is still in use. The Old Montpelier Church is privately owned, vacant and unused. The Presbyterian in Cedar Bluff is abandoned and deteriorating. An intensive study would be needed to determine National Register eligibility.

Rural educational institutions surviving from Clay County's highest growth period represent the history of the changes in the methods of teaching and learning important to the development of county residents. Fortunately, enough buildings remain county-wide to produce a nearly complete picture of school evolution. The resources nominated here represent either the best or the only remaining schools of their types. As a group they describe the changes that took place within the years 1880-1940.

The resources are: a one-room frame school at Tibbee; the Una Consolidated School, built about 1912, an early product of the school consolidation effort in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; the West Clay County Agricultural School, a survivor of the early 20th century efforts to improve agricultural and household economies; and Mary Holmes Junior College, established as a private seminary to train black girls and altered to become the center of education for Clay County's black community. Architecturally, these largely vernacular resources represent the simpler styles of rural buildings that housed educational facilities. Historically, they represent the evolution of thought about how and what the students should learn. A more thorough discussion of changing building forms and educational practices is given in the Educational Property Type section.

Agricultural practices evolved from "hand made" to "machine age" during these same years. Figures in the Agriculture section of the 1940 U.S. Census give statistics for Mississippi agriculture from 1839-1939. Cotton production for 1909, though not as high as in 1889 or 1899, was higher than in later 20th century records for 1919, 1924, and 1934. (Chapter VII, pp. 784-785) Related tables show that the

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number of black and other non-white farm owners grew from 750,000 in 1900 to about 920,000 in 1920. (Chapter III, pp. 140-141) The two surviving communities which best represent the era are Brandtown, already noted, and the black community at Mathews Gin. Both were centered on the land to produce the cotton, the machinery to prepare it to go to market, and the necessities of groups of rural workers, like stores.

The increase in the number of minority farmers was reflected in the growth of a number of communities centered on black-owned agricultural operations. Two of these communities, the Davis community just east of West Point and the Mathews community near Union Star Church, were established in the first or second decade of the 20th century and prospered until the Depression era. In another, descendants of Hugh Valentine still live on a portion of the land from his prosperous farm near Pheba. Remnants of these communities and of black farmsteads established in rural Clay County through early 20th century farm rehabilitation programs survive.

Unfortunately, records of individual farm owners and crops were not kept until a county recording program was established in 1965. The only agricultural records available for the early-to-mid 20th century list only total numbers of farmers and total agricultural crop production by county. (Luther Swords, former Clay County Agricultural Extension Service Agent. Interviewed by Joan Embree, architectural historian, by phone, August 8, 1991.) Some few residential groupings survive from these old communities, but only the Mathews Gin neighborhood, established about 1917, still has its gin building. The Mathews Gin and its builder's house are among individual nominations resulting from the survey because of the importance of their physical survival to an understanding of black enterprise communities.

CLAY COUNTY IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY, 1918-1940

Although the 20th century began well in Clay County, the final historic period between the World Wars brought changes which resulted in the near abandonment of the county for all but residential purposes. Of the nominated resources, only three date from this period: the replacement dormitory at the West Clay County Agricultural School and the Barr Library and Pavillion at Mary Holmes Junior College, (all c. 1920). No rural commercial, agricultural, or residential resources are nominated from this era.

As the decade of the 19'teens and World War I concluded, the boll weevil was advancing on the local single-crop economy. With cotton crops devastated farmers began turning to alternate agricultural practices. Clay County followed neighboring Oktibbeha County into the dairying business, began cattle raising in earnest, and planted hay, corn, and other crops in addition to cotton. The 1920s continued to be good for rural communities where both black and white farmers operated family-sized farms and shipped their products to market in West Point either on the train or on a

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CLAY COUNTY IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY, CONTINUED

much-improved system of gravel roads. (Mississippi Builder, pp. 14-15, Aug. 6, 1926) Trains made regular stops at some rural stations and could be flagged at others, so the railroad-spawned towns continued as marketing and transport centers for their areas.

The city of West Point was adding dairy and meat-processing facilities -- Swift and Company built a plant at the west edge of downtown c. 1928 -- and increasing its stature by its roll in county government and in the promotion and accessibility of the family car and new farm vehicles. During and following the Depression of the early 1930s rural areas of the county began to lose family farms, population, and their railroad-related importance. By the early 1940s automobile and truck transportation had changed the way farms were managed to the advantage of large-scaled operations, the importance of railroad transportation had decreased, and the rural communities were losing population as unnecessary farm hands moved into bigger towns to fill jobs in commerce and industry.

The 1940 U.S. Census verified the shift in agricultural economics by recording that "In 1939 the acreage of cotton harvested was 22,811,004 or a decline of 47.2 percent from 437,227,488 acres harvested in 1929. Unprofitable returns in cotton in recent years and recent farm programs which encourage diversified farming practices are largely responsible for the shift in the South from the production of cotton to annual legumes, lespideza, corn, and other crops." (Chapter VII, p. 703)

CONCLUSION

The history of rural Clay County is best described today by structures which were the center of rural life in the years after the county was settled and before World War II. Existing structures which embody this history are of three main types: residential buildings and their associated agricultural outbuildings (i.e. homesteads); commercial buildings and groups of buildings which served as the centers of rural "neighborhoods" or communities; and educational buildings, focal points of local education and community pride.

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type Residential

II. Description

The county-wide historic structures survey conducted in the spring and summer of 1989 found that only about 400 resources remain from the years between the opening of the territory and 1940. Of these resources, more than half the residences are abandoned, vacant, or in use as storage buildings. Of the inhabited half, few have escaped physical alterations which diminish their integrity as representatives of their eras. Alarming, some of the most intact residential structures and most unusual examples of a style or type of building are among those underused or abandoned. Examples in the latter category include the nominated Powell/Vail house near Pheba, and the Cooper/Millard House in Mhoon Valley. Residences in this category which were not nominated because of their current physical condition include a high-style Craftsman house built by Ben Walker near

III. Significance

Rural residential properties in Clay County can be significant for architectural and/or historical importance. Houses important primarily for architectural form are the best examples found of their style or form from their time period. Houses in the Greek Revival, log, and early and late dogtrot styles nominated describe the talents and aspirations of their builders and occupants through the years. They also describe construction methods and materials available in their locations. A comparison between the Charles R. Jordan House in Tibbee and the Powell-Vail near Pheba illuminates the difference that income and purchasable talent (and perhaps, sophisticated taste) makes in homesteads.

The Jordan House is a vernacular form taking its massing from the Greek Revival and its detailing from Gothic and Greek Revival. Its interior is plastered, its moldings are finished in faux bois, its mantels are made in simple but classical style. The Powell-Vail House has an open central passage for ventilation (no jib doors, as in Jordan), its interior walls are flush boards, its moldings plain, its

IV. Registration Requirements

Residential properties in Clay County may be historically or architecturally significant, or both. Properties cited for their architectural significance must meet a higher standard of integrity than those cited primarily for historical associations. Properties cited for historical associations are allowed more alteration and divergence from original form and materials when their links to importance in local history are those of events or of people, rather than of form. This is especially true when the people and/or events have been crucial to the settlement and/or development of the community or of a rural area. The study of integrity involved in the designation of a National Register property requires integrity of: setting and location; design, workmanship, and materials; and feeling and association. Buildings with the highest levels of historical and architectural significance should be the ones proposed for listing.

Setting and location are crucial to the significance of rural properties. Lacking the architectural sophistication of houses in towns, rural resources best describe the historic importance of an area if they are located on their original sites and if their setting still reflects the era when they were built. It is the case in Clay County that some smaller houses were picked up and moved to suit changing family needs or to establish new homesteads. All but one of the nominated

☒ See continuation sheet

☒ See continuation sheet for additional property types

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DESCRIPTION OF RESIDENTIAL RESOURCES, CONTINUED

Palo Alto about 1917, and two remaining cabins identified with the German Community at Tibbee c.1896.

Rural residential architecture in Clay County consists entirely of vernacular forms, from the highest style Greek Revival early houses through later Victorian and Craftsman examples. The forms found in Clay County are similar to those represented in nominations from other sections of Mississippi. They cannot be compared in detail by numbers and types with resources of other counties, however, because Clay is the first county in the state to be totally surveyed.

Generally, the houses built most often from the opening of the land into the early 20th century were two-room central hall or dogtrot houses with rear ells or shed additions and an occasional finished loft space for childrens' bedrooms/dormitories. As already mentioned, five vernacular Greek Revival antebellum houses remain. Of these, the Charles R. Jordan House in Tibbee is the only one nominated. This is because, of the remaining four, three have been moved (and two of those greatly increased in size by modern additions), and one has been altered from two stories to one. Other antebellum survivors are significant for their plans and/or styles and their rarity.

Four double-pen, log, dogtrot houses have survived more or less intact in scattered locations. Of these four, only the Robert Cooper House in Mhoon Valley has been nominated. Though it is the youngest of the survivors, having been started in 1860 and completed after the Civil War, it is one of only two which have not been moved from their original locations, and the only one which has not undergone alterations which change its appearance. Though unoccupied and in need of repair, the Robert Cooper House best conveys the historical picture of how these houses were built and how they functioned. Associated with it is a double-pen log barn, the only such antebellum barn known to survive in the county. Several other log dogtrot houses, some of uncertain date, survive, but most have been incorporated into later structures or altered significantly.

Two interesting variations on the traditional dogtrot house were observed in Clay County. One variation consists of a dogtrot house in which all four corners contain shed rooms built beneath the roofline of the front and rear porches, leaving, in effect, a recessed central loggia on the front and rear instead of an open porch. The Powell-Vail house is the more intact of two examples of this variation found in the county. The other variation from the traditional dogtrot is a form in which a conventional dogtrot house has a rear ell that is connected to the front part of the house by a second dogtrot breezeway, in such a way that the two breezeways intersect on the porch. A house with this plan is located near Cedar Bluff.

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II. RESIDENTIAL DESCRIPTION, CONTINUED

Another important antebellum house, the William M. Gosa House between Cairo and Old Montpelier, has not been nominated because of its present decaying and altered condition. It is extremely unfortunate that this house, the only remaining antebellum rural I-House in the county, and one with a good historic pedigree, has been allowed to fall into such a deteriorated condition.

Post-bellum styles of domestic architecture nominated individually and in conjunction with commercial areas are representatives of the dogtrot and Victorian vernacular styles. The dogtrots and central hall vernacular farmhouses were most consistently found alone, as part of a homestead, or in smaller settlements. Victorian vernacular forms were more common in the late 19th century communities associated with the expanding railroads or the changing farm-to-market road systems. Individually nominated as the best remaining representative of the early 20th century dogtrot style is the Turnage House near Montpelier. Except for a small shed addition for a bathroom at the rear of the left pen, the exterior of the house looks much as it did in 1907, when it was built by Virgil Reid for his farm family. The Turnages have lived in the house since 1915. No individual examples of the Victorian vernacular style have been nominated, partially because two of the most interesting survivors have been abandoned and are in questionable physical condition. Potential nominees remain in the communities of Cedar Bluff, Montpelier, and Pheba, but further historical research would be necessary to justify these essentially commonplace houses for registration.

III. RESIDENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE, CONTINUED

doors, plank, its mantels, layers of planks. The Powell-Vail House was near no town when it was built; its owners were not owners of large amounts of land. The Jordan house was built near the developing city of West Point, on a rail line, by an important landowner who participated in civic duties and activities. The Powell-Vail House is the more typical county-wide, where sturdiness and practicality seem to outweigh considerations of style, no matter the time when they were built. An exception to this, a lone and outstanding example of the Craftsman/Bungalow style near Palo Alto, the Ben Walker House, unfortunately cannot be nominated because it has been vacant and neglected for so long that its future is endangered. It is the only Craftsman early 20th century house in rural Clay County that has not been significantly altered.

IV. RESIDENTIAL REQUIREMENTS, CONTINUED

resources, however, are located on their original sites. Although the settings for all resources have remained rural, some have been altered by the construction of nearby mid-to-late-20th century buildings. Where this has occurred, it is important that the resources carry enough architectural and/or historical importance to overcome the diminishment of their surroundings.

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IV. RESIDENTIAL REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS, CONTINUED

Nominated buildings must have a high degree of integrity in design, workmanship, and materials. Architecturally significant buildings are required to have maintained original features to a higher degree than buildings nominated primarily for their historical associations. Whatever period of settlement or development these structures represent, it is essential that they still convey a sense of their time period and original use. A complete survey of the county being available, the residential properties nominated can be certified to be the best representatives of their types within county boundaries. Limited types of alterations have been made to the nominated properties and those alterations are generally substitutions of materials -- machine nails for square, concrete underpinnings for brick, new siding or salvaged siding for deteriorated -- which have been used to keep the buildings standing.

Buildings exhibiting integrity of setting, location, design, workmanship, and materials can be said to also retain the final required attributes, those of feeling and association with their historical times and places.

I. NAME OF PROPERTY TYPE: COMMERCIAL RESOURCES

II. DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL RESOURCES

Historic commercial properties are rare survivors in rural Clay County. Once common to most settlements and on old roads, country stores, cotton gins, and old post offices have largely been removed altogether or replaced. Only nine historic stores were located in the 1989 resources inventory, and only one of those, McCarter's Store at Pheba, is still in operation. The others have been abandoned altogether or are being used as storage buildings or residences.

All of the survivors are examples of the late 19th/early 20th century, simple, wood frame, rectangularly massed box, with some variations as to living quarters, porches, and other attachments. Four stores and two cotton gins (labeled here commercial rather than industrial because of their integral connections with business centers), are included in the Multiple Resource Area submissions. Three of the structures, built in the 1890s, are front-gabled stores with integral porches and enclosed or enclosed and attached living quarters at the rear: the Montpelier Post Office, the Cross-Sparks Store in Montpelier, and McCarter's Store in Pheba. The fourth, the Brandtown Commissary, a c. 1905 store, is also front-gabled, but has a shed roofed porch at the first floor level and no living quarters.

There is so little variation in time and style among these examples that it is impossible to discuss "the physical development of the country store" in a meaningful way. The older communities which might have had examples of ante-bellum or mid-19th century styles have largely disappeared altogether, and by the second third of the 20th century, the rural economy was declining and the dominant county seat towns were taking most of the commercial business development.

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II. DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL RESOURCES, CONTINUED

Of the nominated stores, the Cross-Sparks is the only one which contains a living apartment within the rectangular mass of the original building. It had four rooms connected by doors to each other and the store and very plain board walls and surrounds. Both the Montpelier Post Office and McCarter's Store have side-gabled living quarters attached at the rear and have incorporated part of the store into those apartments. Both have been altered in the 20th century. The Cross-Sparks and McCarter stores are both in need of repair and maintenance work.

The cotton gins nominated are Mathews Gin in the community of the same name and the Brand Gin at Brandtown. Both are two story frame structures with corrugated metal siding. Both have at least part of their equipment intact. Both gins are out of service -- the Mathews Gin since the mid 1960s, the Brand Gin since 1979, when the Brand family produced the last cotton crop. The Brand Gin was built c. 1905, as a replacement for an earlier gin that burned. The Matthews Gin was built c. 1917 by the Mathews family.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMERCIAL RESOURCES

Commercial properties nominated to the National Register are considered eligible primarily for their historical associations with their communities and Clay County. The structures are significant as examples of a type inasmuch as they are built of locally available materials, by local labor, in traditional forms. They vary little in style, as described above.

All of the nominated resources are important as unusual survivors of once-common forms and as integral parts of the histories of the communities they served. The stores served as the centers of trade and information for their customers. The gins, though seasonal in operation, were the most essential economic machines for both communities, neither of which had railroad facilities close to hand.

An interesting comparison does develop between the gins. Mathews Gin was established as the center of an early 20th century black community and was the main source of income for the four founding brothers and other early area families. The Brand Gin was the property of a white family with large landholdings and several resident tenant families. The two operations, though of similar ages, represent two strikingly different styles of early 20th century life in Clay County. The Brand operation, with commissary, owners', and tenant workers' related houses, represents the more "traditional" form of cotton processing and land ownership until about the middle of the 20th century. Mathews Gin represents the early entry of black entrepreneurs into land ownership and commercial operation. Several black settlements and early 20th century commercial areas were identified in the 1989 Historic Resources Survey, but few had remaining historic resources justify for National Register nominations.

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IV. COMMERCIAL REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Commercial properties in Clay County may be historically or architecturally significant, or both. Properties cited for their architectural significance must meet a higher standard of integrity than those cited primarily for historical associations. Properties cited for historical associations are allowed more alteration and divergence from original form and materials when their links to importance in local history are those of events or of people, rather than of form. This is especially true when the people and/or events have been crucial to the settlement and/or development of the community or of a rural area. The study of integrity involved in the designation of a National Register property requires integrity of: setting and location; design, workmanship, and materials; and feeling and association. Buildings with the highest levels of historical and architectural significance should be the ones proposed for listing.

Setting and location are crucial to the significance of rural properties. Lacking the architectural sophistication of resources in towns, rural resources best describe the historic importance of an area if they are located on their original sites and if their setting still reflects the era when they were built. Of the nominated resources, the Brandtown commissary is the only one moved (from its original site just in front of the gin to across the road). Although the settings for all resources have remained rural, some have been altered by the construction of nearby mid-to-late 20th century buildings. As with rural residential properties, the structures must be significant enough architecturally and historically to outweigh the impact of these later buildings.

Nominated buildings must have a high degree of integrity in design, workmanship, and materials. Architecturally significant buildings are required to have maintained original features to a higher degree than buildings nominated primarily for their historical associations. Whatever period of settlement or development these structures represent, it is essential that they still convey a sense of their time period and original use. A complete survey of the county being available, the commercial properties nominated can be certified to be the best representatives of their types within county boundaries. Limited types of alterations have been made to the nominated properties and those alterations are generally substitutions of materials -- machine nails for square, concrete underpinnings for brick, new siding or salvaged siding for deteriorated -- which have been used to keep the buildings standing.

Buildings exhibiting integrity of setting, location, design, workmanship, and materials can be said to also retain the final required attributes, those of feeling and association with their historical times and places.

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I. NAME OF PROPERTY TYPE; EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

II. DESCRIPTION OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Educational buildings in Clay County are important primarily for their historical associations with periods of changing ideas about how education is best housed and delivered, and with architectural styles concurrent with the schools' construction dates. Among the buildings nominated, there is great room for comparison -- particularly of form, materials, and setting. All are nominated primarily for their historical associations.

The Tibbee School, nominated as the best example of the one-room school which dotted the county before the turn of the century, is located in what was a thriving community, near the intersection of two historic roads. Tibbee School and its black counterpart Raspberry School, though similar in form, do show variations in the forms of the legendary one-room schoolhouse. Tibbee school's construction date is unknown. Though deed records indicate that land was donated for a school by 1861, the surviving building shows evidence of being of a later date. It has a balloon frame held together by square nails (and modern replacements). The interior is sided in "beaded ceiling," a type of milled, tongue-and-groove finishing wood commonly used from the late 1870s through the 1920s. The style of the building, with boxed eaves and gable returns, is similar to the style of the homes built by members of Tibbee's German Community about 1896.

Raspberry School, in the Kilgore Hills, is a simpler version of a simple form. It has tongue-and-groove floors and is supported on brick piers as the Tibbee School is, but there are no interior wall boards. The balloon framing, held together with machine nails, is visible, as is the inside of the weatherboards which close it in. The Tibbee school has front and rear doors in the gable ends and windows on the sides. The Raspberry School has one gable end and one side door, with miscellaneous windows on the remaining two sides. The Raspberry school appears to have been altered. It has been abandoned for several years, and though important, has not been nominated because of its condition.

The Una School is both architecturally and historically important. It is an early (1912) example of the advanced ideas about how schools should operate and fit into a state-wide system of educational standards. The school is set back from the road between Una and Prairie, in Monroe County. It is raised off the ground on brick pillars, has a central, double-door entry under a centered front porch, and a steep, pyramidal roof topped by a hipped-roof ventilation/bell tower. The Una School is a significant advancement over the traditional one-room school house both in size and function. It provided two school rooms across a wide central hall and an auditorium for meetings, programs, and other activities made possible by the larger student body and the better funding made available by county taxes. Some time before it was superseded in 1937, indoor bathrooms were added in a small wing at the rear.

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II. DESCRIPTION OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES, CONTINUED

The West Clay County Agricultural School at Pheba, though only remaining in part, exemplifies the more substantial and more vocationally-oriented rural schools that were formed in outlying areas of rural counties. The original school building is brick, two stories tall, and set apart on its own block of land near what was, in 1909, the bustling center of the town. When it was converted into a boarding school for girls learning homemaking and boys learning agricultural skills, two two story brick dormitories were added, along with smaller, frame auxilliary buildings. Of these Agriculture School related buildings, only the boys' dorm, rebuilt in 1920 after a fire and the main building remain. The dormitory, frame with brick veneer, had shared rooms in which everything but linens was provided. Tuition to the school was free, but students were required to pay for their board. The aim of the agricultural schools was to train students in physical facilities which served as teaching aids, from home economics labs to croplands and barns. These two buildings, though closed up now and in need of repair, are the only physical evidence of an early 20th century experiment in making schools and learning more relevant.

The Mary Holmes District nominated in this Multiple Resource Area nomination includes the Main Building, built in 1940, five structures built from 1900 to 1920, and a small, non-contributing building in the main campus area. The contributing buildings include the Barr Library and the Pavillion, c 1920, the two-story brick North Hall, built as a boy's dorm c. 1900, the laundry building, c. 1910, and the Farmhouse, formerly the President's house, c. 1912.

Buildings at Mary Holmes College are important primarily for their historical association with early and continuing educational facilities for black students. The Barr Library and the Pavillion, however, are good examples of the Craftsman style in vogue in the 1920s. The historic campus buildings range from the small, two story Farmhouse to the three story Main Hall which houses most of the classrooms and administrative offices. The original three story brick structure built in 1897 burned to the ground in 1899 and a more modest building replaced it in 1900. Once again, in 1939, fire destroyed the main administration/classroom/dormitory building, so the present frame structure, built on the foundations of its predecessor is the longest survivor. The brick laundry building and North Hall, formerly a dormitory, are strictly utilitarian in style -- a measure of the economies maintained at this church-supported school in the early 20th century. The Farmhouse and the Main Hall have asbestos shingle siding and Colonial Revival details which were apparently applied about 1940, when the Main Hall was reconstructed.

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III. SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Few educational buildings remain outside the City of West Point to record the history of the changes in the methods of teaching and learning important to the development of Clay County's citizens. Fortunately, the survivors include a set of buildings that provides an "overview" of educational practices.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a movement toward the consolidation and more efficient operation of the schools began. Up until the Civil War, education had been provided by families or by local communities. (Education in the States, p. 648) The public schools which were to develop were initially based on the private chartered schools in the larger, more settled communities and on the provision of 16th section lands for financing a public school system. On the eve of the Civil War, no state taxes for the support of public schools had been enacted, although Albert Gallatin Brown managed to get the first statewide school law passed in 1846, while he was serving as Governor of Mississippi. The Civil War years concentrated family efforts on war and survival, so schools were temporarily ignored. (Ibid.)

Following the war, the state teachers' association asked for the creation of a school system "to meet the needs of all the people," and requested the establishment of training schools to prepare black teachers for work at black schools. The Constitution of 1869 and the legislation that finally established a statewide school system in 1870 reflected the teachers' requests as published in "A Plea for the Common Schools." (Ibid., pg. 649) The Constitution of 1890 was similar to that of 1869, but specified that black and white children should attend separate schools. (Ibid., p. 651)

The Tibbee and Raspberry Schools are the best remaining examples of the early, localized, one-room schools, and the Una School is the best remaining example of the next step in Clay County's educational advancement - the consolidated school. The Una School took white children from the Bell, Hogpen, and Alliance schools, who were transported first in wagons, later in school buses. Many activities for the three communities centered on the school projects and teams and were produced in the common auditorium. The Una School last held classes in 1936. County school district records show that in the 1920s and 1930s, when the white schools were consolidated into a few buildings county-wide, schools for black students still tended to be rural one or two room buildings. All Una students now attend school in West Point.

Consolidation efforts, begun in earnest in the first decade of the 20th century, added a new emphasis when the state superintendent recommended that agricultural high schools which included work experience and boarding facilities be set up to give practical as well as cultural direction to students. Fifty county boarding agricultural schools were established between 1908 and 1919. Each was required by law to own at least 20 acres and to train students in livestock and

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III. SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES, CONTINUED

poultry raising and farm cropping methods. (Education in the States, p.652) Clay County's remaining example of this specialized schooling is the former West Clay County Agricultural School at Pheba. Opened in 1912, the school was given 25 acres and the 1908 Pheba High School. A girl's dormitory and a barn were the first additions, a boy's dorm and a Home Science and Mechanics building were added by 1917, as well as 45 acres of land. The boy's dorm burned and was rebuilt in 1920, and it is that building and the original Pheba High School building which survive. (Clay County History, pp. 104-105)

A report written by State School Superintendent W.H. Smith for the years 1913-15 describes his views on the need for the type of training offered at the agricultural schools: (Education in the States, p. 653)

Education for culture is a noble ideal, but it is needless to talk of higher culture for the great mass of humanity until they are better housed, fed, and clothed, and until they have surplus leisure and are taught to use that leisure rationally. Our civilization rests on agriculture and we must learn to gain culture through agriculture or go without culture for the masses.

Discipline, attention to detail, and the study of practical home-related arts were, along with traditional religion, the aims also of the church-sponsored school which located just west of West Point in the late 1890s. Mary Holmes began its Clay County operations on donated land, moving from Jackson after a disastrous fire in 1895. It was one of a number of private schools established by northern churches and individuals to educate black children in the post-Civil-War era. The school was named for an Illinois philanthropist and educator by her daughter and husband, who raised money for and helped finance the school founded by the Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church.

Mary Holmes's place in the history of educational development in Clay County has been secured by almost a century of efforts to prepare children to take their places in meaningful jobs and civic responsibilities. From 1897 until the mid-1950s, when public schools began to address the need for black students to receive educations equivalent to white students, Mary Holmes was the leading county black educational institution. Though it began with the goal of teaching girls, it expanded its aims over the years to include an elementary school, boy students, high school training, and finally, conversion to an accredited junior college. The publication "Something of a Faith," produced for the school's 90th anniversary in 1982, listed a paragraph of figures showing that, as late as the 1930s, tens of thousands of the state's black children had no access to local high schools. (Something of a Faith, p.22)

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IV. EDUCATIONAL REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Educational properties in Clay County are primarily significant for their historical associations. Properties cited for historical associations are allowed more alteration and divergence from original form and materials when their links to importance in local history are those of events or of people, rather than of form. This is especially true when the people and/or events have been crucial to the settlement and/or development of the community or of a rural area. The study of integrity involved in the designation of a National Register property requires integrity of: setting and location; design, workmanship, and materials; and feeling and association. Buildings with the highest levels of historical and architectural significance should be the ones proposed for listing.

Setting and location are crucial to the significance of rural properties. Lacking the architectural sophistication of buildings in towns, rural resources best describe the historic importance of an area if they are located on their original sites and if their setting still reflects the era when they were built. It is the case in Clay County that some smaller buildings were picked up and moved to suit changing needs or to establish new schools. The nominated resources, however, are all located on their original sites.

Nominated buildings must have a high degree of integrity in design, workmanship, and materials. Architecturally significant buildings are required to have maintained original features to a higher degree than buildings nominated primarily for their historical associations. Whatever period of settlement or development these structures represent, it is essential that they still convey a sense of their time period and original use. A complete survey of the county being available, the educational properties nominated can be certified to be the best representatives of their types within county boundaries. Limited types of alterations have been made to the nominated properties and those alterations are generally substitutions of materials -- machine nails for square, concrete underpinnings for brick, new siding or salvaged siding for deteriorated -- which have been used to keep the buildings standing.

Buildings exhibiting integrity of setting, location, design, workmanship, and materials can be said to also retain the final required attributes, those of feeling and association with their historical times and places.

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

Clay County's historic structures were inventoried in a survey funded by the Department of Archives and History in the spring and summer of 1989. Joan Embree, a private preservation consultant, conducted the survey under contract with MDAH. Information used in this nomination is based on data collected on 400 MDAH Historic Resource Inventory forms from the survey. The forms provide photographic documentation of each property, along with a physical description, ownership and locational details, and detailed sketches of structural form and related outbuildings.

The three main emphasis areas covered in the nomination arose from the survey data as the most logical for the documentation necessary for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The best remaining historic structural resources in Clay describe continuing homestead creation, the development and decline of rural commercial resources, and the evolution of the local educational system. Although centennial publications offered thumbnail historical sketches of past and present settlements, sources for information about vernacular houses and farmsteads, about rural commercial development and the changing schools, had to be located in books, reports, and files in a number of city, county, and university offices and libraries.

☒ See continuation sheet

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☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency

- ☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Specify repository: Mississippi Department of Archives and History

I. Form Prepared By

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IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS, CONTINUED

Explanations of the significance of the historical periods as represented by these property types are included in the statement of historical context. The contextual areas may, of course be expanded by further research, and the number of nominated properties may be increased by the inclusion of properties surveyed and identified as important, but believed ineligible for nomination without physical stabilization and/or further historical study. The contextual categories were also those which allowed best for comparisons of like resources. The Registration Requirements evolved out of the properties available for nomination.

This nomination and the survey which preceded it were planned and organized as the basis for further study of cultural and historical resources in Clay County and for comparison with findings in other Mississippi counties as additional surveys are completed. Additional study areas have been suggested by this survey and nomination. Additional historic contexts and amendments to initial contexts may result from investigations into the following questions:

1. How can the historical importance of a community or settlement be recorded in the absence of eligible properties on which to base contextual statements and National Register nominations?
2. How do the remnants of Clay County's historical communities compare with similar communities in other counties?
3. How does the very limited number of remaining historical churches in Clay County compare with like resources in other counties? Can a case be made for nomination of these limited resources to the National Register? Church communities were common among the earliest settlements. Does their disappearance preclude an official recognition of their importance?
4. Do ethnic communities such as the German Colony at Tibbee and the Irish Colony near Montpelier deserve additional historic recognition although their physical remnants are decaying or gone?
5. Can the archeological record of the pre-historic and historic Indians living in the Clay County area improve our understanding of the later European settlement patterns and development?
6. Were there county-government-generated factors which influenced the development and decline of communities outside of West Point, the county seat?

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