

STATE:

Arkansas

COUNTY:

Randolph

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY DATE

JAN 18 1974

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:

OLD DAVIDSONVILLE STATE HISTORIC MONUMENT

AND/OR HISTORIC:

Lawrence - Davidsonville

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

Boundaries as shown on annexed map

CITY OR TOWN:

Black Rock vic.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

First

STATE

Arkansas

CODE

05

COUNTY:

Randolph

CODE

121

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY
(Check One)

- ☐ District ☐ Building
☒ Site ☐ Structure
☐ Object

OWNERSHIP

- ☐ Public
☐ Private
☐ Both

Public Acquisition:

- ☐ In Process
☐ Being Considered

STATUS

- ☐ Occupied
☒ Unoccupied
☐ Preservation work
in progress

ACCESSIBLE
TO THE PUBLIC

- Yes:
☐ Restricted
☒ Unrestricted
☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Agricultural ☐ Government ☒ Park
☐ Commercial ☐ Industrial ☐ Private Residence
☐ Educational ☐ Military ☐ Religious
☐ Entertainment ☐ Museum ☐ Scientific

- ☐ Transportation ☐ Comments
☐ Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

State of Arkansas - Department of Parks and Tourism

STREET AND NUMBER:

Capitol Building

CITY OR TOWN:

Little Rock

STATE:

Arkansas

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Randolph County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:

Pocahontas

STATE:

Arkansas

05

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

DATE OF SURVEY: 12-11-69

- ☐ Federal ☒ State ☐ County ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

Arkansas History Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:

300 West Markham

CITY OR TOWN:

Little Rock

STATE:

Arkansas

CODE

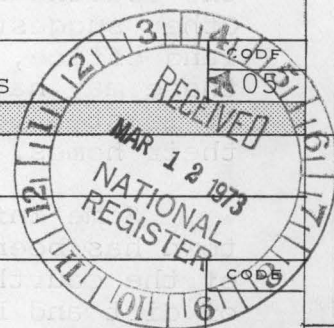
05

STATE:

COUNTY:

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

PH0046957

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☒ Unexposed

(Check One)

☒ Altered ☐ Unaltered

(Check One)

☐ Moved ☒ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

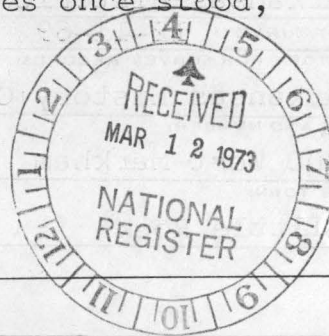
The town of Davidsonville was established on the Black River within a wedge-shaped area of land roughly 5 square miles in size formed by the confluence of Black, Current, and Spring Rivers. The general topography of this region consists of rolling hills and numerous smaller tributary streams. The specific location for the town site was probably chosen largely because of the presence of a sizable area of high ground which projects out towards the river and a pre-existing trail which made use of a natural river crossing.

According to the original town plat, 2 copies of which are still extant, the town was laid out in 9 blocks, 3 each way, covering a rectangular area of 35.1 acres. Eight of these blocks were divided into 6 lots each. The center block was designated the Public Square. There was an additional area, the Town Commons, between the town and Black River. Assuming that the courthouse (the location of which is known) was near the center of the Public Square, this commons area was around 12 acres in size. The alignment of the town was 48 degrees west of north with the southeast side more or less parallel to Black River.

There is some fairly substantial evidence that the courthouse was a two-storey brick structure. Other suggested structures were a jail, post office, land office, and mercantile establishments. However, these may have been contained in private dwellings. At least 3 persons were authorized to keep tavern in their homes.

Some information about the appearance of the town has been passed down through time. The location of the courthouse (now marked by a large, low mound of dirt and brick rubble) has apparently always been well-known. This spot and at least some others were disturbed by "treasure" hunters before the land was acquired by the State of Arkansas. A few other places are still indicative of where structures once stood,

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Arkansas	
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(Number all entries)

7. Description Continued:

and at least part of the original street systems can still be located. Other probably original features include a well, two cemeteries, and the largest of the site's numerous oak trees (many of these last seem to border on what were once streets).

Approximately 85 percent of the original town site is now contained within Old Davidsonville State Park. The park has a picnic pavilion, rest rooms, camping facilities, and a boat ramp. The remaining portion of the original site is privately owned. This is mostly pasture land but includes an occupied house and associated outbuildings.



8. SIGNIFICANCE

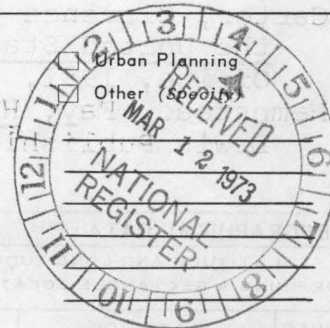
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian ☐ 16th Century ☐ 18th Century ☐ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> losophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> itarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A great amount of variation is found in the historical accounts which have been written about Davidsonville. Apparently this is the result of the existence of both a large body of primary source material, some of it rather obscure, and a substantial quantity of verbal tradition. It is, nevertheless, this wealth of information which best reflects the site's significance to the history of Arkansas. Furthermore, this same information, especially as it includes the original survey of the layout of the town, makes this potentially one of Arkansas' most important sites for historical archeological research.

First usage of the land which was to become Davidsonville is indicated to have been during late prehistoric times, perhaps as much as a thousand years ago. By early historic times, this was part of the hunting territory claimed by the Osage Indians. Existing documents suggest a predominantly French settlement, the Spring River Settlement, in this general area perhaps as early as around 1800. The lands purchased for Davidsonville in December of 1815 had somewhat earlier been obtained from 5 persons with French names (this original tract was around 250 acres but all of it except the actual town and town commons was sold in 1818).

Davidsonville was established as the first county seat of Lawrence County, which had been created in January 1815. This original Lawrence County, part of Missouri Territory, was quite large

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

American Guide Series, Arkansas, A Guide to the State,
New York: Hastings House, 1941.
Carter, Clarence Edwin (ed.), The Territorial Papers of
the United States, Washington: United States Printing
Office, 1951, Vols. XIV, XXI.
Hempstead, Fay, Historical Review of Arkansas, Chicago:
Lewis Publishing Co., 1911, Vol. 1.

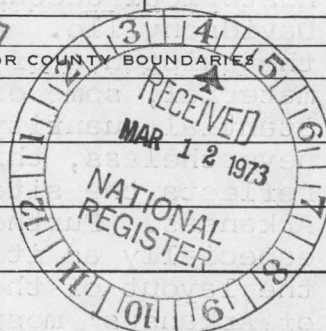
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE			
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	36° 09' 09"	91° 03' 30"	36	09	09
NE	36° 09' 09"	91° 03' 30"	36	09	09
SE	36° 09' 29.5"	91° 03' 08"	36	09	09
SW	36° 09' 29.5"	91° 03' 30"	36	09	09

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: approx 87

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Sam Smith, Archeological Technician	
ORGANIZATION Arkansas Archeological Survey	DATE November 1972
STREET AND NUMBER: University of Arkansas	
CITY OR TOWN: Fayetteville	STATE Arkansas
	CODE 05

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name William E. Henderson

Title State Liaison Officer

Date March 7, 1973

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Al R. Mortensen
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 1/18/74

ATTEST:

Ronald M. Greenberg
Actg. Keeper of The National Register

Date 1/17/74

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Arkansas	
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8. Significance Continued:

(one estimate is 250 miles east-west by 90 miles north-south), covering all of present day northern Arkansas. In its early years the county seat was also called Lawrence, and this name was sometimes used interchangeably with Davidsonville. In 1817, the first post office in what is now Arkansas was established at Davidsonville. The same claim can probably be made for the town's federal land office (1820) and courthouse (probably completed by 1818). In 1819, Lawrence County became a part of Arkansas Territory and was by now considerably reduced in size. Davidsonville continued to serve as county seat until 1829, at which time this function was transferred to the town of Jackson a few miles west. Most likely this was simply a matter of Jackson being more strategically located on what had become the main route of the old Southwest Trail. In spite of its early importance, it is doubtful that Davidsonville ever became a large town. According to a journal written in 1826, it contained only 10 to 15 houses.

The history of the site is not clear after 1829, but apparently the town soon ceased to exist (Lawrence County itself continued to decrease in size and in 1835 the Davidsonville area became a part of the newly formed Randolph County). Afterwards the land adjacent to the river was used as a steamboat stop, and there probably were one or more warehouses built for this purpose. By late in the nineteenth century Scott's Ferry was operating here and continued to be used until 1929 or 1930. In 1957, Davidsonville State Park was established.



PROPERTY Old Davidsonville State Historic Monument STATE Del.

WORKING NUMBER

3.12.73. 2539

RANDOLPH CO.

74000489

TECH REVIEW

Photos _____

Maps _____

CONTROL REVIEW

#10 Acreage is missing

cm
4-20-
73

HISTORIAN

otherwise

OK

OK
Accept
4-24-73
e. Smith

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

I called on acreage; also asked if privately owned portion of site was to be included in nomination as was unclear. Private 150 is included in 87 acre nomination. Mr Porter will find out name of owner & forward to us (hold com. for). He says owner was notified. Wonder how, if he didn't know his name?

ARCHEOLOGIST

Accept
1/14/74

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

BRANCH CHIEF

Accept
1-17-74

KEEPER

Accept
for
1/17/74

National Register write-up 3-5-74

Send-back _____

Federal Register entry 3-5-74

Re-submit _____

Entered _____

JAN 18 1974



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

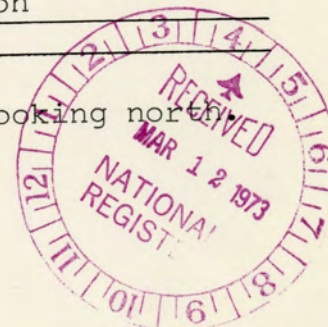
1. NAME COMMON OLD DAVIDSONVILLE STATE HISTORIC MONUMENT		AND/OR HISTORIC Lawrence	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS) JAN 18 1974
2. LOCATION STATE Arkansas		COUNTY Randolph	TOWN Davidsonville
STREET AND NUMBER			

Boundaries as shown on annexed map

3. PHOTO REFERENCE PHOTO CREDIT Arkansas History Commission		DATE 1972	NEGATIVE FILED AT Arkansas History Commission
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4. IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

The photograph was taken from the south side of the site looking north.



PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

1. NAME		
COMMON OLD DAVIDSONVILLE STATE HISTORIC MONUMENT	AND/OR HISTORIC Lawrence	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS) JAN 18 1974
2. LOCATION		
STATE Arkansas	COUNTY Randolph	TOWN Davidsonville
STREET AND NUMBER		

Boundaries as shown on annexed map.

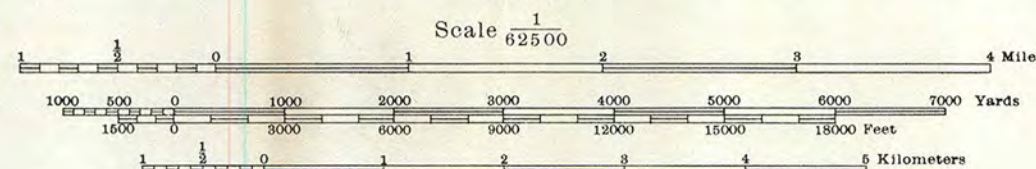
3. MAP REFERENCE		
SOURCE USGS 15' Series Powhatan Quadrangle	DATE 1935	SCALE 1:62,500

REQUIREMENTS: PROPERTY BOUNDARIES, WHERE REQUIRED, AND NORTH ARROW:





Prepared under the direction of the President, Mississippi River Commission.
Horizontal control by Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, Memphis District.
Vertical control by Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, Memphis District and U. S. C. & G. S.
Topography by Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, Memphis District, 1931.
Revised by Mississippi River Commission 1932-35.
Political boundaries are shown according to best available information,
and are subject to change except where established by court decision.
Area outside Alluvial Valley taken from aerial photographs and is not contoured.
Polyconic Projection, North American Datum.



Contour interval 5 feet
Datum is mean gulf level at Biloxi, Mississippi. Elevations differ from mean sea level elevations as determined by the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, by small fractions of a foot. Persons interested may secure elevations of bench marks as determined by the latest U. S. C. & G. S. adjustment, by applying to the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.
FIVE THOUSAND YARD GRID COMPUTED FROM GRID SYSTEM FOR PROGRESSIVE MAPS
IN THE U. S. - ZONE C. U. S. C. & G. S. SPECIAL PUBLICATION NO. 59

Additional copies may be procured from
The President, Mississippi River Commission
Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, Vicksburg, Miss.
20 cents per copy

ARMY MAP SERVICE, U. S. ARMY, WASHINGTON, D. C., 101053
9-55

LEGEND

Levee mile post LMP
Levee station LS
Towhead TH
Levee
Stations and dikes
Revetment
River gate

Distances above mouth of Black River shown at 5 mile intervals.
Distances above mouth of Spring River shown at 5 mile intervals.
Distances above mouth of Eleven Point River shown at 5 mile intervals.

HARD IMPERVIOUSLY SURFACED ROADS
OTHER MAIN TRAVELED ROADS, GRAVEL

POWHATAN, ARK.
EDITION OF 1935
N3600-W9100/15

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE **ARKANSAS**

Date Entered **JAN 18 1974**

Name

Location

Old Davidsonville State Historic Monument

Randolph County

Also Notified

**Hon. John L. McClellan
Hon. J. W. Fulbright
Hon. Bill Alexander, Jr.**

Director, Southwest Region

**State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. William E. Henderson, Director
Arkansas Dept. of Parks and Tourism
State Capitol - Room 149
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201**

PR MMOTT: p1 1.24.74