

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAY 30 1979

DATE ENTERED

JUL 22 1979

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME *Port Gibson Multiple Resource Area*
HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Historic Resources of Port Gibson (Partial Inventory: Historic and Architectural Sites)

2 LOCATION *U.S. 61*
STREET & NUMBER

The incorporated limits of the City of Port Gibson except as noted.
CITY, TOWN NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Port Gibson

VICINITY OF

Fourth

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Mississippi

28

Claiborne

21

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

Multiple Resource

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER Cemeteries

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple Ownership

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. *Office of the Chancery Clerk, Claiborne County Courthouse*

STREET & NUMBER

410 Market Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Port Gibson

Mississippi 39150

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Statewide Survey of Historic Sites

DATE

1978, 1979

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Jackson

Mississippi 39205

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Port Gibson (population 2,589) is located in southwestern Mississippi along the southern fork of the Bayou Pierre River. It lies thirty miles south of Vicksburg, forty miles northeast of Natchez, and ten miles east of the Mississippi River. The town rises from the Bayou and extends south along a rising plain toward the Loess or Bluff Hills region of the state, which stretches from the Louisiana border north to Tennessee. Town boundaries are roughly parallel with geographical contours, following the Bayou from the northwest to the southeast, and proceeding south along the flood plain and west and north along the edges of the loess hills.

Entering Port Gibson from the north across the Bayou brings the town's historic plan and architectural elements into immediate focus. Mississippi Highway 61 becomes Church Street, the major north-south axis of the fifty-five-block street grid. Flanking Church Street and east three blocks is a residential area. A blending of civic, commercial, and residential structures west culminates in the Market Street commercial hub. These are the components of the Market Street-Suburb Saint Mary Historic District. Concurrent with commercial and residential development of the center of Port Gibson that occurred in the early nineteenth century was the construction of significant country residences along the southern and western boundaries of the town.

Intensified growth during the later part of the nineteenth century added integral historic and physical components to the town's built resources. Industrial expansion occurred after the Civil War along the railroad north and west of Market Street. Lumber yards prospered, and in 1882 the Port Gibson Oil Works was founded, causing the accretion of the residential neighborhood west of Market Street between Rodney Road and Anthony Street. The Drake Hill development occurred in this area after 1890. In 1903 the southern boundary of Port Gibson was redefined after construction of the Chamberlain-Hunt Academy campus.

Historic buildings in Port Gibson present an outstanding typology of architectural styles, expressing the town's evolution from modest settlement to prosperous Claiborne County seat. Four stylistic categories can be identified: Nationalistic, 1810-1850 (Federal, Greek Revival); Picturesque, 1850-1940 (Gothic Revival, Italianate, Romanesque Revival, High Victorian Gothic, High Victorian Italianate, Queen Anne, Bungalow); Classical, 1899-1930 (Renaissance Revival, Beaux Arts Classicism, Colonial Revival, Neo-Classical Revival); and Vernacular, 1890-1940 (folk cottages).

The proliferation of rude log structures during the early settlement period between 1788 and 1802 is verified by a journal entry of traveler Lorenzo Dow, who wrote of the existence of thirty houses in Port Gibson by 1804 (H. G. Hawkins, "History of Port Gibson, Mississippi," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society 10:285). The earliest extant structures (ca. 1805), the second home of Samuel Gibson (no. 150), and the Port Gibson Reveille Building (no. 198), were of brick construction and small-scale representations of the Federal style. By the 1820s, late-Federal and Greek Revival frame residences were built on lots in all sections of the plat dating from 1811, while the construction of commercial row buildings was concentrated along Market and contiguous side streets. The transition in residential and commercial buildings from the late-Federal to the Greek Revival was characterized by an increase in size and heaviness of detail but without significant change in proportion, symmetry, and texture.

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HISTORIC RESOURCES OF PORT GIBSON
[Miss.]

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6, 7 PAGE 13

6 - REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Disharoon House (1936)
Gage House (1936)
Port Gibson Bank (1936)
First Presbyterian Church (1936)
Catholic Church (1940)
Van Dorn House (1972)

Federal

Depository for Survey Records: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson 39205

7 - DESCRIPTION

The emergence of Gothicizing trends after 1850 caused further increase in structural size with asymmetrical elevations and plans. The application of millwork details added textural interest, in contrast with the restrained quality of the Greek Revival cottages. The picturesque idiom was expressed most successfully in the ensemble of religious buildings along Church Street. After 1905, the preoccupation with the classical mode, while preserving the monumental scale of the Queen Anne style, recalled symmetrical elevations and a concern for such academic elements as entrance porticos and less conspicuous roof forms. The Colonial Revival was not well suited for small-scale residences, and after 1930 the comparatively low-slung and rustic bungalow, forerunner of the 1950s ranch, became prevalent in Port Gibson.

An important corollary to stylistic trends after the Civil War was the construction of residences for blacks, who represent approximately fifty percent of the town's population. Board-and-batten cottages were typically clustered around streetcorners (Fair and Flower Streets, nos. 218-223) or compacted in neat rows (nos. 135-138, 282-285). These closely knit ensembles serve as neighborhood microcosms in juxtaposition with the landscaped lots and gallery fronts of the more affluent College and Church Streets neighborhood, with sociologically implied and physically apparent barriers for black residents. The distinction between black and white neighborhoods remains evident according to building types, though late-Federal and Greek Revival cottages built for whites along Vine and Marginal streets near the flood plain along the eastern flank of the town are now part of the black neighborhood.

The visual impact and structural density of Port Gibson retain a coherent sense of scale and proportion despite the limited encroachment of incompatible new construction and demolition. Market Street preserves the massing of its early commercial development; Church Street lined with live and water oaks and magnolias, retains its languid nineteenth-century aura. Courthouse Square, planned and used as a public space after 1803, was

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[Miss.]

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7, 8 PAGE 14

7 - DESCRIPTION

reduced in size after the expansion of the courthouse in 1903; its original character was obliterated after 1960 with the construction of a sub-grade one-way traffic circle around the Confederate monument.

Approximately 73% of buildings included in this nomination are used for residential purposes. 20% are commercial, 3% religious, 2% educational, 1% civic, and less than 1% are industrial.

This nomination relies upon an architectural survey of Port Gibson conducted by Jack A. Gold, architectural historian with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and compiler of the nomination, during the months of December, 1978, and January and February, 1979.

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

Railroad Company, using the latter's name and operating as a part of the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad system.

Eras of major architectural and historical significance in Port Gibson are correlative with its intense growth and development periods: from 1810 to 1850, and from 1870 to 1910. Architecturally, the late-Federal and Greek Revival residential and commercial buildings in the Market Street-Suburb St. Mary Historic District are representative of the town's early planning and development period, and are its most significant architectural types. The historical and architectural integrity of the town was apparent to General Grant, who declared the town "too beautiful to burn" during Federal occupation after the crucial Battle of Port Gibson in 1863 (Headley, p. 76). After the Civil War, renewed commercial and industrial growth coupled with flourishing religious and private educational institutions established a statewide identity for Port Gibson.

Major historic figures have resided in Port Gibson. Earl Van Dorn (1820-1863) served during the Mexican War and was a major general in the Confederate army. Irwin Russell (1853-1880) was famous for poetry written in the Negro dialect. His Christmas Night in the Quarters was first published by Scribner's Magazine in 1867 and later as Christmas Night in the Quarters and Other Poems (New York: Century Co., 1917). Thomas Cantwell Healy (d.1889), a well-known portrait artist, moved to Claiborne County from Chicago in 1853. Many of his works are located in Port Gibson, most notably his "Crucifixion" hanging in St. Joseph Catholic Church. Healy is buried in the Catholic cemetery. Henry Hughes (d. 1864) pioneered early sociological theory in the United States with the publication of his Treatise on Sociology (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grampo and Co., 1854). Attorney John Creighton Satterfield, formerly of Drake Hill in Port Gibson, served as president of the American Bar Association in 1961.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW					
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	Black History	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Port Gibson contains an outstanding ensemble of architectural resources preserved within the context of one of the most historic towns in Mississippi. Among its resources are a collection of late-Federal and Greek Revival residences and commercial buildings of national significance, a number of contiguous educational and religious institutions, and four cemeteries of historical interest.

Port Gibson was inhabited by Choctaw Indians when Samuel Gibson (1748-1817) acquired a 722-acre Spanish land grant along the banks of the Bayou Pierre River in 1788 (Katy McCaleb Headley, Claiborne County: The Promised Land [Baton Rouge: Moran Industries, Inc., 1976], p. 7). Prior to Spanish dominion, Claiborne County, known until 1798 as a part of the Natchez District, was claimed by France from 1682 (after LaSalle's exploration) until 1763. England held claim from 1763 to 1781, establishing the Natchez District as a part of West Florida. Spain regained control from 1781 to 1798, and in 1785 Georgia claimed the area as the County of Bourbon (Headley, p. 6). Upon formation of the Mississippi Territory in 1798, the Natchez District was divided into Adams and Pickering counties. In 1802 Pickering was divided into Jefferson and Claiborne counties. The small settlement founded by Samuel Gibson in 1788 on the Bayou Pierre, know as "Gibson's Landing," "Gibson's Port," or "Fort Gibson," was designated the Claiborne County seat in 1802. The territorial legislature changed the name of the settlement to Port Gibson in 1803, and it was incorporated in 1811.

From its inception, Port Gibson played an important role in the development of settlement and transportation patterns in Mississippi. The Natchez Trace, the eighteenth-century overland route from Nashville to Natchez and New Orleans, passed through Port Gibson along the eastern flank of the town east of the Van Dorn House (no. 3A), and approximately along the present location of Marginal Street. "Gibson's Landing Ferry," established by an Act of Congress in 1802 as a port of entry on the formerly navigable Bayou, served as a link to the Mississippi River for inland farmers "as far east as the Pearl River" for the sale and purchase of commodities and merchandise. (J. McC. Martin, Port Gibson and Claiborne County, Mississippi [Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1900], p. 11).

In 1833 the Grand Gulf Railroad and Banking Company was organized under a charter granted by the Mississippi legislature in order to connect Port Gibson with Grand Gulf, a neighboring town (no longer extant) located ten miles northwest on the Mississippi. The eight-mile track, which became operable in 1855, was the first Queen's gauge (standard gauge) track built west of the Appalachian mountains (Elizabeth McLendon, local historian, interviewed by Jack A. Gold, architectural historian with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, at Port Gibson, Miss., Feb. 14, 1979). The terminus of the line was located near the present site of the Port Gibson Oil Works (Headley, p. 107). The Louisville, New Orleans and Texas Railroad Company purchased the line in 1881, rebuilding it through Port Gibson from Memphis to New Orleans during the years 1881-83 (Hawkins p. 290). In 1892, the L., N.O. and T. consolidated with the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 15

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

The history of private educational institutions in Port Gibson can be traced to the founding of Port Gibson Female College, "projected as far back as 1826. . .under the name of Clinton Academy and incorporated by a legislative act of January 23, 1826" (Hawkins, p. 296). The name was changed from Clinton Academy to Port Gibson Academy in 1830. A building was erected under the supervision of the First Presbyterian Church in 1839. The project put the Presbyterian trustees in debt, however, and a group of Methodists assumed control of the school (Hawkins, p. 297). In 1854 the institution was chartered and incorporated as Port Gibson Collegiate Academy. The name was changed in 1811 to Port Gibson Female College. The college was disbanded in 1929. Brashear Academy, a school for women operated by a Miss M. Marvin, was first located in a frame residence near the site of the present brick structure (no. 43) erected in 1857 (Headley, p. 166). The academy operated for approximately twenty years, after which Chamberlain-Hunt Academy occupied the structure (1879-1900).

Restoration projects are planned or underway for several Church Street residences. Interest in historic preservation was spurred recently by a historic-marker and tour-route plan for Port Gibson and Claiborne county undertaken by the State Parks Commission. Community Development Block Grants have been expended in 1977 and 1978 for housing "rehabilitation" on Vine and Marginal streets, with masonite siding applied to the majority of residences.

The proposed Market Street-Suburb Saint Mary Historic District has been the focus of the town's development from its incorporation to the post-World War II period. Chamberlain-Hunt Academy and Drake Hill require treatment as separate districts because of their distance from the street grid as outlined on the 1811 plat. The six residential properties considered individually share common settings, construction dates, and architectural significance. The two industrial sites are contiguous and share an overlapping set of owners. The depot merits separate listing because of its relative isolation on the south end of Market Street. Inclusion of the thematic cemetery group is justified because of the strong historic and associational significance of each of the four cemeteries. Further, the Wintergreen, Jewish, and Catholic cemeteries are contiguous with the boundaries of the proposed Market Street-Suburb Saint Mary Historic District and are integral components of the town's historic development pattern. Wintergreen is also significant as an example of mid-nineteenth-century picturesque landscape planning principles.

All surveyed properties have been entered into the Mississippi Statewide Survey of Historic Sites. Continental Consultants, Inc., contracted by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to implement the 1977-1978 rehabilitation program for Vine and Marginal streets, has been notified of the area's eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Arnold, Julia. Interviewed by Jack A. Gold, architectural historian with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, at Port Gibson, Miss., Feb. 14, 1979.

Chamberlain Hunt Academy. Catalog, 1941-42.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 1000

QUADRANGLE NAME Port Gibson

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	5	6	8	9	2	4	10	3	5	3	9	5	8	10
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B

1	5	6	8	9	7	7	10	3	5	3	5	6	6	15
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ZONE EASTING / 58 NORTHING 255

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

1	5	6	9	2	2	5	10	3	5	3	7	1	5	5
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D

1	5	6	9	10	9	9	5	3	5	3	4	8	10	10
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E

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F

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G

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H

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Multiple resource area boundaries correspond with city boundaries with the exception of the southwestern flank of the city, where area boundaries were extended to include Claremont (5A), McGregor (2A), and Hollyrood (1A).

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

Jack A. Gold, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 571

CITY OR TOWN

Jackson

DATE

April, 1979

TELEPHONE

601-354-7326

STATE

Mississippi 39205

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Elmer R. Williams

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE May 25, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

July 22, 1979

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

7/20/79

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 16

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 17

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Rowland, Dunbar. Mississippi. Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company, Publishers, 1976.

Satterfield, Ellen Steele, granddaughter of Elijah Steele Drake. Interviewed by Jack A. Gold, architectural historian with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, at Port Gibson, Miss., Feb. 21, 1979.

Sturdivant, Laura D.S.H., historian, and granddaughter of Elijah Steele Drake. Interviewed by Jack A. Gold, architectural historian with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, at Jackson, Jan. 15, 1979.