

Form 10-300 (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Mississippi	
COUNTY: Harrison	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON: Jefferson Davis Shrine

AND/OR HISTORIC: "Beauvoir" -- Jefferson Davis House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 200 West Beach Boulevard (U.S. Rt. 90)

CITY OR TOWN: Biloxi

STATE: Mississippi	CODE	COUNTY: Harrison	CODE

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Mississippi Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans

STREET AND NUMBER: Post Office Box 1055

CITY OR TOWN: Jackson STATE: Mississippi CODE

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Office of the Chancery Clerk, Harrison County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER: 101 East Washington Street

CITY OR TOWN: Biloxi STATE: Mississippi CODE

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey; National Register

DATE OF SURVEY: 1936; 1971 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: (1) HABS: Division of Prints and Photographs, Lib. of Congress; (2) NR: Miss. Dept. of Archives and Hist., Jackson, Miss.

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Beauvoir is an example of the "raised cottage," with a residential story supported on 9-foot brick pillars above a full basement. In the 19th century, the latticed basement was unfinished except for a small room bricked off and used for storage of meat and wine. A furnace has been installed in this area and the remainder of the basement now houses a museum of Davis and Confederate memorabilia.

A broad flight of steps with balustrade rises to the veranda, which extends across the facade and halfway around each side elevation. Square wooden columns are aligned above the basement pillars and support a continuation of the balustrade at their base. The floor-length windows are triple-sashed, six lights to the sash, and flanked by 3-part wooden shutters. The ceiling of the veranda and the exterior of the main block, down to the molded baseboard, are plastered, while the rear wings are covered with wooden siding.

The floor plan of Beauvoir was evidently designed to take advantage of natural ventilation provided by the gulf winds. A wide hall bisects the central block of four rooms. Four rear rooms are off-set from the main block, two on each side. All eight rooms open onto the front or rear verandas, and in some instances onto both. Furnishings are those used by the Davis family, and the designation of rooms is as it was in their occupancy. The room to the rear of the present dining room was apparently a serving room to which food was brought from the **outside** kitchen which no longer exists.

The outstanding feature of the Beauvoir interior is the frescoed walls and ceilings of the hall and parlors. A profusion of rococo themes--shells, garlands of fruits and flowers, mythological figures--is rendered in a rainbow of soft colors such as mauve, gray, green and ivory.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1877-1889**

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"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Beauvoir was the home of Jefferson Davis (1808-1889) during the last 12 years of his life. Other than the "White House of the Confederacy" in Richmond, Virginia, no residence closely associated with his productive life still exists.* The 87-acre estate at Biloxi is a summing up of the great man's life, partly memorialized in his 2-volume opus The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government written at Beauvoir. Although Beauvoir represents a time of retirement from active events, it provides a means of reflection upon and recapitulation of Jefferson Davis' role, not only as President of the Confederacy, for which the Richmond White House would be ample illustration, but also his prominence in antebellum America.

As a hero of the Battle of Buena Vista in the Mexican War, he rose to prominence in the U.S. Senate as a southern nationalist defending the South's economy and society against the hue and cry of abolitionism on the one hand, and pressing for the territorial expansion of the "Cotton Kingdom" on the other. While not assessed as being instrumental in the development of party strategy, he was a persuasive orator who was regarded in the public mind as a prominent spokesman of his party. As Secretary of War under Franklin Pierce he utilized the topographical surveys for expanding and developing the frontier, hoping that his direction of the railroad surveys would specifically commercialize a southern empire expanding west and south. He intensified the professionalization of the army and instituted a new strategy of frontier defense which ultimately led to the removal of the Indian from the frontier.

* "Brierfield" on Davis Island is the house most substantially related to Davis' most productive years. It burned in the 1930's leaving only the raised foundation of the Davis house. (The colonnade was added after Davis' association with the house). Today, the site, with its ruins and oak trees is isolated, untouched, and picturesque.

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Stevenson, Nathaniel Wright, "Jefferson Davis," Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. V., New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943.

Strode, Hudson, Jefferson Davis: Tragic Hero, New York, Harcourt Brace and World, 1964.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	30° 23' 50"	88° 58' 22"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	30° 23' 50"	88° 58' 02"				
SE	30° 23' 31"	88° 58' 02"				
SW	30° 23' 31"	88° 58' 22"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **87 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Benjamin Levy, Historian**

ORGANIZATION: **Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service** DATE: **2/5/73**

STREET AND NUMBER: **1100 L Street, N.W.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **D.C.** CODE:

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

<p>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:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Title _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____ Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____ Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date _____</p>
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Mississippi	
COUNTY	
Harrison	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. Significance: (1) Jefferson Davis House, "Beauvoir"

Biography

Born in Kentucky, Davis was brought to Mississippi as a child. In Mississippi the family became wealthy through the success of Jefferson's older brother, Joseph. Educated at Transylvania University, he entered West Point and graduated as a second lieutenant and proceeded immediately to the northwest frontier for seven years, getting his first taste of combat in the Black Hawk War of 1832.

Returning to Mississippi in 1835, he led the life of a planter for the next decade and prepared himself for a life of politics. In 1846, at the outbreak of the Mexican War he resigned his seat in Congress and took command of a volunteer regiment known as the "Mississippi Rifles" joining General Taylor in time to participate in the attack on Monterey. Taylor then appointed him a commissioner to negotiate the surrender of Monterey. The next year, Davis established his reputation as a soldier. At the Battle of Buena Vista, his regiment successfully supported Taylor's rapidly collapsing left flank, thus preventing the Mexican Army from severing the line of communication and potential route of retreat.

As a hero of Buena Vista he easily gained a Senate seat where he was publicly esteemed but not popular with his party due to his support for Polk's expansionist policies. He even advocated the seizure of Yucatan. His imperialism favored southern commercialism, and while he favored new territories, he resisted measures which would forbid slavery in them. His senatorial career, which extended to an additional term, after several years as Secretary of War, was marked by a cooperationist attitude amalgamated with a strong Southern nationalism. As his rhetoric grew more intense through the decade of the 1850's in defense of Southern rights, his activities seemed to support the view that what Davis was really after, was an achievement of a "dual sovereignty" with the South sharing certain exclusivity of power within the union. To this end he joined the White House conclave in 1854 from which emerged the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Again, while he joined Yancey and Rhett in dividing the Democratic Convention in Charleston, he wrote to Rhett, thereafter, and urged an attitude of cooperation. Ultimately, with the Republican victory of 1860, Davis saw no further feasible compromise and acquiesced in his State's secession.

His tenure as Secretary of War has often been regarded as the peak of his career; certainly it was the most to his taste. He used his office to build the economic power of the South, hoping to equal the North and hence balance it. Consequently, he was eager for Southern expansion and, therefore, often found himself in contention with William L. Marcy, Secretary of State, and promoter of Northern party interests. Davis

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8. Significance: (2) Jefferson Davis House, "Beauvoir"

pressed the Spanish seizure of the Black Warrior and the Ostend Manifesto as pretexts for American penetration of the Caribbean. He directed the railroad surveys toward the southern route to the Pacific and urged the Gadsden Purchase toward this end. He instituted a frontier defense policy of concentration of power at fewer posts with emphasis on the mobility of cavalry and succeeded in increasing the cavalry on the frontier.

The years of the Presidency were harsh, characterized by an unceasing storm of criticism leveled against Davis. He was charged with over-managing the war by fancying himself a military leader. He was charged with coddling friends in the government; with depriving men of their liberties and states of their rights. As Confederate fortunes failed, the criticism grew more violent. What was worse, he chose not to recognize the defeat, and urged the South on past endurance. When capitulation came, followed swiftly by his own capture and imprisonment, he was a ruin of a man.

By sheer force of will he regained his strength in retirement during a decade of travel in the United States and Europe. In 1877 he rented the east cottage at Beauvoir from Mrs. Sarah Anne Ellis Dorsey who encouraged him to undertake his history of the Confederate government. Both his wife and daughter joined him the following year and assisted him with the publication. In 1879, Mrs. Dorsey died willing Beauvoir to Davis. During his last years he received a steady stream of visitors, some of whom urged him to return to the Senate. He would not, however, refusing to take the oath to the Union necessary to be seated.