

PH0507687

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED NOV 18 1977
DATE ENTERED MAR 29 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Smith-Buntura-Evans House
AND/OR COMMON
Evansview

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
107 Broadway St.
CITY, TOWN
Natchez
STATE
Mississippi
VICINITY OF
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Fourth
COUNTY
Adams
CODE
28
CODE
001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
National Society of the Colonial Dames of America
in the State of Mississippi - Natchez Town Chapter
STREET & NUMBER
107 Broadway
CITY, TOWN
Natchez
STATE
Mississippi 39120

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Office of the Chancery Clerk
Adams County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
Courthouse Square
CITY, TOWN
Natchez
STATE
Mississippi 39120

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Historic American Buildings Survey
DATE
1936
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Library of Congress
CITY, TOWN
Washington
STATE
D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Smith-Buntura-Evans House is located on a corner lot at 107 Broadway on the Bluff overlooking the Mississippi River in Natchez, Mississippi. The L-shaped structure, a significant and well-preserved example of a once-modest residential-commercial complex, reflects the well-entrenched and conservative side-hall townhouse building tradition in both its massing and detailing. Although the product of at least three major building phases and several remodelings, the structure presents a unified and picturesque appearance that is enhanced by its lush, casually landscaped side service yard.

The three-bay, two-and-one-half-story main section, with its two-story rear service ell connected by a single-bay frame hyphen that was added by 1886, is built to the street on both the western (main) and southern elevations. A carriage house wing stretches across the rear of the service yard and attaches to the eastern or end wall of the ell. The whole is laid in common bond with a stuccoed and scored water table protecting the exposed southern elevation. Fenestration on the main facade is symmetrical, with the entrance set in the northernmost bay. All other elevations feature randomly arranged openings corresponding to the informal interior plan. Low, capped parapets terminate the gable ends of both the main house and ell, and a simple brick corbeled cornice is set at the eaves. A single oversized pedimented dormer is centered on both the front and rear of the main gable. Dominating the facade is a handsome cast-iron double-tiered gallery representative of the fine Ohio-made ironwork frequently used in the Lower Mississippi region in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The gallery was installed between 1892 and 1897, replacing an earlier single-story frame porch.

The carriage house wing, set perpendicularly to the rear service ell, once doubled as a buffer between the domestically oriented front section of the property and the commercial stable area housed in three frame barns, no longer extant, to the rear. A four-bay arcade with wide-arched openings and a covered paddock occupy the first level of the carriage house wing, with quarters above. A plain, two-story gallery with lattice sun screens, set in each of the upper-level bays, wraps around both rear wings, providing all-weather communication between the living quarters and the stables. An exterior flight of stairs rising along the northern wall of the ell provides the only access to the second level of the wings. Much of the original herringbone-pattern paving and cut-out drains around the service yard remains, as do two cisterns, one near the house and the other adjacent to the carriage house. The carriage stalls themselves were originally not paved.

The interior arrangement of the house is a modified side-hall plan with three rooms to a floor. A large room and side hall of corresponding depth are set to the front, while the rear portion is divided into two equi-sized chambers. A plain staircase rises from the rear of the modest hall. An enclosed winder staircase joins the second level with the garret. Each of the six major rooms is serviced by its own interior fireplace set with a simple Grecian mantel. The long service ell is divided by an interior chimney. The depth of the chimney breast would suggest that either the long room closest to the house or the adjoining smaller chamber served as the kitchen.

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7 - DESCRIPTION

During the restoration of the house in the early 1940s, liberties were taken with the original plan in an attempt to formalize the casual, close arrangement. Partitions were removed and relocated, making the back rooms of the house more spacious. Handsome period transitional Greek Revival mantels were added in the first-floor rooms of the service ell. On the exterior the carriage house floor was paved, and a second flight of stairs servicing the quarters above the carriage house was removed. The arched lattice sunscreen, however, still defines its location.

Documentation indicates that the house and wings were completed in stages between 1851 and 1858 by Robert D. Smith, although the order and exact date of construction of each section of the complex are uncertain. The only known sequence is based on structural evidence, which shows that the carriage house was added to the service ell. The western, or front, wall of the carriage house unmistakably abuts the eastern, or rear, wall of the preexisting ell. Whether the house predates the ell is unknown, but stylistic similarities between the two sections would suggest that they were constructed within a few years of one another.

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

1840s and was established in his own livery business by 1849 (Hagan and Davis, eds., p. 750). In 1854, he added to his house lot the adjoining lots 5 and 6 in Square D, known as the "Tattersall Stable" (Deed Book KK:192). The high price (\$2,500) and the specific reference in the deed to the name of the property suggest that the lots, purchased from the trustees of Jefferson College, were already developed for a livery trade. Situated at the head of the road leading down to the Under-the-Hill port section of town, the property proved a prime commercial site for serving both the transient and local clientele. Smith operated his successful hack business at this location until his death in 1858. His widow Ann apparently continued the establishment until 1860, when in recognition of the deteriorating situation of the free Negro, she and her four minor children moved to Valparaiso, Chile, to join her oldest son, Randolph, who was established there in the foundry business.

Although no specific date or complete order of construction for the three-part residential-commercial complex is known, documentation pertaining to Robert D. Smith's estate, including an inventory of his personal property, coupled with the structural evidence, strongly suggests that the buildings

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1852, ca. 1854

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Smith-Buntura-Evans House, built in stages between 1851 and 1858 by successful free black businessman Robert D. Smith for his home and livery business, is a remarkably complete and rare regional example of a residential-commercial complex. The plan of the L-shaped structure is significant for its attention to circulation and to the separation of functions. Featured on the facade of the brick townhouse is one of the handsomest cast-iron, double-tiered galleries in Natchez.

In 1803, a thirty-one acre tract of land on the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River was donated by Territorial Governor Cato West to the trustees of Jefferson College. Under Spanish rule (1779-1798) the section, known as the Esplanade, had been held in common for the town. Instead of realizing a quick and much-needed return from the sale of the lands, the college found itself entangled in nearly twenty-five years of lawsuits and counter-lawsuits brought by both the city and individual landowners, who challenged the legality of the transfer of the river-front property. Finally, in 1827, an agreement was reached whereby the college would belatedly receive revenue from its legacy, with thirty percent of the selling price of the lots, divided according to a survey by Levin Wailes, going to the city.

In 1851, Robert D. Smith purchased for \$500 "Lot No. 1 in Square D" of the Jefferson College lands, on which the present house, service ell, and carriage house now stand (Deed Book HH:566). A "Free Man of Color," Smith was born in Maryland in 1807 and by 1837 was living in Natchez with his wife, Ann, and family. Having satisfied the County Board of Police that he was of "good character and honest deportment," in 1843 he was granted a license by the state legislature to reside permanently in Natchez.

Prior to 1840, the free Negro population of Natchez and Adams County, which peaked at 283 in 1840, existed without harrassment in widely varying economic circumstances and maintained distinct intra-group social levels. Among whites, however, fears grew that the free Negro as a class constituted a potential source of slave unrest, and demands for the enforcement of laws regulating free blacks became more frequent. A spirit of inquisition persisted through the next two decades. Free Negroes were required not only to prove before the Board of Police that they were of good character and thus entitled to stay in Mississippi but also to renew every three years their all-important certificate of "unshackled condition." Both the laws and their enforcement were designed to discourage free Negroes from migrating to or remaining in the state as well as to curtail manumission.

Despite the seemingly hostile climate which greatly restricted their mobility, free blacks such as Robert D. Smith prospered in antebellum Natchez, achieving both social prominence within the black community and professional success in the community as a whole. Literate and accomplished, Smith became a "hackman" in the

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Adams County. Chancery Clerk. Deed Books HH, KK; Chancery Court File, Box 122.

Hogan, William R.; Davis, Edwin A., eds. William Johnson's Natchez; the Antebellum Diary of a Free Negro. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 5	6 5, 1 2, 8, 0	3, 4 9, 2 7, 2, 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A 77' by 150' city lot on the northeast corner of Market and Broadway Streets.

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

Mary M. Shoemaker, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

DATE

October, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 571

TELEPHONE

(601) 354-6218

CITY OR TOWN

Jackson

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 B. Hilliard

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

November 16, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Wm. Hunter
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST: *Walter*
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE *3-29-78*
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 DATE *3-26-78*

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8 - SIGNIFICANCE

were constructed by Smith prior to 1850 (Chancery Court File, Box 122). Property that he amassed between 1851 and 1854 for \$3,000 was sold to Joseph Buntura by Smith's widow in 1860 for \$9,000. Buntura died in 1874 and willed the property to his widow, Fanny, who later married a Mr. Hendricks. After the death of Fanny Buntura Hendricks in 1903, the house descended in the family until 1941, when it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Hugh H. Evans. The Evanses completely rehabilitated the then-deteriorated house and grounds, and in 1961 Mrs. Evans donated the house and its period furnishings to the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Mississippi. The property is maintained as a house museum open to the public every Wednesday and during the annual Natchez Pilgrimage.