

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name _____

other names/site number Downtown Brandon Historic District

2. Location

street & number E. Government St. and West Government Street from Timber Street to College Street, 100 blocks of N. College Street and Black Street

not for publication

city or town Brandon

vicinity

state Mississippi code MS county Rankin code 121 39042

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official
SHPU

Sept. 21, 2010
Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
16	3	buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
16	3	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Historic and Architectural Resources, Brandon, MS

2

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic: single dwelling
- Commerce: business
- Government: courthouse
- Religion: religious facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- Commerce: business
- Government: courthouse
- Religion: religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

- Craftsman, Traditional Commercial, Gothic Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation: brick, concrete
- walls: brick, vinyl, metal, stucco
- roof: asphalt, tar, metal
- other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Downtown Brandon Historic District is located in the center of the city of Brandon in Rankin County, Mississippi. The district includes the town square with the Rankin County Courthouse (1924) (#15) and the Confederate Monument (#21) erected in 1907 in the middle of the square by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Traditional commercial buildings line the square and Government Street which runs east-west through the square. South of town square is the 100 block of Black Street which features an African American theater building (#1) and two small residential buildings. The district also includes the 100 block of N. College Street to the north of Government Street. This stretch includes St. Luke's Episcopal Church (#4) and the Purvis House (#5). The district encompasses about ten acres and its terrain is flat and enhanced with some landscaping. The majority of the buildings are in good condition and retain their integrity of design, materials, and location.

Narrative Description

The Downtown Brandon Historic District is located in the center of the city of Brandon in Rankin County, Mississippi. The terrain is flat. The district boundaries are: East Government Street and West Government Street from Timber Street to College Street, the 100 block of North College Street, and the 100 block of Black Street. These streets are laid out in a grid pattern with a square which sits in the middle of Government Street. The center of the district, the town square, is anchored by the Rankin County Courthouse (#15) on the northeast corner of the square and the Confederate Monument (#21), located in the center of the square. The area around the square is filled with commercial buildings, mostly traditional commercial in style. Black Street extends to the south from Town Square and features a theater (#1) and two residential buildings (#2, and #3). To the west of the square, and anchoring the northwest corner of the district, are the Purvis House (#5) and St. Lukes Episcopal Church (#4). The district encompasses about ten acres and its terrain is flat and enhanced with some landscaping along the sidewalks. The district has an open feeling, even though many of the buildings are built without side setbacks. The part of the town square on either side of Government Street is used for parking. The parking area in front of the courthouse is more enclosed with landscaping, while the south side of the square is not. Government Street is two lanes and is heavily traveled.

The Downtown Brandon Historic District includes 21 resources. The majority of the buildings in the district were constructed between 1920 and 1959. Of the 21 resources in the district, all but two were built within the period of significance. There are 15 commercial buildings in the district which are broken down into ten (10) traditional commercial in design and five (5) other commercial buildings. The traditional commercial buildings are one-or two-story brick buildings, with common walls or free-standing, sitting at the edge of the sidewalk. They have low gable roofs behind parapets or flat roofs. The storefronts consist of traditional display plate-glass windows set over brick or wood bulkheads with wood or aluminum full-light single-leaf or double-leaf doors. The non-traditional commercial buildings are other designs of buildings built for commercial purposes. They are mostly brick and one-story with varying fenestration, roof shapes, and distance from the sidewalk. Traditional buildings within the district are in good condition for the most part and retain their architectural integrity. Alterations to commercial buildings are generally storefront changes such as changing the recess of the windows and doors, adding new siding, or blocking down windows. A number of the traditional commercial buildings were "renovated" to a modern look and have been returned to their original design, and the majority of the remaining renovated buildings have not been so changed as to not be readily restored.

In addition to the residential and commercial resources, there is one church, the Rankin County Courthouse, and the Confederate Monument. Of the 21 resources within the district, 18 are contributing and three are non-contributing, with only one of the non-contributing being a building constructed within the period of significance but lacking significance

because the design of the building was completely altered. Some of the contributing buildings included in the district are the traditional commercial buildings which date from 1870 (the Ohleyer Building #11) to 1950 (Thompson's Super Market #10). A fire in 1924 destroyed much of the town center, but the Ohleyer Building survived and is one of the oldest buildings extant in the downtown area. The Rankin County Courthouse was destroyed during this fire and the current courthouse was then constructed. It was designed by Noah Webster Overstreet, Jr. (1888-1973), one of Mississippi's most notable and prolific architects. Overstreet's practice consisted primarily of institutional projects such as schools, churches, hospitals, and courthouses. However he also designed corporate office buildings and had a large residential clientele. His firm was responsible for more than 650 projects in the course of his career. Also destroyed in the 1924 fire was St. Luke's Episcopal Church (#4) which was rebuilt immediately following the fire.

With the exception of the three buildings on Black Street, the buildings in the district, and businesses operated within them, were historically white-owned, as were the two buildings on College Street.

Inventory of Resources

C= Contributing resource
NC= Noncontributing resource
PL= Previously listed in the National Register of Historic Places

The inventory is arranged alphabetically by street name in ascending numerical order. Buildings are classified as contributing (C), noncontributing (NC), or previously listed in the National Register (PL).

1. C 103 Black Street c. 1958
A two-story concrete block theater building, facing east, with a metal covered gable roof with exposed rafter ends hidden behind a stepped plain parapet. There is a narrow addition on the right end. There are four bays: a single-leaf flush door with a boarded up single-light transom, a wide entrance that has been filled in with vertical board siding and new double-leaf metal doors; a boarded-up window; and a single-leaf flush wood door (in the addition). There are three bays on the second floor: small rectangular windows which are boarded up and covered with shed metal awnings.
2. C 110 Black Street c. 1900
A one-story corrugated metal residential building, facing east, with a metal gable roof with exposed rafter ends. The roof extends as a shed over an addition on the left end. There are two bays in this addition: a four-light fixed wood window and a flush wood door. There are three bays in the main block: a center single-leaf flush wood door flanked by four-light fixed wood windows. There is a shed roof over a porch across the main block supported with square wood posts with plain corner brackets.
3. C 112 Black Street c. 1900
A one-story stucco residential building, facing east, with a metal gable roof. There is metal in the gable end and a plain triangular vent. There are three bays: a center door flanked by windows. All bays are boarded-up.
4. C 104 North College Street c. 1925 Gothic Revival
St. Lukes Episcopal Church. A one-story vinyl over clapboard L-shaped Gothic Revival church, facing west, with an asphalt shingle gable to hip roof. The right side of the church projects with the gable end to the street. The gable end is enhanced with cornice returns and a small round stained glass window. A narrow short gabled projection extends from this end and houses the entrance: double-leaf vertical board wood doors with a large Gothic-arched stained glass transom. There are cornice returns in this end as well. On either side of the projection on the main wall are Gothic-arched stained glass windows. The ell (an addition in 1956) is covered with a hip roof and a cross gable with cornice returns extends to the front over an entrance. This entrance is double-leaf six-panel wood doors with a three-light Gothic-arched transom. The only other bay is to the right of this entrance and is a two-over-two double-hung Gothic arched window.
5. C 105 North College Street c. 1946

Purvis House. A two-story stucco residential building, facing east, with an asphalt shingle hip roof. Hipped dormers pierce the roof on all four elevations and are filled with six-over-six double-hung wood windows. There is a one-story hipped section on the left façade which has three bays: a center single-leaf French door flanked by two-over-two double-hung wood windows. There are three bays on the first floor of the main block: a center single-leaf French door with five-light sidelights flanked by pairs of six-over-six double-hung wood windows. There are three bays on the second floor: a center three-part bay with a pair of smaller four-over-four double-hung wood windows flanked by six-over-six double-hung wood windows, and then this center bay is flanked by pairs of six-over-six double-hung wood windows. Widely overhanging eaves. Originally, there was a hipped portico supported with square posts.

6. C 203 East Government Street c. 1950

Jitney Jungle. A one-story stucco commercial building, facing south, with a flat roof. There is a metal shed awning supported with four stuccoed supports, stretching across the façade. There are five bays: a pair of plate glass doors flanked by two plate glass windows.

7. NC 207 East Government Street c. 2001

A modern two-story brick commercial building, facing south, with a flat roof. The right corner on the main elevation projects and is capped with a metal hip roof. The first floor of this section is open and round arched and the second floor opening is square and open. There are four bays to the left of this projection which are 15-light fixed aluminum windows. "RANKIN COUNTY NEWS" is inset at the cornice on the façade. This building is noncontributing as it is well outside of the period of significance.

8. NC 106 West Government Street c. 1974

A two-story brick modern commercial building, facing south, with a flat roof. The center section is stuccoed and contains the bays: sets of floor length fixed plate glass and a pair of double-leaf plate glass doors.

9. C 135-151 West Government Street c. 1938 Traditional Commercial

Rouse Building. A large two-story brick traditional commercial building, facing north, with a flat roof and flat parapet. There is a corbelled brick belt course above the second story windows. The façade is unusual in that the right side (four bays on the right façade) sits at the sidewalk, the main block on the left is set back and then the left corner is canted and returns one bay to hit the main block at right angles. There is a plate glass door in the canted wall and to the right of it is a pair of plate glass windows and a two-part bay with a single-leaf plate glass door with transom and a plate glass window to the right. In the projecting sections, there are four bays: a single-leaf four-light one-panel wood door with transom; a plate glass window, a plate glass door with transom, and a plate glass window. There are ten 6/6 double-hung wood windows in the second floor. While the building is now divided into two parcel numbers, a historic photograph shows the building as a single construction.

10. C 155 West Government Street c. 1950 Traditional Commercial

Thompson's Super Market. A one-story brick traditional commercial building, facing north, with a flat roof. The façade is divided into two storefronts. The left storefront is filled with a single-leaf full-light glazed wood door on the left and a single-leaf full-light wood door flanked by plate glass windows over brick bulkheads. The right storefront is totally enclosed except for two three-light doors.

11. C 158 West Government Street c. 1870 Traditional Commercial

Ohleyer Building. A two-story stucco traditional commercial building, facing south, with a flat roof and a corbelled flat cornice. There are three bays on the first floor: a center single-leaf non-historic door with a large awning, flanked by one-light fixed windows (non-historic). There are three bays on the second floor: 6/6 double-hung wood windows with metal shed awnings over each.

12. C 168 West Government Street c. 1940 Traditional Commercial

May Motor Company. A one-story brick traditional commercial building, facing south, with a flat roof. There is a decorative metal cornice across most of the front elevation. There is a flat suspended metal awning across the façade. There are double-leaf plate glass doors set slightly off-center flanked by a pair of vertical plate glass windows and a large decorative panel on the left and a single plate glass window and the same designed decorative panel on the right.

13. C 237 West Government Street c. 1946 Traditional Commercial

A two-story brick traditional commercial building, facing north, with a flat roof and flat parapet. A one-story porch stretches across the façade supported by metal poles. It is capped with a decorative wrought iron balustrade. A shed metal awning has been added as a roof supported with metal poles. There are three bays on the first floor: a single-leaf one-light, one-panel door with one-light transom on each end and a large plate glass window in the center. On the second floor there are three bays: a center six-light, three panel wood door flanked by pairs of 6/6 double-hung wood windows.

14. C 290 West Government Street c. 1959 Traditional Commercial

The May Building. A one-story brick commercial building, facing south, with a flat roof. The façade is divided into six storefronts. The first two storefronts (from the left) are both aluminum units with a plate glass door with one-light transom and a full-length plate glass window with one-light transom panel. Then the façade steps down to accommodate the slope of the street. This next section houses one storefront with a single-leaf plate glass door and two large plate glass display windows over brick bulkheads. The next section steps out toward the street and contains three storefronts: double-leaf plate glass doors with transom; off-center plate glass door flanked by plate glass windows over brick bulkheads; and two plate glass windows over brick bulkheads and a plate glass door with one-light transom.

15. PL 117 Timber Street 1924-5 Classical Revival N. W. Overstreet

Rankin County Courthouse. A three-story brick courthouse, facing south, with a terra cotta tile hip roof with widely overhanging eaves. The main façade is symmetrical, consisting of a three story, five bay yellow brick central block flanked on the east and west by two-story, three-bay brick blocks, all rising from a light masonry podium. The major entrances are in projecting flat bays on the east and west ends of the central block. Each of the two entrances is surrounded by a two-story, light masonry architrave with a keystone. The double-leaf, single-light doors have a lintel terminating in large modillions supporting a cornice with a metal balustrade which appears to form a small balcony, although there are no doors at the second floor. Between the projecting end bays is a two-story, three-bay fenestrated arcade with brick spandrel panels laid in header coursing. Each of the three arches is delineated by a course of light masonry with a keystone. The central arch has cartouches on either side at the second story. An architrave, banded top and bottom with light masonry and filled with a red brick soldier course interspersed with rosettes on square bases, spans the arcade. A light masonry belt course extends across the five bays of the central block, separating the two lower floors from the attic, which has a seven bay central block with projecting flat bays at the east and west ends. Each of the attic end bays has a terra cotta panel depicting the scales of justice in low relief. The two-story east and west end blocks have three bays whose fenestration is defined by a panel consisting stack bond brick on the east and west sides and a soldier course lintel. Running bond brick piers flank the center windows. Each of the windows has a brick spandrel panel laid in header coursing beneath its sill. Most of the windows on the first floor are double-hung in several configurations. The attic has six-light, double-leaf casement windows under four light transoms on the main façade.

16. C 200 Town Square c. 1870 Traditional Commercial

A two-story stucco (first floor) and brick (second floor) traditional commercial building, facing north, with a flat roof and a tall flat parapet which is corbelled. The first floor has center double-leaf plate glass doors flanked by plate glass windows over stuccoed bulkheads. There are three single-leaf wood French doors, equally spaced on the second floor, which have filled-in transoms. A narrow cast iron balcony extends across the façade. The west side at the rear has been resurfaced with concrete block with double-leaf doors inset for a retail business. At the rear is a square one-story addition which housed the jail at one time. There are three bays: a multi-light metal window flanked by small square fixed-light windows which have bars.

17. C 202 Town Square c. 1883 Traditional Commercial

Shield's Building. A two-story brick traditional commercial building, facing north, with a flat roof and flat parapet. The building was stuccoed at one time, but the stucco has been removed. There are three bays on the first floor: a center single-leaf French door with side lights and transom set within an arched opening which has been filled in with a new brick cross: flanked by plate glass display windows over brick bulkheads. These windows also have arched opening above them filled with brick crosses. There are three bays on the second floor: what appears to have been a door in the center (now an arched recess in-filled with a brick cross) flanked by arched windows openings now filled with brick crosses.

18. C 204 Town Square c. 1920s Traditional Commercial

A two-story stucco traditional commercial building, facing north, with a flat roof and a flat parapet. There are four bays: a six-panel wood door on the left façade; a plate glass window; a six-light two-panel wood door in a recess and a set of three plate glass windows in the recess along a wall that angles back to the façade at the right end of the façade. There is a set of three two-over-two double-hung aluminum windows in the second floor. There is a small wood plain overhang over the storefront.

19. C 210 Town Square c. 1950s

A one-story concrete block commercial building, facing north, with a gable roof behind a flat parapet. There is a single three-part bay: a plate glass door with a plate glass window on either side.

20. NC 212 Town Square c. 1935 Traditional Commercial

Busick Brothers Shoes. A one-story brick traditional commercial building, facing north, with a flat roof. There are six bays: an off-center recessed entry with a single-leaf modern door and surround flanked by multi-light plate display windows on either side in the angled recess; a large multi-light fixed display window on the right of the recess; and two similar bays on the left. A hipped suspended awning spans the façade. A historic photograph shows the original design of the building to be the right 2/3rds of the current building with the recessed entry flanked by plate glass windows over brick bulkheads with a transom panel across the front and a flat suspended metal awning.

21. PL Town Square 1907 monument

Confederate Monument. A Confederate monument erected in 1907 to pay tribute to the honored veterans of the Confederacy. The monument is 37 feet high and consists of a four level stepped base with the bottom step of granite and the three others of marble; and a marble shaft capped by a seven-foot tall granite statue of a Confederate soldier, facing west in a "lookout" posture. The west face of the monument has low reliefs of a crossed rifle and sword and a bayonet beneath a Confederate flag in the section of the shaft below the soldier and above the shaft's square pedestal which has inscriptions on each of its sides.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development

Commerce

Period of Significance

1870 - 1960

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Noah Webster Overstreet, Sr.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance extends from 1870, the earliest building in the district to 1960, fifty years from the date of this nomination.

Criteria Consideratons (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The Downtown Brandon Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A, within the themes of Community Planning and Development and Commerce. The district is locally significant as the historic downtown area, the center of commerce and government of the city of Brandon. While the downtown area has experienced trying times and has lost a number of its historic resources through fires and demolition, it retains its integrity of location, feeling, and association through the wealth of intact historic resources which span the history of Brandon. The district remains the heart of the city of Brandon.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

Community Planning and Development

The Brandon Historic District is eligible for National Register listing under Criteria A, within the theme of Community Planning and Development. The district is locally significant as the historic and current downtown area of the city of Brandon. The district grew from a crossroads to the center of commerce and government for the city of Brandon and the seat of Rankin County. The district remains the heart of the city of Brandon (see historic context information below).

Commerce

The Brandon Historic District is also eligible for National Register listing under Criteria A, within the theme of Commerce. The district is locally significant as the commercial center for Brandon. The district retains the only historic commercial buildings remaining in the city. The best of overnight accommodations for man and livestock could be found at the trading post owned by D. W. Wilkerson in the early 1820s and 30s, located on College Street. The town continued to grow with commercial buildings being constructed on the town square and to the east and west on Government Street. The district has historically been the commercial center of Brandon and continues to be so today (see historic context information below).

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Brandon is the county seat for Rankin County and is located twelve miles east of Jackson, just off Interstate 20. Historically it was on the line of the Alabama and Vicksburg Railroad and for several years was the terminus of the Vicksburg-Meridian Railroad. According to Dunbar Rowland in History of Mississippi: The Heart of the South, "Brandon was at one time the most important trading points in this section of the state" (p. 818) It was located on a spring near the intersection of two early territorial roads; one heading north through Madison County, crossing the Natchez Trace and heading toward Cairo, Illinois and south to Mobile, Alabama; and the other road toward the Mississippi River to the west and then east to Hillsboro, Scott County, and on toward central Alabama. Traders, missionaries, and early settlers also camped near what is now the town square. Soon a blacksmith and repair shop was built to meet the needs of the travelers. The best of overnight accommodations for man and livestock could be found at the trading post owned by D. W. Wilkerson in the early 1820s and 30s, located on College Street. The town continued to grow with commercial buildings being constructed on the town square and to the east and west on Government Street.

In 1828, Rankin County was carved out of Hinds County and named in memory of the late Christopher Rankin, a distinguished lawyer and politician who served Mississippi in Congress from 1819 until his death in 1826. The site for Brandon was chosen as the seat of the new county because it was the highest point in the new county and centrally located. Originally proposed to be named Poindexter, the name Brandon was chosen to honor the new governor of Mississippi. Gerard Chittocque Brandon was a native of Natchez and had been lieutenant governor for both Governors Leake and Holmes. Brandon was elected governor in 1827 over four opponents and was widely known as a man of ability, character, and culture. In addition, he was Mississippi's first native-born governor.

On July 24, 1828, Daniel Fore bought 79.75 acres from the United States Government, this land being the current downtown area of Brandon. Fore and his wife deeded forty acres to the town with an understanding that a courthouse would be erected in the center of the public square. The land was square, 1320 feet on each side and was divided into four quarters. Brandon grew quickly as is evidenced by an 1838 article in the "Republican and Eastern Advocate" where editors stated that Brandon "was an insignificant little village three years ago with perhaps a courthouse, a store, a lawyer and a physician. Now it is surpassed by few towns in the state.

Probably no town is improving faster than Brandon is at this time. There have been not less than 175 to 200 carpenters daily at work here during the winter."

Rankin County's first courthouse was built in the center of the Brandon Square in 1833. The two-story log building was demolished when it became too small for its purpose and needed repairs. The county records were moved to the Brandon Bank located on the southwest corner of the square. The bank burned in 1851, and a residence on College Street served as the courthouse until a new courthouse, was completed in 1853 on a location west of the public wells.

Because Brandon was the county seat and an important trade center, several hotels and taverns were built to accommodate the many people who came there to transact business. One of the earliest of these was the Union hotel, built in 1836 in the southwest quarter of town. The Chester House, originally called the Shelton House, was built in 1838 and was located on the corner of Main and Timber Streets. It was a two and a half story building with galleries on the first and second floor. Contemporary with these hotels were several saloons, including the Gem Saloon, housed in a two-story frame building on the south side of the public square and the "Old Tavern," in operation by 1842.

By 1837, Brandon had a variety of commercial activities, including three dry goods stores, a lumber company, and a grocer/provisioner, in addition to Fore's grist mill and two smithies. By 1842, eight merchants were listed in Brandon, and more stores opened in 1844 and 1845. Brandon was also the county's major medical center and had at least four doctors by 1837.

Churches were established in Brandon soon after the town was incorporated. These included Brandon Baptist Church in 1835, Brandon Methodist in 1836, and St. Luke's Episcopal in 1848. Brandon Presbyterian Church was formally organized in 1851, but Presbyterians had been meeting there since 1847. Until their church was built on Poindexter Street, the Methodists met at the courthouse. The Methodist Church was used as a hospital during the Civil War, until it was burned in 1863. The congregation met in the Brandon Female College building until the new church was completed in 1873. The Brandon Baptists also met in the College until their first building was completed in 1882.

As was the case in many Mississippi towns, the railroad was a factor in the early development of Brandon. The Jackson and Brandon Railroad and Bridge Company was chartered in 1836, with a bank in Brandon financing the enterprise. The bank failed during the Panic of 1837 and the project was suspended. The company was reincorporated in 1841 but failed again. The same year, the legislature approved the incorporation of the Mississippi and Alabama Railroad and transferred the holdings of the Jackson to Brandon Company to it. A narrow gauge railroad line from Jackson to Brandon opened in 1849. Once the railroad was completed, cut rates encouraged riders to travel to Brandon to enjoy the curative waters found at Baugh's Wells. Baugh's Wells and Busick's Mineral Wells were believed to contain iron, sulfur, and magnesium. Doctors touted their healing powers and visitors stayed at the Union Hotel and the Chester House, both built in 1836. These curative waters were an economic boom for about 50 years until the waters ran out.

In 1852, the Mississippi and Alabama Railroad assets were transferred to the Southern Railroad Company and they completed the railroad through Meridian to the Alabama line in 1860. The railroad ran through Brandon with a deep cut made south of and parallel to Government Street. The track ran past the Methodist Church on College Street to a turntable in McCaskill's pasture. Then the railroad received financing to extend the line to Meridian, there was a disagreement about the right of way in town and to the east of town. The railroad company removed the track from the center of town to its western edge and began looking for another route. Sometime between 1850 and 1860, the depot burned and railroad official decided to move the depot one mile north of Brandon. Local historical information maintains that many Brandon residents were glad to have the depot moved, as they objected to the noise and other unpleasant features of the trains. The removal of the railroad from the center of town probably slowed Brandon's growth, however.

Brandon was briefly occupied by Union by Union troops in both 1863 and 1864. On July 19, 1863, following the Siege of Jackson, Major General Frederick Steele led a small expedition to Brandon in pursuit of Confederate General Johnston E. Johnston's forces, who had abandoned Jackson the day before. While in Brandon, Steele's men burned much of the town, including most of the commercial buildings. On February 7, 1864, Union forces again entered Brandon, this time under the command of Major General James B. McPherson, commanding the XVII Corps. General William Sherman accompanied the XVII Corps, and spent the night in the home of E.H. Lombard (not extant). While in Brandon, soldiers with the XVII Corps set fire to what was left of the business district in Brandon, including the jail, and ransacked other buildings, including the offices of the *Brandon Republican*. According to newspaper editor Col. A. J. Franz, "The thieving Yankee scoundrels...threw type all over the floor and into the street, tore up our stock of paper and demolished everything else we had left." Luckily, Franz had hidden a portion of type in the woods so was able to continue publishing the newspaper. Leaving the ruined town the next day, McPherson's troops rejoined the rest of Sherman's Expedition as the column made its way toward Meridian. Brandon, according to one Union soldier, was "burned to the ground." The courthouse was set on fire, but its stone and concrete construction caused it to burn slowly and the fire was extinguished. The Methodist Church, the post

office, the government stables, and building on all but the west side of the square were burned. General Sherman used four, two-story buildings known as the Wilkerson Block on the west of the square as his headquarters. Much of what was destroyed was not rebuilt.

For several years after the Civil War, the area's transportation and agricultural processing systems were disrupted and the population of Rankin County decreased. Both the black and white population of Mississippi increased between 1860 and 1870, but Rankin County's white population decreased by 826 and its black population increased by 168. It is estimated that about 440 Rankin County soldiers died during the Civil War; the balance of the population loss was probably due to out-migration. Brandon's population also declined from 1850 to 1870, and the town's economy undoubtedly suffered somewhat as a result of the population decline. Despite this change, a pamphlet produced by the Vicksburg and Meridian Railroad noted that "Brandon is the largest and perhaps the most important place on the road between Jackson and Meridian; has always been remarkable for its good society, fine schools, and churches. Has a large weekly newspaper, the 'Brandon Republican,' quite a number of first class business houses, and other facilities." Another indication of the town's regained economic prosperity during this period was the construction of new buildings for the Methodist church in 1873, the Baptist church in 1882, and the Episcopal church in the 1880s.

In the late 1890s, the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad was built across Rankin County, just south of Brandon. While the railroad did not run through Brandon, the town benefited from the 600 laborers who came to the county to build the railroad and from the sale of timber which was used for railroad ties.

Brandon continued its tradition as a center for medical services in the county with the construction of the Brandon Sanatorium, a hospital for the treatment of tuberculosis, on the northwest corner of the intersection of Government and College streets. The facility, which included a training school for nurses, was only in operation until 1913. It was then used as an apartment house until the 1920s when it was used as a hotel and then as a hospital again until 1956. The building was destroyed by fire in 1986.

While Rankin County's economy was based on agriculture, it was not a single crop economy. The boll weevil infestations which ravaged the cotton crops in the state from 1907 to 1916 caused a decline in the county's agricultural income, but the economy was sustained by timber, cereal, and fruit crops. Rankin County's population declined from 1910 to 1920, losing 726 whites and 2,946 blacks, probably due to out-migration of farm laborers. Brandon's population also declined during this period, but the economy remained relatively stable, sustained by its government functions and related services.

Brandon, like many other Southern towns in the early years of the twentieth century, participated in the extensive effort to memorialize the Confederacy. Beginning in 1904, the Brandon chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy had solicited donations, held fundraising events, and asked the board of supervisors in Rankin County for a contribution to help pay the \$3,000 cost of a Confederate monument. In 1907, a monument in memory of "those noble men who gave their lives and for the cause" was erected in the middle of Town Square in front of the courthouse.

The face of downtown was forever changed in 1924 when a fire destroyed the courthouse, the Chester House hotel, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, and much of the downtown. A new courthouse was built on the same site within a year. The new Classical Revival courthouse was designed by Noah Webster Overstreet, one of Mississippi's most notable architects.

Over the next twenty years (1930 to 1950) Brandon's population almost tripled from 692 to 1,827. The city continued to be a center for government and commerce and would over the next half a decade also become a bedroom community for nearby Jackson. The city annexed parts of the county and by 1990 the population had increased to 11,077. The downtown area continues to be the heart of the community and the county. While large shopping areas have been constructed in the outlying areas, the downtown is still dominated by the courthouse, major banking concerns, the local newspaper, churches. Even though the downtown area has experienced trying times and has lost a number of its historic resources through fires and demolition, it retains its integrity of location, feeling, and association through the wealth of intact historic resources which span the history of Brandon.

Although the nearby community of Pearl has a larger population, the "downtown" area of Pearl is diffuse and does not contain a concentration of historic commercial and institutional buildings as seen in Brandon. To the north, Flowood is a late 20th century community which has largely developed along Highway 16 (Lakeland Drive) and lacks any historic central core. The smaller Rankin County towns of Pelahatchie and Florence have small commercial downtowns but neither approaches the size nor the age of the Downtown Brandon Historic District.

Important people to have hailed from Brandon include two governors: Robert Lowry (1882-1890) and Anselm J. McLaurin (1896-1900) and Mary Ann Mobley, who was the first Mississippian to be crowned Miss America (1959). Brandon also claims to have furnished the state of Mississippi with more governors, senators, congressman, judges, district attorneys, physicians and teachers than any other town its size in the state. Brandon has often been called the "City of red hills laden with golden opportunities."

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Brandon, Mississippi: A Pictorial History. Florence, Mississippi: Stephens Printing and Publishing, 2002.

Rowland, Dunbar. History of Mississippi: The Heart of the South. 1925. Spartanburg, South Carolina: Reprint Company Publishers, 1978.

The Vicksburg Foundation for Historic Preservation. Brandon Cultural Resource Survey, Phase 1, 2010.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property about ten (10) acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

A	<u>16</u>	<u>218410</u>	<u>3574625</u>	C	<u>16</u>	<u>218780</u>	<u>3574390</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
B	<u>16</u>	<u>218785</u>	<u>3574460</u>	D	<u>16</u>	<u>218660</u>	<u>3574316</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
E	16	218425	3574425				

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundaries of the Downtown Brandon Historic District are buildings on either side of East Government Street, Town Square and West Government Street from Timber Street to North College Street (excluding the building on the southwest corner of West Government Street and North College Street), then north to include the 100 block of North College Street to Tamberlin Street. It also includes the 100 block of Black Street.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries of the Downtown Brandon Historic District reflect a thorough survey of the historic resources of downtown Brandon. Boundaries were drawn to include streets which have large numbers of historic resources that retain their integrity and which, when viewed together, retain architectural cohesiveness through design, setting, materials, and feeling of time and place.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy Bell

organization Vicksburg Foundation for Historic Preservation

date 3/20/2010

street & number 1107 Washington Street

telephone 601.636.5010

city or town Vicksburg

state MS

zip code 39183

e-mail vburgfoundation@aol.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
 - **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)
-

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Downtown Brandon Historic District

City or Vicinity: Brandon

County: Rankin

State: Mississippi

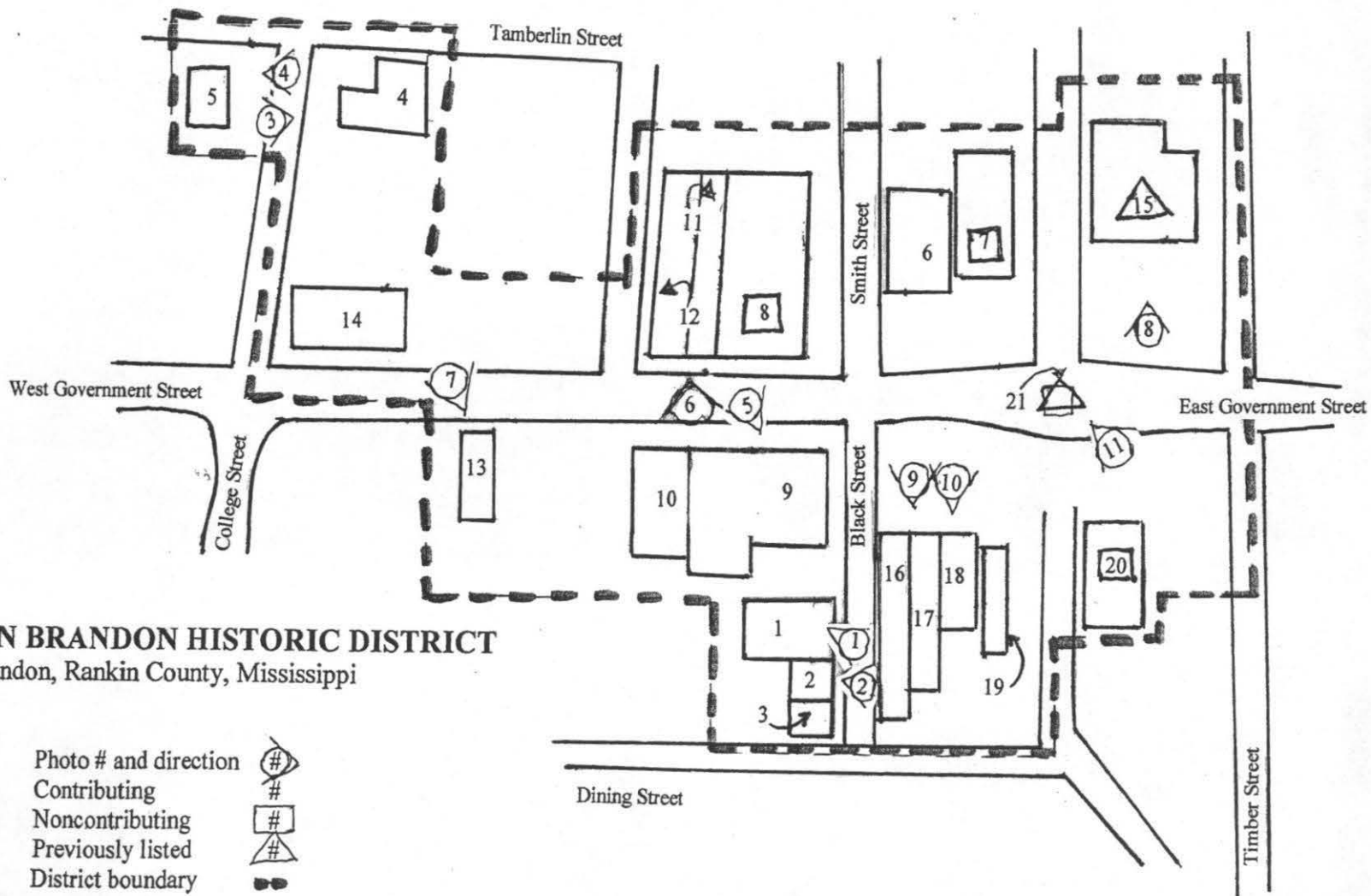
sdfsdf

Photographer: Nancy Bell

Date Photographed: February 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1. 103 Black Street (#1), view to northwest
2. 110 Black Street (#2), view to west
3. 104 North College Street (#4), view to east
4. 105 North College Street (#5), view to west
5. 135-151 West Government Street (#9), view to south
6. 168 West Government Street (#12), view to north
7. 237 West Government Street (#13), view to southeast
8. 117 Timber Street (#15), view to north
9. 200 Block of Town Square, view to south
10. 200 Block of Town Square, view to south
11. Town Square, Confederate Monument (#21), view to northwest



DOWNTOWN BRANDON HISTORIC DISTRICT
 Brandon, Rankin County, Mississippi

- Photo # and direction
- Contributing
- Noncontributing
- Previously listed
- District boundary

1' = 150'





Downtown Brandon Hist. Dist
Brandon, Rankin, MS

1 of 1



Downtown Brandon H. D.
Brandon, Raulcut, MS

2 of 4



Downtown Brandon H.D.
Brandon, Rankin, MS
W of I



Downtown Brandon, H.D.
Brandon, Rankin, MS

4 of 4



Downtown Brandon H.D.

Brandon, Ranferin, MS

10/24



Downtown Brandon, H.D.
Brandon, Lanark, MS

694



Downtown Brandon (H.D.)
Brandon, Rankin, MS

7 of 11



Downtown Brandon H.T.

Brandon, Rankin, MS

8 of 4



Mrs. Debbie's
DOWNTOWN

RESALE &
CONSIGNMENT

Town
Square

Antique
Mall

Lawton,
Brandon,
9,

of 4
Diana,
Lance,
5,

5,
5,
5,



GREEN
FLOWERS
INC

Ms Debbie's
DOWNTOWN

↓
Handicap
Access

↓
Handicap
Access

↓
Handicap
Access

Down town Brandon, H.D.
Brandon, Rankin, MS

LO gg 4



Downtown Brandon, t.D.
Brandon, Rankein, MS.

11 of 4