

**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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Mound Bayou Historic District
 Other names/site number: _____
 Name of related multiple property listing NA
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: Roughly bounded by Martin Luther King Avenue on the north, the Mound Bayou cemetery on the east and southeast, South Street on the south, and Davis Street on the west.
 City or town: City of Mound Bayou State: MS County: Bolivar
 Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
 I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national X statewide local
 Applicable National Register Criteria:
 X A X B C D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> <p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
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City of Mound Bayou

Bolivar

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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

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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	
<u>34</u>	<u>17</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>34</u>	<u>17</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 3

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- DOMESTIC/single dwelling
- COMMERCE/business
- COMMERCE/restaurant

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COMMERCE/financial institution
EDUCATION/school
FUNERARY/cemetery
GOVERNMENT/post office
HEALTH CARE/hospital
RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater
RELIGION/religious facility
SOCIAL/meeting hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
COMMERCE/business
COMMERCE/restaurant
EDUCATION/school
FUNERARY/cemetery
GOVERNMENT/ post office
RELIGION/religious facility
VACANT/NOT IN USE
WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS /vernacular
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/ Mission Revival
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Commercial Style

See Continuation Sheet Section 7 Page 1

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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Summary Paragraph

The City of Mound Bayou, Bolivar County, Mississippi was founded in 1887 by freed slaves. Over the years the City has expanded and contracted due to changing economic conditions. The topography of Mound Bayou Historic District is flat with little change in elevation. A long abandoned train track runs north south on a slightly raised berm between West and East Main Streets. Outside of town to the southeast is a small hill, or the remains of an Indian mound, from which the town gets its name. The district is primarily residential with a small strip of commercial structures running for two blocks along Edwards Avenue.

Narrative Description

The town of Mound Bayou, in Bolivar County, was named for a large Indian mound located to the southeast of town at the junction of two bayous which drained into nearby rivers. The roughly eleven block district is flat with little change in topography. A long abandoned train track and green park area runs north south on a slightly raised berm between West and East Main Streets. The street pattern of the historic district is a modified grid pattern. The primary north south street is Edwards Street, formerly U. S. Highway 61. The town's commercial core developed along Edwards Street.

The main east –west streets are Martin Luther King Drive, Green Street and South Street. The southeast border of the district includes the city cemetery with its irregular boundary running along a natural waterway, also known as Mound Bayou.

Almost all of the surviving buildings are vernacular in style. Most of the commercial buildings are small simple rectangular structures with flat roofs behind parapets or with simple gable roofs. A significant exception is the Bank of Mound Bayou on West Main Street (Inv. 48, Photo 13, NR, 1996). Built in 1904, the bank building is a two-story, brick building with a chamfered corner containing the main entrance. The building features segmented arches above the second windows and a decorative corbelled cornice.

Important institutional buildings include the Knights and Daughters of Tabor building at 205 E. Martin Luther King Street (Inv. 40, Photo 4), built c. 1925, is a two-story brick building with a raised Mission Revival front parapet. The Taborian Hospital (Inv. 27, Photo 3, NR, 1996) , built between 1941 and 1942, is a one-story, Art Deco style, irregularly-massed, brick building. The roof is obscured by a parapet wall capped by cast concrete coping and the roof-line is pierced by a large smokestack. Poured, concrete beltcourses encircle the building both above and below the windows on all elevations.

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Most governmental buildings in Mound Bayou are more recent including the City Hall and Mound Bayou Public Library, both located outside the historic district. The I. T. Montgomery School (Inv. 39a, Photo 6), opened in 1960, on the site of a 1920s Rosenwald building. It is a one-story E-shaped building with a flat roof, with later additions. The United States Post Office (Inv. 18, Photo 2), built in 1960 and located on Edwards Street is a modified Colonial Revival style brick building with a gable front approximating a classical portico.

There are three churches in the Mound Bayou Historic District. Although all three congregations have long histories in the community, only one church building was built during the period of significance. The current Wesley United Methodist Church (Inv. 35, Photo 7) was completed in 1972 and Bethel AME Church (Inv. 23) was constructed in 1973. Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church (Inv. 38, Photo 5) was built in 1950.

The district is primarily residential with most houses found to the west and east for three blocks off of Edwards Avenue. The houses are one-story, frame construction and mostly vernacular in style. There are several notable exceptions. The I.T. Montgomery House, on West Main Street, (Inv. 50, Photo 14, NHL, 1976) was built in 1910 by the city founder I.T. Montgomery. The red brick veneered house is two-stories over a full above-grade basement, irregular in plan, with a hipped roof and gables over projections. The front has a spacious porch with square battered columns resting on brick piers and is reached by a flight of masonry steps. The Booze House (Inv. 53), 308 West Main South, is a two-story American foursquare built in 1910 and features Colonial Revival detailing.

For comparison to today, at one point Mound Bayou had three schools, forty businesses, six churches, a train depot, a newspaper, three cotton gins, a cottonseed oil mill, a zoo, a Carnegie library, a bank, a swimming pool, a sawmill, a Farmers Cooperative and Mercantile company, and a hospital, all created and sustained locally. In its heyday Mound Bayou was a thriving community bustling with activity. Along Edwards Avenue, many multi-story commercial buildings faced directly onto the street. The west side of Edwards Avenue between Montgomery Street and Martin Luther King Avenue still retains a sense of what the community was, although there are many gaps and vacant lots between the remaining buildings.

There are few formal records regarding Mound Bayou. For a number of possible reasons, there are no Sanborn maps that cover Mound Bayou. This is probably due to the fact that insurance companies did not insure any buildings there and may reflect that this was a town founded and built by African Americans.

There are many vacant lots in the historic district. Many buildings suffer the ill effects of deferred maintenance. These same conditions are found in the areas of Mound Bayou outside the historic district. The current status of the built environment in Mound Bayou reflects economic stagnation widespread in the Mississippi Delta, often having the worst effect in African American communities.

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Mound Bayou differs from communities in the surrounding area because of its history as a municipality founded by, developed and governed by African Americans. Although the range of building types, whether commercial, institutional, or residential, would be similar in neighboring communities such as Merigold or Winstonville, none of these other communities feature resources like the I. T. Montgomery House or the Taborian Hospital which link Mound Bayou with the African American experience in the Mississippi Delta during the “segregation era.”

Inventory of Resources

C = Contributing element; NC = Non-contributing element; PL = Previously Listed

The inventory is arranged alphabetically by street name in ascending numerical order. Buildings are classified as “contributing” (C) or “non-contributing” (NC) to the historic character of the district, or “previously listed” (PL) for buildings already listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Burns Street

1. C 103 Burns Street c.1950

One-story frame residence with an asphalt shingle roof. Exterior walls are asbestos shingles. The door is offset to the left. The single-leaf wood door and a single 1/1 metal frame window are sheltered by an extension of the main roof supported by decorative iron posts. There are two paired windows with metal awnings to the right of the door.

East Main Street

2. C Commercial Building, east side of East Main Street, south of Martin Luther King Street Smitty's c. 1960

One story commercial building constructed of concrete block. A squared parapet conceals a gently sloping gable roof clad in asbestos shingles. The front of the building is symmetrical with a single-leaf replacement door set between plate glass display windows. A ghost line above the door and surviving wood posts suggests there was an awning.

3. NC East side of East Main Street, north of 111 East Main Street c. 1975

One story concrete block commercial building with brick veneer and a faux Mansard roof composed of wood shingles. A single leaf metal door is flanked by tall plate glass windows.

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4. NC 111 East Main Street, Sanders Building c. 1975

One-story concrete block building with brick veneer and metal gable roof. The single-leaf glazed metal door inset and flanked by large windows over a brick bulkhead. The plate glass has been replaced by smaller windows set in decorative wood frames.

5. C 113 East Main Street, Mound Bayou Telephone Company c. 1960

One-story concrete block commercial building with brick veneer and a flat roof. Brick pilasters divide the façade into four bays. An inset entry is offset to the north with single-leaf two-light metal frame door. The remaining bays are brick panels without openings.

**6. C Commercial Building, northeast corner of East Main Street and Green Street
c. 1950**

One-story frame commercial building with pyramidal roof clad in asphalt shingles. Walls are clad in asbestos shingles. The west elevation features a triple window, partially covered by plywood. A wood deck is located on the south elevation which has two single leaf doors. A shed roof addition extends to the east.

7. C 213 East Main Street c. 1955

One-story metal building with gable roof. The west elevation has two large metal doors that slide in tracks. The doors are flanked by four-light metal frame windows.

8. C 600 East Main Street c. 1950

One-story brick residence with a gable roof clad in asphalt shingles. The single-leaf wood door is offset to the south and flanked by 1/1 double-hung wood windows. Each elevation has similar windows.

Edwards Avenue, South

9. NC 102 S. Edwards Avenue Smitty's Fast Food c. 1980

One story masonry gas station/convenience store with a flat roof behind a shingled parapet. The primary elevation is east with a brick veneer featuring single-leaf glazed door with small window set in upper wall. A canopy that provided protection for the gas pumps is set an angle near the intersection of Martin Luther King Street and Edwards Avenue.

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**10. C Commercial building, west side of Edwards Street, south of 102 S. Edwards Street
c. 1925**

One brick commercial building with a gable roof clad in asbestos shingles. A single leaf wood door is flanked by windows, a single pane window to the north and two panel window to the south.

11. C Commercial building, west side of Edwards Street c. 1925

One-story commercial brick building with raised parapet capped with ceramic tile. The parapets on the north and south step down three times. The storefront has recessed center entrance with a single-leaf glazed door flanked by large plate glass display windows.

12. C 107 South Edwards Street, Orin's Variety Store c. 1920

One-story frame commercial building with a slightly sloping roof. A full-width shed roof porch supported by seven square posts extend along the west elevation. The exterior is clad asphalt shingles textured to resemble stone. The storefront three doors and three plate glass display windows.

13. NC 112 South Edwards Street, Delta Burial Corporationc. 1980

One-story metal building with gable roof. A single-leaf door with oval glazed panel is flanked by multi-light metal-frame windows.

**14. C Commercial building on west side of Edwards Street immediately south of 112
South Edwards Street c. 1920**

Two-story brick commercial building with one-story wing historically used as a funeral home. The roof gently slopes to the rear. The two-story entrance is a single-leaf wood door flanked by windows, covered with plywood. The entrance is covered by a wood canopy supported by decorative metal posts. There are two larger windows with brick sills flanking the entrance. Similar windows on the second floor, covered with plywood, flank a sign with faded lettering. The one-story wing has a metal garage door under a sign indicating the door was used as an ambulance bay. A single-leaf wooden door is offset to the north with a shingled canopy.

**15. C Commercial building, west side of Edwards Street, immediately south the historic
funeral home c. 1950**

One-story brick commercial building with sloping roof behind parapet wall. The recessed center entrance is a single-leaf glazed door with plate glass display windows over a brick bulkhead. Raised rectangular decorative brick detail above storefront.

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16. NC 116 South Edwards Street c. 1970

One –story brick commercial building with a flat roof. There are four bays. The northern bay has a single-leaf partially glazed wood door with a transom. A large plate glass window sits to the north. The middle bay is recessed with a single leaf partially glazed door with a transom with no additional fenestration. The third bay has a large plate glass display window flanked by multi-light windows. The fourth bay is a recessed entry.

17. C 200 South Edwards Street Pichard’s C. 1930

One-story brick commercial building with the entry cut back several feet at the street corner at 45 degree angle. Parapets on the street sides rise above the flat roof. The single-leaf wood door is set in the angled front. Adjacent to the entry on the street sides there are large windows covered with plywood. A remnant of the name “Pichard” remains in place above the door.

18. C 204 S. Edwards Street Club Jabot C. 1950

One-story story brick commercial building with gable roof. The gable face is wood planks. Two long raised ornamental brick rectangles decorate the space above the doors. A near-center single-leaf wood door is flanked by paired plate glass windows with cast-stone lintels. A single-leaf wood door is offset to the north.

19. C 206 S. Edwards Street United States Post Office 1960

One-story brick United States Post Office building with a gable roof. A hipped roof tower with a louvered panels decorates the roofline. The gable front is covered in stucco imitating a stone pediment. The east elevation is four bays, with the three southern bays inset and divided by square columns. The center bay holds a half glazed single leaf metal door set in a Colonial Revival surround with fluted pilasters and a broken pediment. The door is flanked by faux multi-light windows with applied shutters. The front wall of the north bay is flush with the roof line. (Photo 2)

20. C 301 S. Edwards Street c. 1925

One-story concrete block building with parapet front extending above a gable roof. The symmetrical façade has a centered metal replacement door. The door is flanked by large windows covered with plywood. An aluminum awning extends across the façade.

21. C 303 South Edwards Street c. 1930

One-story brick commercial building with small parapet topped with terra cotta tiles. The font façade is symmetrical with a half-glazed metal door. The door is flanked by plate glass windows.

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22. C Commercial building at the northeast corner of Edwards Street and Spencer Street c. 1930

One-story brick commercial building with parapet walls on the street sides which conceal gently sloping roof. The parapet walls are capped with terra cotta tiles. The southwest corner is cut at a 45 degree angle with a double-leaf glazed doors. Three bays of plate glass windows are set along the west elevation. A thin metal canopy supported by iron rods extends along the west elevation and covers the entrance.

23. NC 401 S. Edwards Street c. 1970

One-story brick commercial building with flat roof. The west elevation has two bays. The north bay has a single-leaf metal frame glazed door set between two plate glass display windows. The south bay has a center entry flanked by two large openings. All three openings are arched and filled with plywood.

24. NC Bethel AME Church, northwest corner of Edwards Avenue and Montgomery Street 1973

One-story brick church building with gable roof and tall spire. The west elevation is primarily plain brick with a centered multi-pane vertical window. The entrance is offset to the south under a porch. There is a single-leaf wood door with sidelights.

25. C Service station building at the northwest corner of Edwards Street and Montgomery Street c. 1930

One-story brick building with intersecting gable roof. The west elevation has four bays. A centered single-leaf multi-light door is set between two plate glass windows with brick lintels. There is an open service bay to the north. Although the gas pumps are gone, a metal canopy remains.

26. NC 505 South Edwards Street c.1980

One-story brick residence with a gable roof. The house has partial-width porch supported by round posts. There are four bays. An open carport, paired 6/6 windows with applied shutters, a single-leaf metal door with and oval window and a single 6/6 double-hung window with applied shutters.

27. C Residence northwest corner of Edwards Street and South Street c. 1950

One-story brick residence with intersecting gable roof clad in asphalt shingles. There five bays: an open carport, probably an addition. There is a slightly projecting wing with an intersecting gable roof which has two windows: there is a three section metal casement windows, each section with three lights. There are paired 3/1 double hung windows. A single leaf door is

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offset to the south with a single 3/1 window on one side and paired 3/1 windows on the other side. All the windows have brick sills.

Fisher Avenue

**28. PL Northeast corner of Fisher Avenue and Martin Luther King Drive
Taborian Hospital 1940 McKissack & McKissack, architects**

One-story, Art Deco style, irregularly-massed, brick hospital building. The roof is obscured by a parapet wall capped by cast-stone coping and the roof-line is pierced by a large smokestack. Poured, concrete beltcourses also run the perimeter of the building both above and below the windows on all elevations of the building. The western (main) elevation of the building is U-shaped with two wings extending toward the west. The facade is approached by a concrete walkway which leads to a central, semi-circular portico with a stepped Art Deco cornice. The original entrance under the portico is obscured by plywood sheets, Windows on the primary facade are three-over-three, double-hung, metal sash, covered with plywood.

The placement of the windows on the facade is symmetrical from the portico with three grouped windows, two ganged windows, and one single window. The extending wings have five, ganged windows on the facade which are filled with eight-over-eight, double-hung, wooden sash. The eastern elevation of the building has a central and northern projecting ell. This elevation has few openings, but ganged, casement windows are located on the northernmost ell although they are obscured by plywood. A few small, casement windows are found on the eastern and northern elevations. (Photo 3)

**29. NC Residence at northeast corner of Fisher Avenue and Montgomery Street
c.1990**

One-story residence with an intersecting asphalt gable roof. The exterior walls of the west elevation are stone veneer, while the other elevations are brick. There is a 1/1 metal frame tripartite window offset to the south. The single-leaf six-panel door with multiple light sidelight is slightly recessed. There is a small 1/1 metal frame window, two single 1/1 windows and an open carport.

**30. C Pump station, southeast corner of Fisher Avenue and Montgomery Street
c. 1925**

One-story concrete brick pump station with an asphalt shingle hip roof.

31. C Residence at northeast corner of Fisher Avenue and Burns Street c.1910

One-story frame residence with a corrugated metal roof and a brick center chimney. Exterior walls are tarpaper with a vinyl clapboard. The primary elevation is west. A partial-width corrugated metal shed roof shelters paired single leaf doors. The doors are flanked by 4/4

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double hung wood windows. The north and south walls also feature two 4/4 double hung windows.

Green Street, East

32. C 100 block of Green Street, East Mound Bayou School District Parent Center Annex c. 1960

One-story brick building with a flat roof. The primary elevation is north. Double-leaf wood doors with single-light transoms are set to the east and the west. The transoms are joined by four clerestory lights. A cantilevered eave protects the entrance.

33. NC 201 Green Street, East Mound Bayou Public School, Office of the Superintendent c. 1980

One-story frame building with asphalt shingle roof. The primary elevation is south. Exterior wall are clapboard with brick wainscoting.

34. C Residence at southeast corner of Green Street, East and Fisher Avenue c.1940

One-story frame residence with an asphalt shingle roof. The exterior is clapboard. The primary elevation is north. A centered single-leaf door is flanked by one-light windows, with board and batten siding. A metal awning protects the entry. The long side has 1/1 metal frame windows with a single-leaf wood door: W, PW, W, D, PW, W.

35. NC 206 Green Street, East c.2000

Single-wide house trailer.

36a. NC Southwest corner of Green Street, east and Montgomery Street Wesley United Methodist Church c. 1972

One-story T-shaped brick church building with intersecting asphalt shingle roof. The leg of the T extends to the north. The north face has a large applied cross. The west face has a single-leaf metal door and two 2/2 metal windows. The east elevation has two similar windows. The entrance is at the intersection of the cross wing and consists of double-leaf wood doors. A steeple rises above the entrance. (Photo 7)

36b. Wesley United Methodist Church Cemetery

Green Street, West

37. NC 104 Green Avenue, West c. 2010

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One-story standing seam metal building with gable roof. Double-leaf partially glazed doors are centered on the south elevation.

Green Lee Street

38. NC Northeast corner of Green Lee Street and Montgomery Avenue c.1970

One-story frame residence with an asphalt shingle roof gable roof. The roof line extends to create shallow partial width porch supported by decorative iron posts. The exterior is clapboard with brick wainscote on west elevation. There are six bays: an open carport; 2/2 metal window; paired 2/2 metal frame windows; 2/2 metal frame window; single-leaf door with decorative metal storm door with sidelight; and, paired 2/2 metal frame windows.

Martin Luther King Drive, East

39. C 102 East Martin Luther King Drive Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church 1950

One-story brick church building with intersecting gable roof clad in asbestos shingles. The primary elevation is north and presents as a gable and wing. The gable section is topped by a wood steeple. The gable apex is wood clapboards with a louvered vent. The lower walls composed of red bricks. A centered double-leaf glazed door is covered by a metal canopy supported by metal posts. The entry is flanked by 2/2 metal frame windows with metal awnings. The wing front extends to the west. A single-leaf glazed door with a metal canopy is flanked by 2/2 metal frame windows. The gable front of a south-projecting wing is seen above the roof line of this wing. (Photo 5)

40a. C 202 East Martin Luther King Drive 1960 I.T. Montgomery Elementary School Harold Kaplan, Architect

The I. T. Montgomery Elementary School is a one-story school building with a flat roof. The building is roughly E-shaped with the long rectangular wing facing Martin Luther King Drive. Moderately broad eaves are supported by stylized brackets. The main entrance has a covered walkway. Three glazed single-leaf doors are slightly inset. There are four bays to the west. Each bay holds six 2/2 metal frame windows. Several windows have been replaced with wood panels holding air conditioners. To the east of the entrance there is a masonry screen and six bays, similar to the western bays. There are double-leaf partially glazed doors with a transom. A taller wing, probably a later addition, extends to the east. This wing has six bays of paired six light metal frame windows. A recessed wing with two windows extends to the east. (Photo 6)

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40b. NC 202 East Martin Luther King Drive c. 1980
I.T. Montgomery Elementary School Gymnasium

One-story metal gymnasium building with a gable roof.

41. C 205 E. Martin Luther King Drive c. 1925
Knights and Daughters of Tabor

Two-story brick building with a gable roof that terminates into a hip set behind a Flemish gable. The gable is capped with cast-stone details. The primary elevation is south. A single arched window, covered with plywood, is located in the apex. Four windows, boarded over, with cast-stone sills extend across the second floor. On the ground floor, a single-leaf entrance is slightly offset to the west, with a single window to the west and two windows to the east. The east and west elevations have four bays. The second floor bays contain paired 1/1 double-hung windows. The ground floor bays have either paired or single double-hung wood windows. (Photo 4)

Spencer Street

42. C 104 Spencer Street c. 1950

One-story frame residence with an asphalt shingle roof. The exterior is clad in asbestos shingles. The single-leaf door is offset to the west with a 2/2 metal frame window. The door and window are sheltered by a pedimented canopy supported by decorative iron posts. There is an additional 2/2 metal frame window.

43. NC 202 Spencer Street c. 2000

Single-wide house trailer.

44. NC 203 Spencer Street c. 2000

One-story modular home with standing-seam metal gable roof. Exterior cladding is metal. There are five bays. A single-leaf metal door is set in a Colonial Revival surround and is flanked by two 1/1 metal frame windows with applied shutters.

Tate Street

45. C 201 Tate Street c. 1940

One-story frame residence with asphalt shingle roof and clapboard siding. The entry is offset to the west in a gable-roof projecting wing with corner posts, with a single-leaf replacement door with metal storm door and two 1/1 metal frame windows. An additional 2/2 replacement

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50. C 204-206 West Main Street, South c. 1950

Two-story brick duplex with hipped roof. The entrances to each unit are offset to the south and north. Each has a single leaf door sheltered by a hip roof canopy supported by decorative iron posts. There are two large window openings on the ground floor, covered with plywood. There are four windows on the second floor, all covered with plywood.

**51. PL 302 West Main Street, South 1910
Isaiah T. Montgomery House**

Two-story asymmetrical brick residence with a hipped roof and intersecting gable roofs front and side elevations set on a full-above-grade basement. A full-width front porch wraps around the north elevation supported by tapered wood columns set on brick piers which descend to grade. There are two windows in the east elevation of the above-ground basement. Concrete stairs rise to the porch level. Double-leaf entry doors are offset to the south. A large window opening is under the porch, but is covered by plywood. On the second floor is a prominent front facing gable with returns and a round louvered window in the apex and a single 1/1 double-hung wood window. Offset to the south are two paired 4/4 double-hung wood windows. (Photo 14)

52. NC 304 West Main Street, South c. 1980

One-story frame residence with intersecting asphalt shingle gable roof. The exterior is brick veneer. The gable front, clad in clapboards, creates a partial-width covered porch supported by decorative iron posts. There are five bays: an open carport; paired 2/2 metal frame windows; a single-leaf door with ornamental iron storm door; and, two 2/2 metal frame windows with applied shutters.

53. NC 306 West Main Street, North c. 2000

One-story L-shaped residence with asphalt shingle roof. The entry is at the intersection of the north-south wing and east-west wing. An interior brick chimney pierces the roof line. The north-south wing has two 9/4 metal double hung windows with applied shutters. The corners have brick quoins. The north face of the east-west wing has a double overhead garage door and a 9/4 window. The east face has a similar window.

**54. C 308 West Main Street, North 1910
Booze House**

Two-story brick residence with an asphalt shingle hip roof. A centered has three double hung wood windows. The second floor has two bays, each with paired double-hung wood windows. A three-quarter width hip roof porch is supported by wood columns resting on brick piers. The outside columns are tripled while the two interior columns are single. The entry is offset to the

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north with a partially glazed wood door. The door is flanked by paired double-hung windows to the south and a single hung window.

Other location

**55. C East of Mound Bayou; west of Montgomery Street and Lafayette Avenue; and south of Martin Luther King Drive
Mound Bayou Cemetery c. 1890**

The Mound Bayou Cemetery is an irregular shaped plot of land west of the waterway known Mound Bayou, west of Montgomery Street and Lafayette Avenue, and south of Martin Luther King Drive. The total number of graves in the cemetery is unknown and it is believed there are many unmarked burials. The oldest markers date from the last decades of the 19th century and include a variety of styles. Community co-founders Isaiah T. Montgomery and Benjamin T. Green are buried in the cemetery. (Photo 8, 9, 10)

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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.

Criteria Considerations

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

- 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE _____
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT _____
ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black _____
SOCIAL HISTORY _____

Period of Significance

1898 - 1963 _____

Significant Dates

1898, incorporated village _____

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Montgomery, Isaiah T. – Community founder and leader _____

Cultural Affiliation

NA _____

Architect/Builder

McKissack and McKissack _____
Harold Kaplan _____

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Mound Bayou is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for statewide significance under Criterion A for association with Community Development and Planning, Ethnic History: Black, Commerce and Social History. The district is eligible under Criterion B for association with Isaiah T. Montgomery, the community founder. Because it was founded by freed slaves after the Civil War with no assistance from other communities, what was accomplished is very significant and was accomplished under extremely difficult conditions. The founders and those that came after them started with a wilderness and created over many years, a thriving self-sufficient community.

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

Criterion A: Community Planning and Development, Ethnic History: Black, and Social History

Bolivar County is located in the northwest part of Mississippi in the area known as the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta. Prior to European contact the territory was occupied by the Choctaw Indians. The Choctaw ceded eleven million acres, including present-day Bolivar County, in the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek on September 27, 1830. Bolivar County was formed in 1836. However, settlement was impeded by “the jungle-like vegetation and climatic unpredictability.”¹

In the early 1880s a group of wealthy financiers formed a railroad company that eventually became the Louisville, New Orleans, and Texas Railway and purchased over a million acres of flat forested and swampy land in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta, including Bolivar County. To offset the costs of acquisition and to encourage settlement to provide a customer base for the line, the L.N.O. & T. owners wanted to sell land along the line. However, many white settlers were deterred by the fears of malaria and other swamp fevers. Major George W. McGinnis, the land agent for the L.N.O. & T., sharing a prejudice common in the era, believed African-Americans were immune to the disease, decided to encourage sale of land to former slaves. He approached former Secretary of State Jim Hill, one of the state’s most prominent black politicians. Hill referred him to Isaiah T. Montgomery, a Vicksburg merchant.²

¹ James C. Cobb. *The Most Southern Place on Earth, The Mississippi Delta and the Roots Regional Identity*. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 9.

² Earnest Overture, “Plan For Founding Mound Bayou Born in Vicksburg.” *(Vicksburg, MS) Evening Post*, May 10, 1987.

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Montgomery was born on Hurricane Plantation owned by Joseph Davis, the elder brother of Jefferson Davis, on May 21, 1847. Davis had purchased his father, Benjamin T. Montgomery, at Natchez. The elder Montgomery learned to read while a slave in Virginia. He learned to survey land, draw architectural plans and operate the steam-powered gin on Hurricane plantation. Additionally, Montgomery owned and operated a mercantile business that served both the white and black community in the Davis Bend area. Montgomery wanted his children to have an education and Isaiah T. Montgomery's education will be discussed below.

During the Civil War, Joseph Davis relocated his family to Alabama. Benjamin Montgomery operated Hurricane until Union troops occupied the Davis Bend area in 1863. He relocated to Cincinnati, but returned in 1865 to reestablish his business with his sons, William Thornton Montgomery and Isaiah T. Montgomery. In 1869, they purchased Hurricane and nearby Brierfield plantation, a total of 4000 acres. Benjamin Montgomery died in 1878, but the sons continued the business. The Montgomerys operated the plantations until 1881 when a combination of high mortgage payments, poor cotton crops and the collapse of their mercantile business caused them to lose the property to auction.³

Isaiah T. Montgomery opened a mercantile business in Vicksburg, Mississippi, and was engaged in that business when Hill put him together with McGinnis. Montgomery made several trips to Bolivar County scouting the area. He identified an area about midway between Memphis and Vicksburg on the rail line. Montgomery was seeking an area as remote as possible from other settlements.⁴ Montgomery and his cousin, Benjamin Green, purchased 840 acres of land from the railroad on June 12, 1887, paying \$7.00 per acre.⁵

Montgomery recruited settlers for the land in various ways. He contacted some of the former tenants from the Davis Bend community. He advertised in the Vicksburg papers. In the fall of 1887, a group of men, estimated at thirty, began to clear the thick forests surrounding the newly established community of Mound Bayou, reportedly named for a nearby Indian mound. By the end of 1887 they had cleared about ninety acres. The first families joined the community in February 1888 and the first crops of cotton and corn were planted.

The early years were difficult. Montgomery and Green acquired a saw mill and the first homes were constructed from the timber cleared on the town site. During the first three years, the settlers survived from the proceeds from the sale of rail road ties and barrel staves. They were able to produce 379 bales of cotton and 3000 bushels of corn.⁶ The women and children of the community worked for white planters, some eight to nine miles away.⁷

³ Janice Sharp Hermann. *The Pursuit of a Dream*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 211.

⁴ Program, 1st Annual Mound Bayou Heritage Festival, July 12-14, 1996, "Our Heritage, Our Dream, Empowerment: A Reality." Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Historic Preservation Division Inventory, Mound Bayou.

⁵ Mound Bayou Movement, History of Mound Bayou.
<http://www.kinglyheirs.com/Mound> Bayou Movement/History

⁶ Hermann, 223.

⁷ Hermann, 222.

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Throughout the difficulties, the community continued to grow. By 1898, the population of the town was 183, and the community leaders petitioned the governor for a proclamation establishing the Village of Mound Bayou. Governor A. J. McLaurin signed the proclamation on February 23, 1898. Mound Bayou was the first municipality founded by, formed and governed by African Americans in the state of Mississippi.

The second mayor of Mound Bayou, A.P. Hood, recorded the founding and history of Mound Bayou in a book published in 1909, *The Negro at Mound Bayou, Being an Authentic Story of the Growth and Development of the Most Celebrated Town in the South Covering a Period of Twenty-two Years*. Mound Bayou, Hood wrote,

stands for the first move...to ascertain by concrete experiment just what the effect of the segregation of an appreciable body of Negroes with powers of municipal government, left absolutely free to do as they willed, and subject only to the law of the commonwealth.⁸

Hood proceeded to report the success of the community. At the time he wrote *The Negro at Mound Bayou*, the town was the center of a population of about 4000 people who owned approximately 30,000 acres of land, with 5000-6000 under cultivation.⁹ The town was the home to "all the principal church denominations."¹⁰ Businesses included a cotton gin, two saw mills, two blacksmiths, a tailor shop, three shoe shops and one millenary house with dress making department. Mound Bayou hosted two watch and clock repair shops and nineteen general and specialty mercantile stores.¹¹ The town had an undertaker, "keeping constantly on hand a full and acceptable assortment of coffins, caskets, burial robes and other funeral supplies,"¹² and a cemetery.

There was a public school, a Baptist college, and the Mound Bayou Industrial Institute, with an enrollment of more than 200 students.¹³ The community was served by two physicians and two lawyers.¹⁴ There were a variety of fraternal organizations including the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons (M.W. Stringer Lodge), Grand Order of Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Knights of Tabor, Eastern Star, Order of Eagles and Woodmen of the World.¹⁵

In 1903 Charles Banks, a financially successful businessman from nearby Clarksdale, came to Mound Bayou. Banks would play an important role in the promotion of Mound Bayou. His association with Booker T. Washington would bring nationwide attention to the community. Banks was also an active member of the Republican party, and these connections would attract the attention of President Theodore Roosevelt to Mound Bayou. Banks was born in Clarksdale on March 25, 1873. He was educated in Clarksdale's public schools and attended Rust College in

⁸ A. P. Hood. *The Negro at Mound Bayou*. Self-published. (Printed by the AME Sunday School Union, Nashville, TN, 1909), 8.

⁹ Hermann, 223.

¹⁰ Hood, 11.

¹¹ Hood, 16-18.

¹² Hood, 21.

¹³ Hood, 12-14.

¹⁴ Hood, 35.

¹⁵ Hood, 28.

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Holly Springs. In 1890, he opened a store which he operated until 1903. In that year, Banks relocated to Mound Bayou. Banks organized and opened the Bank of Mound Bayou in 1904. The Bank of Mound Bayou (Inv. 48, Photo 13, NR, 1996) is recognized as one of the first black-owned banks in the Mississippi.¹⁶ The bank operated out of a two-story brick building at the southwest corner of Green Street and West Main Street. A. P. Hood noted in 1909 that the Bank of Mound Bayou “constitutes a very distinct ornament to the architectural features of the town.”¹⁷

Education played an important role in the development and growth of Mound Bayou. When the first children came to Mound Bayou in 1888, Virginia Montgomery, Isaiah T. Montgomery’s sister, began classes in the Montgomery home. This became the first public school in Mound Bayou. In the early years classes were held in the Green Grove Baptist Church (now First Baptist Church). By 1910 a public school with a local board of trustees enrolled 200 students.¹⁸

Isaiah T. Montgomery and Benjamin Green donated land for the formation of the Mound Bayou Normal and Industrial Institute in 1892. Montgomery secured financial assistance from the American Missionary Association. The school offered a high school course and vocational instruction. The General Baptist Convention assisted in founding the Baptist College, also a secondary and vocational school, in 1904.¹⁹

The public school and the Mound Bayou Institute consolidated in 1920 to form a public school known as the Bolivar County Training School, a public school administered by a local board of trustees responsible to the County Superintendent of Education. The three-story brick school building was partially funded by the Rosenwald Fund and opened in 1921, serving African American students from an area of thirty square miles, with an average enrollment of 850. The building had sixteen classrooms and a 700 seat auditorium. By the late 1950s this building was in disrepair, and it was replaced in 1959 by the I.T. Montgomery Elementary School (Inv. 39a, Photo 6). The school continues to serve the Mound Bayou County community. The John F. Kennedy High School, located just to the north of the historic district, was completed in 1964.

As in many African American communities, religion has played a central role in Mound Bayou. As early as 1888, the community met for worship in a brush arbor. Green Grove Baptist Church built its first sanctuary in 1891. When the congregation completed a new building located about a block north of the historic district in 1964, the congregation became the First Baptist Church.

Bethel AME Church was organized in 1895. The congregation completed a new building in 1919, described as “the most elaborate church in the community with a modern pipe organ and central heating plant.”²⁰ By 1971, the congregation determined that the building had served its useful life and a new building (Inv. 23), dedicated in October 1973, was built on the site.

¹⁶ <http://kinglyheirs.com>

¹⁷ Hood, 23.

¹⁸ Milton J. Crowe, ed. Program: *Mound Bayou, Mississippi Centennial Celebration*, July 6-12, 1987. MDAH, Historic Preservation Division Files, Mound Bayou.

¹⁹ Centennial program.

²⁰ Centennial program.

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Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church was organized in 1915. Their building burned in 1939 and they were able to construct their current building (Inv. 38, Photo 5) in December 1950.

Wesley United Baptist Church, organized in 1887 and purchased its site in 1903. A small frame church served the community for many years, but after it burned, the current church (Inv. 35, Photo 7) was built in 1972.

Although Mound Bayou and the surrounding farms continued to prosper throughout the first twenty years of the 20th century, a number of events occurred which would impede its growth and ultimately lead to the decline of the town. The leadership of the community separated into two competing groups, with members of the Montgomery family and their supporters on one side and supporters of the Banks-Green faction on the other side. The still unsolved murder of Benjamin Green in 1896 exacerbated the bad feelings. However, the dispute broadened after 1917, when competing groups held elections and two administrations claimed to rule. Governor Theodore Bilbo finally intervened and declared the Montgomery group as the legitimate government.²¹

The fall of cotton prices in the period between 1919 and 1922 had a much more serious effect on the community. During the war years the price of cotton remained high and many local farmers borrowed heavily to put more acreage into cotton production. When the bottom fell out of the cotton market many farmers were unable to repay loans. Merchants were unable to recover for goods provided to the farmers and initiated foreclosure resulting in the loss of over 4000 black – owned acres by 1923.²²

Throughout the 1920s the economic hard times continued. With the loss of their farms, many Mound Bayou blacks moved to northern cities to find work. The declining population had a negative effect on the business community. The local business community also suffered from a severe downtown fire in 1926 which destroyed many businesses. A second large fire in 1941 consumed what was left of the town's business district. Mound Bayou has never fully recovered from the combination of economic and natural disasters.

Despite these setbacks, Mound Bayou continued to exhibit some of the spirit that motivated the founders to establish a community for African Americans governed by African Americans. In 1953, Mound Bayou owned 37,000 acres of Delta farmland with an assessed valuation of \$7,000,000.²³ Benjamin Green, Jr., was elected mayor in 1919 and would serve until 1960. Green was the first baby born in Mound Bayou and graduated from Fisk University and Harvard Law School.

²¹ Norman L. Crockett. *The Black Towns* (Lawrence, KS: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1979), 84.

²² www.kinglyheirs.com

²³ *A Pictorial History of Mound Bayou, 95th Founder's Day Celebration, 1982*. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Historic Preservation Division, Inventory files, Mound Bayou.

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Social organizations and churches remained important institutions in Mound Bayou. The International Order of Twelve Knights and Daughters of Tabor made one of the most significant contributions when they organized and built Taborian Hospital (Inv. 27, Photo 3, NR, 1996) in 1942. Taborian Hospital was one of the few full service hospitals treating African Americans in the state. The 9000 square foot hospital was built to serve 52 patients and featured all the modern medical services: two operating rooms, X-ray room and mobile X-ray machines, incubators, and cardiograph. At the time of Mound Bayou's centennial celebration in 1987, the statistics were impressive: 34,320 admissions, 2930 babies born, 7763 major and minor operations and over 128,000 outpatient exams.²⁴

Taborian Hospital attracted black physicians and surgeons, including T.R.M. Howard, who came to Mound Bayou in 1942 as the hospital's chief surgeon. Howard, a Kentucky native, graduated from Union College in Nebraska and Loma Linda Medical School in California. After the Taborian Hospital Board of Trustees decided not to renew Howard's contract in 1946, many members of the Knights and Daughters of Taborian supported Howard. In association with the United Center of Friendship, Howard opened Friendship Clinic across the street from Taborian Hospital.

In addition to his medical practice, Howard owned a plantation and organized the Magnolia Mutual Life Insurance Company. Howard hired Medgar Evers as a salesman. Howard was described by historian John Dittmer as "the state's most charismatic advocate of black rights," becoming the guiding force in Regional Council of Negro Leadership (RCNL). The RCNL held meetings in Mound Bayou in tents on Howard's spacious lawn. A May 1952 speech by Illinois congressman William Dawson before a crowd of 7000 was exceeded by the 10,000 who gathered two years later to hear Thurgood Marshall. The RCNL sponsored a boycott of service stations that refused to allow blacks to use the restrooms.

Mound Bayou was not the only town founded by freedmen. Norman L. Crockett, in his study of towns founded by blacks, *The Black Towns*, noted that at least sixty black communities were settled between 1865 and 1915. The movement was based on an "ideology, in large part formulated and propounded by promoters, [that] sought to combine economic self-help and moral uplift with an intensive pride in race..."²⁵ As the early Mound Bayou settlers viewed the Delta wilderness, Isaiah T. Montgomery encouraged them and asked, "Have you not for centuries braved the miasma and hewed down forests like these at the behest of a Master? Can you not do it now for yourselves, your children into successive generations?"²⁶

Crockett studied other black communities, including Nicodemus, Kansas, and Langston, Clearview and Boley, Oklahoma, but considered Mound Bayou as "perhaps the most prominent black town because of its close ties to Booker T. Washington."²⁷ Washington cited the Mound Bayou experience in articles, speeches and books, calling it a laboratory for black self-sufficiency and self-government.²⁸ Mound Bayou benefitted from its association with

²⁴ Centennial program.

²⁵ Crockett, xviii

²⁶ Crockett, 46.

²⁷ Crockett, xviii.

²⁸ Crockett, 127.

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Washington, "as a procession of Tuskegee graduates trained in such areas as carpentry, teaching, brick laying and business management moved from the Institute to Mound Bayou."²⁹

President Theodore Roosevelt also cited "Mound Bayou as visible proof of what the negro could do in the matter of self-government."³⁰

In its appearance, Mound Bayou is not readily distinguishable from other small Mississippi Delta communities. Like neighboring communities, the business district straddles a highway and a now abandoned railroad. Residential areas developed outward from the core. There are four historic districts in Bolivar County, two in Cleveland and one in Rosedale. Cleveland is a county seat and it maintains a more diverse and vibrant commercial district, including a courthouse. The Cleveland Founders District is primarily a residential district without diversity of building forms. Rosedale, also a county seat, is much larger than the Mound Bayou district. It also includes a courthouse set on a traditional courthouse square.

The Mound Bayou Historic District, based on its history, is clearly distinguishable from any other Mississippi community. There are neighborhoods in larger communities, such as the Farish Street Historic District in Jackson that may have a greater number of resources associated with African American history, whether commercial, institutional or religious. However, Mound Bayou is the only chartered town founded by African Americans and governed by African Americans from the time of its inception.

Criterion B: Isaiah T. Montgomery

Isaiah T. Montgomery (1847-1924) was born into slavery. Through a combination of natural ability and hard work, he became a prosperous businessman and civic leader. He was instrumental in the establishment of Mound Bayou, Mississippi, an all-black community that prospered in the early decades of the 20th century. Montgomery's actions as the sole African American delegate at the 1890 Mississippi constitutional convention made him a controversial figure.

Montgomery was born on May 21, 1847 on Hurricane Plantation in the Davis Bend area of Warren County, Mississippi. Hurricane and the enslaved people living on the plantation were the property of Joseph Davis, the older brother of Jefferson Davis. Benjamin Thornton Montgomery, his father, was a literate and talented man who, within the confines of slavery, held a prominent position at Hurricane. He was a talented mechanic who operated the plantation cotton gin. He also ran a dry goods store, independent of his plantation duties. The elder Montgomery wanted his children to be educated and had the freedom, within the confines of his enslaved position, to be sure they were. Writing later in life, Isaiah Montgomery recalled that he received "my first instruction from a Webster blue back speller on Sabbath morning hours at the house of a slave of Jefferson Davis named George Stewart."³¹

²⁹ Crockett, 129.

³⁰ Hiram Tong, "The Pioneers of Mound Bayou." *The Century Magazine*, January 1910, 390.

³¹ "Isaiah T. Montgomery Tells His Own Story." Centennial program.

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At the age of ten, Montgomery began training as the personal secretary and valet of Joseph Davis, sleeping on a pallet in Davis's room. Living in the Davis home allowed him access to the family's extensive library. Montgomery recalled "I read a great deal, but it was without method and served only to give a fair knowledge of history and current events, of language and composition."³²

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Davis moved his family and some of his slaves, to Alabama. Benjamin Montgomery and his sons remained at Hurricane. After Union troops occupied Davis Bend, the elder Montgomery took his wife and daughters to Cincinnati. Isaiah Montgomery served in the U.S. Navy and was present for the surrender of Vicksburg in July 1863.

Following the war, the Montgomery family returned to Davis Bend, ultimately purchasing two plantations from Joseph Davis, as more fully discussed above. After the plantation business failed, Isaiah T. Montgomery operated a store in Vicksburg, until he led the initial settlers to Mound Bayou.

Montgomery was deeply involved in all aspects of life in Mound Bayou. The first school, a precursor to the public school district, was held in his home. Montgomery and Benjamin Green operated the town's first sawmill and cotton gin. Montgomery also owned one of the first retail businesses in town. He helped organize the AME church. Montgomery was the first postmaster of the community. When Governor McLaurin issued the proclamation creating the Village of Mound Bayou, Montgomery was named the first mayor. Montgomery persuaded the L.N.O. & T. Railroad to donate 1000 acres of land to Campbell College in hope that the AME church-related school would establish a campus in Mound Bayou. Unfortunately that never materialized.

Montgomery was active in Republican politics. He campaigned for Republican presidential candidate James G. Blaine and served on the Bolivar County Republican committee. In 1890, Montgomery was elected to serve in the state's constitutional convention. Montgomery wrote, "I hold my first commission to any elective office, viz: as a delegate from Bolivar County to the Constitutional Convention."³³ Montgomery was the only African American delegate.

During Reconstruction, Mississippi's African Americans exercised their voting rights. Historian Neil McMillen wrote:

Registered to vote under the Reconstruction Act of 1867, they helped to draft and ratify a new state constitution. Largely through their efforts a new legislature was elected that endorsed the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and brought Mississippi back into the Union in 1870.³⁴

Black Mississippians served in United States Senate, as Speaker of the state house of representatives and secretary of state.

³² Centennial program.

³³ Centennial program.

³⁴ McMillen, *Dark Journey*, 37.

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However, white political leaders quickly reestablished political power in the state after the end of Reconstruction in 1876, resulting in the increasing disenfranchisement of black voters. Many white politicians saw the 1890 constitutional convention as the means to accomplish the goal of removing black voters from the political scene. The president of the convention, S.S. Calhoun, spoke for many delegates when he said, “We came here to exclude the negro. Nothing short of this will answer.”³⁵ However, others recognized the need to tacitly acknowledge the federal constitution. Rather than an outright racial line, the delegates enacted the “understanding clause,” which required a potential voter to read any section of the constitution, “or be able to understand the same when read to him, or give a reasonable interpretation thereof.”³⁶

Although the intent was to exclude black voters, the provision was supported by an unlikely delegate: I.T. Montgomery. Montgomery spoke in favor of “a measure to ‘purify the ballot’ the ballot by restricting it to literate adult males, those he called the ‘stable, thoughtful, and prudent element of our society.’”³⁷ By his own calculation, Montgomery knew that the provision would disqualify two-thirds of black voters.³⁸

Montgomery’s motives have been reviewed and discussed ever since. Some have suggested that Montgomery was seeking the security of the newly established Mound Bayou colony.³⁹ However, others believed Montgomery saw his position as a compromise. As a practical matter blacks had little opportunity to vote by this time anyway. Neil McMillen concluded

He dared to hope...voter requirements would apply equally to both races and that such disenfranchisement that would come to the Negro would come ‘because he is ignorant’ not ‘because he is black.’⁴⁰

History would prove that hope false. Even Montgomery recognized this later in life in a private letter to Booker T. Washington.⁴¹

Due to his support of the Republican party (and perhaps that of Charles Banks), President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Montgomery as the Receiver of Public Monies for the State of Mississippi in 1902. Montgomery resigned when discrepancies in the office’s accounting were discovered, even though there were no allegations of any misdeeds on Montgomery’s part. His relationship with Roosevelt remained strong enough that the president visited Mound Bayou in 1907, paying high compliments to the town.

³⁵ McMillen, *Dark Journey*, 41.

³⁶ McMillen, *Dark Journey*, 42.

³⁷ Neil McMillen, “Isaiah T. Montgomery, 1847-1924 (Part II). *Mississippi History Now*. <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/57/Isiah-t-montgomery>, 3.

³⁸ McMillen, *Dark Journey*, 50.

³⁹ Hermann, 231.

⁴⁰ McMillen, *Montgomery*, 3.

⁴¹ Crockett, 97.

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Montgomery remained active in Mound Bayou as a “founding father.” In c. 1910, he built a two-story house on West Main Street for his extended family and guests. The house (Inv. 50, Photo 14) was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1976.

Isaiah T. Montgomery died on March 24, 1924. He is buried in the Mound Bayou Memorial Cemetery.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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<http://mshistorynow.mdah.ms.us/articles/57/Isaiah-t-montgomery>

Mound Bayou Movement, History of Mound Bayou. [http://www.kinglyheirs.com/Mound
Bayou Movement/History](http://www.kinglyheirs.com/MoundBayouMovement/History)

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

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

Acreeage of Property Approx 48

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Roughly bounded by Martin Luther King Avenue and Roosevelt Street on the north,
Roosevelt Street and Green Lee Avenue on the east, South Street West on the south, and
Davis Street on the west.

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates See Continuation Sheet

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or
UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

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The Mound Bayou Historic District boundaries are shown on the historic district map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary was selected to incorporate the significant historic resources, including those previously listed on the National Register) in as compact geographic area as possible.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: _____ Bruce D. Judd, FAIA _____
organization: _____ Bruce Judd Consulting Group _____
street & number: _____ P. O. Box 4867 _____
city or town: _____ Seaside _____ state: _____ Florida _____ zip code: _____ 32459 _____
e-mail _____ bruce@brucejudd.com _____
telephone: _____ 850 687-4111 _____
date: _____ March 15, 2013 _____

Additional text by William M. Gatlin, MDAH Architectural Historian

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

See Continuation Sheets Section Additional Documentation page 1

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to

City of Mound Bayou Bolivar
Name of Property

MS
County and State

the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Name of Property: Mound Bayou Historic District

City or Vicinity: Mound Bayou

County: Bolivar State: Mississippi

Photographer: Eric Reisman, MDAH

Date Photographed: June 15, 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 15 Edwards Street, camera facing south
- 2 of 15 Edwards Street, camera facing north
- 3 of 15 Taborian Hospital, camera facing east
- 4 of 15 Knights and Daughters of Tabor, camera facing north
- 5 of 15 Mount Olive MB Church, camera facing southwest
- 6 of 15 I. T. Montgomery Elementary School, camera facing southeast
- 7 of 15 Wesley United Methodist Church, camera facing southeast
- 8 of 15 Mound Bayou Memorial Cemetery, camera facing southwest
- 9 of 15 I. T. Montgomery grave marker, camera facing east
- 10 of 15 Benjamin T. Greene grave marker, camera facing east
- 11 of 15 East Main Street, camera facing north
- 12 of 15 Creswell House, camera facing west
- 13 of 15 Bank of Mound Bayou, camera facing west
- 14 of 15 I. T. Montgomery House, camera facing west
- 15 of 15 West Main Street, camera facing southwest

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

City of Mound Bayou Bolivar

MS

Name of Property

County and State

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.





MS - Bolivar County - Mound Bayou Historic District - 0001



MS - Bolivar County - Mound Bayou Historic District - 0002



MS - Bolivar County - Mound Bayou Historic District - 0003



WILLIAMSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
100 N. MAIN ST. WASHINGTON, TN 37153
www.williamsoncountyhistoricalsociety.org

MS - Bolivar County - Mound Bayou Historic District - 0004



MS - Bolivar County - Mound Bayou Historic District - 0005



MS - Bolivar County - Mound Bayou Historic District - 0006




Wesley
United Methodist
Church

MS - Bolivar County - Mound Bayou Historic District - 0007



MS - Bolivar County - Mound Bayou Historic District - 0008



ISAIAH T. MONTGOMERY
MAY 21, 1847 — MARCH 8, 1924.
HIS WIFE
MARTHA ROBB
JUNE 4, 1852 — JULY 30, 1923.

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NOV. 14, 1854

DEC. 27, 1836

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MS - Bolivar County - Mound Bayou Historic District - 0012



MS - Bolivar County - Mound Bayou Historic District - 0012