

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Will Watkins House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1423 North State Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Jackson

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourth

STATE

Mississippi

VICINITY OF

CODE
28COUNTY
HindsCODE
049**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC
☒ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☒ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☒ OTHER: vacant

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Dr. R. Arnold Smith, Jr.

STREET & NUMBER

609 Medical Arts Building

CITY, TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi 39201

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Chancery Clerk
Chancery Court Building

STREET & NUMBER

36 South President Street

CITY, TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi 39201

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Statewide Survey of Historic Sites

DATE

1974

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi 39205

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT

☐ GOOD

☒ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED

☐ RUINS

☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED

☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ MOVED

DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Will Watkins House is located on an elevated, terraced, mid-block lot on the west side of North State Street in Jackson, Mississippi. Surrounded by casually landscaped grounds, the stately three-bay, two-and-a-half-story, frame Colonial Revival mansion features a handsome, classically inspired portico with giant-order Ionic columns carrying a full entablature. The end bays of the flat-roofed portico, which project slightly, are further emphasized by shallow pediments on the front and side faces and are each topped by a plain, truncated parapet. A boldly turned roof balustrade runs between the two projecting pavilions, and the portico is enclosed by a reticulated, parapet-like balustrade. Masterfully treated as a frontispiece in its own right, the portico nicely frames the large and elaborate frontispiece surrounding the central entrance. Set within a coupled-column frame are the single-panel, double-leaf, glazed doors and side lights under the broad, fanlight transom. Ionic colonnettes, set on low, paneled pedestals corresponding to the spandrels of the doors and side lights, flank the doors. A handsome balcony enclosed by a turned balustrade and carried on coupled, elongated consoles is set atop the stylized cornice of the frontispiece. The simpler, tripartite frontispiece on the second level enframes glazed, double-leaf doors. The latter are set beneath a transom with the muntins arranged in a diamond pattern and are flanked by one-over-one sash windows, the top sash of which matches the transom. In the outer bays, the fenestration of the first level is identical to the balcony frontispiece, and the second-level fenestration repeats the tripartite theme with a range of three windows featuring the diamond motif on the upper sash.

The monumental detailing was lavished exclusively on the facade of the clapboard-sheathed house. The side and rear elevations of the structure are void of architectural embellishment save for the continuous frieze board set beneath the boxed eaves of the hip roof. The plainness of the secondary elevations is relieved by the grouping and arrangement of the one-over-one sash windows and the shallow, projecting pavilion that breaks from the center of the northern and southern sides of the house.

On the interior, a handsome staircase dominates the wide, gracious central hall of the double-pile plan. Centered behind an Ionic-columned screen that echoes the arrangement of the entrance-door frontispiece, a closed-course, single flight rises to the landing and then returns on itself, continuing to the second level in two narrower flights set against the walls. Slender, turned balusters carry the continuous, ramped handrail, and the framing for all three flights is enclosed by wainscoting. The detailing throughout the rest of the house is much less ambitious but is typical of the period. Only one Colonial-Revival-style mantel, that in the northeastern parlor, has survived. The original two-panel, double-leaf sliding doors that join the double parlors on both the southern and northern sides of the house, as well as the doors that connect the front rooms with the central hall, are still in place.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES _____ BUILDER/ARCHITECT _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Located on North State Street, once the most fashionable residential avenue in Jackson, the Will Watkins House is a stately, infrequent survivor of the monumental Colonial Revival style in the capital city. The facade and central hall are capably designed as a series of elegant, classically inspired frontispieces, making the house an important local example of a mode noted for its grand treatment of formal reception areas. It is also significant as the home for many years of William Hamilton Watkins (1871-1959), who rose from respected pioneer stock of modest means to become one of the most prominent attorneys and civic leaders in the history of Jackson.

Watkins, a native of Jefferson County, Mississippi, worked to finance his own education at Southern University in Greensboro, Alabama, and later at the newly founded Millsaps College in Jackson. After attending the University of Mississippi law school, he became a member of the Mississippi bar and began the practice of law in Jackson in 1895. The following year he married Margaret H. Mitchell of Kirkwood, Missouri, and by ca. 1900 had purchased property at the northern edge of the expanding city, on what was fast becoming the most prestigious residential boulevard in Jackson.

In 1905, Will Watkins entered into partnership with Walter Easterling, and later he established a new partnership with his brother, H. V. Watkins, and Pat H. Eager, Jr. Today the firm continues as Watkins and Eager, one of Jackson's most successful law offices. Attaining a position of professional prominence, Will Watkins was president of the Mississippi Bar Association in 1939-1940. In addition to his distinguished legal career, Watkins assumed a leadership role in the civic, cultural, and religious life of the community, serving as president of the board of trustees of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (1936-1955), member of the board of trustees of Tougaloo College (1938-1952), and member of the board of stewards of Galloway Memorial United Methodist Church for many years.

North State Street, the site of the Will Watkins House, was laid out in the plan of the newly created capital city drawn by Peter A. Vandorn in 1822. Originally conceived as one of the two main thoroughfares for Jackson (the other being Capitol Street), it was, during the first four decades of the twentieth century, a tree-shaded avenue lined with the homes of outstanding leaders in the financial, civic, social, political, and religious life of the city and of the state. The Will Watkins House (1908-9), built on the site of Will and Margaret Watkins's earlier (ca. 1900) home, was designed not only for domestic routine but also for formal entertaining. Its plan was intended to impress and accommodate. The central entrance hall, which communicates with the principal rooms to either side, is the most interesting and lavishly detailed space in the house. Despite the vicissitudes that once-grand North State Street has experienced, the exterior of the Will

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Map of City of Jackson, 1822, by P. A. Vandorn. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson. Map collection.

The Story of Jackson: Biographical Sketches of the Builders of the Capital of Mississippi. Vol. 2. Jackson: J. F. Iyer Publishing Company, 1953.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.01

QUADRANGLE NAME Jackson, Miss.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 765630 3579000

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A parcel of land situated in Lots 3, 4, and 5 of Dobyns Subdivision, according to the plat on file in the office of the Chancery Clerk at Jackson, Hinds County, Mississippi, as now recorded in Plat Book "A" at Page 304 and being described by

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

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Mary McCahon Shoemaker, Architectural Historian
Priscilla M. Lowrey, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

DATE

February 27, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 571

TELEPHONE

(601) 354-6218

CITY OR TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi 39205

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Elmer B. Willard

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

February 27, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 - 10 PAGE 1

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

Watkins House and much of the interior have survived intact, making it one of the most ambitious and complete Colonial Revival residential structures in Jackson.

The house was occupied by the Watkins family for almost forty years, although in the latter years of their ownership, sections were converted to apartments. Subsequent owners maintained the structure as an apartment house until Dr. and Mrs. Robert L. Taylor purchased it in 1957 and returned it to a single-family dwelling. Late in 1976, Dr. R. Arnold Smith, Jr., acquired the property from the Taylors and is in the process of restoring the building and sensitively converting it to commercial use.

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

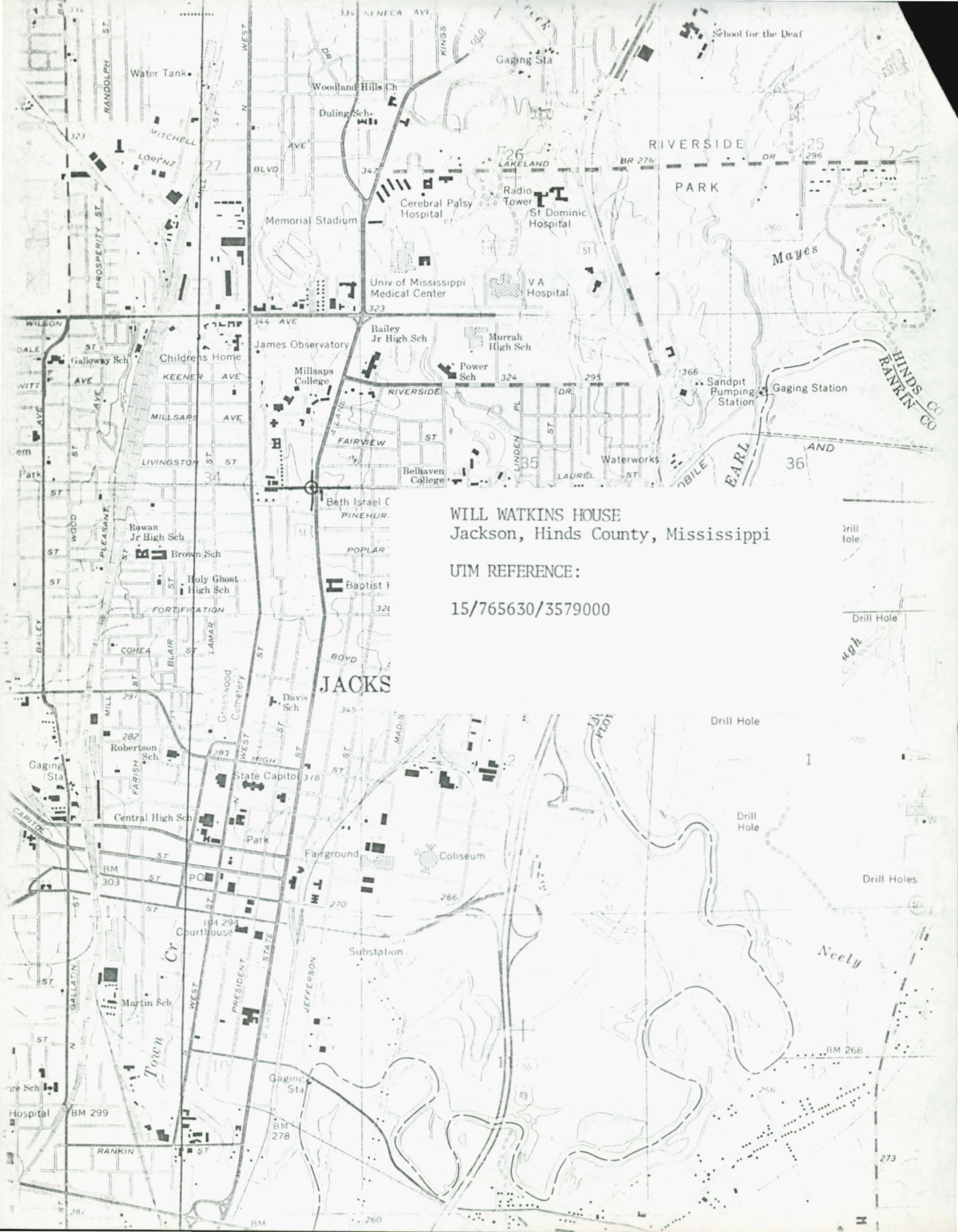
Personal Inspection of Will Watkins House by Mary McCahon Shoemaker, architectural historian, January 22, 1978.

Personal Interview. Priscilla M. Lowrey, historian, with Mrs. W. F. Goodman, Sr. (daughter of William H. Watkins), January 23, 1978.

10 - GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

metes and bounds to-wit:

Beginning at the intersection of the North right of way line of Webster Street with the West right of way line of North State Street; thence run Westerly along the said North right of way line of Webster Street 200.0 feet; thence turn right 97 degrees 36 minutes and run Northeasterly 121.00 feet; thence turn left 21 degrees 24 minutes 30 seconds and run Northwesterly 128.39 feet; thence turn right 105 degrees 01 minutes 30 seconds and run Easterly and perpendicular to the aforementioned West right of way line of North State Street for a distance of 219.78 feet to a point on the said West right of way line of North State Street; thence turn right 90 degrees 00 minutes and run Southerly along said West right of way line for a distance of 240.0 feet to the point of beginning containing 48,000.00 square feet.



WILL WATKINS HOUSE
Jackson, Hinds County, Mississippi

UTM REFERENCE:

15/765630/3579000

JACKSON

Drill Hole

Drill Hole

Drill Hole

Drill Hole

Drill Holes

1

Neely

RM 268

273



PHOTO NO. 1 - WILL WATKINS HOUSE

Jackson, Hinds County, Mississippi

Photographer: Unknown (Collection of
Mrs. W. F. Goodman, Sr., Jackson, Mississippi)

1930

Mississippi Department of Archives and
History

Eastern elevation (facade) from the east.



PHOTO NO. 2 - WILL WATKINS HOUSE
Jackson, Hinds County, Mississippi

Michael Fazio

June, 1977

Mississippi Department of Archives
and History

Eastern and southern elevations from the
southeast.



PHOTO NO. 3 - WILL WATKINS HOUSE
Jackson, Hinds County, Mississippi
Michael Fazio

June, 1977

Mississippi Department of Archives
and History

Western (rear) elevation from the west.



Name: Will Watkins House

Location: Jackson, MS

Photo Credit: Michael W. Fazio

Date of Photo: June 1977

Negative Filed at: Mississippi Dept. of Archive
and History

View: Rear from the west

Photo No. 3

