

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED 12 SEP 1979  
DATE ENTERED APR 3 1980

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

China Grove (McDonald Place)

AND/OR COMMON

McDonald Place

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

W of Lorman off U.S. 61

Approx. 1.32 miles northwest of U. S. 61 and

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

the major paved road of Lorman

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Lorman

VICINITY OF

Fourth

STATE

Mississippi

CODE

28

COUNTY

Jefferson

CODE

063

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Dr. and Mrs. Rodney B. Nelson

STREET & NUMBER

127 Hamilton Street

CITY, TOWN

Geneva

VICINITY OF

STATE

Illinois

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Chancery Clerk/Jefferson Co. Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 145

CITY, TOWN

Fayette

STATE

Mississippi

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Statewide Survey of Historic Sites

DATE

1979

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Surrounded by 531.8 acres of pasture and woodland intersected by the Natchez Trace Parkway right-of-way, China Grove, or the McDonald Place, is located northwest of Lorman, Mississippi, off U. S. Highway 61. Of the total acreage, the 240.9 acres that contains the house and that is located on the easterly side of the Natchez Trace Parkway right-of-way is the portion included in the nomination. Situated on a knoll, the vernacular story-and-a-half frame residence is set upon large stumps and brick foundation piers, and its gabled roof is flanked by two outside end chimneys. An attached one-story wing with gabled roof and interior brick chimney is located to the rear of the main house and is set upon a partial basement fully raised at the rear. As originally constructed in the early nineteenth century, China Grove was a two-room log house with a central open passage, or what is regionally referred to as a dog-trot.

China Grove is fronted by a gallery that extends the full width of the three-bay northeasterly facade. The gallery is supported by short wooden box columns with molded capitals and the columns were originally linked by a wooden railing, which is now missing. The facade is finished in matched boards with a very simply molded base. The central bay consists of the open passage, or dog-trot; the southerly bay contains a plain doorway, the door of which is now missing; and the northerly bay contains a window that is peaked and crudely pilastered. All windows of the house are filled with six-over-six double-hung sash.

The floor plan of China Grove is basically a double-pile plan with central passage. The open passage contains a crudely fashioned staircase with rectangular-sectioned newels and balusters. The stair runs in a single straight flight along the northerly passage wall. All interior walls and ceilings of the main house and its rear wing are finished with matched boards. The simply molded base of the facade is used throughout the interior. The mantels, of which only a portion of one survives, were wooden. The doors leading to the two bedrooms of the second floor and the second-floor closet doors are board-and-batten. The doors and windows of the first floor have architrave trim, and the windows of the second floor have a peaked surround.

The first room in the one-story wing was the dining room. Vernacular molded panels are located beneath the windows. The doors are four-paneled and molded, and original cabinets frame the fireplace. The second room in the wing was the kitchen. The raised basement located beneath the kitchen has a brick trough and appears to have served originally as a dairy. A gallery perpendicular and contiguous to the rear gallery of the main house extends the full width of the one-story wing along the northerly elevation. The gallery is supported by wooden box columns with molded capitals, and the columns were originally linked by a wooden railing, now missing.

About 200 yards from the house is located the China Grove cemetery, in which members of the McDonald family (including Willis McDonald, the builder of China Grove), has been buried since 1840. No nineteenth-century outbuildings survive.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES Ca. 1805; ca. 1850 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Probably Willis McDonald. (log portion)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE Wiley McDonald (mid-19th century remodeling)

China Grove, or the McDonald Place, is an outstanding example of a vernacular Mississippi plantation residence with its integrity of setting intact. As originally constructed, the house was a two-room log dwelling with a central open passage, or dog-trot. Documentary and stylistic evidence indicates that the log portion of the house was probably constructed not long after 1804, when Willis McDonald purchased the first portion (Jefferson Co., Miss., Deed Book A2:167) of what would eventually become a plantation of 866 acres (Deed Book 5R:399). The amount of land acquired by Willis McDonald in 1804 is unspecified in the deed, but later deeds of purchase indicate that the 1804 homestead tract, "lying in the north fork of Coles Creek," probably contained about 400 acres, of which the nominated 240.9 is a portion.

Willis McDonald was a Revolutionary War veteran who was born in North Carolina and died in Jefferson County, Mississippi, in 1840 (China Grove cemetery marker). The log portion of China Grove was probably constructed by McDonald. In 1839, McDonald willed China Grove, "on which I now reside," to his daughter Rebecca, wife of Edward Wallace, and his son Wiley (Will Book B:522) with a life estate for their mother. After the death of his mother, Wiley McDonald acquired the "Home Place" and its surrounding 400 acres from his sister Rebecca (Deed Book F:289). The vernacular Greek Revival detailing of the main house, the one-story attached wing, and possibly even the second story of the main house appear to date from Wiley McDonald's ownership. In 1868, after Wiley McDonald's death, China Grove was described as being the "dwelling house in which said decedent in his life time next before his death was most accustomed to dwell" (Probate Record Book I:649).

China Grove remained the property of the McDonald family until 1973 (Deed Book 5R:423). The structure has remained virtually unchanged since the mid-nineteenth century with the exception of rudimentary wiring and plumbing and changes to the front slope of the roof to shade the front gallery. Vacant for many years, the house has recently been purchased by Dr. and Mrs. Rodney B. Nelson, who intend to preserve and restore this important example of Mississippi's vernacular architectural history. The land is currently being used for agricultural purposes while restoration work is underway.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

China Grove Cemetery grave marker.

Jefferson County, Miss. Chancery Clerk. Deed Books A2, F, 5R.

Jefferson County, Miss. Chancery Clerk. Probate Record Book I.

Jefferson County, Miss. Chancery Clerk. Will Book B.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 240.9 acres

**ACREAGE**

QUADRANGLE NAME St. Joseph

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:62500

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,5 | 6,8,4,0,5,0 | 3,5,2,3,4,0,0

B 1,5 | 6,8,3,8,0,0 | 3,5,2,1,9,5,0

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 1,5 | 6,8,2,3,5,0 | 3,5,2,2,3,7,5

D 1,5 | 6,8,2,7,7,5 | 3,5,2,3,8,7,5

E | | | | | | | | | |

F | | | | | | | | | |

G | | | | | | | | | |

H | | | | | | | | | |

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See enclosed xerox of survey of the China Grove property with the 240.9 portion of the original 400-acre homestead tract outlined in red.

## 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 Warren Miller

Research Consultant

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Private consultant

May 16, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

506 High Street

(601) 442-9786

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Natchez

Mississippi 39120

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Elmer B. Willard*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE September 6, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE 4/3/80

ATTEST:

*W. Ray Luce*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 1/2/80

*W. A. Dubois*  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	11/3/78

China Grove

CONTINUATION SHEET Jefferson Co. ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

The total acreage of China Grove Plantation is presently 531.8 acres, and the right-of-way for the Natchez Trace Parkway has divided the property almost in half. A decision was made to nominate the 240.9 acre portion that contains the house site and cemetery and is located entirely on the eastern side of the Natchez Trace Parkway right-of-way. This 240.9 acres is agriculturally significant as it has been part of a working plantation since 1804, when Willis McDonald purchased the first approximate 400 acres of China Grove Plantation. The land has been used agriculturally from 1804 until the present, and the new owners of China Grove, Dr. and Mrs. Rodney Nelson, intend to continue leasing the farm land. The McDonald family owned China Grove until 1973, making it one of the largest intact Mississippi plantations and increasing its historic importance due to the long history of family ownership.

Plans for the restoration of the house are underway, and the Nelsons and their contractor intend to follow closely the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

miss

<b>FOR NPS USE ONLY</b>
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

China Grove  
CONTINUATION SHEET Jefferson County MS ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

China Grove, or the McDonald Place, is an outstanding example of a vernacular Mississippi plantation residence with its integrity of setting intact. As originally constructed, the house was a two-room log dwelling with central open passage, or dog-trot. Documentary and stylistic evidence indicates that the log portion of the house was probably constructed not long after 1804 when Willis McDonald purchased the first portion (Jefferson Co., Miss., Deed Book A2:167) of what would eventually become a cotton plantation of 866 acres (Deed Book 5R:399). The amount of land acquired by Willis McDonald in 1804 is unspecified in the deed, but later deeds of purchase indicate that the 1804 homestead tract portion "lying in the north fork of Coles Creek" probably contained about 400 acres, of which the nominated 240.9 acres was a portion. Jefferson County, unlike its more famous neighboring Adams County, was populated by planters and farmers who planted and farmed "at home" rather than across river in Louisiana or upriver in the Mississippi Delta region. The county is still primarily an agricultural county, and it is one of the few counties in Mississippi where plantations can still be found that contain most of their antebellum acreage. China Grove joins a special group of plantations that remained in the same family until recent years with little alteration of their historic acreage. The possible ca. 1804 date of construction for the log portion of the house makes it one of the earliest plantation residences in the state.



CHINA GROVE (*McDonald Place*)

Lorman, Jefferson County, Mississippi

Mary Warren Miller

March, 1979

506 High Street, Natchez, Mississippi

The Northeasterly facade and the northwesterly  
elevation of China Grove.

Photo No. 1 *of 4*

**12 SEP 1979**

APR 3

1980





CHINA GROVE (*McDonald Place*)

Lorman, Jefferson County, Mississippi

Mary Warren Miller

March, 1979

506 High Street, Natchez, Mississippi

The southeasterly elevation of China Grove.

Photo No. 2 *of 4*

12 SEP 1979

APR 3 1980



CHINA GROVE (*Mc Donald Place*)

Lorman, Jefferson County, Mississippi

Mary Warren Miller

March, 1979

506 High Street, Natchez, Mississippi

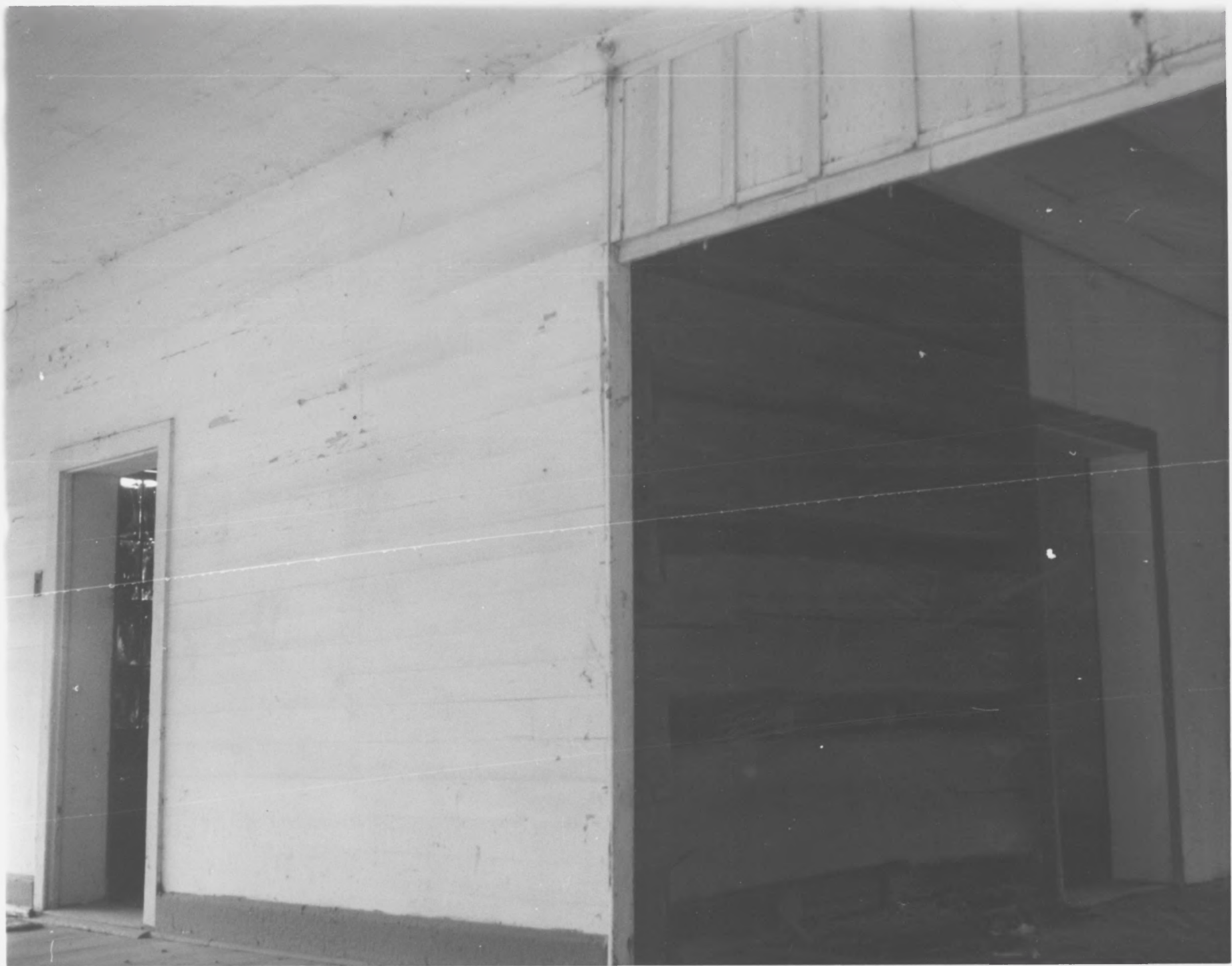
The northwesterly elevation of China Grove.

Photo No. 3 *of 4*

**12 SEP 1979**

APR 3 1980

~~*[Handwritten signature]*~~



CHINA GROVE (*McDonald Place*)

Lorman, Jefferson County, Mississippi

Mary Warren Miller

March, 1979

506 High Street, Natchez, Mississippi

Looking southwesterly, the center bay, or dog-trot opening, of China Grove showing the log construction and detailing of the north-easterly facade.

Photo No. 4 *of 4*

**12 SEP 1979**

APR 3

1980