

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received SEP 29 1986

date entered NOV 6 1986

**1. Name**

historic The Taylorsville Signal Office and Watkins General Store

and or common Watkins Museum

**2. Location**

street & number 326 Eureka Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Taylorsville

N/A vicinity of

state Mississippi

code 28

county Smith

code 129

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Town of Taylorsville and Taylorsville Garden Club

street & number City Corner of Ford and Eaton Streets

city, town Taylorsville

N/A vicinity of

state Mississippi 39168

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Chancery Clerk  
Smith County Courthouse

street & number Highway 35

city, town Raleigh

state Mississippi 39153

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Statewide Survey of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1986 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Mississippi Department of Archives and History

city, town Jackson

state Mississippi 39205

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date 1973 - During the rehabilitation of
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	(slightly)		the store, it was moved approximately
				ten feet south of its original location.

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

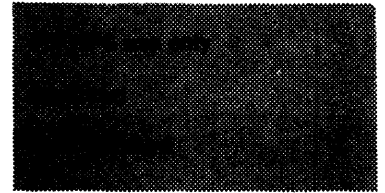
This rectangular, frame building (49'x 22') is three bays wide and has a gable roof with front and rear gables. The building rests on cement blocks. The front facade has a full-width porch with wooden steps and a wooden deck. Its cypress chamfered posts support a corrugated tin shed roof with exposed rafter ends. These posts were salvaged from a local farmhouse and replaced the original, simple posts in the 1973 rehabilitation. Located in the porch area, in the central front bay is an entrance consisting of double doors of diagonal tongue and groove beaded boards and a three-light transom. This entrance is flanked by paired four-over-four double hung sash windows with vertical tongue and groove beaded board panelling beneath them. The rest of the windows are four-over-four double hung sash. The rear facade is marked by a single door flanked by windows. Each side facade has one window.

On the interior, the pine flooring runs the length of the building and the walls are sheathed with narrow, beaded panelling. The east side of the building was the general store and shelves still line the east wall. Counters and display cases are also located in this area. The newspaper's printing press and high shelves holding the printer's paraphernalia are in the western half of the building.

The building has had some minor alterations which do not significantly detract from its integrity. During its rehabilitation in 1973, the store was moved approximately 10 feet south of its original location. It also seems that the roofline has been altered and that the front porch is an early addition. In a 1903 photograph, the front facade has a false front with the peak of the gable extending slightly above the false front to give the appearance of a pedimented parapet. Today, the false front is gone and the building has a simple gable roof. This roof is sheathed in tin, but it is believed that the original wooden shakes are underneath this later roofing material. The building rests on cement blocks, the original wooden blocks having been replaced. Minor interior alterations include adapting the electric ceiling light sockets to ceiling fans with lights and converting the wood-burning, potbellied stove to the use of natural gas. Overall, the building is an amazingly intact example of a turn-of-the-century general store of vernacular form. The alterations and additions to this general store/newspaper office have not compromised its architectural integrity or historical significance.

**United States Department of the Interior  
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Taylorsville Signal & Watkins Gen. Store,  
Continuation sheet Taylorsville, Smith Co., MS Item number 8

Page 1

important link to the town's past. Local citizens are striving to improve the quality of the museum and thus garner even more public support for it. The building's listing in the National Register is an important step towards achieving this goal.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** ca. 1903 **Builder/Architect** unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Watkins Museum is a significant example of a turn-of-the-century general store and newspaper office building of vernacular design. The building's high level of architectural integrity, combined with its contents, provides significant insights into rural life in early twentieth century Mississippi.

Taylorville was an antebellum village located a few miles northeast of the present town's current site. Although the community prospered during Reconstruction, it was moved to its present site in 1900 in order to be on the railroad line. The "new" Taylorville had been surveyed and platted by Wiley G. Moore in 1899 (Taylorville, Mississippi, Subject File. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson and Taylorville Quadrangle 7.5 Minutes Series Topographic Map).

The newspaper The Taylorville Signal was established in January 1901 by Virgil Watkins who moved his enterprise into this building two years later. His father, James Thomas Watkins, assumed the editorship of the newspaper in 1905. Upon his death in 1930, Hattie and Mamie Watkins (James' daughters) took over the newspaper and ran it from this general store until 1966. In the late 1960's the building was abandoned. It was saved and rehabilitated into the Watkins Museum in 1973 (The Mississippi Historical Records Survey, Division of Community Service Programs, Work Projects Administration, Mississippi Newspapers, 1805-1940: A Preliminary Checklist... [Jackson, MS: 1942], p. 230; Lucy Kennedy interviewed by Susan M. Enzweiler, architectural historian with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, at Taylorville, Miss., April 14, 1986 and no author cited, "James Thomas Watkins," The Taylorville Signal June 26, 1930, p. 1).

Many of the town's wooden commercial buildings were destroyed by fires in the early twentieth century. This prompted the town board to pass an ordinance in 1922 requiring all new commercial buildings to be of fireproof construction. Of course, this law dramatically altered the town's appearance and brought to a close the first phase of Taylorville's development (Taylorville).

The Watkins Museum is the only extant commercial building remaining from this early phase of Taylorville's growth. It is the second oldest building in the town. The oldest, a house, predates the establishment of the community and is not as closely linked to the town's history as the museum.

In summary, the Watkins Museum (formerly a general store and newspaper office) is the only remaining vestige of early Taylorville as far as can be determined at this time. The building retains its architectural integrity and is respected by the community as an

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Tylorsville, Miss.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	6	2	70	2	4	0	3	5	2	3	7	9	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 5 and 6 of Block 12 Moore's Survey in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 17, Township 10 North, Range 14 West, Town of Tylorsville, Smith County, Mississippi, together with all improvements therein situated.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
N/A			

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mrs. Kennedy's Resource Class

organization Tylorsville High School

date 2/14/86

street & number Hester Street

telephone 601 - 785-2283  
601 - 785-6716 - Mrs. K.'s Home

city or town Tylorsville

state Mississippi 39168

## 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

Kenneth H. P. Pool

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date September 25, 1986

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 11-6-86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
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Tylorsville Signal & Watkins Gen. Store,  
Smith Co., Mississippi

Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page

1

#9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Kennedy, Lucy. Interviewed by Susan M. Enzweiler, architectural historian with the the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, at Tylorsville, Miss., April 14, 1986.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson. Subject File: Tylorsville, Miss. Smith County. Tylorsville.

Mississippi Historical Records Survey, Division of Community Service Programs, Work Projects Administration. Mississippi Newspapers, 1805-1940: A Preliminary Checklist.... Jackson, MS: 1942.

No Author Cited. "James Thomas Watkins." The Tylorsville Signal.

Tylorsville Quadrangle 7.5 Minute Series Topographic Map.





Taylorsville Signal Office and General Store/  
Watkins Museum

326 Eureka St., front and east elevations,  
view to southwest

Taylorsville, Smith County, Mississippi  
Mississippi Dept. of Archives & History

Susan M.ENZWEILER

April 14, 1986

Photo 1 of 6





Taylorsville Signal Office and General Store/  
Watkins Museum

326 Eureka St., front entrance, view to  
southwest

Taylorsville, Smith County, Mississippi  
Mississippi Dept. of Archives & History  
Susan M.ENZWEILER

April 14, 1986

Photo 2 of 6



Taylorsville Signal Office and General Store/  
Watkins Museum

326 Eureka St., rear elevation, view to  
north

Taylorsville, Smith County, Mississippi  
Mississippi Dept. of Archives & History

Susan M. Enzweiler

April 14, 1986

Photo 3 of 6





Taylorsville Signal Office and General Store/  
Watkins Museum

326 Eureka St., interior, view to south

Taylorsville, Smith County, Mississippi

Mississippi Dept. of Archives & History

Susan M. Enzweiler

April 14, 1986

Photo 4 of 6





Taylorsville Signal Office and General Store/  
Watkins Museum

326 Eureka St., front elevation, view to  
southwest

Taylorsville, Smith County, Mississippi  
Mississippi Dept. of Archives & History  
Susan M.ENZWEILER

c. 1970

Photo 5 of 6



Taylorsville Signal Office and General Store/  
Watkins Museum

326 Eureka St., Taylorsville Signal Office  
and General Store in the background to the  
far right, view to south

Taylorsville, Smith County, Mississippi  
Mississippi Dept. of Archives & History  
Susan M. Enzweiler

1903

Photo 6 of 6