

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name River Road

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Between Highway 43 and Conerly Road

not for publication

city or town Oak Vale

Vicinity

state Mississippi code MS county Lawrence code 77 zip code 39654

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

national statewide local

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

1-25-2011
Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

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

Signature of commenting official _____

Date _____

Title _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		district
1		site
2		structure
		object
3		Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

NA

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: NA
walls: NA

roof: NA
other: _____

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Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The River Road Historic District consists of approximately 5.56 miles of roadway from the junction of Highway 43 close to the China Lee Community to Conerly Road near Oak Vale, Mississippi. The original River Road (established between 1812 and 1814) ran north and south paralleling the Pearl River from Ford's Ferry near the Line of Demarcation on the Pearl River (today's Mississippi / Louisiana Stateline) to Monticello. River Road was one of the first north/south corridors and as such helped expand the Mississippi territory into the 20th state in the union. The majority of the old road has been lost to highway expansion and road widening; however, in this 5.56 mile segment, the original road bed width remains much as it was. A portion of the road just below China Lee is open land much like it was in the days of the Lynch, Martin and Douglas Plantations. In places, the road is narrow and sunken with earthen banks aligned with mature trees that are close to the road with a canopy effect. The mix of trees are pines and hardwood in the upland area while the bottomland forest of the White Sand Creek area consists of a mostly mature forest of red oak, white oak, white pines and magnolias. River Road presents the passerby with the impression of what the pioneer traveler experienced in the deep south of Mississippi in the yesteryears. These views into our past are rapidly disappearing from our landscape and history.

Narrative Description

As one travels River Road, the subtle and isolated nature of the topography is apparent. Elevation change is subtle with an occasional rise over a branch with a culvert or a fall into a slight bottom. The Road descends 20 feet into the White Sand Creek bottom on the southeast side of the creek. The sunken portions of River Road are not as deep and wide spread as portions of the old Natchez Trace near Port Gibson as the dirt is not a loess type soil. Outside of China Lee, there are only two full-time residences on the Road with only one being within view of River Road. According to the Office of State Aid Road Construction, River Road is traveled by approximately 90 cars a day. The River Road Historic District roadway varies in width from 16 to 18 feet with no centerline painted on the surface. The surface material is a rough gray chip and seal material. River Road was the last gravel road in Lawrence County to be surfaced in 2004. River Road is paralleled by a single wire power line easement which is setback away from the road in places and is next to the road right of way in others. Most of the original 50 plus miles of River Road from Ford's Ferry near Sandy Hook on the Pearl River to Monticello has been lost to modernity. Only this 5.56 mile segment has not been widened or taken over by a modern highway or county roads with their wide right of ways and tree setbacks. Within the last two years alone, a 3.59 mile segment joining Lawrence County in Marion County was lost to widening.

Mile marker 0, picture 1: Turning onto River Road from Highway 43 on the northern end of the District, the area is rural and undeveloped. This section has an old field to the east now growing in pine plantation. On the west side is mixed pine and hardwood.

Mile marker .65, picture 2: Entering the China Lee Community, an African American community of approximately one hundred and fifty people, the China Lee M.B. Church is on the east side of the road with a cemetery beside the road. Most of the homes in China Lee were built in the mid-1970s and the historic homes were razed. The community extends along approximately one mile of the District. The road meanders through this section with homes and fences alongside the road.

Mile marker 1.84, picture 3: Leaving China Lee, the road is straight with a pine plantation on the left and open land to the right. A white fence fronts the road to the south. Since its settlement, this section was historically cultivated land clear of trees with crops of cotton and corn. Today, the landscape is pine plantation to the northeast and opens to the south towards the Pearl River with hard wood trees lining the river. This open area is much like the traveler would have experienced during the plantation days of River Road in the mid-nineteenth century. The Road descends into a branch bottom. Historically, the River Road crossed into the spring fed gravel bottom. A modern concrete bridge was added across this branch in 2004. According to oral tradition, the original cemetery for the China Lee Community is located on the northwest bluff of this branch. No physical evidence of this cemetery remains. The graveyard is marked on the attached USGS map.

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Mile marker 2.53, picture 4: In this section of the Road rises out of the creek and reenters the canopy of trees lining the road. The road is generally straight with hardwoods lining the road shoulder growing along the barbed wire fence. Beyond the fence is pine plantation on each side to the road.

Mile marker 3.72, picture 5: Proceeding south toward White Sand Creek the Road crosses Water Branch, a small creek that is mostly seasonal. This section is where the known historic houses in the District were located. One of the few surviving buildings is an abandoned house on the north side of River Road which is believed to be built in the 1930s. Close to this house on the south side of the road is the site of the 1820 home place of Joshua Benson with only the chimney remaining.

Mile marker 3.95, picture 6: This section shows River Road at its narrowest with the trees close to the right of way. There is a gate to the south which leads to a 1930s log cabin hunting lodge. Deeper in the swamp are oxbow lakes along the Pearl River.

Mile marker 4.14, picture 7: The Road leaves the upland pine forest and descends into the White Sand Creek bottom where the shoulder is flanked by earthen banks and the forest is mixed hard woods. This is the oldest forest in the District. While not a virgin forest, the trees here are close to one hundred years old.

Mile marker 4.21, picture 8: The Road crosses a cypress swamp on the left and right side of River Road. Occasionally, alligators and wood ducks are seen in the slough.

Mile marker 4.27, pictures 9 and 10: The tall mature forest includes a mix of red oak, magnolia, white pines and cypress. The undergrowth is sweet bay, dogwood, American holly and huckleberry.

Mile marker 4.31, picture 11: River Road curves through the swamp as it nears the landing of the White Sand Creek Bridge.

Mile marker 4.33, pictures 11 and 12: The White Sand Creek Bridge built in 1913 is an iron pony truss bridge spanning the spring fed gravel and sand bottomed clear water stream. The creek's headwaters are approximately 30 miles upstream in the vicinity of the White Sand Creek Community in Jefferson Davis County between Prentiss and Mendenhall. The creek originates in a blue hole spring on private property. The creek's terminus is around one mile downstream from the bridge where it flows into the Pearl River. The stream lives up to its moniker by being graced with the limestone sandbars along the cool clear running flow.

Mile marker 4.44, picture 13: The Road returns to higher ground on the southern side of the old iron bridge. In this section, there are a few gates on the north and south side of the road which lead to a couple of homes and fishing camps at the mouth of White Sand Creek.

Mile marker 5.28, picture 14: The road near Conerly Road at the southern end of the River Road Historic District is lined by a canopy hard woods forest close to the road. The Road here is somewhat sunken with about three to four foot earthen banks close to the shoulder.

The 5.56 mile section of River Road within the boundaries of the historic district retains sufficient integrity for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The most significant change has been the material of the road surface. Originally an earthen trail the road was later covered with gravel and most recently paved with asphalt. However, the nature of the surrounding landscape, the relation of the road to the natural topography and the direction of the road are largely unchanged. Within the China Grove community, the only populated area along the road within the historic district, the road maintains its traditional relationship with the church, houses and businesses. Outside the China Grove community, River Road retains its traditional rural character. The district contributing resources include the roadbed, the White Sand Creek Bridge and the general landscape, which is a characteristic-defining element of the district.

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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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

c. 1814-1960

Significant Dates

1913

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Period of Significance (justification)

The River Road Historic District is composed of a 5.56 mile segment of River Road, an important north-south transportation route constructed in 1814 with continued use into the 1960s. White Sand Creek Bridge, a contributing resource, was built in 1913.

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Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

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

The River Road Historic District is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for statewide significance under Criterion A for association with Transportation. River Road Historic District includes a 5.56 segment of River Road built during Mississippi's territorial era and was an important north-south transportation route into the 20th century.

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

I. Native Americans

It is logical that parts of River Road were originally Choctaw trails as the road closely parallels the Pearl River and follows the ridge above the hardwood bottom land floodplain. Research to date cannot clearly document the presence of a Choctaw trail.

II. Monticello – 1811

Monticello is approximately six miles to the north of the River Road Historic District and Columbia is approximately 18 miles to the south. River Road is the original pioneer road between Monticello, Columbia and Ford's Ferry and was the primary corridor for overland travelers between the port cities on the Pearl River during the Mississippi territory days after the Treaty of Mount Dexter, otherwise know as the First Choctaw Cession. This treaty was negotiated in 1805, four years after the Treaty of Fort Adams. In 1806, the Federal Road was opened from the Ocumulgee River in Georgia to St. Stephens Fort in Alabama. In 1808, the road was completed through Monticello to Natchez.¹ This segment was known in Mississippi as the St. Stephens Road. River Road once intersected with St. Stephens Road in the vicinity of the existing Arm Road and St. Stephens Road east of Monticello. Today, River Road is known as Arm Road at this location. In 1809, the lands west of the Pearl River could be purchased at Washington, Mississippi near Natchez and lands east of the Pearl River at Fort Stephens in Alabama. Lawrence County was originally part of Marion County and was established out of Marion on December 22, 1814. Monticello was first settled on the western high bluff of the Pearl River by Harmon Runnels in 1811. The settlement was the location of Joseph Cooper's ferry. Joseph Cooper is documented as having applied for a Land Patent on February 24, 1812. The settlement was incorporated as Monticello on March 1, 1815 as the county seat of the newly formed Lawrence County.

III. River Road – 1812 to 1818

According to the Records of Marion County, "*Road Books of Marion County, Mississippi*", Book I, 1812 – 1818, Recordings Called Road Books For Order to Establish Roads Over the Newly Created County, the original date for the commencement of construction of River Road is between 1812 and 1814. The Road Books were transcribed by Russ Williams of Bogalusa, Louisiana from the Orphan Court Minutes. These records cover the laying of roads, tavern charges, ferry charges, etc. Road Book Volume I minute entries are laid out in chronological order. While the earliest road entry is not directly dated, it can be determined road construction started prior to August 22, 1814 based another court recording. The minutes detail the laying of a road running up the east side the Pearl River from

¹ "*History of Lawrence and Jefferson Davis County*", transcribed, edited, re-written, indexed by Eddie Mikell.

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Ford's Ferry in the south near the Line of Demarcation (the line between The Mississippi and Spanish Territory and the present day state line between Louisiana and Mississippi) to the northern Choctaw line (present day county line between Lawrence and Copiah County). In 1812, Lawrence County was part of Marion County. Lawrence County was formed in 1814. The road was important to open a north/south corridor between the St. Stephens Road in Monticello where the Joseph Cooper Ferry crossed the Pearl River and the mail road between Natchez and Ft. Stoddert, GA crossing of the Pearl River at Ford's Ferry. The road was evidently built in segments over the course of the six years between 1812 and 1818 as River Road's construction is recorded with nine separate entries in the Orphan Court minutes. In the eighth entry, the road is directly referred to as River Road.

At some point, River Road was extended south of Ford's Ferry to Gainesville on the Pearl River and eventually became known as the Gainesville Road to the south of the Ferry. The first European settlement in this Spanish territory below the Line of Demarcation appears to have occurred in the 1790s. In 1810, Ambrose Gaines received his patent and laid out a new town, which he called Gaines Bluff. The name of the town was later changed to Gainesville. The town of Gainesville no longer exists today and was one of several towns along the Pearl River which formerly stood on the land on what is now the Stennis Space Center.

IV. Maps – 1820 to 1833

River Road can also be documented to be in existence in several early maps from 1820 to 1833. In each of these maps of the state of Mississippi, River Road is shown extending from Ford's Ferry near Sandy Hook on the Pearl River running north/south alongside the east side of the river to Monticello. A few of the maps show the more well known and documented pioneer Natchez Trace, St. Stephens Road and Natchez-Ft. Stoddert road. The well documented Natchez Trace runs from Natchez to Nashville. St. Stephens Road ran from St. Stephens Fort in Alabama to Natchez and Natchez-Ft. Stoddert road ran from Mobile Bay to Ford's Ferry to Natchez. Some of the maps but not all are consistent in documenting the location of these three historic east/west corridors. The only north/south road that is consistently documented on all the maps is River Road. It is clear River Road is documented to be one of the first four major roads and one of the only north/south roads established in the Mississippi Territory days and the early years of the state of Mississippi. The maps include an 1819 map published by John Mellish, an 1823, 1824 and 1829 maps published by A. Finley of Philadelphia, and an 1829 map of the Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas territories published by Fenner, Sears and Company in 1829. (Exhibit A) Additional historic maps showing River Road include an 1827 map published by Phillippe Vandermaelen and an 1833 map published by Walker, J. & C. and Tanner. The original survey map from 1824 maintained at the Lawrence County Courthouse in Monticello shows the section of River Road in the vicinity of White Sand Creek in the south to Silver Creek in the north (Exhibit B).

According to local folklore, Monticello was the state capital of Mississippi for a short period of time. Although the Legislature did once designate Monticello as the state capital, they changed their mind within twenty-four hours.² However, the near selection of Monticello as the state capital was documented an 1822 map drawn and published by F. Lucas Jr. and B. T. Welch which clearly shows Monticello as the seat of government for the State of Mississippi in 1822 (Exhibit C).

V. Homes – 1830 to 1856

Pioneer homes near the River Road Historic District include the Cannon House (NR, 1980) and the Armstrong-Lee House (NR, 1980). Each of these homes is located on Highway 43 within a half mile of the northern end of the River Road Historic District. Prior to the establishment of Highway 43, these two houses were on River Road. According to *"Pioneer Places of Lawrence County, Mississippi"* by Anita Clinton and Lynn Lofton, the Cannon House (NR, 1980) was built in 1830 by Jesse Cannon who came to Mississippi in 1820 from South Carolina. His

² James Brieger. *Hometown, Mississippi*. 2nd Ed. 1980, 276.

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descendents include his son Matthew B. Cannon who served as a Judge and signed land transactions with Stephen A. Douglas (see below). The Armstrong-Lee House (NR, 1980) was built in 1856 by Jasper Armstrong, a plantation owner and merchant. Mr. Armstrong helped found Arm, Mississippi when the Illinois Central rail road was established in Lawrence County. Other houses on River Road are in the China Lee Community near the northern end of the District. It does not appear that any of the original houses are still in existence in the community. The other known houses in the District include an abandoned house on the north side of River Road which is believed to be built in the 1930s and was home to tenant farmers. This house still exists and is in a deteriorating condition. Close to this house on the south side of the road is the site of an old home place with only the chimney remaining. According to oral tradition, this home was built by Joshua Benson, who obtained a land patent in 1820. The other known old home place site is closer to the southern end of the district on the Robbins' place where the only remaining evidence of habitation is an old barn and live oak trees which are not native to this area.

VI. Landowners – 1845 to 1876

One prominent and noteworthy landowner along River Road was Stephen Arnold Douglas, a Democrat from Illinois, who was known for his debates with Abraham Lincoln. Douglas' father-in-law, Colonel Robert Martin of Rockingham County, North Carolina, purchased a 1,700 acre plantation from Charles Lynch. Lynch served in 1827 and 1832-1833 as a State Senator and as Governor of Mississippi from 1834 to 1836. Martin subsequently gifted the Lawrence County plantation, known as Martinsville, to Stephen Douglas as a wedding gift. The plantation had an estimated value of approximately \$100,000. The plantation ultimately grew to encompass approximately 3,000 acres five miles south of Monticello on the east bank of the Pearl River between Silver Creek and White Sand Creek alongside River Road. The plantation had a ferry crossing near the mouth of Silver Creek across the Pearl River. The primary cash crop grown on the plantation was cotton and corn which were sent to market. The plantation was self-sufficient producing hogs, cattle, sheep, corn, peas, and sugar cane. For Douglas, an Illinois senator with presidential aspirations, the management of a Southern plantation worked by slave labor presented a difficult situation. Douglas sought to escape slaveholding charges by employing a manager, Col. James Strickland, for his Mississippi holdings, while using the economic benefits derived from the property to advance his political career. His sole lengthy visit to Mississippi came in 1848, with only brief emergency trips thereafter. Martinsville was ideally located on River Road with north and south access to Monticello and Jackson to the north, Columbia and Ford's Ferry to the south. The plantation also had Pearl River access by steamboat to Jackson and the Gulf of Mexico approximately 150 miles downstream. Douglas used the steamboat on the Pearl when he visited the plantation on the three documented occasions. He traveled by steamboat down the Mississippi River to Vicksburg, train from Vicksburg to Jackson, steamboat down the Pearl to Monticello and horse and buggy on River Road to Martinsville.

VII. Civil War – 1864

In his "*Decision in Mississippi*", Edwin Bearrs provides an account of the Federal raid on General John W. Davidson in late 1864. Federal troops left Baton Rouge and made an attempt to cut the Mobile and Ohio RR near Leakesville, traversing South Mississippi. They crossed the Pearl River on pontoons which they brought with them north of the John Ford Home south of Columbia. Troops remarked how much better the travel was on the road on the east side of the Pearl. The entire 4,000 man force made their way to Columbia and turned abruptly east; however, they had reports of guerilla activity in Monticello, so they sent a detachment of the 11th New York, "Scott's 900" cavalry, to check out the area. They were led by Major Seth Pierre Remington, father of Frederick Remington, famed artist of the American West. They traveled on River Road leaving Columbia around 2 p.m. returning to Columbia at around 10 p.m. that evening. They did not see any Confederates but reported that they must have moved on before the cavalry detachment entered Monticello.

VIII. China Lee Community and China Lee Missionary Baptist Church – 1874 to 1974

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The China Lee Community, population of approximately one hundred and fifty, is located at mile marker .65 in the River Road Historic District. In interviews with local residents, the origin of the historically African American community is unknown. According to Rosetta Williams, a resident of China Lee and Church historian, there is no written history of the community prior to the establishment of the China Lee Missionary Baptist Church in 1874. Based upon the history of land ownership along River Road, it is likely China Lee was settled by freed slaves from the Charles Lynch and/or Stephen Douglas plantations. This fact cannot be clearly documented at this point.

According to a history of the China Lee Missionary Baptist Church, a group of men began worshiping west of the existing community in 1874 on land known as the "Strickland Place," probably a reference to Col. James Strickland, the caretaker of the Stephen Douglas plantation. The first church services were held in the open, under a chinaberry tree in the yard of Ben Lee. The name China Lee is derived from the tree and Mr. Lee. The first pastor was the Reverend Silas Harris. Near the location of the present day church, a small frame church was erected but burned in 1915. Services were then held in the China Lee school house which no longer exists. Church revivals were held outside with logs as seating. In 1917 under the leadership of Reverend David James, the congregation purchased a building from Macon Garrett, owner of a saw mill, which later burned. In 1929, the Church relocated to its existing location under the leadership of Rev. E. F. Oatis. In 1974, the existing brick building was constructed while Rev. J.B. Smith was pastor. The present cemetery is still in use and is located next to the church. According to oral tradition, the original cemetery for the China Lee Community is located at River Road Historic District mile marker 1.84 on the northwest bluff of the branch. No physical evidence of this cemetery remains.

The Lawrence County Supervisor for the fifth district, Coach Archie Ross, hails from China Lee. The China Lee Missionary Baptist Church and Community have played an important role in the history of Lawrence County and continues to play a major role in the political environment of the county today.

IX. Townships – 1882

Incorporated small towns in close proximity to the River Road District include Arm and Oak Vale, Mississippi. Arm was founded by Jasper Armstrong, owner of the Armstrong-Lee House. Arm was built as a rail road stop when the Illinois Central line was established circa 1882. Oak Vale was established on the rail line as well and became a center for the saw mill and timber industry. Arm is on Highway 43 approximately 1 mile from the northern end of River Road where it intersects Highway 43. Oak Vale is located approximately 3 miles from the southern end of the District's terminus at Conerly Road.

X. White Sand Creek Bridge – 1913

The White Sand Creek Bridge built in 1913 is a single span Warren pony truss iron bridge spanning the spring fed gravel and sand bottomed clear water stream. The creek's headwaters are approximately 30 miles upstream in the vicinity of the White Sand Creek Community in Jefferson Davis County. The creek's terminus is around one mile downstream from the bridge where it flows into the Pearl River. A contract dated April 8, 1913 between the Lawrence County Board of Supervisors and the Memphis Bridge Company, called for construction and completion by August 7, 1913 for \$3,100. White Sand Creek Bridge is a designated Mississippi Landmark. It is one of three historic iron bridges in Lawrence County. The Bahala Creek Bridge (NR, 1988) is a Pratt through truss bridge with two spans built in 1909. The Pretty Branch Bridge is a Warren pony truss bridge with a single span built in 1909. According to the Office of State Aid Road Construction report dated 10/26/09, White Sand Creek Bridge is in "good" to "very good condition".

XI. Other Early Roads

Perhaps the most documented territorial-era road in Mississippi is the Natchez Trace. Composed of a series of trails running northeast from Natchez to the Mississippi border with Alabama in northwest Mississippi, the Trace

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has been the subject of both serious research and legend and lore. The current Natchez Trace Parkway, constructed between 1937 and 2005 by the National Park Service, is commemorative of the Old Trace and generally follows its path. There are documented stretches of the Old Trace itself near Port Gibson, Claiborne County (NR, 1976), near Ridgeland, Madison County (NR, 1976), near French Camp, Attala County (NR, 1976) and near Mathiston, Choctaw County (NR, 1976). All these sections are interpretative stops on the Natchez Trace Parkway illustrating the historic transportation byway. None are currently in use for intercity travel and the longest section is approximately 600 feet.

A state historic marker commemorates the location where the St. Stephen's Road, which ran from St. Stephens, AL to Natchez, crossed the Pearl River in Monticello by way of Cooper's Ferry. However, none of the historic roadbed remains. A 10-mile unimproved section of Highway 84 between Monticello and Prentiss most closely resembles the historic corridor.

Old Robinson Road was constructed in 1823 to connect Lowndes County, MS with the state capital in Jackson. The road ran approximately 130 miles. A 1950 foot section remains in Leake County (NR, 1976) near the intersection with the Natchez Trace Parkway. However the rest of the road has been obliterated or become parts of U.S. Highway 82 or other roads.

The early road most closely resembling River Road is a 3.3 mile section of the Old Natchez Trace in Madison County, now known as Old Agency Road (NR, 1976). The nomination describes the road as follows:

Although paved with asphalt and wider than the historic Natchez Trace it is evocative in its surrounding landscape of the narrow road or trail that linked Nashville and Natchez 190 years ago. It is narrow with a width of 30-feet and winds through an area of low undulating hills interspersed with small stream bottoms as it follows the course of the historic trace. At several points the road is sunken with high earthen banks on each side. In other areas large trees border the road and overhang it creating a canopy effect. In other areas it passes through fields and pastures. Most of these features are included within the overall 60-foot right-of-way. The road also retains the appearance of the rural county roads that were once typical of Mississippi, but now are rapidly disappearing.

The description could almost apply to River Road, which favorably compares with other early Mississippi roads listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Books and Articles

Bearss, Edwin. *Decision in Mississippi, Mississippi's Role in the War Between the States*. Jackson: Commission on the War Between the States, 1962.

Brieger, James F. *Hometown, Mississippi*. 2nd ed. Self-published, 1980.

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Public Records

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"Road Books of Marion County, Mississippi", Book I, 1812 – 1818, Recordings Called Road Books For Order to Establish Roads Over the Newly Created County. The Road Books were transcribed by Russ Williams of Bogalusa, Louisiana from the Orphan Court Minutes.

St. Stephens Road, State Historic Marker Application. Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Newspapers

Lawrence County Press

Websites

<http://preserveriverroad.com/>
[http://www.stephenadouglas.org/
Stephen A Douglas Deed.pdf](http://www.stephenadouglas.org/Stephen%20A%20Douglas%20Deed.pdf)
<http://bridgehunter.com/>
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen A. Douglas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_A._Douglas)
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles Lynch \(politician\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Lynch_(politician))
<http://mshistory.k12.ms.us/articles/265/index.php?s=extra&id=114>
<http://www.msstateaidroads.us/index-x.html?introduction.html>
<http://crgis.ndc.nasa.gov/historic/Gainesville>

Maps

Mississippi 1820 Published by John Melish. From Library of Congress.
Mississippi 1822 - Published by A. Finley, Philadelphia.
Mississippi 1827 - Published by Philippe Vandermaelen
Mississippi 1833 - Published by Walker, J. & C. and Tanner.
Mississippi 1822 Drawn and Published by F. Lucas Jr. B.T. Welch, Sc.
River Road Original Survey 1824 – Monticello Courthouse and Bureau of Land Management

Map of the states of Mississippi, Louisiana, and the Arkansas Territory [map].
<http://zed.mdah.state.ms.us/F/EA3UJTCMG71656REAJF9VGBSPTKUQ919YQ4X8JGKQM7RHFDH72-22296?func=full-set-selected>

Mississippi [map] / [by A. Finley].
<http://zed.mdah.state.ms.us/F/EA3UJTCMG71656REAJF9VGBSPTKUQ919YQ4X8JGKQM7RHFDH72-22347?func=full-set-set&set number=000181&set entry=000002&format=999>

Mississippi [map] / Young & Delleker, sc.
<http://zed.mdah.state.ms.us/F/EA3UJTCMG71656REAJF9VGBSPTKUQ919YQ4X8JGKQM7RHFDH72-22430?func=full-set-set&set number=000181&set entry=000003&format=999>

Mississippi [map] / [by A. Finley].
<http://zed.mdah.state.ms.us/F/EA3UJTCMG71656REAJF9VGBSPTKUQ919YQ4X8JGKQM7RHFDH72-22501?func=full-set-set&set number=000181&set entry=000004&format=999>

Map of Mississippi [map] : constructed from the surveys in the General Land Office and other documents / by John Melish.
<http://zed.mdah.state.ms.us/F/EA3UJTCMG71656REAJF9VGBSPTKUQ919YQ4X8JGKQM7RHFDH72-22778?func=full-set-set&set number=000181&set entry=000005&format=999>

River Road
Name of Property

Lawrence, Mississippi
County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
 preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been

Primary location of additional data:
 State Historic Preservation Office

River Road
Name of Property

Lawrence, Mississippi
County and State

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 # _____

Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx 34
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.) See Continuation Sheet

A	<u>15</u>	<u>781989</u>	<u>3489052</u>	C	<u>15</u>	<u>781651</u>	<u>3486944</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
B	<u>15</u>	<u>781639</u>	<u>3488643</u>	D	<u>15</u>	<u>782217</u>	<u>3483573</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

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

River Road Historic District begins at the intersection of Highway 43 and River Road, designated as UTM Point A on the attached Monticello Quadrangle map, and proceeds in a southwesterly direction to UTM Point B on the Monticello Quadrangle where it turns to the south; the road proceeds south until UTM Point C on the attached Tilton Quadrangle where it makes a shallow curve to the southeast; the road proceeds in a southeast direction until UTM Point D on the attached Tilton Quadrangle where it makes a sharper turn to the southeast. The road proceeds to the southeast until it reaches UTM Point E on the attached Tilton Quadrangle where it makes a shallow turn to the west; it proceeds to UTM Point F on the Tilton Quadrangle where it crosses White Sand Creek and makes a shallow turn to the east. From there it proceeds in a southeast direction to UTM Point G on the Tilton Quadrangle. The roads proceeds from there to UTM Point H on the attached Oak Vale Quadrangle where it makes a sharper turn to the south. The road proceeds south to the intersection with Conerly Road, designated as UTM Point I on the attached Oak Vale Quadrangle.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is drawn based on the alignment of River Road between Highway 43 on the north and Conerly Road on the south and the Right-of-Way of 25 feet from the center line. The district includes the last 5.6 mile section of River Road not lost to modern highway expansion and road widening and that retains its historic setting within the landscape, improvements and topography.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kay T. Allen, President
organization Lawrence County Historical Society date 10-28-2010
street & number 1201 F E Sellers Highway telephone 601-886-3341

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

River Road Historic District

Name of Property

Lawrence, Mississippi

County and State

NA

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 10 Page 1

E.	15	783983	3483505
F.	15	784165	3483289
G.	15	784520	3483060
H.	16	214937	3482938
I.	16	215550	3482193

River Road
Name of Property

Lawrence, Mississippi
County and State

city or town Monticello state MS zip code 39654
e-mail bbourne@firstcommericalbk.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

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

- **Continuation Sheets**

Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

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

Name of Property: River Road Historic District and White Sand Creek Bridge

City or Vicinity: Arm and Oak Vale

County: Lawrence

State: Mississippi

Photographer: Bo Bourne

Date Photographed: February 3, 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 0001 of 15. Mile Marker 0. Camera facing southeast.
- 0002 of 15. Mile Marker .65. China Lee community. Camera facing south.
- 0003 of 15. Mile Marker 1.84. Camera facing south.
- 0004 of 15. Mile Marker 2.53. Camera facing south.
- 0005 of 15. Mile Marker 3.72. Camera facing south.
- 0006 of 15. Mile Marker 3.95. Camera facing south.
- 0007 of 15. Mile Marker 4.14. Camera facing south.
- 0008 of 15. Mile Marker 4.21. Camera facing south.
- 0009 of 15. Mile Marker 4.27. Camera facing south.
- 0010 of 15. Mile Marker 4.27. Camera facing south.
- 0011 of 15. Mile Marker 4.31. Camera facing south.
- 0012 of 15. Mile Marker 4.33. White Sand Creek Bridge. Camera facing south.
- 0013 of 15. White Sand Creek Bridge. Camera facing southwest.
- 0014 of 15. Mile Marker 4.44. Camera facing north.
- 0015 of 15. Mile Marker 6.28. Camera facing south.

River Road
Name of Property

Lawrence, Mississippi
County and State

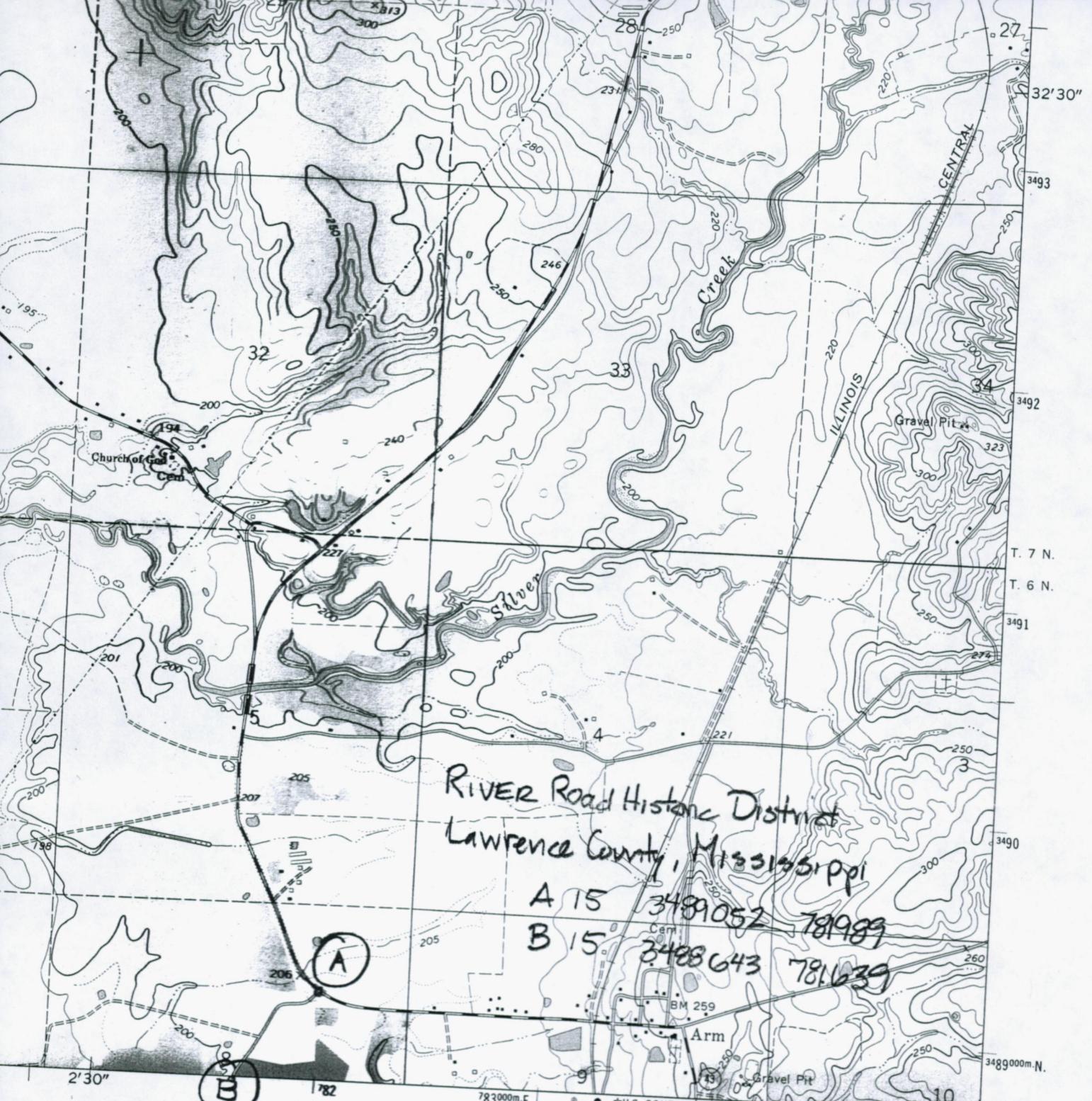
Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Name Lawrence County
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town Monticello state MS zip code 39654

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.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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.



1 MILE

*Continued on
Tilton Quad*



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, all weather, hard surface	Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface	Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
U. S. Route	State Route

MONTICELLO, MISS.
 N3130-W9000/7.5

1 of 3

TILTON QUADRANGLE
MISSISSIPPI

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

SILVER CREEK 9 MI.
ARM 0.2 MI. 600 000 FEET

3047 III SW
(PRENTISS WEST)

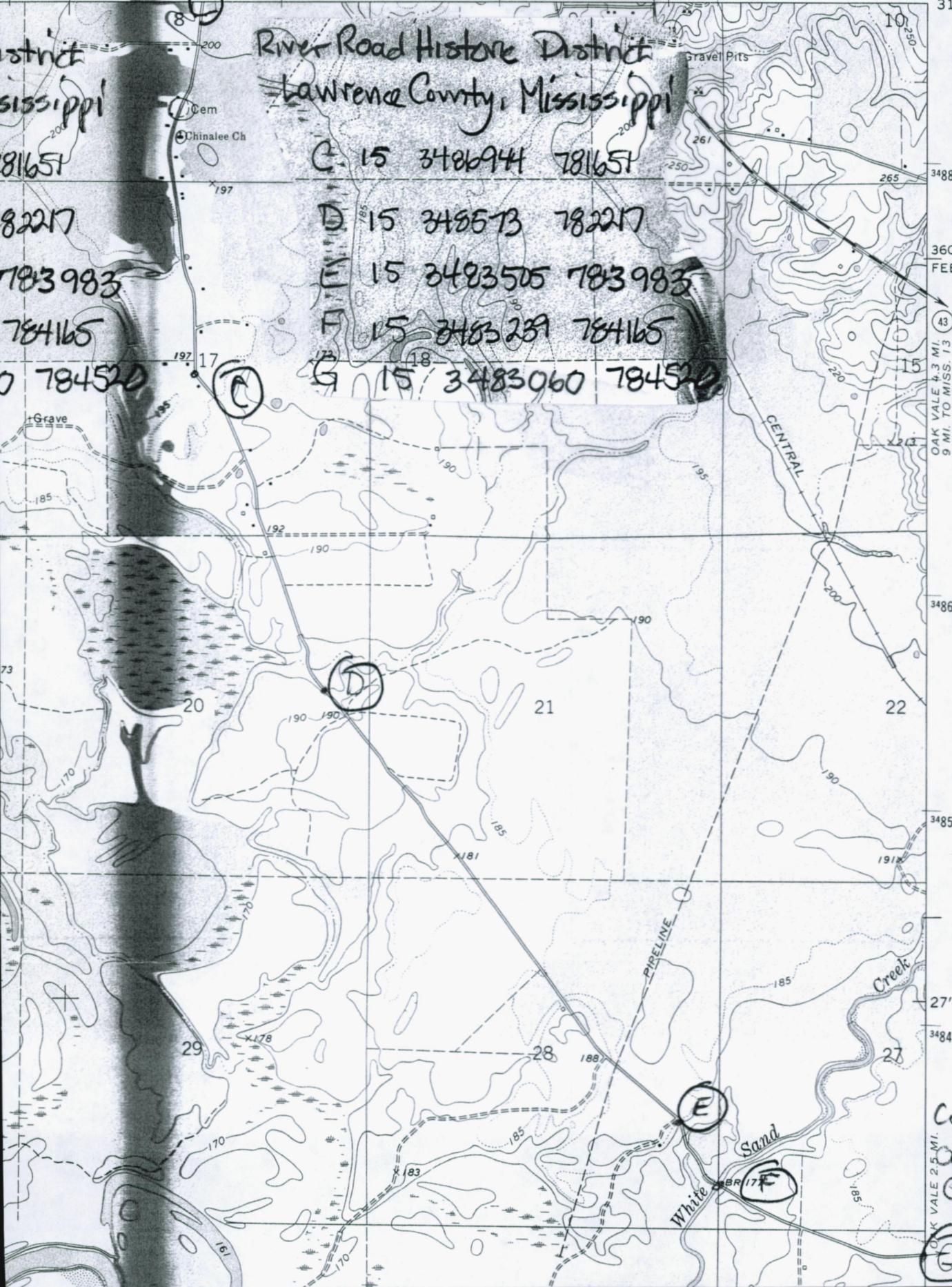
2' 30" 782 783 90° 00' 31° 30'

street
Mississippi
81651
82217
783983
784165
784520

River Road Historic District
Lawrence County, Mississippi

C 15 3486944 781651
D 15 348573 782217
E 15 3483505 783983
F 15 3483239 784165
G 15 3483060 784520

360 000 FEET
OAK VALE 4.3 MI.
9 MI. TO MISS. 73



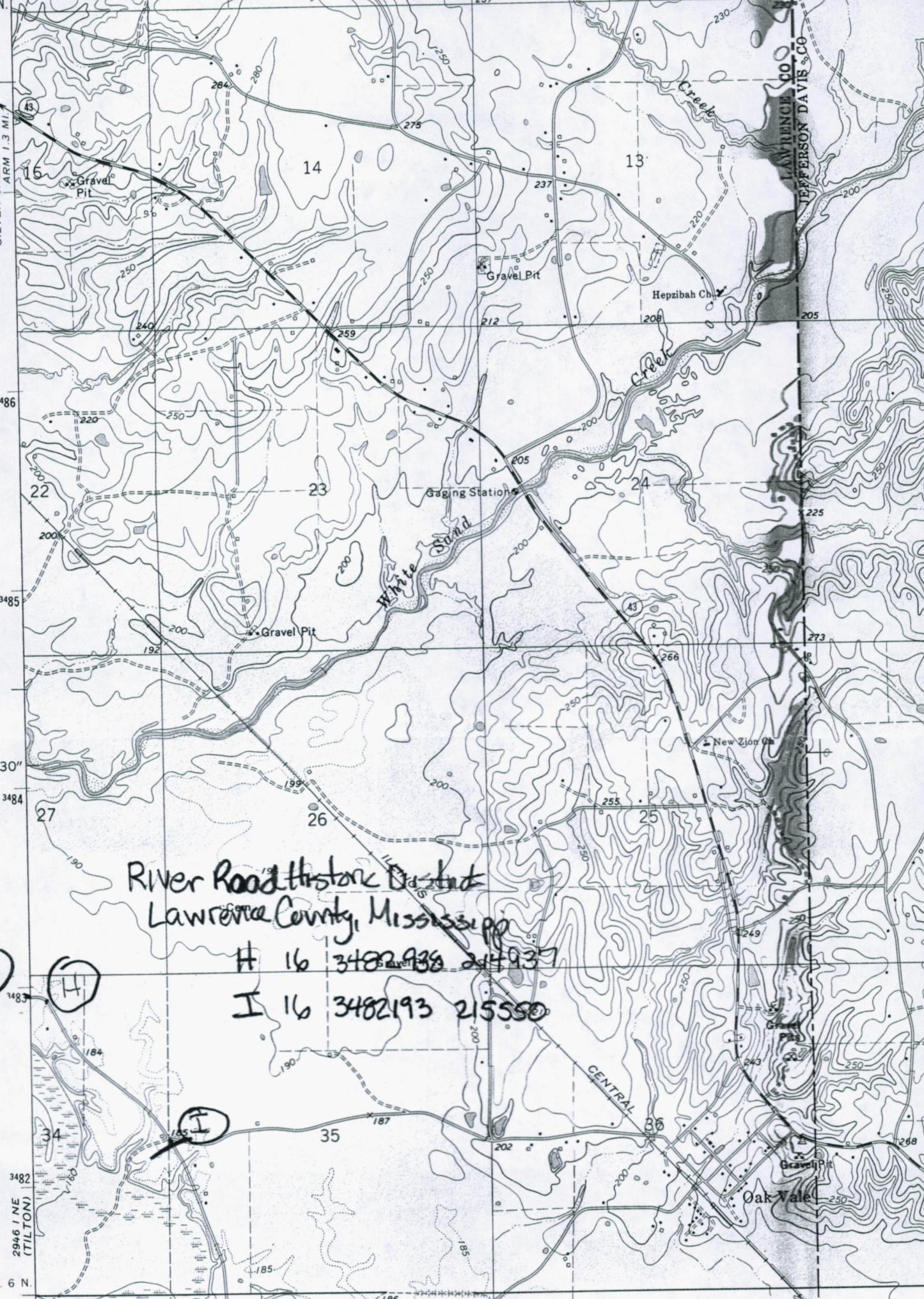
Continued on
Oak Vale
Quad

43

348000m.N.

SILVER CREEK 10 MI. ARM 1.3 MI.

LAWRENCE CO. JEFFERSON DAVIS & CO.



River Road Historic District
Lawrence County, Mississippi

H 16 3482938 244937

I 16 3482193 215550

G

H

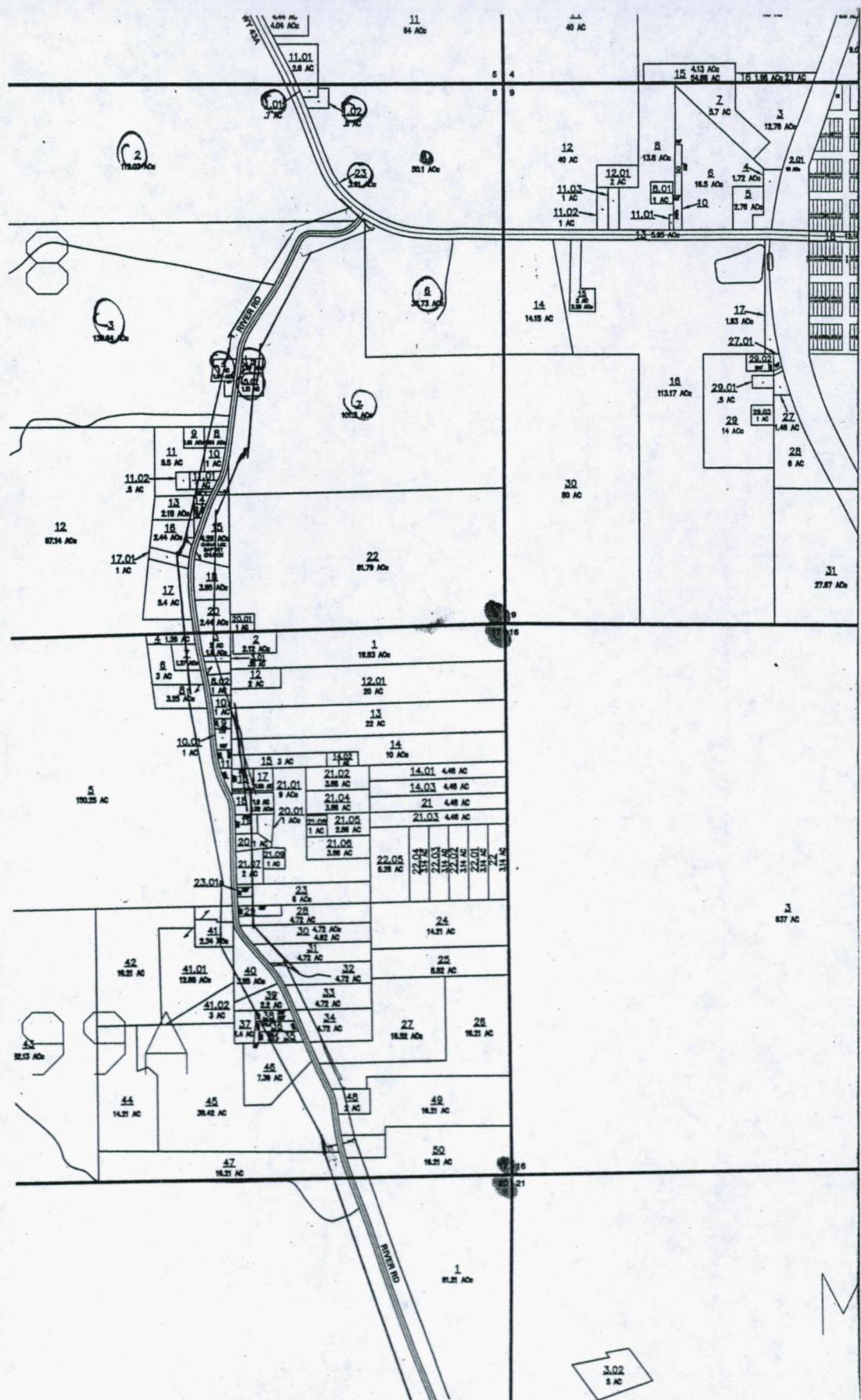
I

2946 1 NE (TILTON)

T. 6 N.

186

185

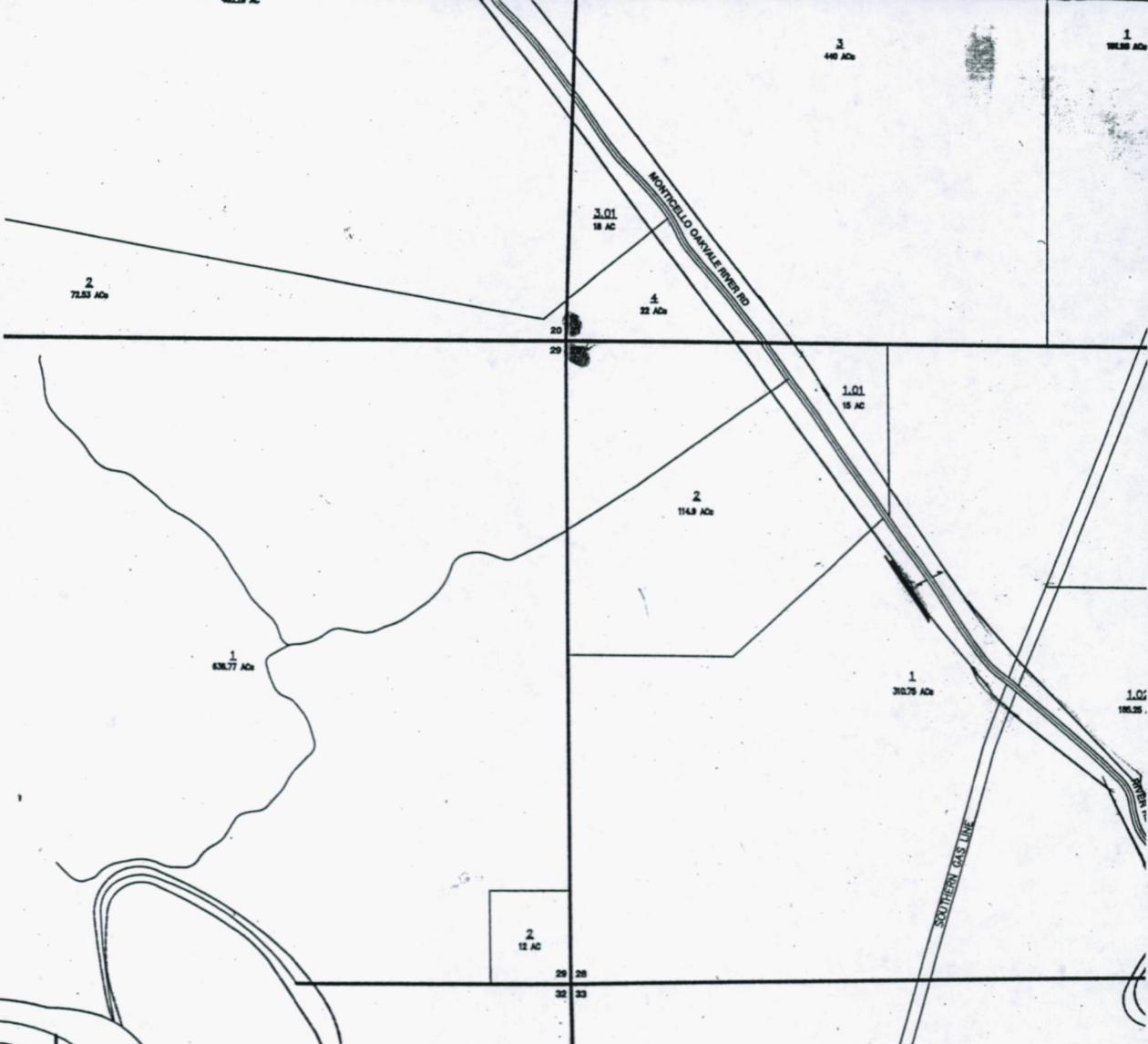


RIVER RD

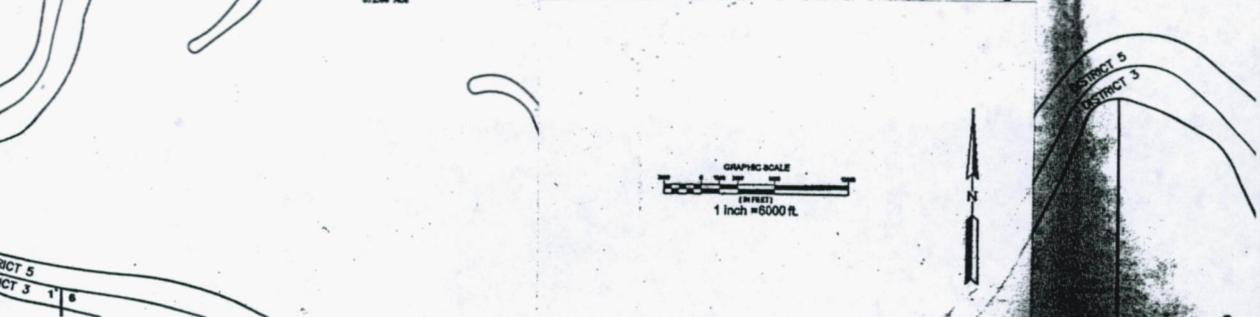
WINDY RD

3.02
3 AC

M



MAP 104 River Road Historic District
Lawrence County MS





MAP 103
Stone District
County MS

1
30.75 AC

1.02
185.25 AC

2.01
187.75 AC

2
145 AC
123.4 AC

1
195.92 AC

5
24.34 AC
17.01
3.88 AC

5
92.82 AC

4
75 AC
71.88 AC

7
28.34 AC

5
45.88 AC

5
64.88 AC

13.03
15 AC

13.02
15 AC

3.03
20 AC

3.02
20 AC

1
81 AC

4.01
46 AC

4
47.71 AC

3
101.44 AC

2
71.27 AC

4.02
4 AC

4.01
53.9 AC

5.01
1 AC

5
125.7 AC

1.01
65.8 AC

1.02
71.8 AC

5
3 AC



DISTRICT 5
DISTRICT 3

PEARL RIVER

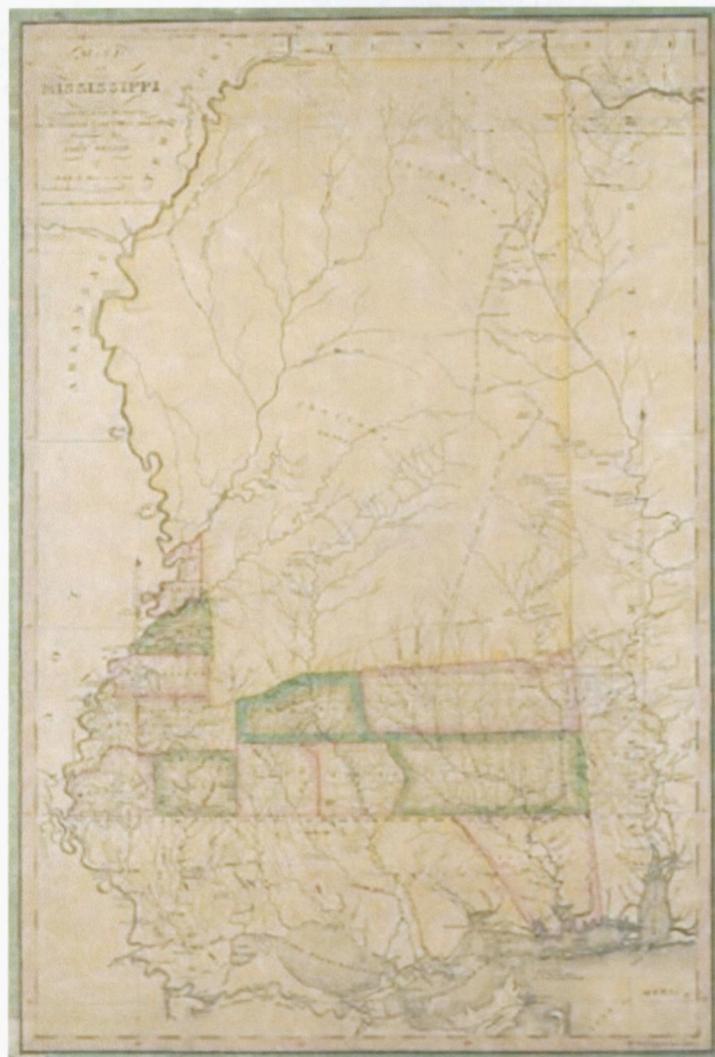
WHITE SAND CREEK

SOUTHERN GAS LINE

RIVER RD

RIVER RD 1

34 35



[Mississippi 1820](#) Published by John Melish. From Library of Congress.

MISSISSIPPI.

MISSISSIPPI.

Map of Mississippi from 1822, showing the state and its counties, with a scale of 100 miles to an inch.

EXES OF THE CAPITAL, AND THE TERRITORIES

The western part of the state is about 100 miles from the Gulf of Mexico, and is a fertile soil, and is well adapted to the raising of cotton, sugar, and other crops.

MISSISSIPPI.

The Mississippi river is the largest river in the world, and is the source of the life of the state.

MISSISSIPPI.

After several days of rain, the water is high, and the crops are in danger.

MISSISSIPPI.

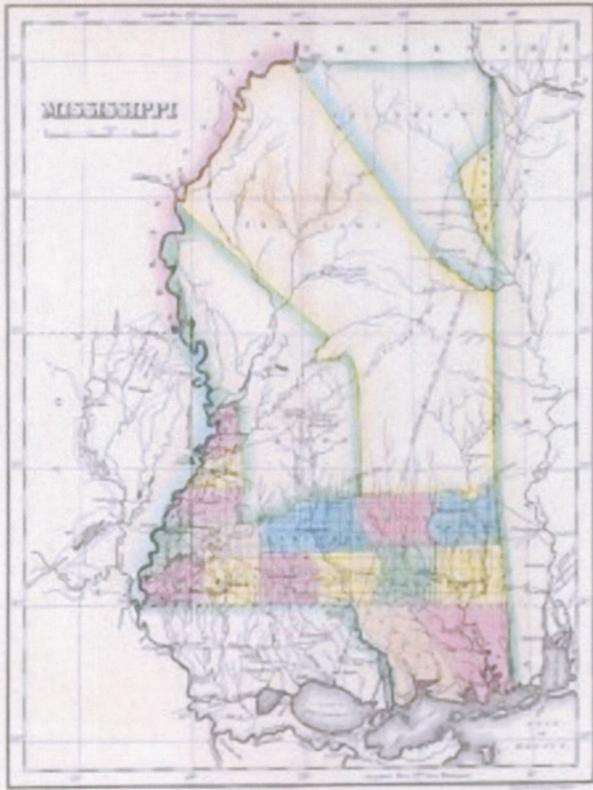
The object of this map is to show the geographical, statistical, and historical facts of the state.

SCALE OF THE MAP



MISSISSIPPI.

Map of Mississippi from 1822, showing the state and its counties, with a scale of 100 miles to an inch.



MISSISSIPPI.

Map of Mississippi from 1822, showing the state and its counties, with a scale of 100 miles to an inch.

MISSISSIPPI.

Map of Mississippi from 1822, showing the state and its counties, with a scale of 100 miles to an inch.

MISSISSIPPI.

Map of Mississippi from 1822, showing the state and its counties, with a scale of 100 miles to an inch.

Map of Mississippi from 1822, showing the state and its counties, with a scale of 100 miles to an inch.

MISSISSIPPI.

MISSISSIPPI.

Map of Mississippi from 1822, showing the state and its counties, with a scale of 100 miles to an inch.



[Mississippi 1822 Drawn and Published by F. Lucas Jr. B.T. Welch, Sc.](https://www.loc.gov/rr/rst/maps/mississippi/mississippi.html)



[Mississippi 1827 - Published by Philippe Vandermaelen](#)



Mississippi 1833 - Published by Walker, J. & C. and Tanner.



White Sand Creek Bridge

Land survey: T. 6 N., R. 20 W., Sec. 28
+31.45083,-90.01028(decimaldegrees)
31°27'03" N, 90°00'37" W (degrees°minutes'seconds")
Approximate UTM coordinates
15/784124/3483437 (zone/easting/northing)

CHINA LEE

M.B.CHURCH

E.J. Earl - Pastor



RIVER RD

MS Lawrence County River Road Historic District

Mile Marker 0 0001



MS Lawrence County River Road Historic District

Mile Marker .65 0002



MS Lawrence County River Road Historic District

Mile Marker 1.84 0003



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MS Lawrence County River Road Historic District

Mile Marker 2.53 0004



MS Lawrence County River Road Historic District
Mile Marker 3.72 0005



MS Lawrence County River Road Historic District

Mile Marker 3.95 0006



MS Lawrence County River Road Historic District

Mile Marker 4.14 0007



MS Lawrence County River Road Historic District

Mile Marker 4.21 0008



MS Lawrence County River Road Historic District

Mile Marker 4.27 0009



MS Lawrence County River Road Historic District

mile marker 4.27 0010



MS Lawrence County River Road Historic District

Mile Marker 4.31 0011



WEIGHT
LIMIT 8
TO 10 T

MS Lawrence County River Road Historic District

Mik Marker 4.33 0012



MS Lawrence County River Road Historic District

Mile Marker 4.33 0013



40

MS Lawrence County River Road Historic District

Mile Marker 4.44 0014



10
11
12
13

MS Lawrence County River Road Historic District

mile marker 6.28 0015