

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
 INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**
PH0668851
FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAY 15 1978

DATA SHEET

DATE ENTERED

OCT 19 1978

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

HISTORIC

Snowdoun

AND/OR COMMON

John Marshall Billups Home

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

906 Third Avenue North

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Columbus

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Mississippi

CODE
28COUNTY
Lowndes

CODE

027 57

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

__COMMERCIAL

__EDUCATIONAL

__ENTERTAINMENT

__GOVERNMENT

__INDUSTRIAL

__MILITARY

__MUSEUM

__PARK

 PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__RELIGIOUS

__SCIENTIFIC

__TRANSPORTATION

__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. Thompson Daniel

STREET & NUMBER

906 Third Avenue North

CITY, TOWN

Columbus

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Mississippi 39701

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.Office of the Chancery Clerk
Lowndes County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Second Avenue North

CITY, TOWN

Columbus

STATE

Mississippi 39701

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1936

 FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20540

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Snowdown is a two-story wood frame residence situated on the corner of Third Avenue North and Ninth Street, near the Columbus, Mississippi, central business district. Extant and original landscape features include bricked walks, oval-shaped parterres, and a shaded circular walk in the front of the property. The house features a diagonal Greek cross plan with four projecting pavilions and central octagonal core. During the 1870s the flat roof and octagonal cupola were replaced with a steep-pitched gabled roof. The two-story rear (southeast) portico was partially enclosed ca. 1917, bathrooms installed, and a pedimented one-story kitchen added on the south side of the portico. The building is supported by a brick-pier foundation, with a basement service washroom on the southeast side.

Rising in the center of the front (northwest) elevation is a striking two-story, three-sided portico with four fluted octagonal columns supporting the entablature. A dormer window with broken pediment and dentiled cornice extends from the gabled roof and overlooks the portico, flanked on both sides by corbelled cap chimneys, which date from the 1870s renovation. The four second-story gable ends are trimmed in the same fashion as the dormer window, with pointed-arch openings centered in the tympanum, and bargeboard decoration and pendant at the top of the gable.

The fenestration of the northwest facade is particularly fine, with bracketed cornices over the jib windows on both floors. Frontispiece entrances on the first floor and balcony have diamond-patterned Venetian glass in the side lights and transom. A three-sided second-story balcony is located above the portico veranda, with an ornamental jigsaw design balustrade.

The southeast elevation reflects the changing life-style of Snowdown's residents. A one-story kitchen was added on the south side of the rear portico ca. 1917, replacing the original kitchen and slaves' quarters--a one-story brick structure adjacent to the new kitchen addition and formerly joined to the main house by a brick walk and latticed passageway. Traces of the brick walk remain. The 1871 Bird's Eye View of Columbus, Mississippi depicts Snowdown as an estate occupying an entire block, with kitchen, slaves' quarters, and four other out-buildings, including a dairy and stables.

The interior of Snowdown features an octagonal hall with a spiral staircase and four, four-paneled doors with eared architrave trim leading to the library, bedroom, rear veranda, and dining room and drawing room. Triangular closets are employed to square off each room. Wooden cornices above the windows are used throughout the house, varied in form and in graining or gilding technique. The second-floor plan of the main house is identical to the first, with the spiral stair continuing up to the attic.

The dining room is of particular interest, containing the Billups family collection of rare china, silver, and glass, including syllabub cups, satin and Bristol glass bowls, and a tall epergne with the initials "S.G.B.," for Major Billups' wife, Sally Govan Billups. The mahogany-stained window cornices are particularly handsome, with milled scrollwork and turned finial. The chandelier, like the others in the house, was originally a gas fixture, and has etched glass shades with crystal prisms.

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

The use of the octagonal theme with the cross axial plan has produced in Snowdown a highly successful and individualistic form of residential architecture for the Columbus region. Built in 1854, its architectural integrity is largely intact, despite the major exterior roofline alterations that occurred roughly twenty years after the house was built. Visited by persons important in the history of the South, Snowdown remains a symbol of the lavish hospitality of wealthy property owners during the antebellum period in Columbus and Mississippi.

A prototypical "Anglo-Grecian Villa," as popularized by William H. Ranlett in The Architect, published in 1847, Snowdown is similar in design and plan to Cooleemee Plantation (built in 1853-1855 by Peter W. Hairston in Davis County, North Carolina), with the diagonal Greek cross plan, projecting pavilions, and octagonal center hall. These features are paralleled at Snowdown with the addition of Greek Revival stylistic elements to the country villa form and plan, most visibly expressed in the structure's facade portico.

Constructed by Governor James Whitfield, Snowdown was purchased in 1866 by Confederate Major John Marshall Billups, president of the Columbus Insurance and Banking Company (now the First Columbus National Bank), plantation owner, and cotton merchant. The property has remained in the Billups family and is now owned by Mrs. Thompson Daniel, granddaughter of Major Billups. The name Snowdown is derived from the Billups family estate in Scotland. Several prominent nineteenth-century military and political figures visited the house and have spoken from the balcony, including Jefferson Davis during his campaign for the United States Senate, Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest, and U.S. Supreme Court Justice L. Q. C. Lamar.

The house contains a variety of documents and memorabilia relating to the history of the Billups family, Snowdown, and the South, including a Mexican War battle flag, letters from Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee, and Henry Clay's calling card.

The preservation of these and other objects of historical significance, coupled with the continuous ownership of the property by the Billups family, has preserved the outstanding mid-nineteenth-century ambience of the property.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Drie, Camille, artist. Bird's Eye View of Columbus, Mississippi. Columbus Public Library. Lithograph. N.p., [1871].

Gold, Jack A., architectural historian. Personal inspection, January 30, 1978.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1-1/2

QUADRANGLE NAME Columbus, Miss.-Ala.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:62500

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 367800 3707250
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning on the east side of Block 20, Barry's Survey, City of Columbus, at a point 65 feet south of the northeast corner of the Southeast Quarter of said block and

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

Jack A. Gold, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

DATE

April, 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 X

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 R. Hilliard

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE May 5, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST: *William Leavelle*
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 10/19/78

DATE Oct 16, 1978

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 15 1978
DATE ENTERED	OCT 19 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6,9,10 PAGE 1

6 - REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Statewide Survey of Historic Sites
1974 x state
Mississippi Department of Archives and History
Jackson Mississippi 39205

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Gold, Jack A., architectural historian. Personal interview with Mrs. Thompson Daniel, January 30, 1978.

Hairston, Peter W., ed. "J. E. B. Stuart's Letters to His Hairston Kin, 1850-1855," The North Carolina Historical Review, 51 (1974):317.

Lowndes County, Mississippi. Chancery Clerk. Deed Books 27:399; 34:293; 381:499. Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Microfilm.

Ranlett, William H., The Architect. New York, 1847.

10 - GEOGRAPHICAL DATA (Verbal Boundary Description)

running thence west 107 feet more or less to the Bill J. Wheeler lot (conveyed to him by deed dated January 31, 1963, and recorded in Book 336, page 177), thence south 22 feet, thence east 107 feet more or less to the east boundary of said block, thence north 22 feet to said beginning point.

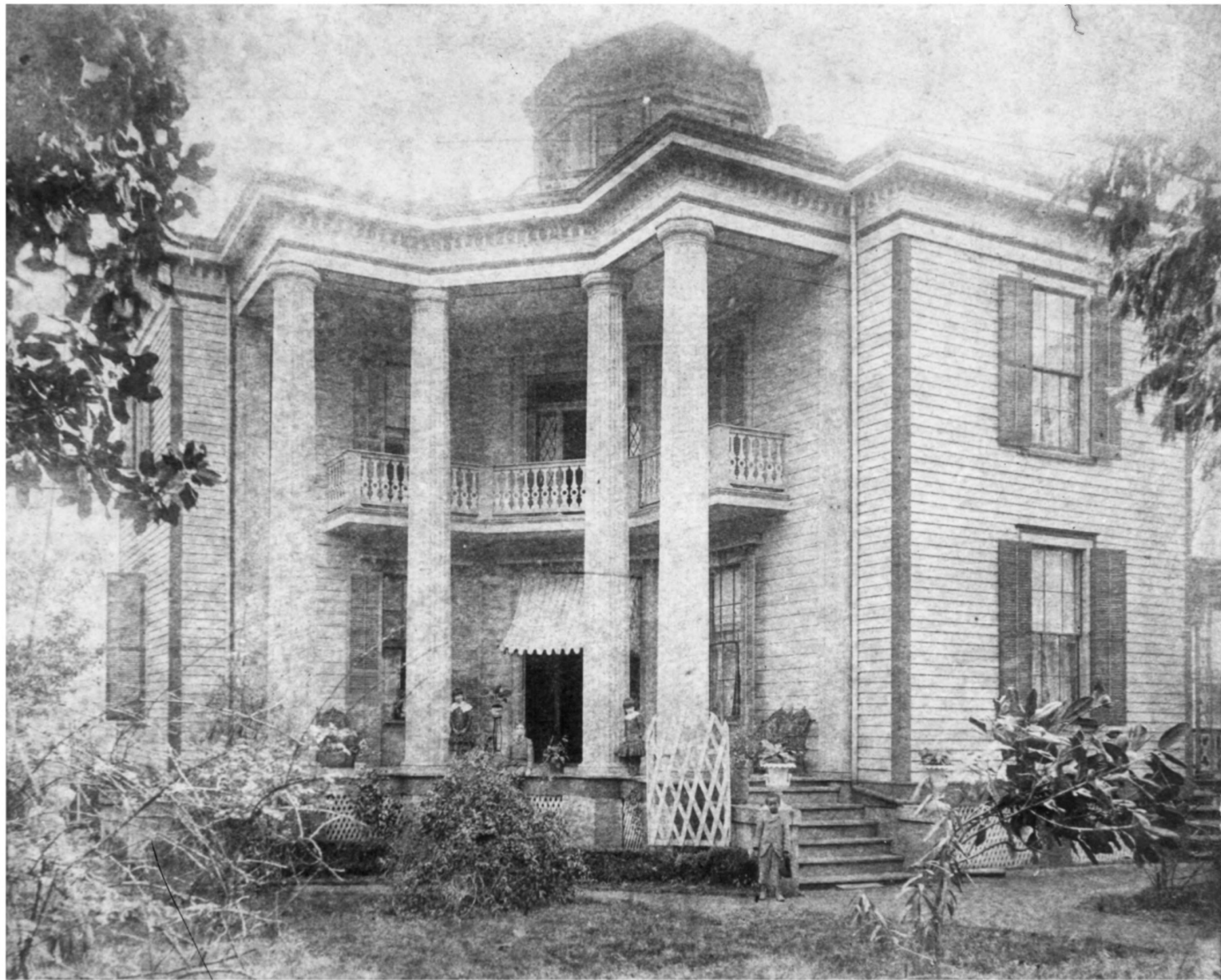


PHOTO NO. 1²³ - SNOWDOWN

Columbus, Lowndes County, Mississippi

Photographer - Unknown

ca. 1870

Mississippi Department of Archives and
History

Northwest facade, showing original cupola
and flat roof. View toward northeast.

OCT 19 1978

MAY 15 1978



PHOTO NO. 2⁸³ - SNOWDOWN
Columbus, Lowndes County, Mississippi
Gregory B. Free
February, 1978
Mississippi Department of Archives and
History
Northwest facade; view toward north.

OCT 19 1978

MAY 15 1978



PHOTO NO. 3~~0~~³- SNOWDOWN

Columbus, Lowndes County, Mississippi

Calvin Shanks

March, 1978

Shanks Photo Service

413½ Main Street

Columbus, Mississippi 39701

Dining room; view toward southeast.

OCT 19 1978

MAY 15 1978