

DATA SHEET

PH0692654

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

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  
Old Augusta Historic Site  
AND/OR COMMON  
Old Augusta Historic Site

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
CITY, TOWN  
STATE CODE COUNTY CODE  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3 CLASSIFICATION

Table with 4 columns: CATEGORY, OWNERSHIP, STATUS, PRESENT USE. Includes options like DISTRICT, BUILDING(S), STRUCTURE, SITE, OBJECT, PUBLIC, PRIVATE, BOTH, PUBLIC ACQUISITION, IN PROCESS, BEING CONSIDERED, OCCUPIED, UNOCCUPIED, WORK IN PROGRESS, ACCESSIBLE, YES: RESTRICTED, YES: UNRESTRICTED, NO, AGRICULTURE, MUSEUM, COMMERCIAL, PARK, EDUCATIONAL, PRIVATE RESIDENCE, ENTERTAINMENT, RELIGIOUS, SCIENTIFIC, GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRIAL, MILITARY, TRANSPORTATION, OTHER: Forest.

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
Pat Harrison Waterway District  
STREET & NUMBER  
P. O. Box 1509  
CITY, TOWN  
Hattiesburg, MISSISSIPPI VICINITY OF STATE  
Mississippi 39401

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Office of the Chancery Clerk, Perry County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER  
P. O. Box 198  
CITY, TOWN  
New Augusta MISSISSIPPI STATE  
Mississippi 39462

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
Cultural Resources Survey  
DATE  
1977  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
Pat Harrison Waterway District  
CITY, TOWN  
Hattiesburg MISSISSIPPI STATE  
Mississippi 39401

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

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

The site of Old Augusta, the nineteenth-century seat of Perry County, Mississippi, is now in pine forest (with oaks and other species represented).

Upon transfer of the populace away from Old Augusta (chiefly to New Augusta, ) by 1902, many of the building materials (brick and wood) were removed, a process which continues to the present. Brick rubble and/or foundations remain from the courthouse, jail, and clerk's office. The cemetery is still in use. Extensive brick and concrete remains of the Meyers' sawmill, in operation from ca. 1916 until the 1930s, are visible, as are three roadways. Fragmentary remains of a combination church and school are visible immediately north of the cemetery. No surface remains have yet been found, but sub-surface evidence should be available for the Ben Stevens, Dr. Cook, Kennedy, and McCoy homes, Jim Deaman's blacksmithery, the Kennedy brothers' store, and the Methodist church, as well as the gallows at either end of town where James Copeland and Davis Hawthorne were hanged. construction has evidently destroyed all or most of the Dr. Carter home, Stevens' general store, the drug store, the "fountain" or soda shop, Moore's store, the barber shop, and the Baptist church. (The location/identification of these structures was made by Holt Meyers, New Augusta, Mississippi, and confirmed by Henry McCardle, Janice, Mississippi; both men are former residents of Old Augusta.) No evidence has yet been found, and the probable locations remain unknown, of the earliest buildings in the town, primarily log structures (United States Works Progress Administration).

Intrusions: The following three modern houses have been built within the site boundaries; none intrudes upon any known archaeological remains:

Estella McCarty Hollimon House  
Gertie Hollimon House No. 1  
Gertie Hollimon House No. 2

A series of roads has recently been built, one of which has caused serious damage, as indicated above.

# 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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY                     | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-     | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS                 | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)     |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION                         |   |  |

SPECIFIC DATES Ca. 1812 to 1930s BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Old Augusta was a major commercial and governmental center for interior southeastern Mississippi in the 1800s. Its structural remains and the artifacts which should be found in association with them represent a cross-section (governmental, commercial, and residential) of a nineteenth-century rural center which has been little altered by later intrusions, a situation which is probably unique in southeastern Mississippi. From either the historical or anthropological perspective, any attempt to understand the European settlement of the area must include an examination of Old Augusta. Such an approach would also help equalize the study of Mississippi history, which heretofore has emphasized the plantation system as it existed in the western part of the state.

Little written evidence exists concerning Old Augusta for three reasons. (1). The courthouse burned in 1868 and again between 1900 and 1902, resulting in the destruction of the records of Perry County. (2). The economic potential of the area was never great until the advent of large-scale commercial logging in the twentieth century. Therefore, Old Augusta remained small, its population probably never exceeding 200 (although thousands gathered from all over the Southeast for outlaw James Copeland's hanging in 1857). (3). Local newspapers did not begin publishing in Perry County until the mid-1800s. The resulting absence of early documentary evidence requires a reliance upon archaeological investigation for information about Old Augusta, and it is therefore vital that maximal integrity of the site be maintained.

Founded in 1812 while the area was still Choctaw Indian property, Old Augusta became the county seat upon the creation of Perry County in 1818. Throughout most of the 1800s, it was a thriving though small community. One of the first land offices in the state was established at Old Augusta in 1819 and remained in operation until 1860. At unknown dates, although undoubtedly quite early, the jail and clerk's office were built.

At that time [1855] Augusta, the county seat, was an Indian trading point, and the public land office was located there, and . . . these things served to make the locality quite a money center. . . . (Pitts, p. 7).

From a historical standpoint, the most important events in the history of Old Augusta were the trial of James Copeland and his hanging at a fork in the road at the northwest corner of town in 1857. The Wages and Copeland "clan" was the most feared group of outlaws in the region, spreading terror from Florida to Texas, and from the Gulf Coast to the Ohio River. Thousands gathered at Old Augusta for the hanging. A second hanging occurred in the 1890s when Davis Hawthorne was executed [REDACTED] for the murder of his wife.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Greenwell, Dale. Correspondence with Herlon D. Pierce, Pat Harrison Waterway District, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, July 25, 1977, and August 9, 1977.

Heisler, David M. Personal interviews with Holt Meyers, New Augusta, Mississippi, February 14, 1978, and Henry McCardle, Janice, Mississippi, February 27, 1978.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY [REDACTED]

QUADRANGLE NAME [REDACTED]

UTM REFERENCES [REDACTED]

QUADRANGLE SCALE [REDACTED]

C [REDACTED]

A [REDACTED]

ZONE EASTING [REDACTED]

B [REDACTED]

D [REDACTED]

ZONE EASTING NORTHING [REDACTED]

E [REDACTED]

F [REDACTED]

G [REDACTED]

H [REDACTED]

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

David M. Heisler, Assistant Professor of Anthropology

ORGANIZATION

University of Southern Mississippi

DATE

October 6, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

Box 445, Southern Station

TELEPHONE

(601) 266-7211

CITY OR TOWN

Hattiesburg

STATE

Mississippi 39401

# 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

*Charles R. Williams*

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

November 22, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Charles R. Williams*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4.24.79

ATTEST:

*David M. Heisler*  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

4/24/79

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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DEC 5 1978

APR 24 1979

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4, 6&8 PAGE 1

4 - OWNER OF PROPERTY

Estella McCarty Hollimon  
Route 1  
New Augusta, Mississippi 39462

Elizabeth Hammett  
Route 1  
New Augusta, Mississippi 39462

Gertie Hollimon  
Route 1  
New Augusta, Mississippi 39462

William A. Powe Trust  
c/o Raymond J. Thibodeaux  
Box 428  
Bogalusa, Louisiana 70427

6 - REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Title: Statewide Survey of Historic Sites

Date: 1978

X State

Depository for Survey Records: Mississippi Department of Archives and History

City: Jackson

State: Mississippi 39205

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

By the end of the nineteenth century, Old Augusta contained at least seven commercial establishments. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The town began to die when the railroad was built [REDACTED] and by 1902 the site was abandoned. [REDACTED] The mill was partially destroyed by flood in 1919, and the business collapsed during the Great Depression. A series of shanties was apparently built near the remains of the courthouse during this time, probably by sawmill employees. A number of rusted metal objects are associated with this occupation, but apparently no sub-surface alteration. (The economy of this portion of the state was based on small family farms and lumbering, with logs being floated [REDACTED]. The only real change today is that the lumbering industry is on a much larger scale.)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8, 9 & 10 PAGE 2

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

Old Augusta seems to have been divided into three spatial units: the governmental district at the south end and west of the original town road [REDACTED]; the business district to the immediate north and west of the government buildings; and the residential district along the second terrace about one-half kilometer [REDACTED]

The notoriety of the James Copeland saga makes the gallows upon which the outlaw died an artifact significant in local history, and it is expected that remains of it (two heart pine posts) will be found below the ground surface. None of the other structures of Old Augusta, taken in isolation, has any great significance. However, when considered as a unit, they provide important evidence for the design, developmental history, and workings of an important type of community - the rural center. Archaeological study may be expected to yield evidence of the development of Old Augusta which would not be available from the study of single structures. Remains of early buildings will presumably be found in areas not occupied by later construction.

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Pitts, J. R. S. Life and Confession of the Noted Outlaw James Copeland. A. S. and L. S. Pitts, 1909.

United States Works Projects Administration. 1939. Source Material for Mississippi History: Preliminary Manuscript, Perry County, Vol. 56.

10 - GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

[REDACTED]

These boundaries correspond to the limits of the town as specified to David M. Heisler by former residents of Old Augusta: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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|                         |             |
|-------------------------|-------------|
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7,8

PAGE 3

7 - DESCRIPTION OF PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Except for the area immediately around the three intrusive houses, the site has never been cultivated. Heavy mechanized logging equipment has not been used. Except for the removal of bricks from the buildings, there is no evidence of looting of the site. These facts indicate that the remains are basically undisturbed. Surface observation, and very limited sub-surface testing at the Church/School (#12 on the sketch map) and the Clerk's Office or Jail (#7) indicate that midden remains are extensive. The lack of sub-surface disturbance at the site indicates that foundations should be preserved of those buildings not destroyed by road construction (see sketch map).

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

The well-documented earlier and contemporary (with the early settlement of Old Augusta) towns of Mississippi are in other regions of the state - Natchez, Port Gibson, Grand Gulf on the Mississippi River; Biloxi and Pascagoula on the Gulf Coast; Barton, Colbert, Vinton on the Tombigbee River. In the interior southeast there is little beyond Old Augusta.

As the dominant 19th Century commercial and governmental center of the region, Old Augusta has a vital position in any study of the history of interior southeastern Mississippi. The other (possibly well-preserved) abandoned 19th Century towns of the region were lesser nodes in the settlement system. With the land office in Old Augusta, all settlers had to pass through the town. Examples of the research questions which could be addressed include:

- 1) Did settlement radiate outward from Old Augusta, with the nearby regions being settled first; or, were early settlements maximally dispersed; or was the pattern different from either of the these. In any case, how do the compositions of these towns compare with Old Augusta. Such a question can only be answered through extensive investigation of Old Augusta's internal composition.
- 2) The homes of a number of prosperous citizens have been located; where did the poorer whites and the slaves live?
- 3) Old Augusta is said to have been founded as a trading post with the Choctaws; what evidence can be found pertaining to this relationship?