

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation 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 HCRS use only

received

SEP 14 1982

date entered

1. Name

historic Laurel Hill Plantation

and/or common same as above

2. Location

South of Natchez off US 61

West of U.S. Highway 61 South about twelve miles

street & number south of Natchez

N/A not for publication

city, town Natchez

☒ vicinity of

~~regional district~~

state Mississippi

code 28

county Adams

code 1

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 Pierce Butler

street & number P. O. Box 661

city, town Natchez

N/A vicinity of

state Mississippi

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Natchez

state Mississippi 39120

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NA

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☒ fair

☒ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date NA

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located west of U.S. Highway 61 South about twelve miles south of Natchez, the Laurel Hill Plantation outbuildings are located in the midst of an approximate 2000-acre plantation setting and are reached by a plantation drive about a mile and a half long that is entered from an unmarked, gravel county road. Of the 2,000 acres of land, approximately 1,400 acres constitutes the Laurel Hill tract, which is part of a 20,000-acre English land grant made to Richard Ellis and his brother John in the mid-1770's (D. Clayton James, Antebellum Natchez [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968], p. 17). The main plantation residence, no longer standing, was located on a rise in the midst of rolling land intersected by deep bayous, or ravines. The eastern and western dependencies sat perpendicular and to the rear of the main residence with the ground area between the buildings forming a paved courtyard.

St. Mary's Chapel. St. Mary's Chapel is a stuccoed-brick church building with one-bay facade and three-bay side elevations. A single, center, cast-iron spire is inset in the ridge of the gable roof, and the buttresses are each surmounted by cast-iron crockets. A crenelated parapet once extended along all elevations of the building but was obscured on the side elevations during earlier renovations. The facade features a one-story, enclosed entry porch with crenelated parapet, and the rear elevation features a one-story, gabled-roof vestry wing. A single, tracery, Tudor-arched window with label hood mold is located on the facade above the enclosed entry porch, and a rose window of stained glass lights the rear elevation above the one-story rear vestry. Gothic-arched window openings with label hood molds are located in the side elevations and are closed by original shutter blinds. The interior features a marble floor, raised chancel, elaborately detailed wooden chancel railing, and a molded base with two fascia. The coved ceiling and elaborate cornice molding were removed in an earlier renovation. To the rear of the chapel is a small plantation cemetery. The chapel is in good condition and is currently the focus of restoration activity at Laurel Hill.

Parsonage. The parsonage, or what may be the parsonage outbuilding, was constructed as a companion building to St. Mary's Chapel, since it has a stylistic date of 1835-40 and matches the chapel in its original exterior stucco finish and in the label hood moldings of the door and window openings. The parsonage is a unique, vernacular, one-story, three-bay frame building which was originally finished in stucco on lath, some of which has been replaced with lap siding. The pyramidal roof is pierced by one interior chimney and galleries are recessed under the front and rear slopes of the roof. The gallery roof sections were originally supported by slender box columns as evidenced by one remaining column capital. A wide bracketed eave encircles the house on all four sides. Each of the building's two chambers features a fireplace opening with side cabinet. A side frame addition was added to the building ca. 1900. The parsonage building is in deteriorated but restorable condition.

Western dependency. The western dependency, which stylistically appears to have been constructed in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, is a two-story, four-bay brick building with gabled roof, inside-end chimneys, and double-tiered front gallery. Door and window openings are topped with flared, flat arches, windows are filled with nine-over-six sash, and the doors are board and batten. The brick belt course and quarter-round windows in the gable ends are unique for Natchez in this time period. The building is in deteriorated but restorable condition.

Eastern dependency. The eastern dependency, which stylistically appears to have been constructed ca. 1835 to match the western dependency, is a two-story, four-bay brick building with gabled roof, inside-end chimneys, and double-tiered front gallery. Door and window

(see continuation sheet)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Laurel Hill Plantation
Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

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Eastern dependency (continued)

openings are topped with flared, flat arches, windows are filled with rectangular-sectioned wooden bars or six-over-six sash, and the doors are board-and-batten. A one-story, shed-roof brick addition is attached on the northern elevation and a one-story, gabled-roof addition is attached on the southern elevation. The building is in fair condition.

Carriage house. The carriage house, probably dating to the late 1830's, is a brick building with stepped parapet facade and gabled roof surmounted by a frame pigeon house with pyramidal roof. Two symmetrical, arched carriage openings are topped with quarter round windows, between which is centered an arched opening into the hayloft. At each side elevation is a one-story, frame, shed-roof attachment. The integrity of the carriage house is excellent and the building is in fair condition.

Billiard hall. The billiard hall is a two-story, gabled roof, frame building that was originally finished in stucco on lath like the parsonage and stylistically dates to the late 1830's. Although severely altered on the exterior, the interior integrity of the building is good. The billiard room was located on the first-story with two servants rooms above. The building is in fair condition and could be restored.

Crypt. The crypt is a small, gabled-roof brick structure which was originally entered through a hinged iron door, now missing. Inside the crypt is a mid-nineteenth century metal coffin. The crypt is in deteriorated condition.

Other outbuildings. A frame chicken house and a large storage building of modern materials are also located within the boundaries of the nominated property.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input 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 St. Mary's Chapel--1837 **Builder/Architect** James Hardie--chapel and possibly parsonage

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Laurel Hill Plantation is one of the most architecturally significant plantation complexes in the state of Mississippi. This architectural significance is derived principally from the ca. 1837 (Pierce Butler, The Unhurried Years [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948], p. 50) plantation chapel, one of Mississippi's architecturally finest, earliest, and most unique essays in the Gothic Style and a documented example of a building constructed by Natchez architect and builder James Hardie (Butler, p. 16); from the vernacular Gothic parsonage (that may be a parsonage outbuilding since Butler states that the parsonage burned) built as a companion building to the chapel; from the two-story brick outbuilding with belt course and quarter-round windows that probably dates from the late eighteenth century and is architecturally unique for the Natchez region; and from the unusual carriage house with quarter round lights that is surmounted by a pigeon house. The main plantation residence house, destroyed by fire in the early 1960's, was probably constructed in the last quarter of the eighteenth century on a land grant from the English government to Richard Ellis, pioneer Adams County settler. The two-story brick outbuilding with belt course and quarter-round windows was probably contemporary with the main residence. An additional two-story brick dependency constructed ca. 1835, a late 1830's billiard hall that was extensively remodeled during the mid-twentieth century, the ca. 1837 Gothic chapel and parsonage, and the late 1830's carriage house were all constructed during the period in which Richard Ellis's granddaughter, Anna, and her husband Dr. William Newton Mercer were in charge of Laurel Hill. Laurel Hill gains additional significance from its remarkable integrity of setting and from its long history of family ownership, possibly the longest continuous history of family ownership in the state of Mississippi. Laurel Hill is today the property of Pierce Butler, the great-great-great-great-great-grandson of Richard Ellis.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Butler, Pierce. The Unhurried Years. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948.
James, D. Clayton. Antebellum Natchez. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968.

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 150 acres

Quadrangle name Kingston, Miss.--La.

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A

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

B

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6	5	1	6	4	0
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3	4	7	7	0	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

1	5
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6	5	0	6	7	5
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3	4	7	7	0	0	0
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D

1	5
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6	5	0	6	7	5
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3	4	7	7	6	2	0
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E

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Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property forms a four-sided figure with right angle corners. The northern and southern boundary lines are equidistant, parallel, and 3,300 feet in length. The eastern and western boundary lines are equidistant, parallel, and 1980 feet in length. The center point of the rectangular figure is the center point of the

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries (see continuation sheet)

state	NA	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Warren Miller/Research Consultant

organization Historic Natchez Foundation

date December 21, 1981

street & number P. O. Box 1761

telephone (601) 442-2500

city or town Natchez

state Mississippi 39120

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date September 8, 1982

For HCRS use only

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



date 10/26/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: 

date 10/25/82

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Natchez, Adams Co., Miss.

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ridge of the gable roof of the late eighteenth-century, two-story outbuilding that is designated as building B on the sketch map of the plantation. The 150 nominated acres constitutes a rectangular section of the approximate 2,000-acre Laurel Hill Plantation. This 150-acre section is deemed necessary to include all the significant plantation outbuildings and to protect their historic plantation setting. Quite possibly, Laurel Hill Plantation, having been acquired as an English land grant in the 1770's, has the longest history of continuous family ownership in the state of Mississippi.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

LAUREL HILL PLANTATION
Natchez, Adams Co., Miss.

UTM REFERENCES

- A 15/651640/3477620
B 15/651640/3477000
C 15/650675/3477000
D 15/650675/3477620

3485000m N.

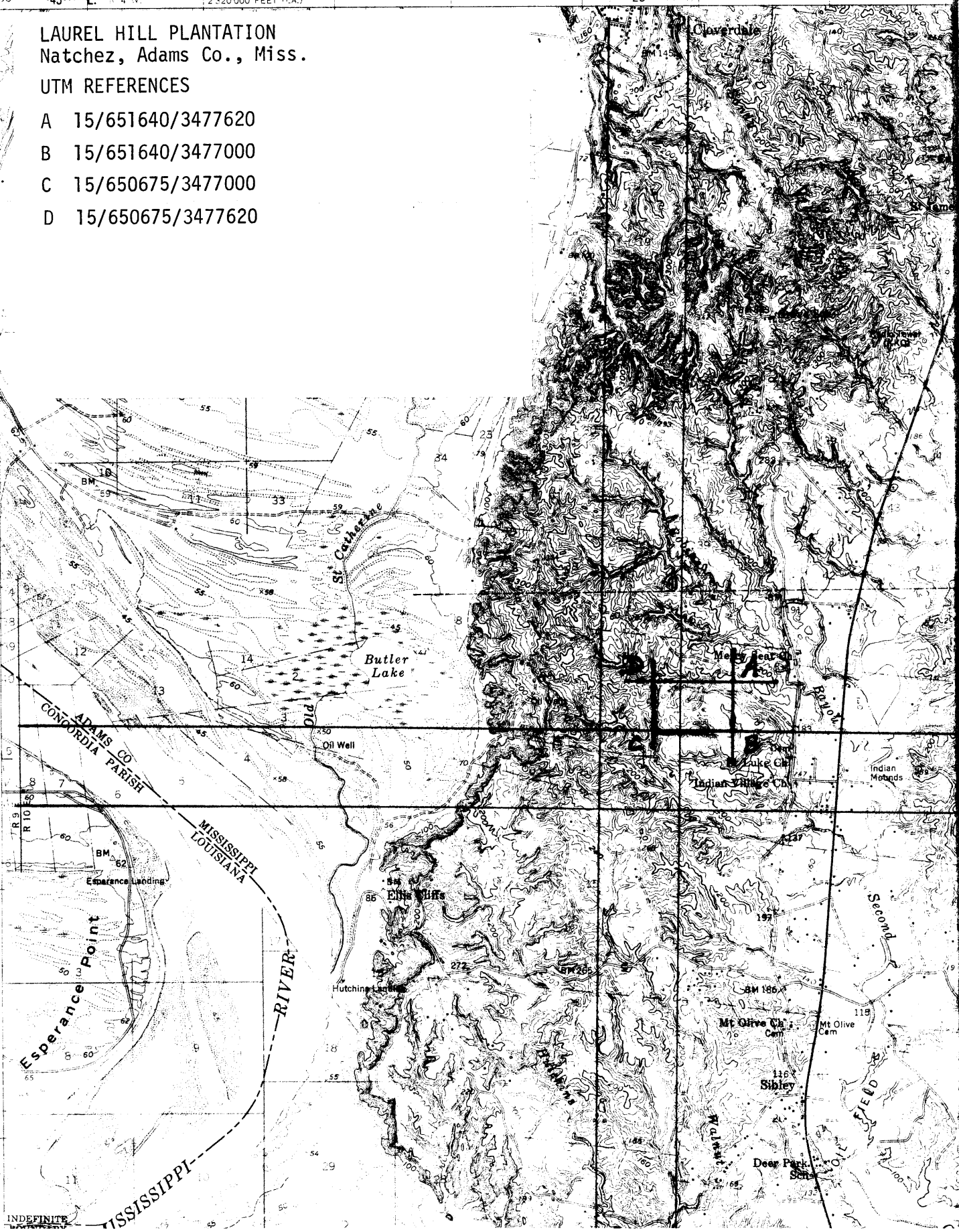
100 000 FEET
(LA.)

P1

70

25

(DEER PARK)



INDEFINITE



LAUREL HILL PLANTATION

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

Looking northeasterly, the facade and southern elevation of St. Mary's Chapel.

Mary W. Miller, Historic Natchez Foundation, fall 1980.

Photo 1 of 7



LAUREL HILL PLANTATION

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

Looking easterly, the rear elevation of
the western dependency.

Mary W. Miller, Historic Natchez Founda-
tion, fall 1980.

Photo 2 of 7



LAUREL HILL PLANTATION

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

Looking southeasterly, the facade and northern side elevation of the eastern dependency.

Mary W. Miller, Historic Natchez Foundation, fall 1980.

Photo 3 of 7



LAUREL HILL PLANTATION

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

Looking southeasterly, the facade of
the carriage house.

Mary W. Miller, Historic Natchez Founda-
tion, fall 1980.

Photo 4 of 7



LAUREL HILL PLANTATION

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

Looking northerly, the facade of the
parsonage.

Mary W. Miller, Historic Natchez Founda-
tion, fall 1980.

Photo 5 of 7



LAUREL HILL PLANTATION

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

Looking southwesterly, the rear and
easterly side elevation of the parsonage.

Mary W. Miller, Historic Natchez Founda-
tion, fall 1980.

Photo 6 of 7



LAUREL HILL PLANTATION

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

Looking southerly, the northerly elevation
of the billiard hall.

Mary W. Miller, Historic Natchez Foundation,
January 1982.

Photo 7 of 7