

PH 0663 760

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 23 1978

DATE ENTERED JUL 11 1978

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
Monroe County Jail

AND/OR COMMON
Athens Jail

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

116 N. 2nd St.

CITY, TOWN

Athens

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

STATE

Mississippi

CODE

28

COUNTY

Monroe

CODE

095

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: Future Museum

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

John Tubb

STREET & NUMBER

Route 2

CITY, TOWN

Aberdeen

VICINITY OF

STATE

Mississippi 39730

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Chancery Clerk
Monroe County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Chestnut Street

CITY, TOWN

Aberdeen

STATE

Mississippi 39730

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Statewide Survey of Historic Sites

DATE

1973

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi 39205

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

The Athens Jail is a two-story structure of masonry, wood, and metal standing isolated in a fenced pasture. Its present physical appearance is the result of three building programs: the 1845 original construction, a slight remodeling in the late nineteenth century, and the rebuilding of the upper story in the early twentieth century. The original two-story, single-pile masonry building was apparently free of porch structures. The first floors of both the front and the rear elevations had center doorways flanked by single windows of nine-over-six-light sash, the upper sash being stationary. At the second-floor level were three similar window units on the front and two on the rear, all windows having heavy wooden sills. The front elevation had paired single-leaf doors, each with a long rectangular panel and a smaller square panel above and below; the rear elevation had a single door with six panels in the same configuration. All doorways had identical four-light transoms and simple joined members enfaming the whole. With one exception, all windows and doors today remain in their original condition. A simple cornice composed of a fascia and what appears to have been a small fillet or cyma molding originally finished the front and rear elevations, but this was replaced in the twentieth century.

The later remodeling, dating possibly from the mid-1870s, when the building was converted into a dwelling, added a one-story wooden porch across the front elevation. Four slender, wood columns, interspersed with pierced millwork in circular motifs, supported the hip roof. These square columns were reflected on the facade wall with vertical wood members representing pilasters, between which was a dado. Apparently, a one-story, frame kitchen/dining room was added at the rear, but it was later removed and no traces remain. All the iron fittings of the jail were removed and sold during the remodeling. The facade at this period is well documented in a ca. 1905 photographic portrait of the Walter Smith family, then residents of the house.

At some later date, the final and most severe physical changes took place, with the demolition of the masonry upper story and its subsequent rebuilding in wood covered by pressed tin in a brick pattern. The hip roof porch was replaced with a shed porch, the new columns being of turned wood ornamented at the top with small millwork brackets. A pedimented gable was projected from the center of the roof of the building, sheltering a second-story porch approximately one-third the length of the facade; trim from the late nineteenth-century porch was reused as a makeshift bargeboard. The center bay was altered from window to door to serve the second-floor porch, and its door, once paneled below a large glazed area, is presently in pieces. During this final phase, the gable roof was rebuilt with a greater pitch and pedimented ends. Two original chimneys were rebuilt from the second floor upward and now resolve in simple corbeled caps.

Inside the thirty-two-inch walls are two large twelve-foot by twenty-foot rooms separated by a hall eight feet in width. Each room has a fireplace, and the north (left) room has its original wood mantel with a simple paneled frieze. The identical floor plan is repeated on the second floor, with the fireplaces eliminated, and the two floors are linked by a simple, single-flight stair ascending from the right of the lower hall. A turned newel and heavy turned balusters carry a molded handrail at a low height, giving the stair an awkward appearance. The stair and all door and window trim downstairs are grained with heavy brush strokes over an ochre base coat, in crude simulation of oak. Floors

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
☐ 1600-1699	☐ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
☒ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☒ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1845

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Athens Jail is the oldest extant public building in Monroe County and one of the oldest in northeast Mississippi. It is the only known structure remaining to document the existence of the town that was the seat of government for the county from 1830 until 1857.

In 1821, four years after Mississippi had attained statehood, the legislature created Monroe County in the northeastern portion of the state. Though isolated and far removed from the developed civilization of the Natchez District, the frontier county was populous and showed the promise of great wealth. A strip of rich soil known as the "Black Prairie" and a navigable river, the Tombigbee, had attracted white settlers there as early as 1791. When in 1829 the legislature extended the boundaries of Monroe County to include the remaining Chickasaw and Choctaw lands within Mississippi, the county became the largest in the state. From this vast area, over twenty new counties would soon be formed. In 1830, the legislature divided Monroe County to create the new county of Lowndes. At the same time, it directed that a new county seat be chosen for Monroe--one nearer its geographical center. The new town was named Athens.

Well situated on the stage road from Morgan's Ferry on the Tombigbee River north to the old Natchez Trace, Athens enjoyed a brief period of prosperity. By 1838, it could boast of six stores and three hotels, and at the peak of its growth in the 1840s it claimed a population of five hundred. Around its courthouse square were arranged twenty or more business houses, two churches, two taverns, and a school, in addition to scores of residences. The town was the home of several politically prominent Mississippians, including Tilghman M. Tucker, governor of the state from 1842 to 1844. Reuben Davis, a lawyer of considerable fame, lived and practiced there.

In March of 1844, the Monroe County Police Court ordered the preparation of plans for a county jail at Athens, which drawings were exhibited and accepted on April 15. That same day "the Sheriff proceeded to cry off the building of the said Jail to the lowest bidder, when Joshua Toomer became the undertaker, he being the last and lowest bidder at the sum of Four Thousand Six hundred and ninety Dollars" (Minutes of Police Court, p. 122). The jail was satisfactorily completed in October, 1845, several months ahead of schedule (Minutes of Police Court, pp. 122, 253).

In 1849, the courthouse at Athens burned, giving opportunity to those who had long hoped to move the center of government to Aberdeen, and in 1857 the county seat was relocated in the rival town. Following the move, the decline of Athens was steady and uneventful. The jail in the former county seat continued to be used until October, 1872, when the county supervisors ordered the sheriff to sell the building for cash to the highest bidder. The January 7, 1873, minutes of the

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Monroe County, Mississippi. Minutes of Police Court, 1842-1848.

Monroe County, Mississippi. Minutes of the Board of Supervisors, Vol. 1.

Personal Interviews conducted by Mrs. Charles G. Hamilton, officer, Monroe County Historical Society:

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A 1 6 3 6 6 5 8 5 3 7 4 8 6 4 5
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the Southeast corner of Section 5, Township 14 South, Range 18 West, Monroe County, Mississippi, and run thence North 51 degrees 30 minutes West - 137.0 feet to a point; run thence North 29 degrees East - 355.8 feet to a nail in the road; run thence North 5 degrees 27 minutes East - 20.4 feet to the point of beginning. Run thence in a Northwesterly direction along a fence on the North right-of-way of a gravel road the following calls and distances (North 72 degrees 37 minutes West - 80 feet; North 78 degrees 38 minutes West - 142.4 feet; North 80 degrees 45 minutes West -

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE W. Norman Chronister, Research Assistant

Gregory B. Free, Restoration/Preservation Specialist

ORGANIZATION

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

DATE

December 16, 1977

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

LOCAL X

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

Elbert A. Williams

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE February 16, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

7-14-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

July 13, 1978

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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CONTINUATION SHEET

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7 - DESCRIPTION

throughout the building are pine in approximately five-inch widths.

The Athens Jail has suffered not only from many alterations, but also from serious neglect. Today the remaining brick walls show signs of stress. Because the gables have lost much of their siding, water has penetrated the entire structure, leaving the upper story in ruinous condition. The original first floor is stable.

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

Board of Supervisors acknowledged the receipt of \$1,028 from Mrs. E. P. Sadler for the jail (Minutes of the Board of Supervisors, Vol. 1, p. 339).

Interviews with descendants of owners have made possible a fairly complete history of ownership from the late nineteenth century until the present. In 1880, the jail was owned by William Hudson Butler, who sold the iron jail fittings and converted the structure into a dwelling. By 1902, the structure had become the property of Dr. Nathan Pennington, who sold it that year to Walter Smith. The Smith family occupied the building until 1916. In 1918, the structure was owned by Dr. George Thomas Tubb, who rented it to seven successive tenant families before leasing it in 1926 to his brother, Winston Tubb, who lived there until 1943. In 1940 the former jail was inherited by Dr. George Tubb's nephew, John Tubb. It has since remained in his possession and has been used as a residence and as a barn. Presently the Monroe County Historical Society is raising funds to acquire and restore the building, which will be utilized as a county museum.

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Mrs. Ellis Harris, daughter of John Miller, former tenant. Aberdeen, January 5, 1978

Eugene "Trick" Miller, son of John Miller, former tenant. Aberdeen, January 5, 1978

Miss Vergie Smith, granddaughter of William Hudson Butler, former owner. Aberdeen, January 5, 1978.

Mrs. Sam Stegall, daughter of Walter Smith, former owner. Amory, January 5, 1978.

Mrs. A. G. Taylor, Athens resident. Athens, January 5, 1978.

John Tubb, present owner. Athens, January 5, 1978.

Condy Tubb, son of former tenant. Athens, January 5, 1978.

Cecil Tubb, son of former tenant. Athens, January 5, 1978.

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ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

10 - GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

97.3 feet) to a point; run thence in a Northwesterly direction along a curve on the North right-of-way of said road - 80 feet more or less to a point; run thence North 1 degree East along a fence on the North right-of-way of said road 54.4 feet to an iron pin; run thence South 84 degrees 28 minutes East - 375.0 feet to an iron pin; run thence South 5 degrees 27 minutes West - 142.3 feet to the point of beginning. With part lying in the Southwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 4 and part lying in the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 5, Township 14 South, Range 18 West, Monroe County, Mississippi, and containing 1.0 acre, more or less.



PHOTO NO. 1⁴³ ATHENS JAIL

Athens, Monroe County, Mississippi

Photographer: Unknown

ca. 1905

Mississippi Department of Archives
and History

Facade and south elevation, looking
northeast.

JUL 14 1978

FEB 23 1978

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

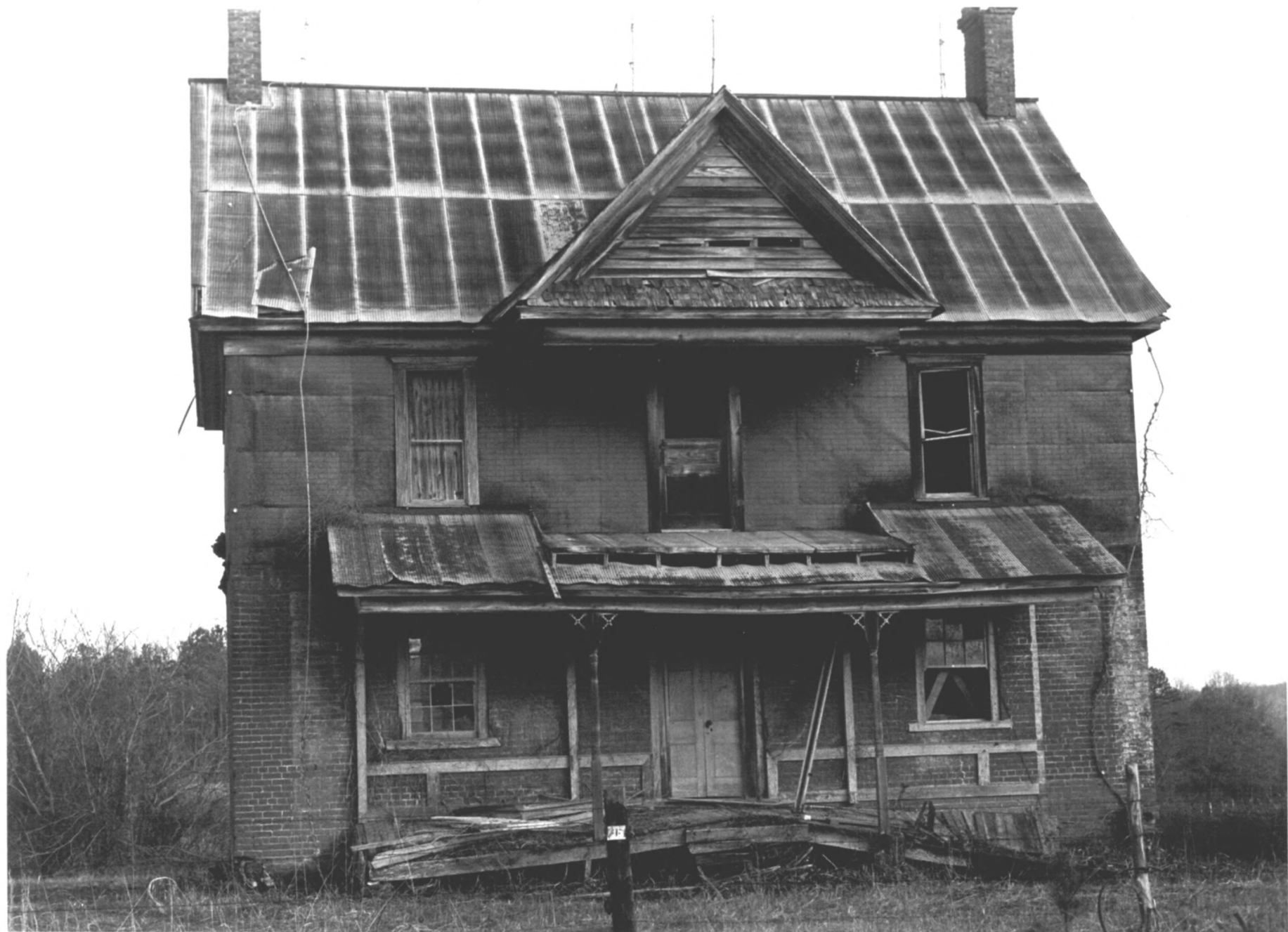


PHOTO NO. 2 - ²³ATHENS JAIL
Athens, Monroe County, Mississippi
The Aberdeen Examiner
January, 1978
Mississippi Department of Archives
and History
Facade, looking east.

FEB 23 1978

JUL 14 1978

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



PHOTO NO. 3 - ²³ATHENS JAIL

Athens, Monroe County, Mississippi

Gregory B. Free

November, 1977

Mississippi Department of Archives
and History

South elevation, looking north.

FEB 23 1978

JUL 14 1978

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