

PHO 692735

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	DEC 5 1978
DATE ENTERED	JAN 3 1979

# 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

AND/OR COMMON

Winchester House

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

816 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Natchez

STATE

Mississippi

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

CODE

028

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

COUNTY

Adams

CODE

001

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Brown Harrington

STREET & NUMBER

816 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Natchez

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Mississippi 39120

## 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

Statewide Survey of Historic Sites

DATE

1978

\_\_\_ FEDERAL  STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi 39205

# 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 type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Winchester House, on the southerly side of Main Street near the central business district of Natchez, Mississippi, is a five-bay one-and-one-half story frame duplex with a gable roof. The lawn slopes down toward the rear of the property, allowing a fully raised brick basement beneath the rear portion of the house. In addition to the basement and the two main stories of the house, there is a floored attic lighted at the gables.

The front gallery is set back beneath the main roof, which is supported across the front by six square tapered Tuscan columns set below a plain wide frieze. Originally, in the center of the facade were two single doors, one abutting the other, in independent door frames. Single windows were in the two bays on each side. At some later date, the center doorways were combined into one unit consisting of a single door (one of the originals), a transom, and side lights. Also at a later date, windows of the second and fourth bays were changed to single doorways. The facade wall is finished with beaded tongue-and-groove boards approximately eight inches wide placed horizontally from floor to ceiling and finished at the bottom with a baseboard eight inches high. The two interior chimneys have been removed at the ridge line. Dormers, two on the front and two on the back, have pediments supported by simple pilasters flanking the windows.

On the rear elevation, a central porch is set beneath the main roof with a "cabinet" room on each side. The three walls of the porch are finished like the facade wall of the house. The open side has been enclosed with large panels of glass set unobtrusively inside the balustrade and chamfered posts dating from the recent restoration which removed numerous twentieth-century lean-to additions and porches. These were added when the property was converted into apartment use. The basement level is equally divided into four bays, with single doors in the central bays and windows in the outer bays. One pair of bead-and-butt shutters, original to the basement windows, still remains.

Originally, all the windows in the Winchester House were closed by double-hung sash with twelve-over-twelve lights, but most of the first-floor sash were replaced in the late nineteenth century with two-over-two light sash. The original louvered blinds are now missing, with the exception of those at the gable windows of the attic.

Inside, the main body of the house is divided into four equal rooms on each of the principal floors. On both floors, the rooms are approximately twenty feet square with ten-and-one-half foot ceilings on the first floor and seven-and-one-half foot ceilings on the second floor. Across the rear of the first floor, flanking the back porch, are two "cabinet" rooms approximately nine by twelve feet.

# 6 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 checked="" 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/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 type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 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

1837 - 1841

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Probably Horace Gridley

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Winchester House is a Greek Revival cottage typical of the houses built by the rising middle-class merchants of antebellum Natchez. Originally constructed as a duplex, a type of dwelling uncommon in Natchez, it is also an excellent example of a transitional house since it encompasses both Federal and Greek Revival detailing. It is significant in local history for its association with Judge Josiah Winchester and his family.

The builder of the Winchester House was probably Horace Gridley, a builder by trade and city selectman (alderman) from 1839-1840.<sup>1</sup> A Natchez city ordinance enacted in 1817 refers to the "water works, recently erected by Horace Gridley."<sup>2</sup> Gridley bought the site of the Winchester House at public auction on January 7, 1836,<sup>3</sup> the property having been advertised prior to the sale as consisting of only one lot.<sup>4</sup> After mortgaging the property in 1837,<sup>5</sup> Gridley defaulted and lost it in August, 1838.<sup>6</sup> In an 1841 deed, the property was described as being rented to John R. Stockman, Mayor.<sup>7</sup> An architectural evaluation supports the documentary evidence that the house was built between 1836 and 1838 by Horace Gridley. The first documented Greek Revival building in Natchez is the 1833 Britton and Koontz First National Bank, formerly the Agricultural Bank. The Winchester House is an example of those Natchez buildings constructed in the 1830s which include detailing from both the Federal and Greek Revival periods. In 1854 it was purchased by Judge Josiah Winchester,<sup>8</sup> and probably during his ownership the house was converted from the duplex form to a single-family dwelling.

Judge Josiah Winchester was born in Salem, Massachusetts, and studied law in Boston in the office of Rufus Choate. He moved to Natchez, where he had an uncle, George Winchester, a lawyer and member of the Supreme Court of Mississippi. George Winchester was also the noted tutor of Varina Howell, wife of Jefferson Davis.<sup>9</sup> Judge Josiah Winchester was an attorney of recognized ability and a staunch Union sympathizer. He wrote an appeal in support of the Union cause entitled "Thinking Men of the South" which was printed in pamphlet form and widely circulated throughout the South. He was elected a Unionist delegate from Adams County to the succession convention which declared Mississippi no longer part of the Union.<sup>10</sup>

Judge Winchester's wife, Margaret Graham Sprague, was a first cousin to Varina Howell and was one of her two attendants at her marriage to Jefferson Davis.<sup>11</sup>

The Winchester House remained in the Winchester family until 1928, when it was sold to the Burns family of Natchez. In 1973 the house was purchased by



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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

7 - PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The fireplaces on the cross walls common to the large rooms are faced with pilastered mantelpieces in the late Federal style. Those in the front rooms differ from those in the back only in having all the elements (pilasters, impost blocks, full entablature, and mantel shelf) elaborately molded.

Door and window openings throughout the interior are trimmed with single-fascia architraves banded by a simple Grecian ovolo molding. The same molding frames the fielded panels on the six-panel interior doors and the eight-panel front doors and crowns the double-fascia baseboards on the primary floor. The baseboards on the upper floor are simply beaded. Both primary stories are floored with eight-inch wide tongue-and-groove cypress boards. The staircase in the easterly back room is especially well detailed, with newels forming delicately turned columns set beneath blocks and surmounted by ring turnings and ball finials. The exposed side of the staircase is finished with a wall of paneling, fielded and molded with a Grecian ovolo. When the house was first constructed, only the original easterly staircase continued to the basement level.

On the second floor, the front bedrooms have never been changed. The small stair hall which had been inserted between the rear bedrooms has been removed and those rooms have been returned to their original configuration. Only the front two rooms on the upper floor have fireplaces, finished with wood mantels with pilasters and a simple shelf. In the easterly front rooms, an offset to the right of the fireplace conceals a narrow winding stair leading to an original paneled trap door to the attic. The attic runs the width of the house and is unfinished with the exception of wide random-width cypress floorboards. A similar offset in the westerly front rooms forms a small open storage area.

The basement area is divided to correspond with the room division above. The space beneath the back porch is occupied by two side-by-side halls which lead past rooms corresponding to the "cabinet" rooms above. The halls give onto two large rooms corresponding to the two large back rooms above. Each of the two large basement rooms was originally plastered on the walls and ceiling and paved with brick laid in a herringbone pattern, some of which remains.

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ITEM NUMBER 7 & 8 PAGE 2

7 - PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

Since the Winchester House was built as a duplex, the left and right sides did not originally communicate with one another. However, later in the nineteenth century, when the front doors were altered, a narrow central hall was built and one of the original staircases relocated to it. The other staircase was removed entirely. Originally, each side had its own staircase against the back walls of the large back rooms. The walls have been returned to their original positions and the remaining staircase has been returned to its position on the easterly side of the house. The "cabinet" rooms have been adapted for kitchen and bathroon use.

8 - SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Brown Harrington, whose restoration of the house and grounds is taking place in a neighborhood where similar projects are being undertaken.

Notes

<sup>1</sup>"Board of Mayor and Aldermen, From April, 1803, to 1904, Inclusive," xeroxed pages (321-22) from unidentified publication in files of Thomas M. McNeely, Attorney, 116 South Wall Street, Natchez, Mississippi.

<sup>2</sup>"Ordinances of the City of Natchez. Act of United States Territory of March 10, 1803, revised and amended by an Act of December 9, 1809, to June 2, 1829," xeroxed copies (p. 227) in possession of Natchez Historical Society, Coyle House, Natchez, Mississippi.

<sup>3</sup>Adams County Deed Book X:55-56.

<sup>4</sup>Mississippi Free Trader, Tuesday, September 1, 1835.

<sup>5</sup>Adams County Deed Book 2:22.

<sup>6</sup>Adams County Deed Book AA:435.

<sup>7</sup>Adams County Deed Book CC:602-03.

<sup>8</sup>Adams County Deed Book KK:219-20.

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8 - SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

<sup>9</sup>Ishbell Ross, First Lady of the South, The Life of Mrs. Jefferson Davis (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1958), p. 7.

<sup>10</sup>Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi (Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1891), I, 1021.

<sup>11</sup>Ross, p. 19.

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Continued)

"Board of Mayor and Aldermen, From April, 1803 to 1904, Inclusive."  
Xeroxed pages (321-22) from unidentified publication located in files of Thomas M. McNeely, Attorney, 116 South Wall Street, Natchez, Mississippi.

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Ross, Ishbell. First Lady of the South, The Life of Mrs. Jefferson Davis. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1958.

10 - VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (Continued)

said Main Street 99½ feet to the line of a lot currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Catchings; thence running at right angles from Main Street southerly 140 feet; thence running at right angles westerly seven feet; thence running at right angles southerly 68 feet to an alley; thence running easterly along said alley to the line of the lot currently belonging to the McDaniels; thence running northerly along said line to the point of beginning on Main Street.



WINCHESTER HOUSE

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

Lucia Bacot

Mississippi Department of Archives and  
History

August, 1978

Northeast (facade) and northwest elevations,  
looking south.

Photo 1 of 2

**JAN 31 1979**



WINCHESTER HOUSE

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

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Southwest (rear) elevation, looking  
northeast.

Photo 2 of 2

**JAN 31 1979**