

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED DEC 5 1977

DATE ENTERED JUN 9 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Cotesworth

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Old Grenada Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

North Carrollton

☒ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

STATE

Mississippi

CODE

28

COUNTY

Carroll

CODE

015

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. James B. Williams

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 165

CITY, TOWN

North Carrollton

☒ VICINITY OF

STATE

Mississippi 38917

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

STREET & NUMBER

Lexington Street

CITY, TOWN

Carrollton

STATE

Mississippi 38917

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.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Cotesworth is situated on the summit of a gently-rounded hilltop on a 900-acre estate one mile north of the village of North Carrollton on the old Grenada Road. Surrounded by broad expanses of sloping lawn dotted with specimen trees and shrubs, the two-story, gable-roofed, frame house incorporates an earlier (ca. 1840) two-story, single-pile structure. The five-bay principal (south) elevation, set in rusticated siding with sanded paint, features regionally interpreted Greek Revival styling that, curiously, is applied only to the front of the house. Dominated by an ambitious flat-roofed portico with giant-order square columns carrying a simple entablature, the entire facade becomes a frontispiece set against the backdrop of the vernacular house. Defining the central entrance bay and separating the double-leaf doors from the sidelights are narrow Grecian pilasters, which carry a slightly pedimented cornice. A plain, cantilevered balcony enclosed by an iron balustrade cast in a typical late nineteenth century pattern is set directly above and is serviced by a single-leaf door that features as its surround the same pilaster and pedimented cornice motif as the frontispiece. The scheme is repeated for the pairs of full-length six-over-six windows that flank the main entrance as well as the smaller ones on the second level. Shading the upper story of the facade are large, fixed louvered panels set in each end of the piazza-like portico.

In contrast to the conscious Grecian detailing of the facade is the modest vernacular styling of the secondary elevations, which are sheathed in clapboard. A pair of nearly identical stuccoed, paved single-shoulder end chimneys on the eastern and western elevations are off center on the gable ends, an indication that the house was built in two stages. Flanking the chimney on the older rear, or northern, portion are six-over-nine sashes that diminish to six-over-six on the second level, while on the newer southern portion the earlier scheme is repeated, but with larger windows that do not align with the preestablished pattern. An asymmetrical arrangement is thus created. The windows are bordered with simple molded architraves. An inset gallery with giant order square columns stretches across the rear elevation, which features a slightly recessed entrance bay. An extension of the gallery connects to the frame, two-story kitchen/cook's quarters set at the northwest corner of the house.

A single-story, two-bay frame library wing connected to the eastern side of the house by a breezeway was added about 1860. Echoing the arrangement and simple Grecian detailing of the main house, the southern elevation of the wing also has a flat-roofed, portico-like gallery set with square columns carrying a plain parapet with a molded cap. The single, two-bay room is serviced by an interior end chimney.

The interior arrangement of the house follows the popular central hall, double-pile plan, the older section comprising the rear file of rooms. On the first level the western rooms are linked by wide, double-leaf folding doors, and the less formal rooms to the east are joined by a single-leaf door set near the end wall. Of the fireplaces originally centered on the end wall of each chamber, only the one in the southeastern room survives. The wide central hall features a single-run staircase that rises from front to rear. With the exception of the northeastern room, which was converted into a bath, each upper level chamber retains its fireplace.

Simple, Greek Revival woodwork is sparsely used throughout the spacious, plain interior, contrasting with the dual styling of the exterior and creating a more unified appearance. Nevertheless, in the central hall the lower ceiling height, pieced flooring, and post and beam, appropriately encased to simulate a classical column and

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 & 8 PAGE 1

7 - DESCRIPTION

entablature, reveal the earlier origins of the rear portion of the house. Detailing is limited to the door and window architraves, which vary in exact design from room to room, and the corresponding flat-panel spandrels set under each first-level window. Mantels repeat the very simple Grecian styling, being little more than plain pilasters carrying a deep frieze board and molded shelf. The only surviving example on the first level is elaborated by an arched opening on the bottom of the frieze board.

Of greater architectural distinction than the main house itself is the hexagonal frame library set in the yard to the southeast. Built in 1887, the clapboarded structure reflects the late-Victorian fascination with the picturesque. Both the porch and the hexagonal, glazed cupola that terminates the six-sided pitched roof are richly accented with sawn trim that contrasts nicely with the plainness of the basic structure. The fanciful, eclectic styling of the western entrance porch is particularly noteworthy, with its open gable infitted with pieced millwork and its sawn, arched screen carried on coupled, truncated square columns. Ample light is introduced into the interior by large windows with two-over-two sashes centered on each side elevation and flanking the exterior brick chimney on the rear.

The open interior is set with six bookcases that line the walls between the windows and radiate from each corner towards the center. Coupled pilaster panels flanking triangular, shelved inserts conceal the ends of each projecting stack. The pine flooring is also laid in an interesting radiating pattern that branches from the center.

A highly decorative mantelpiece with molded pilasters and an auxiliary architrave and gallery is spatter painted to imitate a warm, red marble. The bookcases are also richly decorated, being painted and grained in simulation of a variety of woods.

Above, the interior of the sloped roof, finished with plaster and then narrow, beaded siding, is styled to suggest a dome which is set on a shallow platform formed by the low, flat board ceiling around the perimeter of the room and carried by the radiating bookcases. The glazed, hexagonal cupola, with hinged sash operated by ropes, forms the lantern.

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

By the mid-seventies George was again actively involved in state politics. He established his reputation as a champion of state's rights in 1875 when he engineered the successful Democratic campaign that overturned the alien carpetbagger administration of Adelbert Ames and restored the status quo to state politics. George had hoped for his party's 1876 senatorial nomination, which fell instead to General Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar. In 1880, however, he was elected to the United States Senate after

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8, 9, & 10 PAGE 2

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

serving briefly as the chief justice of the state supreme court.

The sixteen-year senatorial career of J. Z. George, lasting from 1881 until his death in 1897, was characterized by his unswerving devotion to the interests of the common man. He was noted for his unpretentiousness, forthright manner, and rational logic in resolving difficult problems. George was instrumental in the drafting of the Sherman Anti-Trust Law, introduced the bill to establish the Department of Agriculture, and consistently opposed protective tariffs and fixed railroad rates.

George was recognized as one of the most brilliant constitutional lawyers of his day and was chiefly responsible for the 1890 Mississippi constitution--basically the same instrument under which the state operates today. He not only authored the sections dealing with suffrage reform and apportionment but also eloquently and convincingly defended those provisions when they were challenged in the United States Senate.

The selection of J. Z. George to stand alongside Jefferson Davis as one of Mississippi's two most outstanding sons is not surprising, considering his dedicated service to the state. Davis led at a time when the prestige of Mississippi was at its zenith; it was George who helped the state regain its lost dignity and respect.

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ringold, Mary Spencer. "Senator James Z. George of Mississippi: Liberal or Bourbon?" Journal of Mississippi History 16(1954):164-71.

10 - GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

19 North, Range 4 East; the East Half of the Northeast Quarter (E 1/2 of NE 1/4), the Northeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter (NE 1/4 of SE 1/4), 10.34 acres in the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter (SE 1/4 of SE 1/4), 0.75 acres in the Southwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter (SW 1/4 of SE 1/4), 28.84 acres in the Southwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter (SW 1/4 of NE 1/4), 8.88 acres in the Northwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter (NW 1/4 of NE 1/4), all in Section 6, Township 19 North, Range 4 East; the East Half of the East Half (E 1/2 of E 1/2) of Section 31, Township 20 North, Range 4 East LESS 76.5 acres off the North End thereof; the Southwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter (SW 1/4 of NE 1/4), the

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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RECEIVED **MAY 4 1978**

DATE ENTERED **JUN 9 1978**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

AMENDMENT
COTESWORTH
VICINITY OF NORTH CARROLLTON
CARROLL COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

I. 8. Significance (to be added as last paragraph thereof)

The entire 900-acre tract of rolling, alternately open and wooded farmland surrounding the house was assembled by J. Z. George and has remained in the possession of his decendants. Previously cultivated by tenant farmers, the acreage presently supports cattle. A board-and-batten sided quarters and two barns are all that remain of the once-numerous farm buildings located at the rear of the house.

II. Two additional photographs:

Photo No. 4 - General view of farm buildings located north-northwest of main house. View from southeast.

Photo No. 5 - View of pastures and woodlands northeast of main house.

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 1861-1897

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Cotesworth was the home of distinguished attorney and United States Senator James Zachariah George, one of two Mississippians honored by representation in Statuary Hall of the United States Capitol. George's untiring efforts to restore stable, fair government to demoralized Mississippi after the Civil War, as well as to protect the interests of the common man, earned for him the nickname "The Great Commoner" and distinguished him as the state's most dynamic leader in the Reconstruction era. In addition to the historical importance of the nearly 900-acre estate, George's house is a remarkably complete regional expression of the Greek Revival style. The detached hexagonal library which he built in 1887 (Greenwood, Miss., Yazoo Valley Flag, November 23, 1887) is one of the most remarkable and significant outbuildings in the state. The diminutive structure is a vernacular adaptation recalling Thomas Jefferson's scheme for the library at the University of Virginia, complete with dome and radiating bookcases concealed by pilastered panels.

In 1861 George purchased from William Scales a 492-acre tract of rolling farmland, on which the present house is located (Deed Book P, pp. 331-33) and named the estate in honor of Cotesworth Pinckney Smith. (Smith had been chief justice of the High Court of Errors and Appeals from 1851 until his death in 1862, and George had served as reporter for that court from 1854 until the outbreak of the Civil War.) Incorporating an earlier single-pile, two-story dwelling that was subsequently enlarged to a double-pile structure, the house achieved its present provincial Greek Revival appearance during George's occupancy. Ownership has descended in the family, and Cotesworth is presently the home of George's great granddaughter. Many of George's original furnishings, including the walnut, three-leg, corner desk used by him while drafting the 1890 Mississippi constitution, remain. The detached hexagonal library is still filled with many of his books, including leather-bound Congressional Records spanning his sixteen-year career in the United States Senate.

George was born in Georgia in 1826 and moved with his family to Carroll County, Mississippi, in 1836. Educated in the local common schools, he began to read law at age eighteen and was admitted to the bar in 1846 by a special legislative act which waived the standard age requirement. In January, 1861, representing Carroll County at the special state convention called to consider the question of secession, he voted in favor of the ordinance that made Mississippi the second state to secede from the Union. George served as an officer during the Civil War, but his military record was undistinguished. After the surrender at Appomatox, George returned to his law practice in Carrollton until 1872, when he entered into partnership with Wiley P. Harrison of Jackson, "then looked upon as the ablest and best equipped lawyer in Mississippi" (George, p. xii). George moved his family to the capital city the following year, while continuing to maintain Cotesworth as a part-time residence.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

George, James Z. The Political History of Slavery in the United States. New York: The Neale Press, 1915.

Greenwood, Miss. Yazoo Valley Flag, November 23, 1887.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 900 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 28,832,5 3,717,3,7,5
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B 1,5 28,84,0,0 3,71,4,5,6,0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 15 28,64,7,5 3,71,4,5,0,0

D 1,5 28,63,7,5 3,71,7,3,0,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The West Half of the Northwest Quarter (W 1/2 of NW 1/4), 33.29 acres in the Northwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter (NW 1/4 of NE 1/4) and the Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter (NE 1/4 of NW 1/4), 24.88 acres in the Southeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter (SE 1/4 of NW 1/4), 3.75 acres in the Northeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter (NE 1/4 of SW 1/4), 23.88 acres in the Northwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter (NW 1/4 of SW 1/4), all in Section 5, Township

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

Mary McCahon Shoemaker, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 571

CITY OR TOWN

Jackson

DATE

October, 1977

TELEPHONE

(601) 354-6218

STATE

Mississippi 39205

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

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

Elmer B. Hilliard

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

November 30, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST:

[Signature]
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
[Signature]
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

6/9/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

6.5.78

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 3

10 - GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter (NW 1/4 of SE 1/4), the South Half of the Northwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter (S 1/2 of NW 1/4 of NE 1/4), the West Half (W 1/2) LESS 50.0 acres off the North End thereof, 14.60 acres in the Southwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter (SW 1/4 of SE 1/4), all in Section 32, Township 20 North, Range 4 East.



PHOTO NO. 1 ²⁵ COTESWORTH

Vicinity of North Carrollton, Carroll
County, Mississippi

Mary McCahon Shoemaker

Mississippi Department of Archives
and History

September, 1977

JUN 9 1978

General view from the southwest

DEC 5 1977

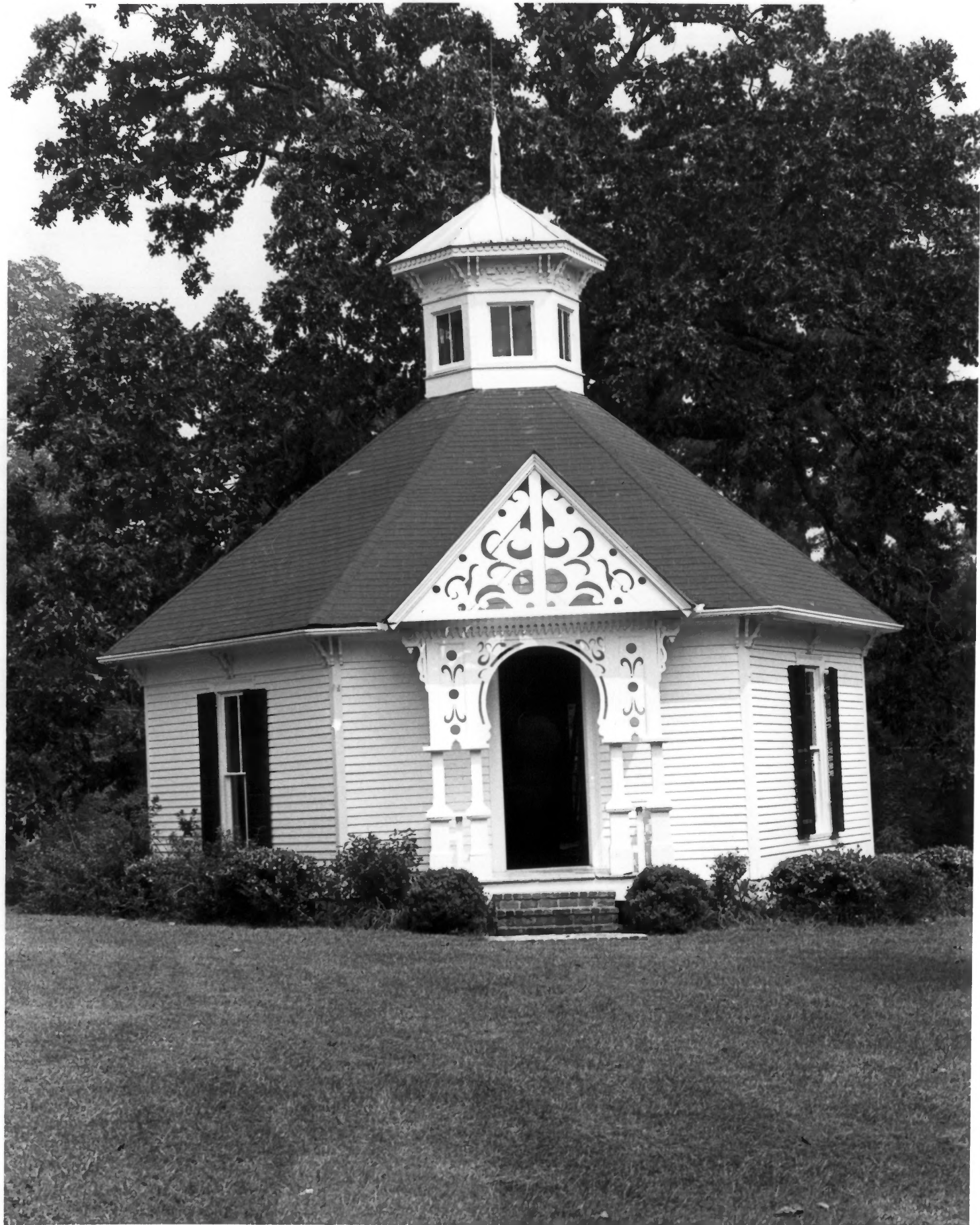


PHOTO NO. 2 ⁴⁻⁵ - COTESWORTH

Vicinity of North Carrollton, Carroll
County, Mississippi

Mary McCahon Shoemaker

Mississippi Department of Archives
and History

September, 1977

Detached hexagonal library, view from the
west

DEC 5 1977

JUN 9 1978



PHOTO NO. 3 ¹⁵ COTESWORTH

Vicinity of North Carrollton, Carroll
County, Mississippi

JUN 9 1978

Mary McCahon Shoemaker

Mississippi Department of Archives
and History

September, 1977

Interior of detached hexagonal library,
looking east

DEC 5 1977



PHOTO NO. 4 ~~4~~⁵COTESWORTH

Vicinity of North Carrollton, Carroll
County, Mississippi

Mary McCahon Shoemaker

Mississippi Department of Archives
and History

JUN 9 1978

April, 1978

General view of farm buildings located
north-northwest of main house. View
from southeast.

MAY 4 1978



PHOTO NO. 5²⁵ COTESWORTH

Vicinity of North Carrollton, Carroll
County, Mississippi

Mary McCahon Shoemaker

Mississippi Department of Archives
and History

April, 1978

JUN 9 1978

View of pastures and woodlands northeast
of main house.

MAY 4 1978