

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name: Clark, John, House
other names/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number: 211 Clark Street
city or town: Clarksdale
state: Mississippi code: MS county: Coahoma code: 27 zip code: 38614

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Kenneth H. P. Dore
Signature of certifying official

MAY 20, 2003
Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
✓ entered in the National Register,
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the
National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the
National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain):

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

7/5/03
Date of Action

Clark, John, House

Coahoma County, Mississippi

5. Classification

Ownership of Property:

Private

Number of Resources within Property:

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Category of Property:

Building

Contributing

1

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

1

Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed

in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Current Functions:

Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification(s):

Greek Revival

Colonial Revival

Materials:

foundation: brick

roof: pressed metal

walls: weatherboard

other: n/a

Narrative Description:

See Continuation Sheets

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

Exploration/Settlement
Architecture

Period of Significance

1859-1916

Significant Dates

1859

1916

Criteria Considerations:

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☒ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Person(s)

Clark, John

Cultural Affiliation(s)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance: See continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Carnegie Public Library, Clarksdale, MS

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: approximately 2.5 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing
 15 723475 3787515

Verbal Boundary Description See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title:	Nancy H. Bell, Executive Director	(Edited by MDAH staff)	
organization:	Vicksburg Foundation for Historic Preservation		date: July 6, 2002
street & number:	P.O. Box 254		telephone: 601-636-5010
city or town:	Vicksburg	state: MS	zip code: 39181

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner(s)

name:	The Belle Clark, Inc.		
street & number:	5958 Eaglenest Road West		telephone: 662-627-7413
city or town:	Clarksdale	state: MS	zip code: 38614

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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John Clark House
Clarksdale, Coahoma County, MS

7. DESCRIPTION

The John Clark House, built in 1859, is located on a three-acre lot shaded by oak, magnolia, red bud, and cherry laurel. Originally located about 100 feet to the east, the two-story clapboard residence is topped with a pressed-metal covered hip roof enhanced with a denticulated frieze and pierced with three brick chimneys. The house rests on brick piers.

In 1916, the house was moved by John Clark's daughter, Blanche Cutrer to make room for her new home, the grand and elaborate Italian Renaissance Cutrer Mansion. At this time Blanche and her husband, John Wesley Cutrer remodeled the house to its current appearance. The two-tiered, one-bay porch supported with turned posts was replaced with a then-stylish Colonial Revival porch (photo #1). The 1916 three-bay porch of the main (south) facade features box columns a denticulated frieze, and a paneled balustrade. The roof is encircled with a balustrade comprised of plain balusters and asteriated designs. The center entrance has double-leaf, paneled and glazed doors framed by three-light sidelights and a two-light transom. The other four bays are four-over-four double-hung sash. There are six four-over-four double-hung sash on the second floor framed with louvered shutters. The roof is pierced with two former vents enhanced with incomplete cornice returns.

The west facade (photo #2) features a center bay framed by paneled pilasters supporting a denticulated pediment with a round vent. The entrance has double-leaf, paneled and glazed doors framed by three-light sidelights and a two-light transom. A swan's neck pediment, added during the 1916 remodeling, completes the entrance. There are five bays on the first floor- four four-over-four, double-hung sash and the entrance. The second floor exhibits six four-over-four, double-hung sash.

At the rear of the house is small, one-story wood-frame outbuilding thought to have been built in the 1950s. It does not contribute to the historic character of the house. Attached to this outbuilding is a carport or *porte cochere* which has a very low gable roof supported by paired box columns (photo #3).

The interior of the house retains a high degree of integrity from its 1859 construction. It has a center hall plan with an intersecting cross hall that contains the staircase (photo #4). -The stair is a two-flight, open- stair with octagonal newel post and turned balusters. Significant features such as the four-panel doors (photo #5), window and door surrounds (photo #6), baseboards, hardwood floors, plain mantel pieces (photo #7) and molded plaster cornices have been retained. The library also features built-in cabinets with bookcases above (photo #8).

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John Clark House
Clarksdale, Coahoma County, MS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1859, the Clark House is significant as the home of Clarksdale's founder, John Clark, and his wife Eliza (Criteria A and B, in the area of exploration and settlement). Clark became one of the largest landowners in Coahoma County and one of its most generous benefactors, providing land and materials to build churches, schools, and a courthouse. Remodeled in 1916, the house is also significant as a good local example of Colonial Revival architecture (Criterion C). Criterion Consideration B is applicable, as the house was moved 100 feet in 1916 by the builders' daughter.

In 1832, James Hawkins Clark, an architect from Ashton, England, moved his family, including his son John, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. When Hawkins Clark was commissioned in 1837 to oversee the renovation of a post office in New Orleans, he took John with him. A yellow fever epidemic in 1839 took the life of Hawkins, and John found employment with brothers Thomas Flint and Edward Drake Porter, lumbermen with ties to the Mississippi Delta. It is through this association that John Clark discovered the rich fertile land along the Sunflower River in Coahoma County, Mississippi.

In 1848, Clark purchased 101.5 acres of land from the government on the east bank where the Sunflower and Little Sunflower rivers meet. He cleared the land, sold the timber, planted cotton, and with his proceeds purchased another 159.4 acres in 1850. In 1854, Clark married Eliza Jane Alcorn, the sister of another large landowner in Coahoma County, James Lusk Alcorn. (Alcorn would later become the Governor of Mississippi and a United States Senator from that state.)

The Clarks hired a Philadelphia architect (name unknown) in 1859 to design a new home and to employ craftsmen from Philadelphia to construct the Greek Revival residence. Before the home was completed, however, war broke out and his craftsmen retreated north. John Clark sent a part of his amassed wealth north to a Canadian bank for safekeeping. This fortuitous act allowed him to continue to purchase land in large amounts after the war, and by 1891 he owned 5,000 acres, of which 2,000 were under cultivation in that year (Goodspeed, p. 553).

In 1869 Clark drew up a town plat for "Clarksville" with 76 uniform 50'x100' lots for sale and a number of squares reserved for markets and public assemblies (WPA). He and Eliza had already provided land and materials for the Mount Mariah Methodist Church in 1868. When it became evident that a railroad would be built in the vicinity, Clark had the town incorporated in 1882 as "Clarksdale," this despite a devastating flood at the time that inundated a majority of the new city. Clark's connection with Governor Alcorn, his brother-in-law, assured that the Memphis and Vicksburg Railroad (later the Louisville, New Orleans, and Texas Railroad) would take a route through Clarksdale instead of along the river, and the town grew rapidly.

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John Clark House
Clarksdale, Coahoma County, MS

In addition to his farm and lumber concerns, John Clark owned two steam gins, a sawmill, and a large mercantile store; was the founder and president of Clarksdale's first bank, The Clarksdale Bank and Trust Company; and was the director and stockholder in the Clarksdale Brick Manufacturing Company and in a cotton compress. His public service was limited to a term as a city alderman, but his philanthropic service was extensive, as he donated land and materials for churches, schools, and a courthouse.

Following his death in 1892, Eliza and her children continued to help Clarksdale prosper. Their son, Walter, dug the Delta's first artesian well on the shores of the Sunflower River in 1898. Daughter Blanche M. Clark married John Wesley Cutrer, a lawyer, state representative, state senator, and a member of the state constitutional convention of 1890. Cutrer was a main player in a decades-old battle of whether the Coahoma County seat should be located in Friar's Point or in Clarksdale. He was eventually successful and Clarksdale became the county seat.

After the death of Eliza Clark in 1915, Blanche and John W. Cutrer began work on plans for a new house that called for the relocation of the family home to a site almost 100 feet to the east to allow for the construction of the "Cutrer Mansion" on the crest overlooking the Sunflower River. In 1916, the Clark House was moved and remodeled to give it a then-updated Colonial Revival appearance. When Blanche and her husband moved into their new house, they rented their old house until their daughter moved there. Later the house became the home for John Clark's grandson, Guy, who owned it until it was sold in 2001 to Billy and Lillie Strohm, who are currently rehabilitating the house for a bed-and-breakfast inn.

As remodeled in 1916, the house is a locally noteworthy example of Colonial Revival architecture and of the practice, widespread in Mississippi in the first two decades of the twentieth century, of remodeling antebellum Greek Revival houses into the more fashionable Colonial Revival and Neoclassical Revival styles. (Another example of this practice is the Lenoir Plantation House in Monroe County, built circa 1850 and remodeled in the Neoclassical Revival style in 1910. It was listed on the National Register in 1992.)

The John Clark House has been an important landmark in Clarksdale since 1859 as the home of its founder and most generous benefactor and as the oldest extant building in the city. The exterior of the house retains a high degree of integrity from the 1916 remodeling, and the interior retains a high degree of integrity from its 1859 construction.

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John Clark House
Clarksdale, Coahoma County, MS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Abernathy, Harry. "Looking for Lumber, Clark Founded Clarksdale." The Clarksdale Press Register, April 27, 1993, p. 110.

Clarksdale, Mississippi. Carnegie Public Library. Hilda Clark Heidleberg Collection.

Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi, Vol. I. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1891.

Weeks, Linton. Clarksdale and Coahoma County: A History. Brandon, MS: Quail Ridge Press, 1982.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description: A parcel of land which is situated in Sectional Lot 14 in Section 14, T27N, R4W, and described by metes and bounds as follows:

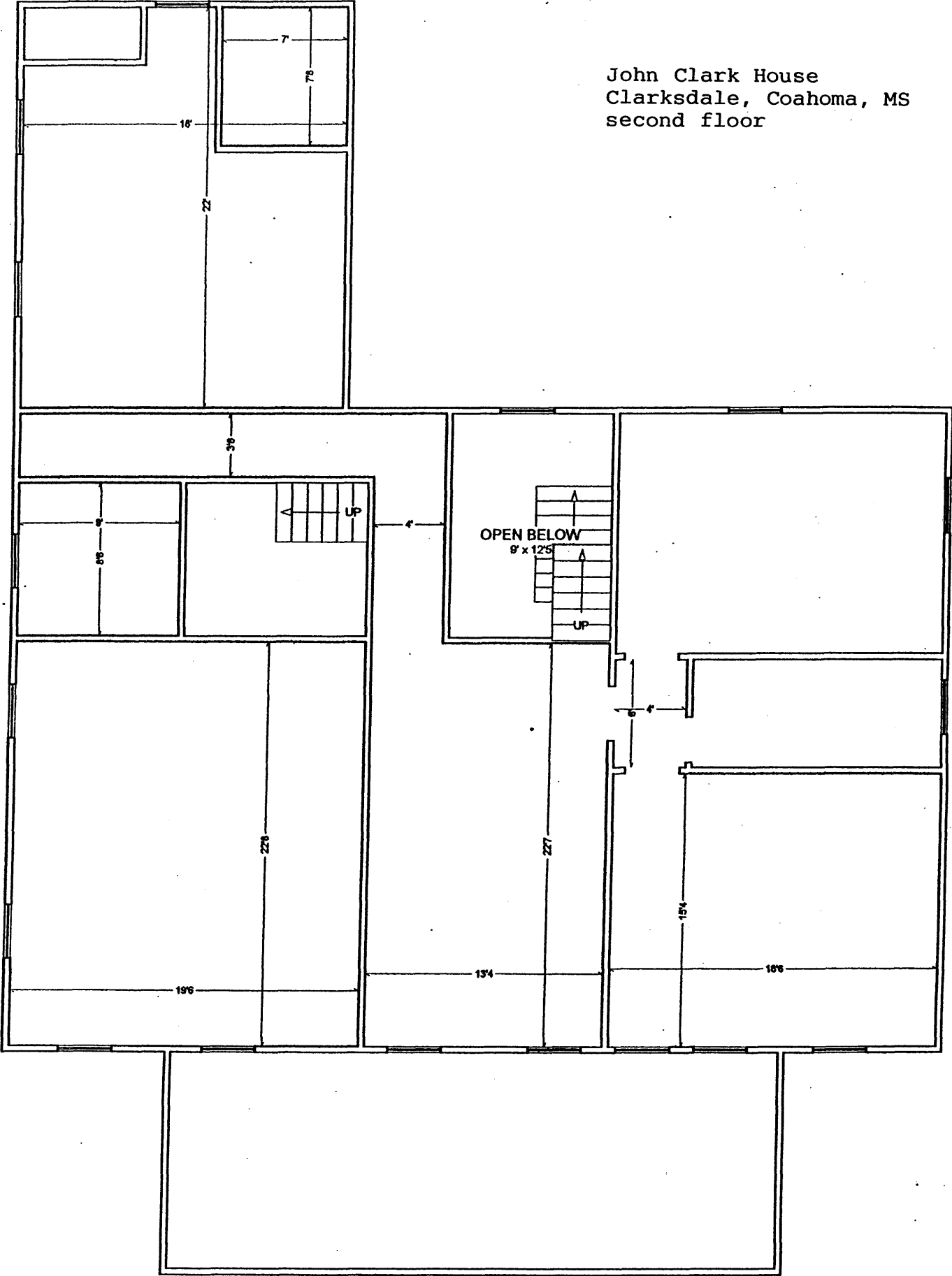
Beginning at a point where the center line of John Street intersects the north line of Clark Street; thence south 75 degrees 30 minutes west 396.25' along the north line of Clark Street to a point; thence north 14 degrees 22 minutes west 202' to the Point of Beginning; thence south 14 degrees 22 minutes east 202'; thence north 75 degrees 38 minutes east 146.25'; thence north 14 degrees 22 minutes west 275'; thence north 7 degrees 40 minutes east 302' to the center of Mill Bayou Ditch; thence north 79 degrees 14 minutes west 146.25' along Mill Bayou Ditch to stake on west line of the tract herein conveyed; thence south 2 degrees 46 minutes west 447.2' to the Point of Beginning, containing in all 2.5 acres, more or less. Book 0811, p. 242.

Boundary Justification: The nominated property consists of the lot historically associated with this house when it was moved in 1916.

[illegible]

LIVING AREA
3009 sq ft

John Clark House
Clarksdale, Coahoma, MS
second floor



LIVING AREA
2619 sq ft



The John Clark House
Clarksdale, Coahoma County, MS
South elevation

Photo 1 of 6



John Clark House

Clarksdale, Ms, Coahoma County

~~With~~ elevation

Photo 2 of 6



John Clark House
Clarksdale, MS, Coahoma County

Rear elevation

Photo 3 of 6



John Clark House
Clarksdale, MS, Coahoma County
first floor hall and stair
(facing west)
photo 4 of 6



John Clark House

Clarksdale, MS.

Coahoma County

representative example
of moldings, window
surrounds and mantel pieces

photo 5 of 6



John Clark House

Clarksdale, Oklahoma County,

Library book shelves ^{ms}

and mantle piece

photo 5 of 6