

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICEPH06 73960
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RECEIVED MAY 1 1979

DATE ENTERED

5

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

Cottage Gardens

AND/OR COMMON

Cottage Gardens

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

816 Myrtle Avenue

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Natchez

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Fourth

___ VICINITY OF

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

Tom H. and Dorothy Jane McNeil

STREET & NUMBER

816 Myrtle Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Natchez

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Mississippi 39120

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
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

1979

___ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi 39205

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

☒ EXCELLENT

☐ DETERIORATED

☐ UNALTERED

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ GOOD

☐ RUINS

☒ ALTERED

☐ MOVED

DATE _____

☐ FAIR

☐ UNEXPOSED

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Cottage Gardens faces easterly toward Myrtle Avenue. The house is constructed of cypress and poplar timbers, mortised and pegged together. A sloping roof extends across the front of the house, forming a gallery with six Doric columns which support a pediment containing an oval window with molded architrave and radiating muntins. The window is unusual in that it can be raised for ventilation. There is a dormer window at the opposite end of the upper hall, overlooking the courtyard to the rear. Windows on the second floor have the same number of panes as those on the first floor but are smaller. The steep pitch of the roof, along with the chimney placements, probably dictated their size. The original wooden railing of the front gallery incorporates a motif of three crossed sticks.

On the interior, the graceful half-circular stair in the center hall is partially unsupported and enriched with scroll carving. Fanlighted doors open onto the front and rear galleries, and a matching fanlight is repeated over the double doors between the drawing room and the dining room. The sliding doors are concealed in casements.

The house rests upon a basement, which contains a room with double arches of brick, adding structural support. There is also a small dairy where formerly troughs filled with cool water kept food fresh, and open arches beneath provided space for storage of vegetables. Windows in the basement are barred, some with wood and others with iron.

A dry moat lines the sides of the house, its brick walls supporting terraces; a walkway to the rear is at the base of the moat. An iron fence which borders the property on the Myrtle Avenue side originally surrounded the old Episcopal chapel belonging to the Butler family at Laurel Hill Plantation, south of Natchez.

When Cottage Gardens was restored in 1963, the kitchen and breakfast room were attached to the main structure. Rounded columns were reconstructed for the gallery, in place of the existing square ones. In 1973 the back gallery was enclosed, and a wooden arbor was built in the courtyard area.

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		Photography

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Cottage Gardens is an excellent example of the late Federal style of architecture as it developed in the Natchez region of the Lower Mississippi Valley. It was also the home of noted photographer Earl Norman (1888-1951), who for nearly forty years continued a family profession of visually recording the people and scenes of Natchez and its environs.

According to local tradition, Cottage Gardens was built ca. 1795 as the home of Don José Vidal, the last of the Spanish-appointed acting governors of the Natchez district and, after dissolution of the Spanish regime in 1798, consul of Spain. It presumably was substantially remodeled when purchased in 1828 by Adam Bower (Natchez Metropolitan Planning Commission of Adams County, Natchez-Adams County Landmark Inventory [Natchez: City Hall, 1973-78]). The regional cottage form with inset gallery and large central pediment is enriched by the high quality of the interior and exterior trim, notably the interior stairway and the gallery railing. The former feature is similar to the stairway at The Burn (nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, 1979), while the latter resembles the railing at the Neibert-Fisk House (entered in the National Register, 1979). These similarities suggest the hand of a single master craftsman working locally from the late 1820s to the mid-1830s.

Earl Norman was the son of Henry C. Norman (1850-1913), who in 1870 joined a photographic firm which had operated in Natchez since the 1850s. In 1877 Henry opened Norman's Studio, and during his peak years in the 1880s and 1890s, he was unrivaled locally as a photographic artist. In 1913 Earl Norman inherited the studio, and as was subsequently demonstrated, he had also inherited his father's talent. The careers of the two men produced approximately 75,000 prints and negatives which document Natchez from the time of Reconstruction through the first half of the twentieth century.

Earl Norman lived his married life at Cottage Gardens with the family of his wife, Mary Kate Foster, herself an artist specializing in tinting photographs. In 1960 Mrs. Norman sold the collected work of her husband and her father-in-law to Thomas H. Gandy, who cataloged and preserved it (Joan W. Gandy and Thomas H. Gandy, Norman's Natchez [Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1978], pp. 19, 24-25). Cottage Gardens was purchased in 1963 by William C. and Sarah McGehee, who restored it, and since 1973 it has been the residence of the present owners.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Beach, Rowan Moody, grandniece of Earl Norman. Interviewed by Mary Warren Miller, restoration consultant, at Natchez, Feb. 22, 1979.

Gandy, Joan W, and Thomas H. Gandy, comps. and eds. Norman's Natchez. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1978.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 4

QUADRANGLE NAME Natchez, Miss.-La.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1, 5 6, 5, 2, 2, 8, 0 3, 4, 9, 3, 5, 8, 8

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

E

G

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D

F

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See enclosed tax map; Cottage Gardens boundaries are outlined in red.

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

Dorothy Jane McNeil

ORGANIZATION

Owner of Cottage Gardens

STREET & NUMBER

816 Myrtle Avenue

CITY OR TOWN

Natchez

DATE

February 20, 1979

TELEPHONE

(601) 445-5797

STATE

Mississippi 39120

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

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 R. Williams

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

April 25, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

James H. Williams
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

James H. Williams
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

7-5-79

DATE

7/3/79

Cottage Gardens

Natchez, Mississippi

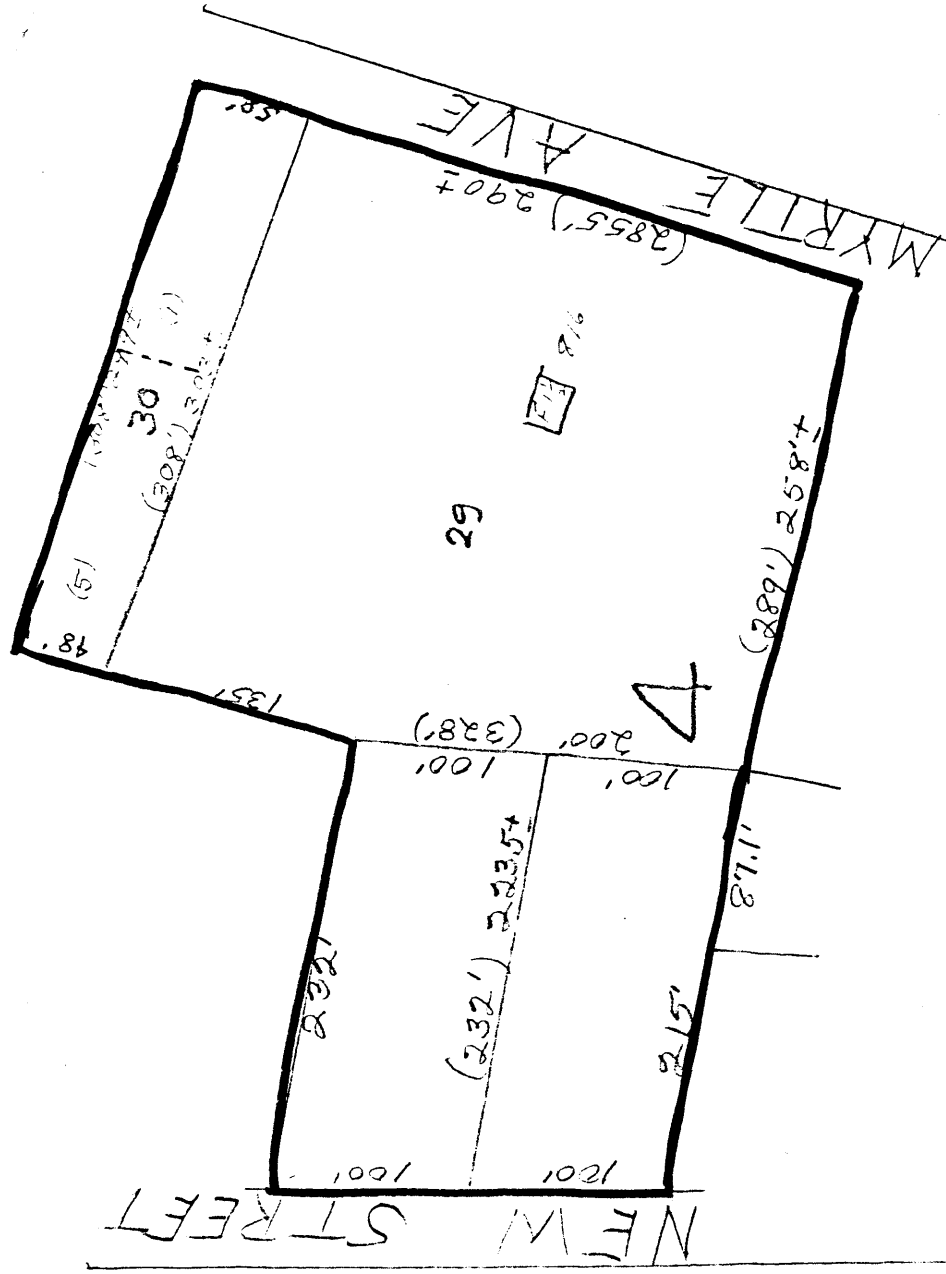
Cottage Gardens, Natchez, has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural significance and its association with a noted local photographer. Built c. 1795, it is a good example of the late Federal style of architectural development in the Natchez region. Its regional cottage form with inset gallery and large central pediment is similar to other homes in the area which suggests a single master builder working locally in the late 1820s through mid-1830s. The structure also features a dry masonry wall with which support terraces. The interior features a half-circular stair, fanlighted doorways and concealed sliding doors. The house was destroyed in 1963.

According to local tradition, Cottage Gardens was built for Don José Vidal, the last Spanish-appointed Acting Governor of the Natchez District. It presumably was substantially remodelled when purchased by Adam Bowser in 1828.

Earl Newman, a well known local photographer, lives in the house in its current use. His photographic career, along with his father Henry C. Newman, produced approximately 75,000

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K
E

RECORDED
MAY 1979
TAX MAP
REGISTER



TAX MAP
NATCHEZ
ADAMS COUNTY
MISSISSIPPI
SHEET 12
BLOCK 4
PAGE 1 OF 30

COTTAGE GARDENS

2/23/74
W. L. Lacombe
2/23/74



COTTAGE GARDENS

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

DOE

Danny Richardson

Jul. 5, 1979

February 16, 1979

307 Arlington Ave. - Natchez, MS 39120

Facade (southeast elevation), looking
northwest.

Photo 1 of 4

MAY 1 1979



COTTAGE GARDENS

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

DOE

Danny Richardson

JUL

5 1979

February 16, 1979

307 Arlington Ave. - Natchez, MS 39120

Facade (southeast) and southwest elevations,
looking north.

Photo 2 of 4

MAY 1 1979



COTTAGE GARDENS

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

DOE

Danny Richardson

JUL

5 1979

February 16, 1979

307 Arlington Ave. - Natchez, MS 39120

Southwest elevation, showing brick kitchen
and breakfast room; looking east.

Photo 3 of 4

MAY 1 1979



COTTAGE GARDENS

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

Danny Richardson

February 16, 1979

307 Arlington Ave. - Natchez, MS 39120

Spiral staircase in front hall, looking
southeast.

Photo 4 of 4

MAY 1 1979

JUL

DOE

5 1979