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National Park Service

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NA
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Supplemental Nomination  
Windsor Ruins, Claiborne County, Mississippi

Administrative Information

Windsor Ruins was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on November 23, 1971. Forty years after Windsor Ruins' National Register listing, the accumulation of additional information about the property warrants this supplement to the original nomination. In the interim, archaeological studies investigated the mansion's footprint and the buried chain wall beneath the columns, a Civil War-period sketch of the house surfaced, and new information has come to light about preservation efforts at the site prior to acquisition by the Department of Archives and History. As may have been typical at the time of the original nomination, the sections on "Description" and "Significance" are very brief (1 page and 1.5 pages respectively). The purpose of this Supplemental Nomination is to update the National Register nomination to reflect the current status of data about this site.

Section 3. State/Federal Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national X statewide \_\_\_ local

*[Handwritten Signature]*

*3.24.2014*

State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**Section 7: Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, iron \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly

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describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

**Summary Paragraph**

Windsor Ruins is located in southwestern Claiborne County, Mississippi, on Highway 552, approximately 14 miles west of Port Gibson. The setting is rural with mature vegetation. Twenty-three complete columns and 5 truncated columns outline the footprint of the Windsor mansion constructed during 1858-1861.

**Narrative Description**

Windsor Ruins is located in southwestern Claiborne County, Mississippi, on Highway 552, approximately 14 miles west of Port Gibson. Twenty-three complete columns and 5 truncated columns outline the footprint of the Windsor mansion constructed during 1858-1861. The mansion was oriented to face west, toward the Mississippi River, therefore, the present-day parking lot is adjacent to the front of the structure. The mansion originally comprised 29 columns. (One column on the north side was razed at ground level prior to state acquisition of the property.) Windsor burned in 1890, leaving the 23 columns standing. The truncated columns collapsed during or soon after the fire. The complete columns, brick construction with iron capitals, are 40 feet high and measure 3 feet 6 5/8 inches in diameter at the base. They stand upon paneled brick plinths 10 feet high and 4 feet 8 inches square, which in turn rest upon a below-ground brick chain wall 5-7 brick courses deep and 4.72 feet wide at the top. Due to weathering and early preservation efforts, patches of original plaster are missing from the columns, exposing the underlying brick. Sections of iron balustrade from the third floor gallery hang between some of the columns. A low-profile, wooden rail fence surrounds the columns, and signs warn visitors to remain outside the enclosure to avoid injury from falling debris. The property is adjacent to the Canemount Wildlife Management Area.

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Section 8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture \_\_\_\_\_  
 Social History \_\_\_\_\_  
 Archaeology, Historic-Non-Aboriginal \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1859-1964 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1890 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**STATEMENT of SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY PARAGRAPH**

Windsor Ruins in Claiborne County, Mississippi, is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for statewide significance under Criterion A for association with Social History, Criterion C for association with Architecture and Criterion D for association with Archaeology, Historic, Non-aboriginal.

**HISTORIC CONDITION**

**PHYSIOGRAPHIC SETTING**

Windsor Ruins is located in Claiborne County, Mississippi, in the region known as the Petit Gulf Hills. This topographic feature is a part of the Loess Hills that form a distinctive physiographic zone in Mississippi extending from below the Natchez region north to the lower Yazoo River just north of Vicksburg, where the hills angle away from the Mississippi River toward the northeast and then north to form the eastern boundary of the Yazoo Basin. The Petit Gulf Hills are named for the Petit Gulf, which appears on French colonial maps of the region in the early 1720s marking a spot where the river's dynamics created a swirling current.<sup>1</sup> (Grand Gulf, a similar hydrological feature noted by the French, was about 10 miles north of Petit Gulf.) Today, Bayou Pierre flows out of the Petit Gulf Hills and enters the Mississippi River about 400 yards southwest of Windsor. James

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Creek, a tributary of Bayou Pierre, flows north out of the uplands immediately east of Windsor. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Mississippi River's channel was closer to Windsor, occupying the approximate bed of the present-day lower course of Bayou Pierre. At that time, James Creek flowed directly into the Mississippi River near Windsor and Bayou Pierre's mouth was about five miles upriver.<sup>2</sup> (FIGURE 1)

#### EARLY HISTORY

Smith Coffee Daniell II, born in Mississippi in 1826, built the mansion he called "Windsor" during the years 1858-1861. Daniell, a cotton planter who owned approximately 21,000 acres in Mississippi and Louisiana, died in 1861, just weeks after taking possession of his new home.<sup>3</sup> The mansion comprised a main three-story block (ground floor and two raised stories) topped with a cupola or belvedere, with an attached three-story service ell that extended from the east side of the main block. With the exception of archaeological remains representing a probable smokehouse just east of the ell, dependency structures that supported the mansion have not been identified. Daniell family documentation indicates that outbuildings probably included a blacksmith shop, three steam gins, slave quarters, carriage house and stables, and various other utility buildings.<sup>4</sup>

The Daniells were part of a close-knit group of interrelated families, many of whose founding members had migrated to the Petit Gulf Hills from Maryland at the beginning of the Cotton Boom. The removal of the American Indian groups from the region, paired with the importation of enslaved African Americans from the former tobacco states, set up the conditions for fortunes to be made by Daniell and other cotton planters. The community of families that settled this area included the Daniells, Freelands, Magraders, and Skinners. Living in relative isolation, these families intermarried and consolidated their considerable holdings. In 1830, this community of cotton planters founded Oakland College (present-day Alcorn State University).<sup>5</sup>

Smith Coffee Daniell II constructed Windsor at a cost of approximately \$175,000 using his own slave labor force, augmented by skilled carpenters and artisans recruited from Mississippi, Maryland, Massachusetts,

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and New York, as well as from Europe. David Shroder of Maryland supervised the construction work. Shroder also supervised the construction of other mansions in the area, including Rosswood in Jefferson County. According to Mimi Miller, Historic Natchez Foundation director, Shroder's buildings combine an eclectic mix of Gothic, Italianate, and Greek architectural styles.<sup>6</sup> Although largely unheralded in documentation about Windsor's construction, the contributions of the enslaved African Americans who carried out most of the construction work must also be recognized. Apart from the nearby river port town of Bruinsburg, the closest significant settlement was Port Gibson, about 12 miles to the northeast along the Bruinsburg Road (present-day Highway 552). Windsor is approximately equidistant between Vicksburg, about 30 miles to the north, and Natchez, about 30 miles to the south.

#### WINDSOR DURING THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

General Ulysses S. Grant's invasion of Mississippi and subsequent campaign for the capture of Vicksburg began on the night of April 30, 1863, with a river crossing at Bruinsburg, less than two miles from Windsor. With the sudden arrival of 22,000 Union soldiers, the Daniell family found itself in the midst of what National Park Service Historian Terrence Winschel has called "the greatest amphibious military operation in American history up to that time."<sup>7</sup> According to family correspondence, General Grant set up temporary headquarters in the Windsor mansion and the army eventually confiscated the plantation's three steam gins along with 165 horses and mules, and burned 3000 bales of cotton. As the Vicksburg Campaign fighting intensified around Port Gibson, the Union army transformed Windsor into a field hospital treating between 400 and 500 wounded soldiers. Daniell's widow (and cousin) Catherine Freeland Daniell (1830-1903) and the couple's six children, along with several other family members, lived at Windsor at the time of the Union invasion. Although allowed to remain in the mansion, the family members had to relocate to rooms on the third floor while the hospital was active. According to Daniell family correspondence, an unknown number of Union dead were interred in the

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grounds around Windsor.<sup>8</sup>

The Daniell family remained at Windsor during the Reconstruction years following the conclusion of the Civil War. Correspondence indicates that the family members quickly became accustomed to a less extravagant lifestyle. They derived income through the leasing of part of their land and managed to raise cotton.

Approximately 150 former slaves remained at Windsor after the War, working for wages. Although "Yankee adventurers" occasionally made life difficult for the Daniells, Eliza M. Ross (Smith Coffee Daniell II's maternal aunt) was able to write in 1871 that, despite the hard times and lack of money, life was still "very comfortable."<sup>9</sup> In 1868, Catherine Daniell married Dr. William G. Williams, formerly of Pennsylvania, who practiced medicine in the nearby town of Rodney.<sup>10</sup>

The extended family's life in the c. 17,000-square-foot mansion ended abruptly on February 17, 1890, when an accidental fire destroyed the main block and ell. The cause of the blaze is not known, but according to family tradition the fire started in the cupola or attic. Apparently no one was injured and family members dispersed to live with relatives.<sup>11</sup> Following the fire, twenty-three of the original twenty-nine columns remained standing with their iron capitals more or less intact. (Note: In her 1971 nomination, Maddox stated mistakenly that twenty-two complete columns remain standing.) The upper sections of the other six columns apparently fell with the burning building leaving truncated lower sections and plinths. A few sections of cast iron balustrade at the upper gallery level remained attached to their column anchors. The cast iron stairway from the ell was removed from Windsor Ruins sometime between 1890 and 1912 and installed at Oakland Chapel on the campus of nearby Alcorn State University, formerly Oakland College.<sup>12</sup> The whereabouts of the other three cast iron stairways is not known. Port Gibson resident R. L. Ritchey, who assisted with the cleanup of the Windsor site in the early 1970s (see below) suggested that the stairways may have been sold for scrap iron.<sup>13</sup> Priscilla Daniell (the builder's daughter, 1850-1932) married Joseph Moore Magruder and inherited Windsor following the death of her mother. The property remained in the Magruder family until its donation (1.84 acres) to the State of

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Mississippi in 1974.<sup>14</sup> At this time, Windsor Ruins came under the administration of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

#### EARLY PRESERVATION EFFORTS

In 1970 the Port Gibson – Claiborne County Historical Society in cooperation with the Magruder family attempted to preserve the columns by “sandblasting, waterproofing, and removal of cedar trees atop the capitals.”<sup>15</sup> This effort included painting patches of exposed brick with watered-down Portland cement in an effort to protect the columns from weathering. Unfortunately, the Portland, being much harder and more impermeable than the bricks and original lime and sand mortar, has trapped moisture within the bricks causing deterioration and spalling of the brick faces. Another attempt at protecting the columns prior to state acquisition, however, has proven to be much more successful. Convex concrete caps were applied on the tops of the twenty-three remaining column capitals, effectively keeping rainwater from entering the column interiors.<sup>16</sup> Endeavoring to clean up the site before state acquisition, the Magruder family removed the fire debris from within the column enclosure using a front-end loader and backhoe, and piled the debris material a few yards north of the columns.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps to create an additional opening wide enough to bring the heavy equipment inside the column enclosure, one of the column bases on the north side was razed at ground level, resulting in the present configuration of twenty-three complete and five partial columns.

#### DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY ADMINISTRATION

Soon after state acquisition, the Department of Archives and History contracted with the firm John Milner Associates, Inc. to conduct an archaeological study of the mansion site. The resulting report, *A Final Report on Archaeological Investigations, Historical Research, and Architectural Analysis for Windsor Ruins Historic Site, Claiborne County, Mississippi*, provides a baseline analysis of the lost mansion’s footprint (FIGURE 2). The

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Milner report demonstrates the potential for retrieving archaeological information from the ruins, despite the disturbance caused by the removal of the fire debris. The state-owned property adjacent to the mansion site (approximately 1.74 acres) has not been investigated archaeologically. This property has the potential to yield important archaeological information about dependency structures associated with the mansion and about the Union army's occupation and use of the house in 1863. As discussed above, Daniell family correspondence indicates the possible presence of Union soldiers' graves in the vicinity of the mansion.<sup>18</sup>

When the State of Mississippi acquired the Windsor property, the site included an abandoned three-room, wood frame house, possibly a tenant house, located beside the cistern on the north side of the column enclosure. The date of the tenant house's construction is not known; Milner and Associates personnel examined the house and found that it might have been built before the 1890 fire, noting that main house debris scavenged after the fire had been used in repairs to the tenant house, but apparently not in its initial construction.<sup>19</sup> By the mid-1990s, the tenant house was beginning to collapse and was demolished in 1996.

#### ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

All of the known architectural drawings and photographs of Windsor perished in the 1890 fire. As a consequence, reconstructions of the mansion's appearance were based upon written descriptions until the discovery of a Civil War-era sketch of Windsor (Figure 3). The house was one of only a few antebellum Southern mansions incorporating a peripteral (continuous) colonnade encompassing most of the structure. The visual effect of Windsor's twenty-nine Corinthian columns must have been impressive. A person approaching Windsor from the Bruinsburg Road would have beheld a grand façade, with as many as seventeen of the columns visible at once. The elegant cast iron stairways would have augmented the building's temple-like appearance and provided a pedestal effect. Existing examples of peripterally colonnaded houses include Dunleith (twenty-six columns, c. 1855-1857) at Natchez (the sole remaining peripterally colonnaded house in Mississippi) and Oak

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Alley (twenty-eight columns, 1848) at Vacherie, Louisiana. Both Dunleith and Oak Alley are constructed in the Doric order in contrast to Windsor's more elaborate Corinthian style.<sup>20</sup>

The remarkable discovery in the early 1990s of a Union soldier's 1863 sketch of Windsor (FIGURE 3), done during Grant's Vicksburg Campaign invasion, reveals some of the house's exterior details while bringing other architectural elements into question. Jennifer Baughn, Chief Architectural Historian for the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, described the sketch as follows:

"While not the work of a professional, the drawing clearly indicates a number of important characteristics of Windsor that were previously unknown. Showing the familiar massive columns atop their paneled bases and topped by lightly sketched capitals, the drawing also reveals that the house was much more eclectic and flamboyant than expected. Composed of a rectangular block and a rear service wing, and encircled by a peripteral two-tiered gallery supported on massive fluted Corinthian columns atop paneled pier bases, the house was further heightened by a pyramidal roof--probably of tin--accentuated by an octagonal belvedere topped by what appears to be a flared pyramidal roof. On the drawing, the balustrade encircling the house at both levels appears to be simple with straight wooden balusters, in contrast to the lacy ironwork so familiar in the ruins. Windows on the [main] floor -- flat-headed as would be expected in the Greek Revival style -- appear to stretch to the floor level, providing easy access to the porch from every room in the house. Surprisingly, the sketch indicates that the [third] floor windows had round heads -- an Italianate detail -- and further that the belvedere windows had the pointed heads of the Gothic style. The cornice itself displays a combination of styling, with what appears to be a classical dentil course above a cornice of brackets or modillions that is more Italianate in its character. Chimneys that look stuccoed and paneled in a similar way to the column piers pierced the roof on both the side slopes of the main block and on the porch slope of the rear wing."<sup>21</sup>

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Perhaps the most striking thing about the 1863 sketch is the absence of the two south exposure exterior cast iron stairways. The artist's attention to other details while omitting these important architectural components is puzzling. The Milner report's measured drawing of the Windsor floor plan indicates four exterior stairways and shows stone footing supports where the stairways would have rested upon the ground (FIGURE 2). According to the Milner report, the exterior stairways varied in width: west (front) 17 feet 6 inches; main block north and south 13 feet; and ell south 14 feet 3.5 inches.<sup>22</sup> Part of the stone footing supports for the north side stairway are visible today, although the stone supports for the west stairway appear to have been lost during site development. A sunken farm road running parallel with the south line of columns is close enough to the south side of the ruins to have obliterated traces of the footings for the two south exposure stairways. The farm road presumably developed in the early twentieth century after the removal of the stairways.

That twenty-three of Windsor's columns remain standing one hundred and fifty years after their construction is a testament to sound engineering in their design and execution. The six partial columns all collapsed during or shortly after the fire that destroyed the house, perhaps pulled down by falling roof beams. There is no evidence suggesting that any columns have fallen since 1890. By the time of Windsor's construction, the structural requirements for brick column design were well established. The enormous columns (40 feet high and measuring 3 feet 6 5/8 inches in diameter at the base) stand upon paneled brick plinths 10 feet high and 4 feet 8 inches square, which in turn rest upon a below-ground brick chain wall 5-7 brick courses deep and 4.72 feet wide at the top. The sides of the chain wall are stepped out in pyramid fashion to a base width of 6.89 feet. Under each column, the chain wall expands to accommodate the dimensions of the plinth bases.<sup>23</sup> The below-ground footing is critical for structural stability, since each column (including capital, column, and plinth) weighs an estimated 49,200 pounds (24.6 tons).<sup>24</sup> Each iron capital weighs approximately 1,200 pounds and is comprised of numerous interlocking parts including a two-piece cap (upon which rested the entablature lintel

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supporting the roof), a multiple-piece decorative floral urn, and a notched base ring. The base ring notches served as the template for the fluting that extended the length of the columns.<sup>25</sup>

Windsor's main three-story building was square in plan view, measuring 64 feet 2 inches on each side. The service ell measured 59 feet x 26.5 feet. The galleries on the main block and ell were approximately 9 feet deep. The Milner archaeological report provides information about the building's ground floor layout, with a central west-east hallway flanked by three rooms on the north and south sides (FIGURE 2). At ground level, the load-bearing brick walls of these rooms were approximately 18 inches thick and the inner and outer surfaces of the walls were covered with a layer of stucco. The brick flooring was also covered with stucco. Where the flooring covered the chain wall, the bricks were mortared in place. Elsewhere, the floor bricks were installed without mortar. The interior flooring bricks were laid in simple side-by-side and end-to-end patterns directly on the clay ground surface, which had been leveled and prepared prior to construction. Where the floor extended under the galleries, the brick paving pattern changed to herringbone, extending to the outer edge of the column bases. The central hallway was approximately 16 feet wide. The excavations showed that the size of the rooms decreased from west to east, with the two west rooms measuring 23 feet x 21.5 feet and the two east rooms measuring 16 feet x 21.5 feet. The service ell had two ground floor rooms, with the west room measuring 31 feet x 23 feet and the east room measuring 21.5 feet x 23 feet. These load-bearing ground floor walls reveal the approximate configuration of the rooms on the second (main) and third floors. The construction material for the walls above the ground floor is not known. The upper walls may have been brick, but Townsend et al. note the possibility of wood framing in the upper walls. The type of wood used is also speculative; however, the archaeologists recovered a small section of charred cypress tongue-in-groove flooring in the excavation of the north gallery. The piece may have come from the second floor gallery. Whatever their composition, the upper wall exteriors were probably covered in stucco. The archaeologists also located the brick footings for chimneys centered along the north and south walls of the six main block rooms. The two ground floor rooms in the ell each

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had somewhat more substantial chimney footings along the north wall, with the fireplace in the east room having possibly served as a bake oven. All chimneys were recessed into the walls to present a smooth, uncomplicated exterior surface adjacent to the columns.<sup>26</sup>

There was no archaeological evidence for the locations of interior staircases. For these and other interior details, we must rely on a floor plan sketch of the house's layout based upon a description by Smith Coffee Daniell IV, which appeared in a 1974 *Clarion Ledger-Jackson Daily News* article (FIGURE 4). According to Daniell, who lived in the house as a child, a circular staircase on the second floor at the east end of the central hallway provided access to the third floor. A kitchen occupied the service ell's ground floor. An enclosed staircase at the eastern end of the ell connected the kitchen to the dining room. Daniell indicated that a dumbwaiter also connected the kitchen and dining room. In the main block, the ground floor included a school room, doctor's office, dairy, commissary, and two storage rooms. On the second or main floor, accessed by gallery stairways, the rooms included two parlors, a bedroom, study, library, and bathroom. The third floor was comprised of five bedrooms and a bathroom. Three bedrooms occupied the ell's third floor above the dining room, giving Windsor a total of nine bedrooms.<sup>27</sup>

Daniell's recollection of interior bathrooms on the second and third floors is corroborated by the archaeological study. The Milner archaeologists found evidence of an elaborate drainage system (FIGURE 2), a part of which apparently carried sewage away from the house. At the northwest corner of the ell, two vertical drains emptied into a horizontal brick box drain that ran along the base of the north side of the ell and emptied into an arched culvert at the northeast corner of the ell. The culvert extended twelve feet to the north to discharge into an open wooden trough that angled away to the northeast, extending some forty feet into a field. These two drains may have serviced the second and third floor bathrooms, which Daniell's floor plan shows in the northeast corner of the main block. In a similar drain complex at the southeast corner of the ell, two apparent sewage drains emptied into a brick box drain extending northward along the base of the east side of the ell to join the

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other box drain at the northeast corner of the ell and empty into the aforementioned arched culvert. These last two drains may indicate a possible servant's bathroom in the east end of the ell (Daniell's floor plan does not show a bathroom in this area) or perhaps the drains were for the removal of kitchen refuse. Each of the two drain complexes also incorporated a single downspout for rainwater. The downspout associated with the drain complex at the northwest corner of the ell emptied into a buried brick box drain, which ran into the cistern located approximately 15 feet north of the ell. Another downspout at the northeast corner of the main block also fed into this cistern. A rainwater downspout leading into the drain complex at the southeast corner of the ell emptied into a buried brick box drain that fed a cistern located some 25 feet southeast of the southeast corner of the ell. The archaeologists also uncovered a buried box drain that apparently carried overflow from the north cistern to the arched culvert at the northeast corner of the ell.<sup>28</sup>

For the operation of indoor toilets, which were not uncommon by the middle of the nineteenth century, the plumbing system would have relied upon gravity to bring water into the bathrooms and subsequently carry refuse further down into the house's drainage system. This indicates the likely presence of a rainwater holding tank in the upper part of the house. As noted above, at least part of the rainwater runoff from the Windsor roof was captured by the drains leading to two cisterns. Other roof drains may have been designed to bring rainwater into a holding tank beneath the roof. In Maddox's 1971 nomination, she states that the bathrooms "were supplied with rainwater piped from the attic, where it was stored in tanks eight feet wide, twenty feet long, and five feet deep." Although the statement isn't footnoted, she probably learned this from Thomas Daniell Magruder, whom she interviewed in 1971. Aside from the attic, another possible location for the holding tank (or tanks) was within the cupola or belvedere. J. L. and Mary Ritchey stated that Smith Coffee Daniell IV told them the cupola was an open-topped cistern, apparently disguised to appear as a cupola or belvedere when viewed from ground level. In her reconstructive oil painting of Windsor, done in consultation with Daniell, Mary Ritchey depicts the cupola as a square or rectangular structure with no visible roof (FIGURE 5). Unfortunately, Daniell's floor plan

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does not include the cupola or any indication of the use of space above the third floor.<sup>29</sup> Adding to the mystery surrounding Windsor's appearance, the faux rectangular cupola depicted in Mary Ritchey's painting is strikingly different from the roofed cupola in the 1863 sketch. Also of interest with regard to the cupola, the Milner archaeologists found pieces of miniature iron capitals matching the larger capitals atop the columns. Townsend et al. speculate that these small capitals sat atop miniature columns supporting the cupola roof.<sup>30</sup>

#### WINDSOR IN PHOTOGRAPHS AND MOVIES

Any discussion of Windsor Ruins would be incomplete without mention of the site's appearance in two major motion pictures: "Raintree County" (1957, starring Montgomery Clift and Elizabeth Taylor) and "Ghosts of Mississippi" (1996, starring Alec Baldwin, James Woods, and Whoopi Goldberg). The lost mansion's solemn grouping of columns, standing forty feet high in eerie isolation, has also inspired legions of professional and amateur photographers. Perhaps the first serious photographer to capture Windsor Ruins on film was the writer Eudora Welty, who visited the site on a winter day in 1942. Among the shadows playing across the dirt road in the foreground is Welty's own silhouette. (FIGURE 6)

#### CURRENT CONDITION

The twenty-three complete columns and five partial columns of Windsor Ruins are in guardedly stable condition. Although the columns have stood since the 1890 fire, enduring tropical storm force winds on numerous occasions, moisture and other effects of weathering have caused deterioration in the brick and mortar. Large areas of the original fluted plaster are missing from the brick columns and from the plinths. Attempts by a local historical group to waterproof some of the exposed brick using Portland cement resulted in trapped moisture that has damaged some of the columns' exterior bricks. A preliminary structural study carried out in 2009 led to the initiation of a more thorough analysis of the columns by the Department of Archives and History in 2012.<sup>31</sup>

The composite cast iron column capitals, though weathered, are only minimally affected by rust. Most of

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the column capitals are missing some of their ornamental pieces, in part due to past growth of vegetation sprouting from seeds in bird droppings. The expansion of the roots and stems of these plants forced pieces of the capitals to become dislodged. To keep this damage at a minimum, the Department of Archives and History hires a bucket truck crew to inspect the capitals on an annual basis to remove any plants beginning to sprout. The placement of convex concrete caps on the column capitals in 1970 by the previous owner effectively sealed the column tops and has been a major factor in the preservation of the columns thus far.

Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Anonymous map [ca. 1720]: *Carte du cours de la rivière du Mississipi depuis les Illinois jusqu'à son embouchure*. (HMC Karpinski series F 05-1-2. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des cartes et plans, Ge DD 2987, 8819 B).

<sup>2</sup> Cross et al. *Atlas of Mississippi* pp. 5-6; Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 1, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 5, 11, 14.

<sup>4</sup> Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 14, 52-57, 83, 84, Appendix A "Inventory of the Estate of Smith Coffee Daniell II." In 2012, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks (MDWFP) acquired the property surrounding Windsor Ruins, creating an opportunity for an archaeological survey to locate the mansion's outbuildings. The MDWFP property includes the Freeland/Daniell Cemetery, which is located on one of the Indian mounds in the Windsor mound group, approximately 800 yards north of the Ruins.

<sup>5</sup> Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 5, 8, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Townsend et al. *A Final Report* Figure 20; Mimi Miller personal communication 6/2/2010.

<sup>7</sup> Winschel *Triumph & Defeat* 57-58.

<sup>8</sup> Letter transcript from E. M. Ross, January 25, 1867 (Eliza Magruder Skinner Ross, sister of Smith Coffee Daniell II's mother Priscilla) in Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 9, 14, "Appendix A"; Maddox *Windsor Ruins*. Presumably, the Union burials at Windsor were later reinterred in national cemeteries such as the ones at Natchez and Vicksburg. Maddox *Windsor Ruins*.

<sup>9</sup> Letter transcripts from E. M. Ross, July 9, 1867; July 25, 1868; September 4, 1871 in Townsend et al. *A Final Report* "Appendix A."

<sup>10</sup> Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 11, 23.

<sup>11</sup> Maddox *Windsor Ruins*; Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 24-25.

<sup>12</sup> Adams *Historic Structures Report* 1; Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 75.

<sup>13</sup> R. L. Ritchey, personal communication 8/26/2010.

<sup>14</sup> Maddox *Windsor Ruins*.

<sup>15</sup> Maddox *Windsor Ruins*.

<sup>16</sup> The name "Fred Masterson" and partially legible date "1/?/1970" were inscribed in the wet concrete of

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one of the column caps, providing a general date for this work.

<sup>17</sup> R. L. Ritchey, personal communication 6/11/2010. Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 49.

<sup>18</sup> Winschel *Triumph & Defeat* 57-58. Letter transcript from E. M. Ross, January 25, 1867 (Eliza Magruder Skinner Ross, sister of Smith Coffee Daniell II's mother Priscilla) in Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 9, 14, "Appendix A."

<sup>19</sup> Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 85.

<sup>20</sup> Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 37, 71, 72. The mansion known as "The Forest," located approximately five miles south of Natchez, was probably the earliest peripterally colonnaded mansion in Mississippi. Constructed c. 1816, The Forest burned in the mid-1850s. Todd Sanders personal communication 3/14/2011 and 3/16/2011.

<sup>21</sup> Jennifer Baughn, personal communication 6/15/2010. R. L. Ritchey reports that, if Windsor had a tin roof, no trace of it remained among the house rubble in the early 1970s. Personal communication 8/26/10.

<sup>22</sup> Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 46, 73, 75.

<sup>23</sup> Hahn, *2013 Archaeological Investigations at Windsor Ruins*.

<sup>24</sup> Estimate of column weight is from Walsh "Ruins of Windsor Engineer's Report" Calculation sheet 2.

<sup>25</sup> Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 78, Figure 21; Walsh "Ruins of Windsor Engineer's Report" Calculation sheets 1 and 2.

<sup>26</sup> Hahn, *2013 Archaeological Investigations at Windsor Ruins* 9; Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 37, 40, 42-43, 45, 46, 48, 49, 73, 75, 78. An oil painting by Port Gibson resident Mary Ritchey (see FIGURE 5), done in consultation with Smith Coffee Daniell IV, indicates the presence of only four chimneys in the main building, while the Milner archaeology revealed footings for six chimneys in the main building. One further note about the chimneys: In her description of the 1863 sketch, Baughn notes the chimneys (three of them) shown on the ell roof's south exposure, a detail that is contradicted by the Milner archaeological report, which revealed that the ell chimneys were on the north wall and would have protruded from the roof's north exposure. Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 49.

<sup>27</sup> McIntire "Windsor Castle Recalled."

<sup>28</sup> Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 45, 48, 50, 52, 58, 78, 80, Figure 11.

<sup>29</sup> R. L. and Mary Ritchey, personal communication 6/11/2010; Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 80.

<sup>30</sup> Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 76.

<sup>31</sup> Davidson *Windsor Ruins Historic Structures Report*; Maddox *Windsor Ruins*.

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

### Bibliography

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Anonymous map [ca. 1720]: *Carte du cours de la rivière du Mississippi depuis les Illinois jusqu'à son embouchure*. (HMC Karpinski series F 05-1-2. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des cartes et plans, Ge DD 2987, 8819 B).

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Letter: Lt. George Smith to Hattie Smith, (Camp between Port Gibson and Black River, Mississippi) May 6, 1863. Collections of Al Nummer, Reno, Nevada, reproduced in part in Townsend et al. *A Final Report* 20. McIntire, Carl "Windsor Castle Recalled" (*Clarion Ledger-Jackson Daily News*, May 18, 1974).

Maddox, Dawn *Windsor Ruins National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form* [listed 11/23/1971] (National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior 1971).

"May 1<sup>st</sup> 1863 Residence Near Bruinsburg [sic] Miss." (Sketch by Union soldier Henry Otis Dwight, 20<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry, on file in the Archives Library, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

Townsend, Alex H. et al. *A Final Report on Archaeological Investigations, Historical Research, and Architectural Analysis for Windsor Ruins Historic Site, Claiborne County, Mississippi* (Prepared for the Department of Archives and History, State of Mississippi by John Milner Associates, Inc., August 1978).

Walsh, John "Ruins of Windsor Engineer's Report" (Draft manuscript on file, Mississippi Department of Archives and History 2010).

Winschel, Terrence J. *Triumph & Defeat: The Vicksburg Campaign* (Savas Beatie LLC, New York 2004).

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

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**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** 021-ALC-1001 NR ML \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** 2.1

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 31.859167                      Longitude: -91.130278

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is the legal description of the Windsor Ruins property owned by the State of Mississippi and administered by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, described as follows:

Beginning at the most southwesterly column of said Windsor Ruins, go S89°28'W for 27.0 feet to the point of beginning. From said point of beginning go S68°40'E for 220.0 feet to a concrete monument; thence go N21°25'E for 365.1 feet to a concrete monument; thence go N68°40'W for 220.0 feet to a concrete monument; thence go S21°25'W for 365.1 feet to a concrete monument and point being the point of beginning.

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**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is the legal description of the Windsor Ruins property owned by the State of Mississippi and administered by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: James F. Barnett, Jr. \_\_\_\_\_  
organization: Mississippi Department of Archives and History \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number: 400 Jefferson Davis Blvd. \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town: Natchez \_\_\_\_\_ state: MS \_\_\_\_\_ zip code: 39120 \_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail jbarnett@mdah.state.ms.us \_\_\_\_\_  
telephone: 601-446-6502 \_\_\_\_\_  
date: 1/24/2014 \_\_\_\_\_

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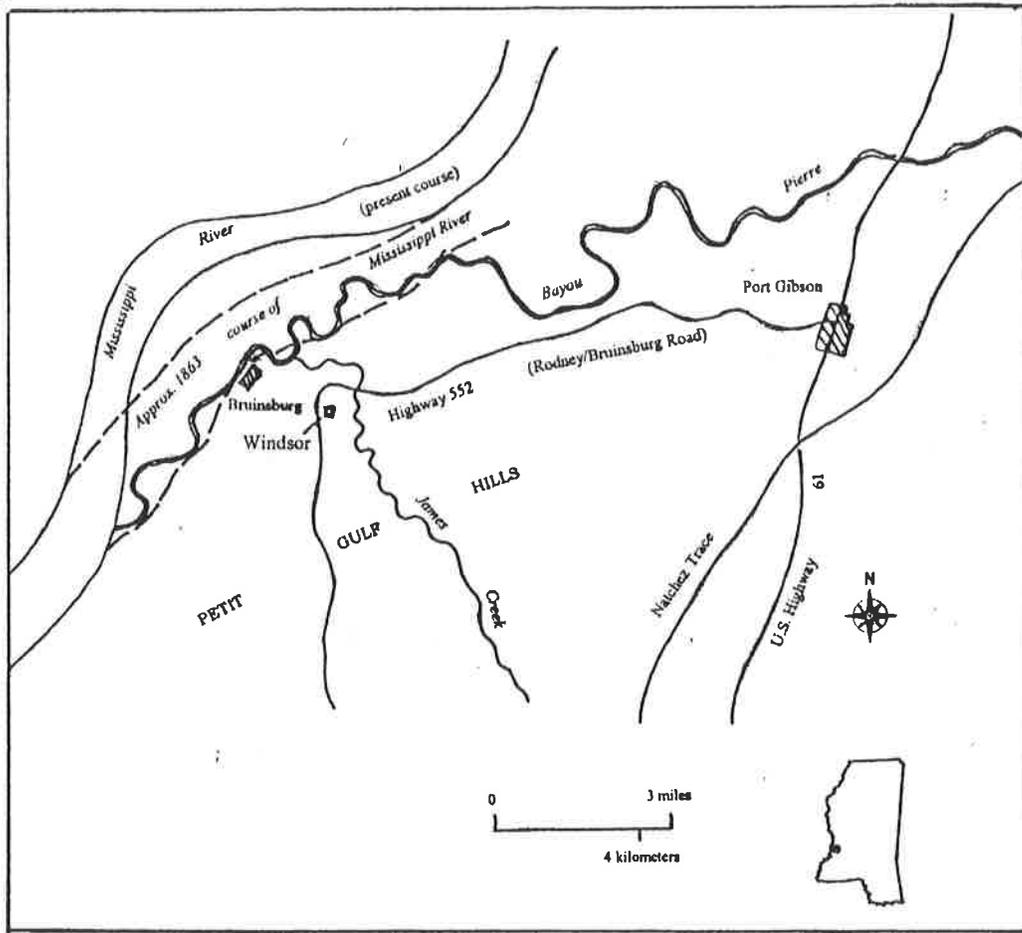
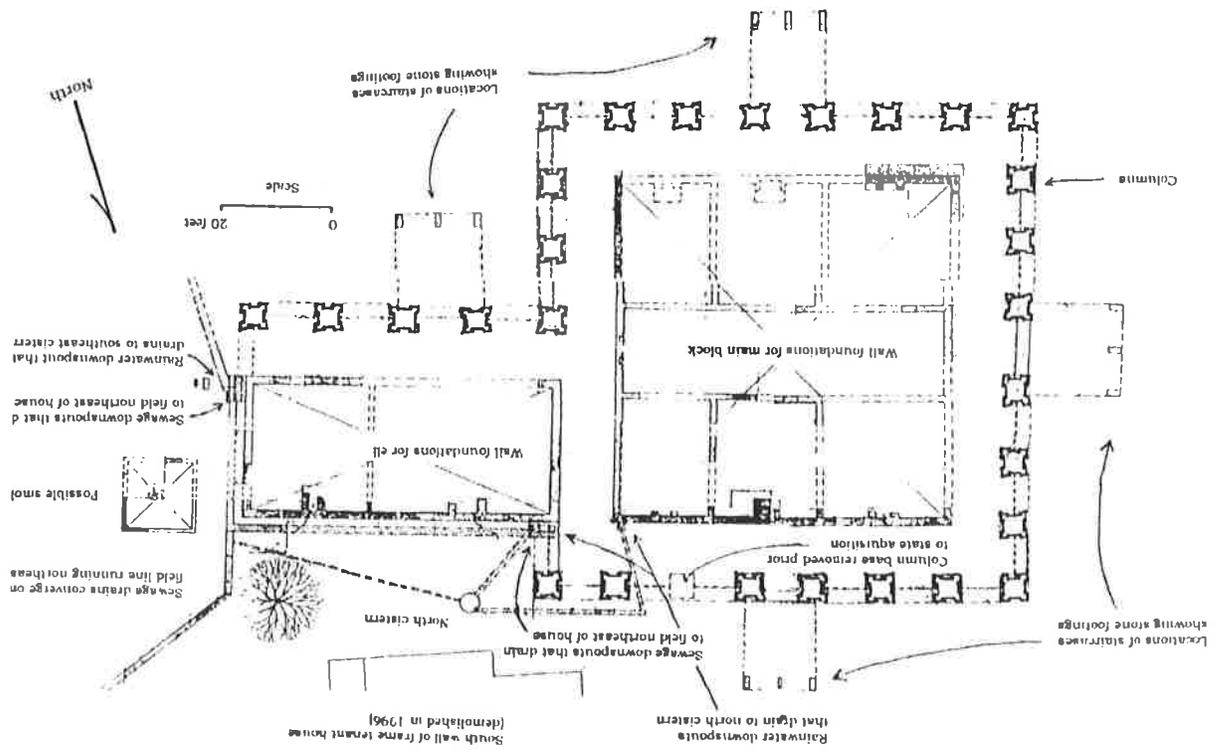
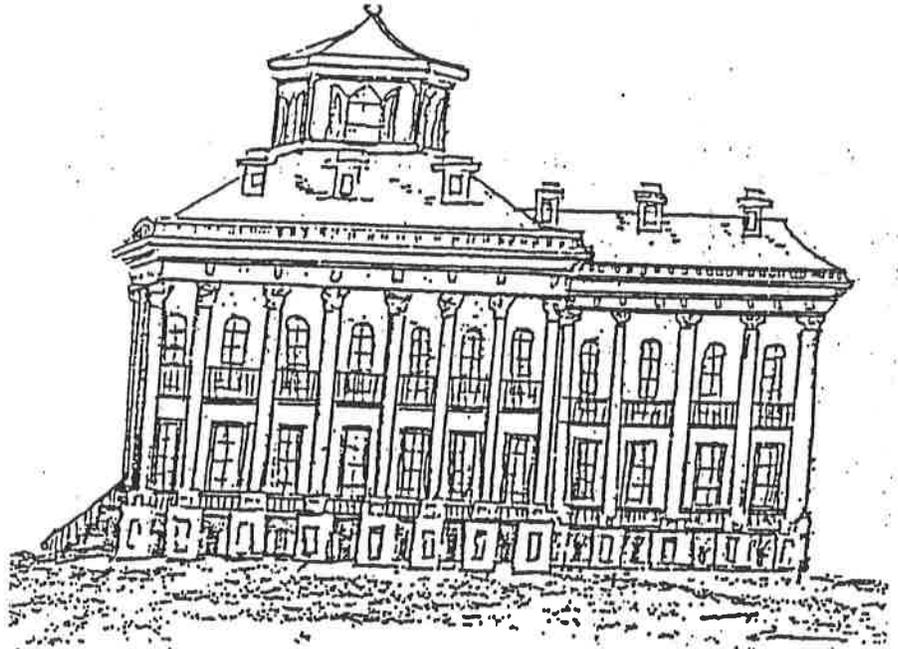


FIGURE 1. The Windsor Ruins area.

Figure 2. Windsor Ruins architectural plan based upon Townsend et. al.

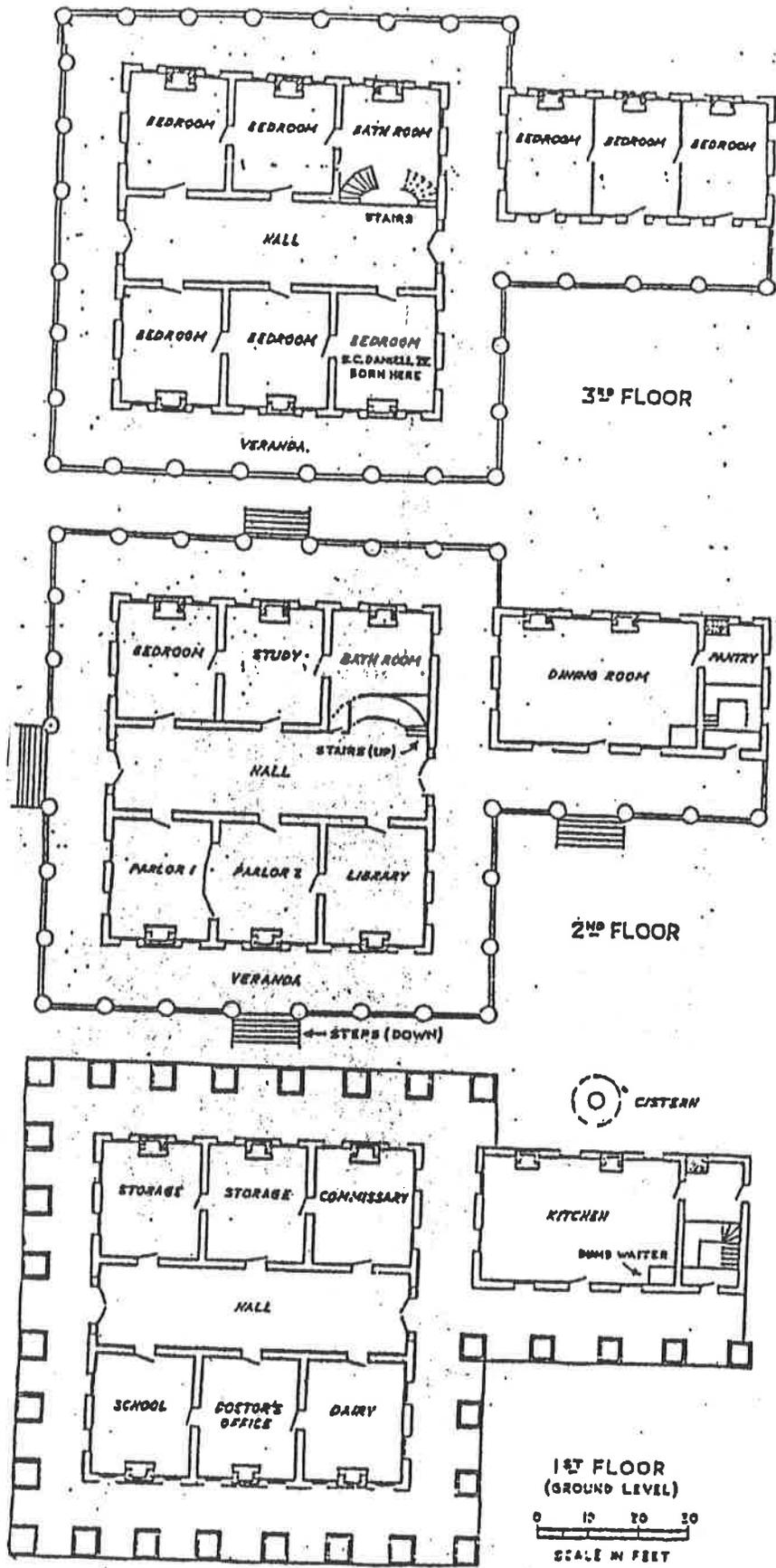




May 1<sup>st</sup> 1863  
Residence near Bowling Green

Sketch of Windsor by Union Soldier during Grant's Vicksburg Campaign.  
Mississippi Department of Archives

Figure 3



FLOOR PLAN OF WINDSOR as drawn by Smith C. Daniell, IV, from memory and from measurements made of the ruins. The original plans were burned when the house was destroyed. The first floor was at ground level. There was a smaller fourth floor which contained only a ballroom, never finished and above this was the observation tower.

Figure 4

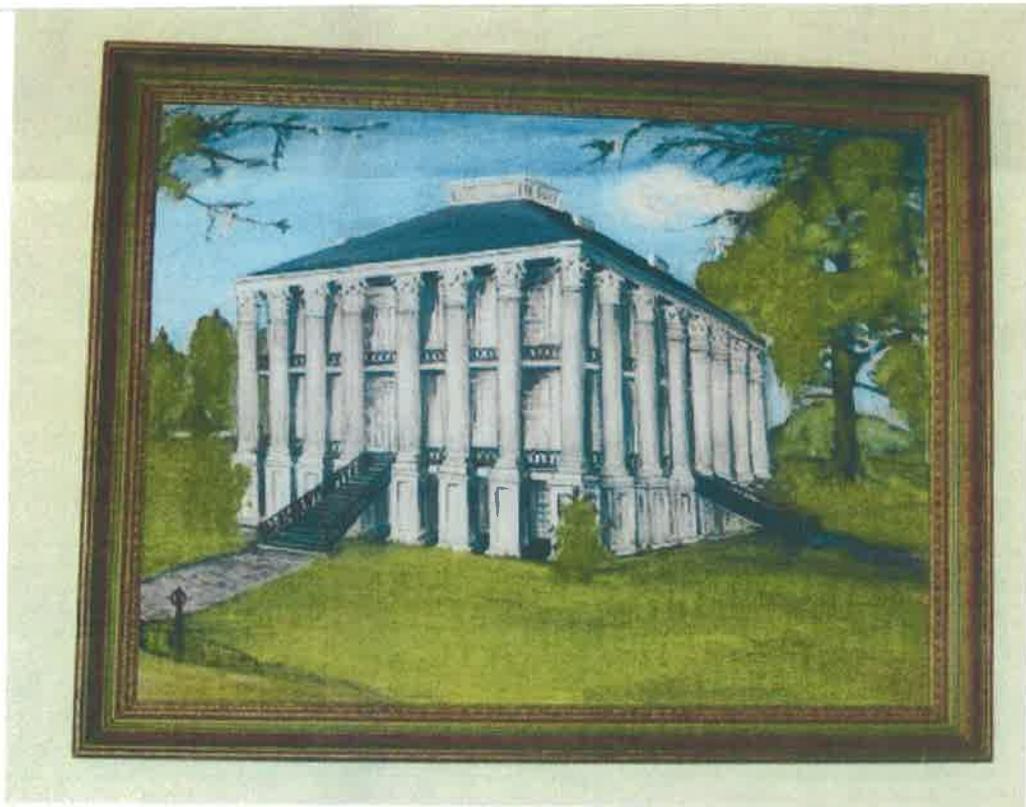


Figure 5



Figure 6