

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH06 73960

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 1 1979
DATE ENTERED	5

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

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\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION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	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> 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 DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Chancery Clerk  
Adams County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

Natchez

STATE

Mississippi 39120

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Statewide Survey of Historic Sites

DATE

1979

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

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi 39205

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD             RUINS  
 FAIR              UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### 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			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Photography
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

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

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

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## 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

DATE

Owner of Cottage Gardens

February 20, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

816 Myrtle Avenue

(601) 445-5797

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Natchez

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. Belmont  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

7/5/77

ATTEST: James H. Belmont  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

7/3/79



COLTRAE GARDENS

Natchez, Mississippi

COLTRAE GARDEN, 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 COLTRAE 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 THROUGHOUT MID-1830s. THE STRUCTURE ALSO FEATURES A DRY MORT MASONRY OF BRICK WALLS WHICH SUPPORT TERRACES. THE INTERIOR FEATURES A HALF-CIRCULAR STAIR, FANCY LIGHTED DOORWAYS AND CONCURRED SLIDING DOORS. THE HOUSE WAS RESTORED IN 1963.

ACCORDING TO LOCAL TRADITION, COLTRAE GARDEN WAS BUILT BY DON JOSE VIDAL, THE LAST SPANISH-APPOINTED ACTING GOVERNOR OF THE Natchez DISTRICT. IT PRESUMABLY WAS SUBSTANTIALLY REMODELED WHEN PURCHASED BY ADAM BOWER IN 1828.

EARL NOUNMAN, A WELL KNOWN LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER, LIVES IN THE HOUSE IN HIS PRIVATE USE. HIS PHOTOGRAPHIC CAREER, ALONG WITH HIS FATHER HENRY C. NOUNMAN, PRODUCED APPROXIMATELY 75,000

