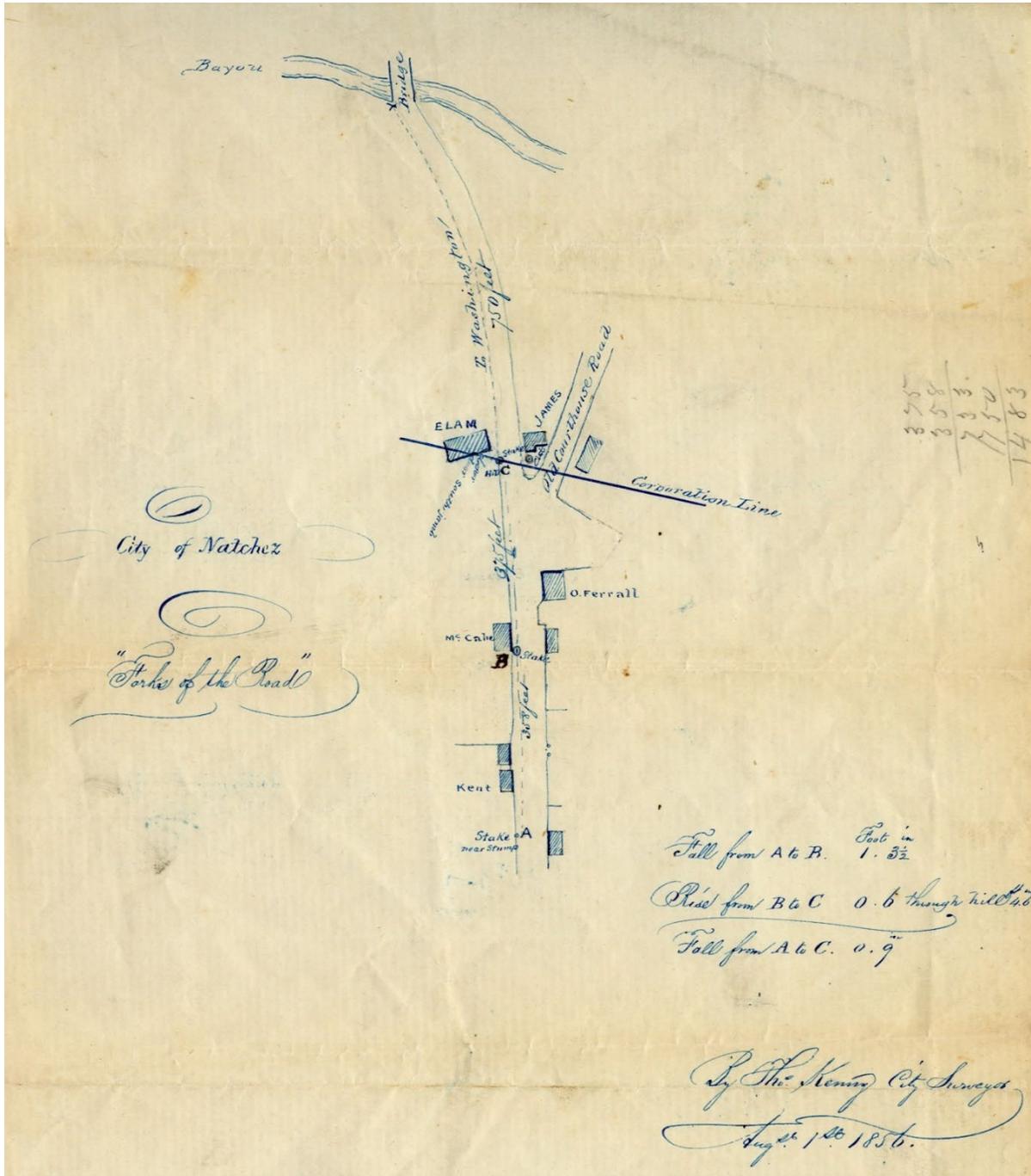


# National Park Service Cultural Landscapes Inventory 2022



**Forks of the Road**  
Natchez National Historical Park  
100 Percent Submission

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## Inventory Unit Summary

*The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:*

### *Purpose and Goals of the CLI*

The methodology for the research and documentation for the Forks of the Road Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) is set forth in the *National Park Service Cultural Landscapes Inventory Professional Procedures Guide, January 2009*.

The purpose of a CLI is “to document the qualities and attributes of a cultural landscape that make it significant and worth preserving.”<sup>1</sup> According to the procedures guide,

“...it is an evaluated inventory of all landscapes having historical significance that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places or are otherwise managed as a cultural resource through a public planning process and in which the National Park Service (NPS) has or plans to acquire any legal interest.”

Cultural Landscapes are defined as “settings that human beings have created in the natural world.” They are “intertwined patterns of things both natural and constructed...”<sup>2</sup>

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) is an evaluated inventory of all significant landscapes in units of the national park system in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire, any enforceable legal interest. Landscapes documented through the CLI are those that individually meet criteria set forth in the National Register of Historic Places such as historic sites, historic designed landscapes, and historic vernacular landscapes or those that are contributing elements of properties that meet said criteria. In addition, landscapes that are managed as cultural resources because of law, policy, or decisions reached through the park planning process, even though they do not meet the National Register criteria, are also included in the CLI.

The CLI serves three major purposes. First, it provides the means to describe cultural landscapes on an individual or collective basis at the park, regional, or service-wide level. Secondly, it provides a platform to share information about cultural landscapes across programmatic areas and concerns and to integrate related data about these resources into park management. Thirdly, it provides an analytical tool to judge accomplishment and accountability.

The legislative, regulatory, and policy direction for conducting a CLI includes:

*National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)).* Each Federal agency shall establish...a preservation program for the identification, evaluation, and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places...of historic properties...

*Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003.* Sec. 3(a)...Each agency with real property management responsibilities shall prepare an assessment of the current status of its inventory of historic properties required by section 110(a)(2) of the NHPA...No later than September 30, 2004, each covered agency shall complete a report of the assessment and make it available to the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Secretary of the Interior... (c) Each agency with real property management responsibilities shall, by September 30, 2005, and every third year

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<sup>1</sup> Page, Robert R., National Park Service Cultural Landscapes Inventory Professional Procedures Guide. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 2009), IN-2.

<sup>2</sup> Page, Robert R., National Park Service Cultural Landscapes Inventory Professional Procedures Guide. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 2009), IN-2.

thereafter, prepare a report on its progress in identifying... historic properties in its ownership and make the report available to the Council and the Secretary...

*The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation* (Sec. 110 (a)(2). Programs Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Standard 2: An agency provides for the timely identification and evaluation of historic properties under agency jurisdiction or control and/or subject to effect by agency actions.

*Management Policies 2006*. 5.1.3.1 Inventories: The Park Service will (1) maintain and expand the following inventories...about cultural resources in units of the national park system... Cultural Landscapes Inventory of historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and historic sites...

*Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22 issued pursuant to Director's Order #28*. As cultural resources are identified and evaluated, they should also be listed in the appropriate Service-wide inventories of cultural resources.

#### *Scope of the CLI*

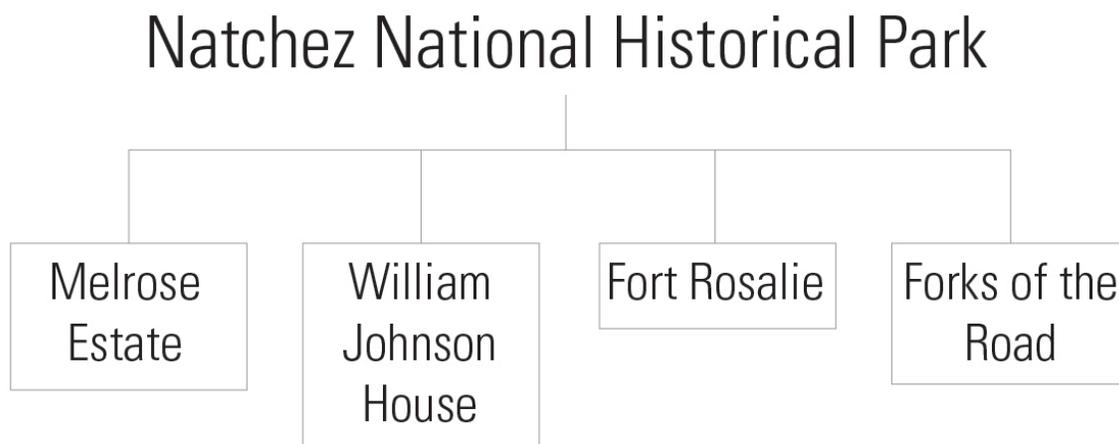
CLI data is gathered from existing secondary sources found in park libraries, archives, and at National Park Service (NPS) regional offices and centers, as well as through on-site reconnaissance. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's overall integrity and an assessment of the landscape's overall condition. Deliverables provided include a site plan created in ArcGIS 10.6. The CLI also identifies treatment recommendations to prevent further deterioration of vulnerable landscapes and provides data that will be entered into the Facility Management Software System.

## Section 1: Inventory Unit Information

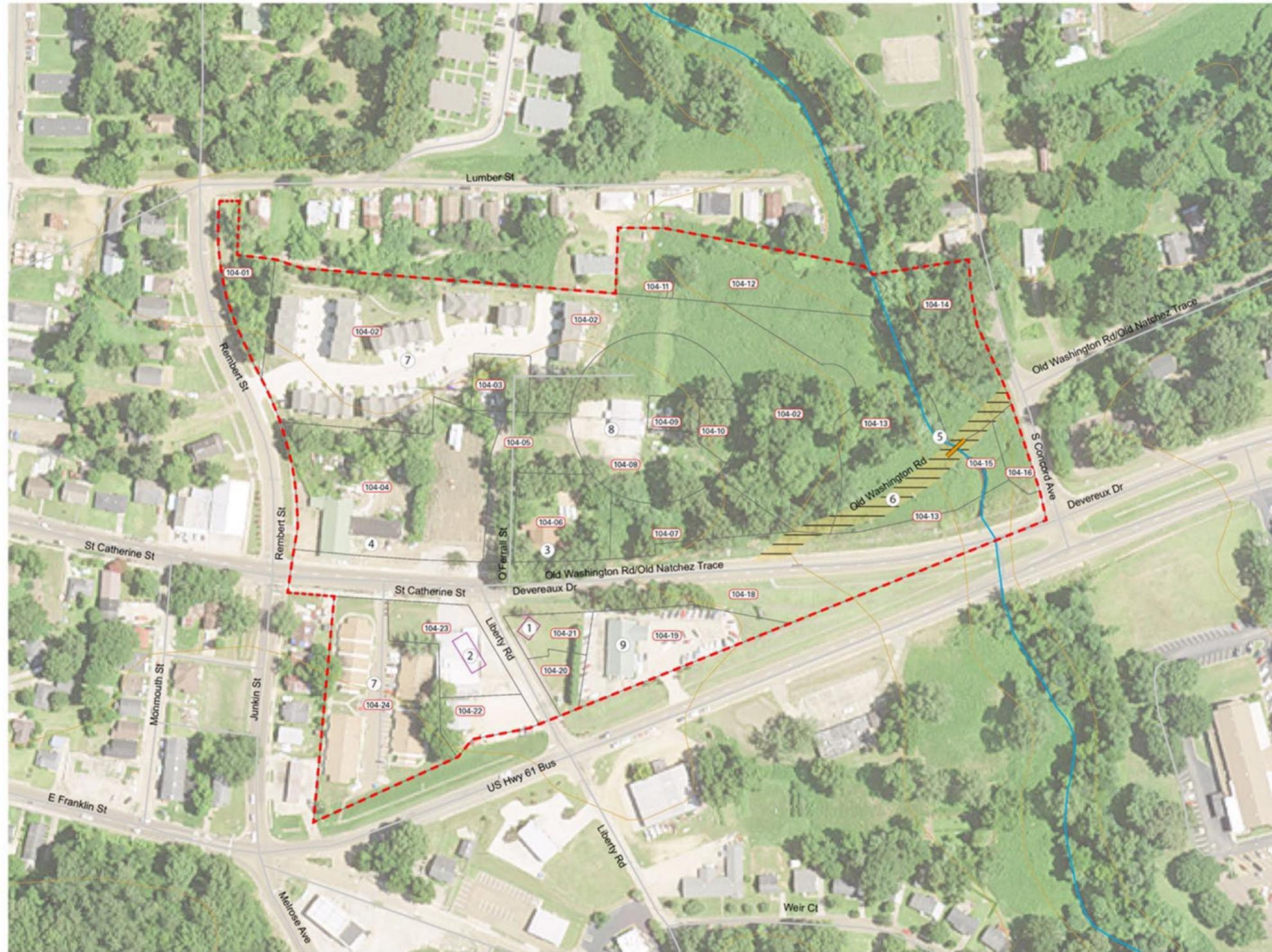
<b>Cultural Landscapes Inventory Name:</b>	Forks of the Road (FotR)
<b>CLI Identification Number:</b>	976165
<b>Parent Cultural Landscape Inventory Name:</b>	Natchez National Historical Park
<b>Parent Cultural Landscape Inventory Number:</b>	976165
<b>Subunit Alpha Code:</b>	NATC
<b>Administrative Unit:</b>	Natchez National Historical Park
<b>Park Name:</b>	Natchez National Historical Park
<b>Park Alpha Code:</b>	NATC
<b>Park Organization Code:</b>	5565
<b>Inventory Unit Size:</b>	18.7 acres
<b>Property Level:</b>	Landscape
<b>Park Report Cover Image:</b>	Forks of the Road Survey, by Thomas Kenney, Surveyor, City of Natchez
<b>Park Report Cover Date:</b>	1856

### *CLI Hierarchy Description*

Natchez National Historical Park was established by Congress in 1988. It currently includes five units: Melrose, William Johnson House, Fort Rosalie, Forks of the Road, and the Natchez Visitor Center. Of these, the first four are considered cultural landscapes.



*Figure 1* CLI Hierarchy Graphic showing NATC as the parent landscape and the four landscapes that comprise the park (STA 2000).



**Forks of the Road  
Cultural Landscapes Inventory**  
Natchez National Historical Park  
Natchez, MS

**Legend**

- NATC Boundary
- Historic Markets
- 1888 Bridge
- Spanish Bayou
- State Roads
- Old Washington Roadbed
- Historic Circulation
- Contours
- Parcel Numbers
- Parcels

- ① Site of the James Brothers Stand (Market 1)
- ② Site of Isaac Franklin/O'Ferrall stands (Market 2) / Existing Auto Shop
- ③ Site of Elam Stand/O'Ferrall Residence (Market 3)
- ④ St. Catherine Slave Hospital site
- ⑤ Forks of the Road Bridge
- ⑥ Former Old Washington Roadbed
- ⑦ Apartments
- ⑧ Radio Station
- ⑨ Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses church

**Notes**

1. On this site map, the configuration of Old Washington Road is approximate and based on aerial photography, the ForR Bridge HSR (59), and the 1853 and 1855 maps. The configuration appears somewhat differently in various reports and drawings, and an accurate configuration should be established with future documentation efforts.

**Sources**

- 1. Aerial Photography, NAIP/NPS, December, 18, 2014.
- 2. Boundaries and GIS Data, National Park Service 2017.
- 3. "NATC Proposed Boundary Addition," NPS Land Resources Program Center, August 2012.
- 4. "Survey and Plan of the Road to St. Catherine," 1853 Map.
- 5. Thomas Kenney, Surveyor, "Forks of the Road Survey," City of Natchez, 1856.
- 6. Warren Carnuth, "Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Slave Market (22AD987) in Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi," Panamerican Consultants, Inc., 2007.
- 7. Panamerican Consultants, Inc., Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., WFT Architects, PA, "Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report," Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020.

**Drawn By**

Ashley Braquet, ArcMap and Illustrator, 2021.



Figure 2. Forks of the Road Site Map



Figure 3. Forks of the Road Site Map Enlargement

***Inventory Unit Description:***

The legislative boundary of Forks of the Road (FotR) is 18.7 acres and is roughly bounded by Rembert Street and Junkin Street to the west, St. Catherine Street/Devereux Drive to the south, South Concord Avenue to the east, and numerous residential properties to the north (**Figure 2**). The legislative boundary encompasses the original location of the Forks of the Road slave market (FotR market); the Forks of the Road Bridge (FotR Bridge) that crosses Spanish Bayou; and several twentieth-century developments including the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses church, two low-income apartment complexes or subsidized housing developments, a mental health facility, a radio station, and several other businesses including a muffler shop and a window tinting shop.

Historically, there were three notable stands which comprised the FotR market. These will be referred to as Markets 1 – 3 throughout the document. This is further clarified in the section called “How the Market Changed Hands (see **Figures 2 and 19**).

Market 1 refers to the location east of Liberty Road and south of St. Catherine Street, which was operated by the James Brothers. This property currently contains wayside panels, interpretive materials, and an outdoor sculpture.

Market 2 refers to the location west of Liberty Road and south of St. Catherine Street, which was operated by Isaac Franklin, Rice Ballard, and later James O’Ferrall (Isaac Franklin/O’Ferrall stands). This property currently contains two auto shops—Solar Eclipse Window Tinting and Natchez Exhaust Services muffler shop.

Market 3 was located north of St. Catherine Street, directly opposite from Market 1, and was operated by R. H. Elam. This was later the O’Ferrall Residence and is currently a mental health facility.

The parcels of the FotR market (**Figure 3**) are located at the intersection of Liberty Road and St. Catherine Street/Devereux Drive, about 1.5 miles east of the Mississippi River and the City of Natchez. Historically, Old Washington Road intersected with St. Catherine Street. Old Washington Road connected Natchez with the Old Natchez Trace, a historic forest trail used by Native Americans and early European settlers and explorers to travel from Natchez to Nashville—roughly 440 miles away—which was often used to traffic enslaved people to and from the FotR market.

Currently, NATC is completing a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) on the FotR Bridge, the O’Ferrall Residence (Market 3), and the auto dealership located west of Liberty Road (Market 2).

The Forks of the Road Bridge—MDAH (MS-SHPO) stated is significant at a local, and possibly state level for Criterion C Engineering as the circa 1888 bridge is considered “a rare example of an arched brick bridge.” It is also likely that the bridge is eligible for listing on the local level under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development, as a Natchez Democrat article described it as “a public bridge planned and paid for by the Board of Supervisors and taxpayers of Adams County.”<sup>3</sup>

O’Ferrall Residence – this building is potentially eligible under Criterion D as an undisturbed nineteenth-century landscape, and potentially under Criterion B based on possible connection to John O’Ferrall, a known trader. This circa 1870 Greek Revival style residence, which is located at 217 O’Ferrall Avenue, post-dates the period of significance for the FotR site,<sup>4</sup> however, this is

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<sup>3</sup> Barry White, “Re: Old Washington Road Bridge, Natchez, Adams County,” Correspondence with Jeff Mansell, MDAH, September 1, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Barry White, “Re: 217 O’Ferrall St., Natchez, Adams County,” Correspondence with Jeff Mansell, MDAH, July 29, 2020.

the site of the Elam Stand, which was active from about 1856 up to the Civil War. This site has also been undisturbed since around 1870.<sup>5</sup> This stand is visible on the 1856 map, north of Washington Road. (Market 3)

Auto Dealership [auto shop] – this DOE is still under review by MDAH. (Market 2)

Historically, Liberty Road (sometimes referred to as Old Courthouse Road or Second Creek Road) forked off from Washington Road (now Old Washington Road), and the FotR market was situated within the fork of these two roads. Washington Road, now referred to as Old Washington Road connected Natchez with the Natchez Trace (this path is often called the Old Natchez Trace).<sup>6</sup> Historically, the site was just beyond the city corporation line; west of that line was St. Catherine Street and east of the line was Washington Road. The site is located about 0.15 miles (approximately 800 feet) west of Spanish Bayou, which is a significant landscape feature within the legislative boundary.

The National Register nomination states that “the market site occupied a prominent knoll, straddling what was then the city’s eastern corporation line.”<sup>7</sup> The site is still situated several feet higher than the highways that bound the north and south portions of the site, although there have been several alterations to the historic topography according to a previous property owner, Clifton McCarstle

a significant amount of soil had been removed from the area by the previous land owner, N.M. Steed. McCarstle reported that the elevation of the area had been similar to that of the church parking lot located just east of the project area and it had extended all the way to a steep cut bank bounding Liberty Road. This would mean that close to two meters of soil had been removed. N.M. Steed was contacted and he graciously visited the site and discussed what he remembered about the modification of the project area. He confirmed that in the late 1970s he had removed the soil to provide a parking area for a business he was considering opening. He sold the material as fill to a local real estate developer named Johnny Masters...the grade of the project area is flat east of Liberty Road until the steep cut bank of the church parking lot is encountered. The only exception to this is a narrow strip of land at the north end of the city’s property where a small dirt road connects the church parking lot with Liberty Road.<sup>8</sup>

The Market 1 site occupies the western portion of a triangle of land that lies between the start of a divided highway. The site is a grassy lot with a Leyland cypress hedge on the eastern border. A scattering of crape myrtles and a bench border the northern edge of the lot, while a kiosk and a small outdoor sculpture of shackles in concrete mark the southern terminus. A pull-off parking area and several small wayside signs line the western edge of the site. No bounding fences or gates exist. The site is low-density and most adjacent development is vehicular-driven in character, with large trees nearby. The one remaining historic building is the O’Ferrall Residence, which was originally the location of Market 3.

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<sup>5</sup> Carruth, “Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market,” 9.

<sup>6</sup> The current location of the Natchez Trace Parkway is located approximately one mile southwest of the Forks site by way of Liberty Road, and it was relocated around the 1930s when NPS was creating the current Natchez Trace Parkway route. Panamerican Consultants, Inc., Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., WFT Architects, PA. “Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report,” Natchez National Historical Park. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020, 3 and 23.

<sup>7</sup> Barnett and Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Section 7, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Warren Carruth and LeeAnne Wendt *Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Slave Market (22AD987) in Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi* (Prepared for the city of Natchez, PO Box 1185, Natchez, Mississippi 39121 and Mangi Environmental Group, 7915 Jones Branch Drive, Ste. 2300, McLean, Virginia 22102 by Panamerican Consultants, Inc. 924 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. East, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35404, Paul D. Jackson, RPA, Principal Investigator, PCI Project No. 26391, June 2007) 28.

### ***Significance Summary***

The period of significance for the FotR market begins in 1833, with the City Ordinance that eliminated large-scale trading within city limits. Trading took place at the Forks of the Road site before 1833, however this spurred a more formalized development at the forks of Washington and Liberty roads, a spot which was located just beyond the city corporation line. The sale of enslaved people ended in 1863, during the Civil War, when Union troops arrived in Natchez. The slave pens at the FotR market were dismantled so that the materials could be used to construct Fort McPherson. During this time, there were barracks for the US Colored Troops (USCT) set up at the FotR market site. The period of significance ends in 1865, a year after Union troops ceased to occupy the town.

Forks of the Road is significant under Criteria A, B, C, and D, and under Criterion Consideration F. Forks of the Road is significant as the second largest slave market site in the Lower South during the antebellum period, where the trafficking, forced migration, and of enslavement of humans occurred. It is also significant for its association with the collective group of African American enslaved people who were sold at the Forks of the Road, and for its association with those interstate traders who bought and sold enslaved people. The property is likely to yield information important to the history of the interstate slave trade, and it is significant as a site which holds “tremendous emotional power”<sup>9</sup> and symbolic value.

### ***Integrity Summary***

Integrity of the Forks of the Road site has been determined by evaluating and comparing the current conditions of landscape features—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association—with their conditions during the period of significance, from 1833 to 1863. It has also been determined with guidance by National Register Bulletin 40, “Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluation, and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields. STA visited Forks of the Road on October 16, 2019 and documented the site’s existing conditions. Documented features included the area that is currently interpreted, the parcel containing the abandoned roadbed, and the brick bridge over Spanish Bayou.

Based on the evidence observed and consideration of historic records and historic context, the Forks of the Road site today retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. In addition, the site holds highly meaningful significance to the collective history of our country, and it possesses the strong capability for its significance and integrity to be revealed and interpreted. For these reasons, Forks of the Road should be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Forks of the Road Bridge is also eligible as a locally significant structure with a separate historic context that post-dates the slave market and US Colored Troops period of significance. Additionally, it retains integrity of materials, design, and workmanship.

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<sup>9</sup> Mark Barnes, “Re: Formats,” Correspondence with Jim Barnett, NATC, November 27, 2006.

***Condition***

During the authors' site visit on October 16, 2019, the site was photographed and recorded to document a baseline inventory. Landscape characteristics and features present on site were small-scale features, including an outdoor sculpture of shackles in concrete, wayside signage, and a kiosk; natural systems and features including Spanish Bayou, which was historically crossed by coffles of enslaved people en route to Forks of the Road slave market via the Natchez Trace; circulation including the former roadbed of Washington Road;<sup>10</sup> and archeological sites.<sup>11</sup> The 2007 archeological study, the 2010 Environmental Assessment, and the 2009 Boundary Adjustment Study reveal that there is sufficient archeological, documentary, and cartographic evidence to prove integrity and significance of the Forks of the Road site.

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<sup>10</sup> Panamerican Consultants, Inc., Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., WFT Architects, PA. "Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report," Natchez National Historical Park. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020, 1-2.

<sup>11</sup> "Final Environmental Assessment for the Boundary Adjustment Study of Forks of the Road," Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, June 2010, 14.

## Section 2: Concurrence Status

**Inventory Unit Completion Status:** Pending

### Completion Status Explanatory Narrative

The National Park Service initiated a Cultural Landscapes Inventory for the Forks of the Road site. John Welch, Herpreet Singh, and Ashley Braquet, historic landscape architects with Suzanne Turner Associates, conducted the initial site visit on October 16, 2019. Braquet conducted a second site visit on November 16, 2020. Braquet researched and wrote this document. Welch and Singh contributed formative input to the included discussions of Significance and Integrity. In addition, Singh wrote and edited a significant portion of the Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity. The NPS contact is David Hasty, from the Southeast Regional Office.

### Concurrence Status:

**Park Superintendent Concurrence:** Pending

**Park Superintendent Concurrence Date:** (mm/dd/yyyy)

**National Register Eligibility:** Pending SHPO concurrence

**National Register Eligibility Concurrence Date:** (mm/dd/yyyy)

### National Register Concurrence Explanatory Narrative:

Forks of the Road is not currently listed on the National Register. A National Register nomination form was completed by the SHPO for City of Natchez to list lot numbers 104-23 (90), 104-21 (91), and 104-20 (92) under the National Historic Landmark (NHL) designation in April of 1999. This nomination was denied initially because of objections from property owners. At that point, most of the site property was under private ownership, and a small portion was within the right-of-way owned by the City of Natchez and the Mississippi Department of Transportation. Jim Barnett, the Historic Properties Division Director at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) questioned whether the publicly owned portion could be listed. In April of 2003, further correspondence shows that Jim Barnett had obtained the support of the property owners and he revised and resubmitted the nomination.<sup>12</sup> Correspondence from Barnett stated that the nomination was not accepted because Criterion D, which states that a property has yielded or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history, could not be justified. At that time, he was encouraged to resubmit to the NRHP based on Criteria A and B.<sup>13</sup> At the initial meeting, park staff informed researchers that the NHL nomination was rejected due to lack of above-ground identifiable resources.

As a historical NPS park unit, the new parcels would be administratively listed in the NATC National Register listing boundary (01000276) once they are acquired by NPS. The CLI advocates for the addition of the Forks of the Road property as a contributing site within the Natchez National Historical Park National Register district. Based on a 2020 Determination of Eligibility, the Forks of the Road Brick Bridge has already been identified as potentially eligible under Criterion C for

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<sup>12</sup> "NHL Correspondence, 1999-2003." NATC, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interior Region 2, 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Jim Barnett, "Re: Forks," Correspondence with Kathleen Schmidt, MDAH, November 21, 2006.

Engineering at a local, possibly state, level of significance. The O'Ferrall property has been determined potentially eligible under Criterion D, as an undisturbed nineteenth-century landscape. And the Auto Dealership (auto shop) is still under consideration based on an additional 2020 Determination of Eligibility submitted by NPS.

**Concurrence Graphic Information**

**Concurrence Graphic:** Pending

**Concurrence Graphic Caption:** Pending

### Section 3: Geographic Information and Location Map

#### **Boundary Description**

The Forks of the Road legislative boundary comprises 18.7 acres. The Eastern boundary begins at 0 Concord Avenue (the intersection of Concord Avenue and Devereux Drive) and runs north to 64 South Concord Avenue. The northern boundary begins at 64 South Concord Avenue, and running west, includes property at 59 Partridge Lane, 0 Greystone Place, and a parcel at 0 Corner of Lumber Street and Rembert Street. The western boundary runs from 0 Corner of Lumber Street and Rembert Street to 0 St. Catherine Street, jogs east and south to 160 St. Catherine street. The southern border runs from 160 St. Catherine Street to 102 Liberty Road and extends to 105 Devereux Drive. The legislative site boundary contains the original sites of two slave markets, the site of a slave hospital and the extant historic bridge over Spanish Bayou, as well as several twentieth-century intrusions including two low-income or subsidized housing developments, a church, a radio station, and a car repair shop.

#### **Management Unit:**

Forks of the Road Unit

#### **Land Tract Numbers:**

The legislative boundary of the Forks of the Road CLI includes twenty-four tracts. Although the NPS may not own all property within the boundary, features within the boundary are described within this CLI. The parcels referred to in this inventory can be referenced on the Site Plan (**Figure 2**).

*The Unit consists of the following properties:*

(104-20), (104-21), (104-13), (104-17), (104-01),  
(104-16), (104-15), (104-06), (104-22), (104-23),  
(104-19), (104-04), (104-14), (104-07), (104-08),  
(104-09), (104-10), (104-05), (104-03), (104-12),  
(104-11), (104-02), (104-24), and (104-18).

#### **GIS File Name:**

20210302\_ForksoftheRoad  
20210315\_ForksoftheRoad\_2.5

#### **GIS File Description:**

This file contains the NATC Boundaries, a Forks of the Road Boundary, contours, state roads, waterways, and landscape features.

#### **States and Counties**

#### **State:**

Mississippi

#### **County:**

Adams County

**Location Map Graphic**

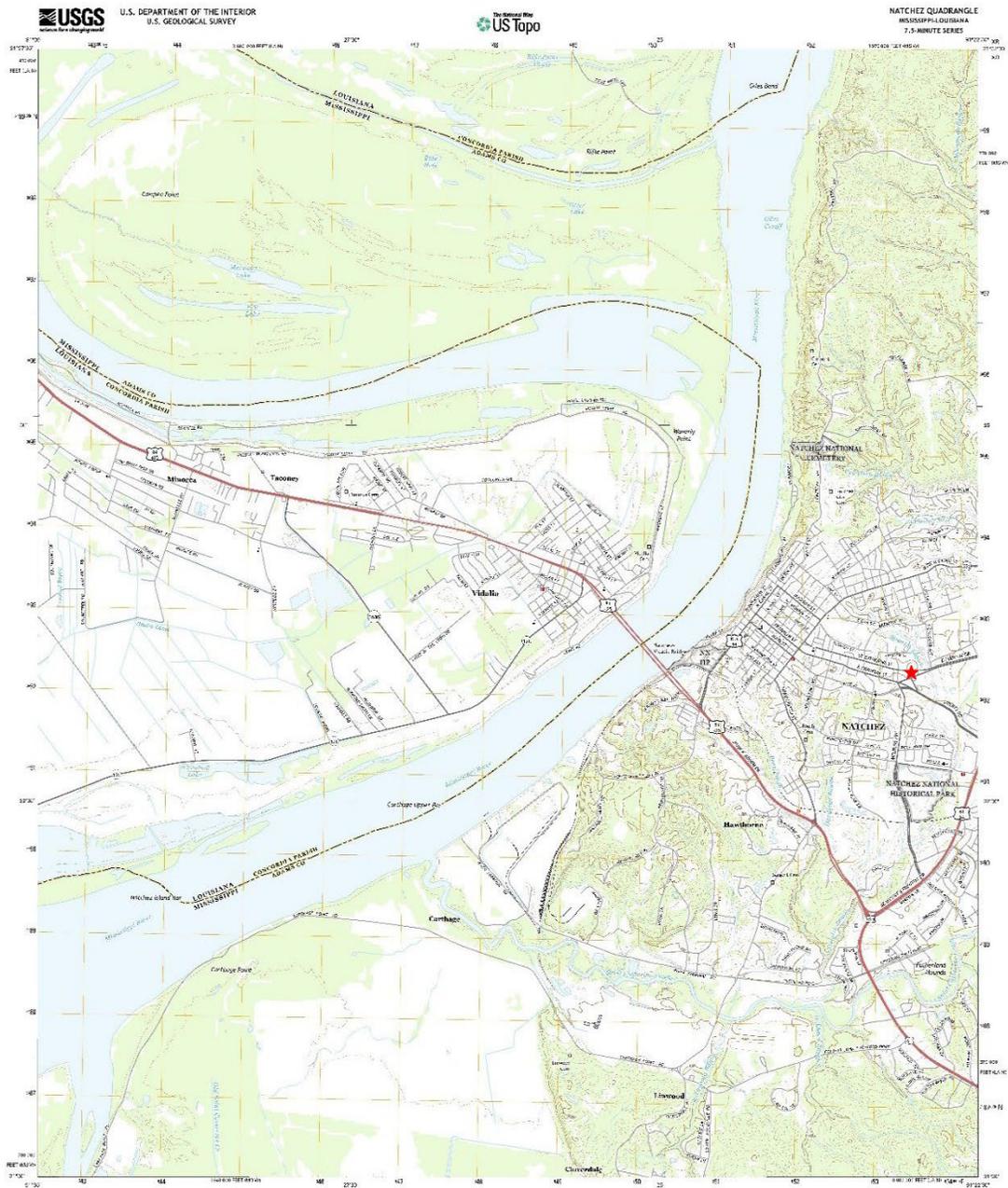


Figure 4. Forks of the Road is located in Adams County, Mississippi, on the east bank of the Mississippi River (USGS Map 2015).

**Boundary UTM**

<b>UTM Source:</b>	USGS Map 1:24000
<b>UTM Type:</b>	Area
<b>UTM Datum:</b>	Other (NAD 88)
<b>UTM Zone:</b>	15R
<b>Northing/Easting and Latitude/Longitude</b>	Point A Easting: 653189, Northing: 3492589 31.55813°N -91.38598°E
	Point B Easting: 653258, Northing: 3492142 31.55409°N -91.38532°E
	Point C Easting: 653600, Northing: 3492624 31.55839°N -91.38164°E
	Point D Easting: 653711, Northing: 3492133 31.55395°N -91.38055°E

## Regional Landscape Context

**Type of Context:** Physiographic

**Description:**

Natchez is located within the Mississippi Valley Loess Plains on the east bank of the Mississippi River. The legislative unit is located within the bluff hills, which consist of sand, clay, silt, lignite, and the area is capped by loess deposits. The bluffs that front the river on the east side begin south of St. Francisville, Louisiana, and run north to Vicksburg, Mississippi before rejoining the Mississippi River near Memphis, Tennessee.

**Context Type:** Cultural

**Description:**

The area around Natchez has a high degree of significance and integrity, with a large collection of extant antebellum and post-bellum properties in their original settings, and multiple antebellum properties that have been subdivided. Modern development is largely absent in the core of Natchez, but twentieth-century intrusions occur immediately outside of downtown. Highways 61 and 425 bisect the city but are not obtrusive, and their scale fits within the regional and local character of the area following the advent of automobile transport. In Adams County during the period of significance, much of the land was devoted to large cotton plantations. Today, commercial forestry operations cover about 75 percent of the county land, although some agricultural crops, including cotton, sorghum, and soybeans, are still grown here.<sup>14</sup>

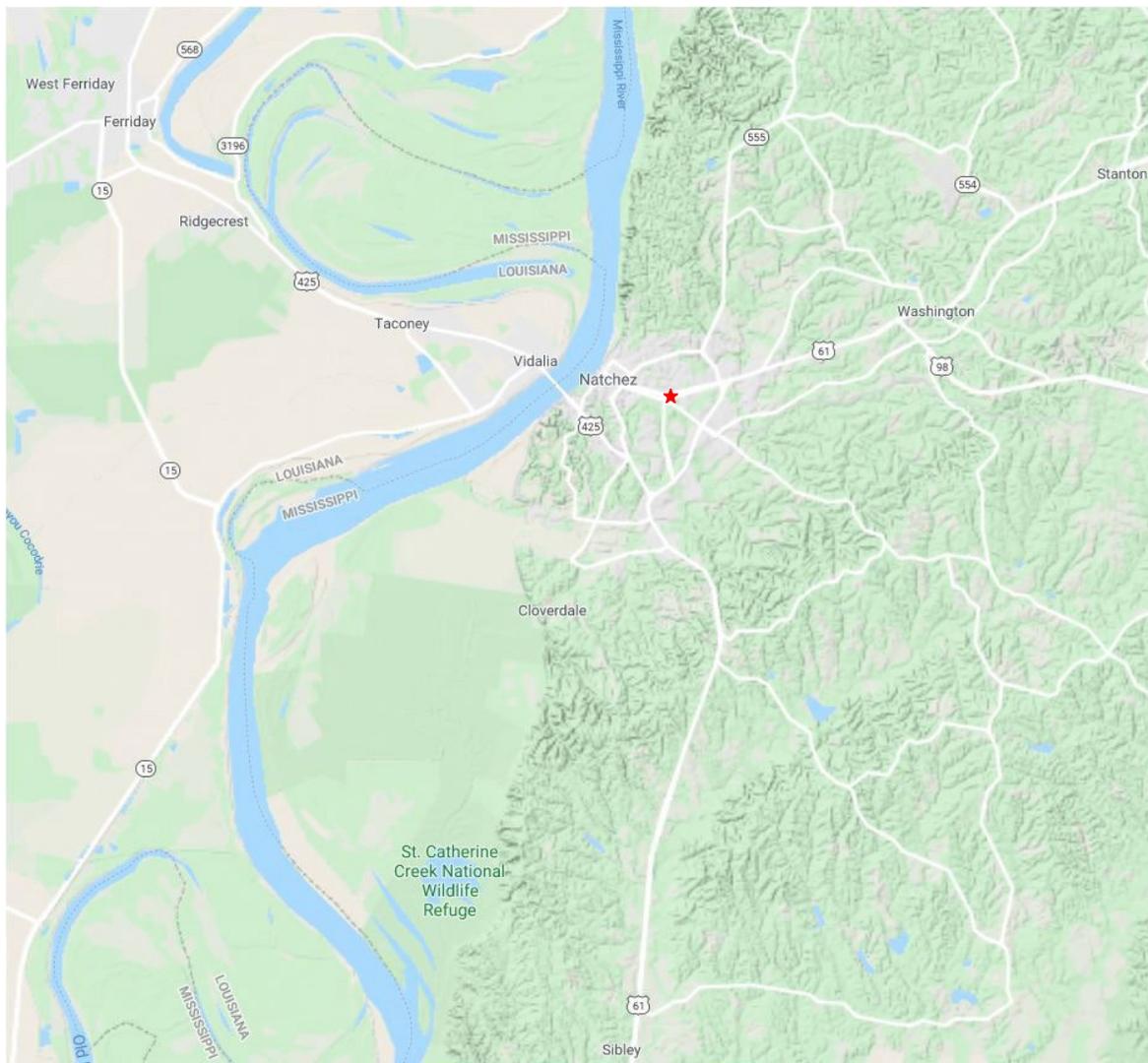
**Context Type:** Political

**Description:**

The Forks of the Road Unit is located in the City of Natchez, County of Adams, State of Mississippi. Forks of the Road is a cultural landscape within the Natchez National Historical Park, a unit of the National Park Service.

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<sup>14</sup> John E. Cornelison Jr., and Meredith D. Hardy, eds. With contributions by John E. Cornelison, Jr., Meredith D. Hardy, Brian Worthington, Vincas P. Steponaitis, Jim Barnett, Jessica McNeil, Jessica Fry, Michael E. Seibert, Alex Parsons, R. Stephen Kidd, Charles Lawson, Mercedes Harrold, Joseph Frank III "Smokeye," Jack Elliot, James A. Nyman, Clifton Hicks, and Michelle Gray, "Archeological Investigations of Fort Rosalie, Natchez National Historical Park Draft," National Park Service, Southeast Archeological Center. Tallahassee, FL, 2017, 9.



*Figure 5: Regional Landscape Context.* This Google map illustrates the regional location of Natchez Mississippi, with a change in topography to the loess plains east of the river. The Forks of the Road site is located east of downtown Natchez (Google Maps 2020).

## Section 4: Management Information

### General Management Information

**Management Category:** Category B: Should be Preserved and Maintained

An inventory unit meeting all of the following criteria: the inventory unit meets the National Register criteria; the inventory is compatible with the park's legislative significance. In 2017, legislation from the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress allowed for a boundary modification to NATC. The text in Section 119 authorized the park to "(1) acquire by donation or purchase from willing sellers' lands at the site of the historic Forks in the Road Slave Market, and (2) revise the boundary of the Natchez National Historical Park to include the land."<sup>15</sup>

**Management Category Date:** TBD

### Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

The Forks of the Road Unit meets the requirements of the management Category C, "May be Preserved and Maintained" because National Register Eligibility concurrence will be solicited upon completion of this CLI.



Figure 6 Draft map depicting adjacent lands within the new legislative boundary of FotR (Southeast Land Resource Program Center, NPS).

<sup>15</sup> Paul Cook, "H.R.244 - 115th Congress (2017-2018): Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017," *Congress.gov*, May 5, 2017, Accessed February 24, 2021, [www.congress.gov/bills/115/congressional-legislation/2017-05-05/house-bills/244?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22forks%22%22%7D&s=6&r=1](http://www.congress.gov/bills/115/congressional-legislation/2017-05-05/house-bills/244?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22forks%22%22%22%7D&s=6&r=1).

## Adjacent Lands Information

**Do Adjacent Lands Contribute:** Yes

### Adjacent Lands Description:

The legislative boundary of the site encompasses 18.7 acres (**Figure 6**). Many parcels within the legislative boundary were important during the period of significance, including sites where the enslaved were sold, a hospital for the enslaved, and the crossing over Spanish Bayou.

The Forks of the Road market was an open-air market where various slave pens belonging to multiple slave traders were scattered across several acres. There were three stands where the sale of enslaved people occurred. Market 1 was the James Brothers Stand (104-21, 104-20), Market 3 was the Elam Stand/O'Ferrall Residence (104-06) (**Figure 7**) and Market 2 was the Isaac Franklin/O'Ferrall Stand (104-23) (**Figure 8**). Currently, the Elam Stand/O'Ferrall Residence site is the site of the Southwest Mississippi Mental Health facility, which is located north of the James Brothers Stand at the FotR market site, on the corner of St. Catherine Street/Devereux Drive and Liberty Road. The Isaac Franklin/O'Ferrall Stand was located across from the James Brothers site, west of Liberty Road and currently houses Natchez Exhaust Services and other car-related businesses. These two properties are the subject of ongoing DOEs. The St. Catherine Hospital for the enslaved was located on the corner of Rembert and St. Catherine Streets, (104-04), which is currently an empty building (**Figure 9**).<sup>16</sup>

The northeast quadrant of the legislative property includes the Forks of the Road Bridge, which is the circa 1888 brick bridge that crosses Spanish Bayou. This area also includes several parcels that contain the historic roadbed of Washington Road. This site is overgrown with kudzu vine, which makes it difficult to discern specific features. Southwest of the bridge site, and east of the FotR site (within the triangle), is the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses church. A radio station is situated north of Devereux Drive in the circular parcel (104-08, 104-09, 104-10).

There are several housing developments on site. Stonehurst Arms II, LLC owns the complex that spans the area north of parcel 104-04 and east of the radio station (104-02); the low-income and subsidized housing that lies east of the radio station and west of Spanish Bayou was built in 2015. This complex is highly visible from the FotR Bridge site at Spanish Bayou. The Natchez Housing Authority owns parcel (104-24).

The writer Joseph Holt Ingraham noted that the enslaved were kept in "old unoccupied buildings, and often [in] tents or booths, pitched upon the common,"<sup>17</sup> some of which were likely just outside of the FotR legislative boundary. The NHL nomination notes that the FotR market would have likely resembled a "sprawling prison camp" as the slave masters would have needed areas to feed and shelter the enslaved people while they were waiting to be sold. The suburban estates Devereux, Monmouth, and Linden, which are still in existence, were all "within site" of the FotR market.<sup>18</sup> This seems discordant by today's standards, however, Davis stated that it would not have been difficult to relocate the slave markets if any of these wealthy estate owners had objected to the location of the markets. Instead, the market seems to have been "an attraction of sorts—a place close at hand for gentleman dandies, respected ladies, esteemed "nabobs," whites of the middling class, and just the plain curious who wanted to view the fresh crops of slaves [enslaved] brought in from Virginia."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Current property information was gathered through use of the Adams County Geoportal website and Google Maps.

<sup>17</sup> Jim Barnett and H. Clark Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Adams County, Mississippi, Natchez, MS: Mississippi Department of Archives & History, Revised October 17, 2008, Section 7, 8.

<sup>18</sup> Barnett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form*, Section 7, 8.

<sup>19</sup> Ronald L. F. Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez 1720–1880, Special History Study*, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Denver Service Center, 1993, 82.



*Figure 7* View of the O'Ferrall Residence, which was once the site of the Elam Stand. The O'Ferrall Residence is labeled on the 1886, 1892, and 1897 Sanborn maps, and it is present on all consecutive Sanborn maps (NATC 2020).



**Management Agreement** None

**NPS Legal Interest:**

Type of Interest: None—State Government Owned

Type of Interest: None—Privately Owned

**Explanatory Narrative:**

Plans and negotiations to purchase the remaining lands of the legislated boundaries continue.

**Public Access:**

Type of Access: Unrestricted

**Explanatory Narrative:**

Access to the Forks of the Road Unit is provided by public roads—US Highway 61, St. Catherine Street/Devereux Drive, and Liberty Road. The site is accessible at all times, as the area is not gated. The FotR site lies east of the Natchez Visitor Center, Fort Rosalie, and the William Johnson House, and north of Melrose (**Figure 10**).

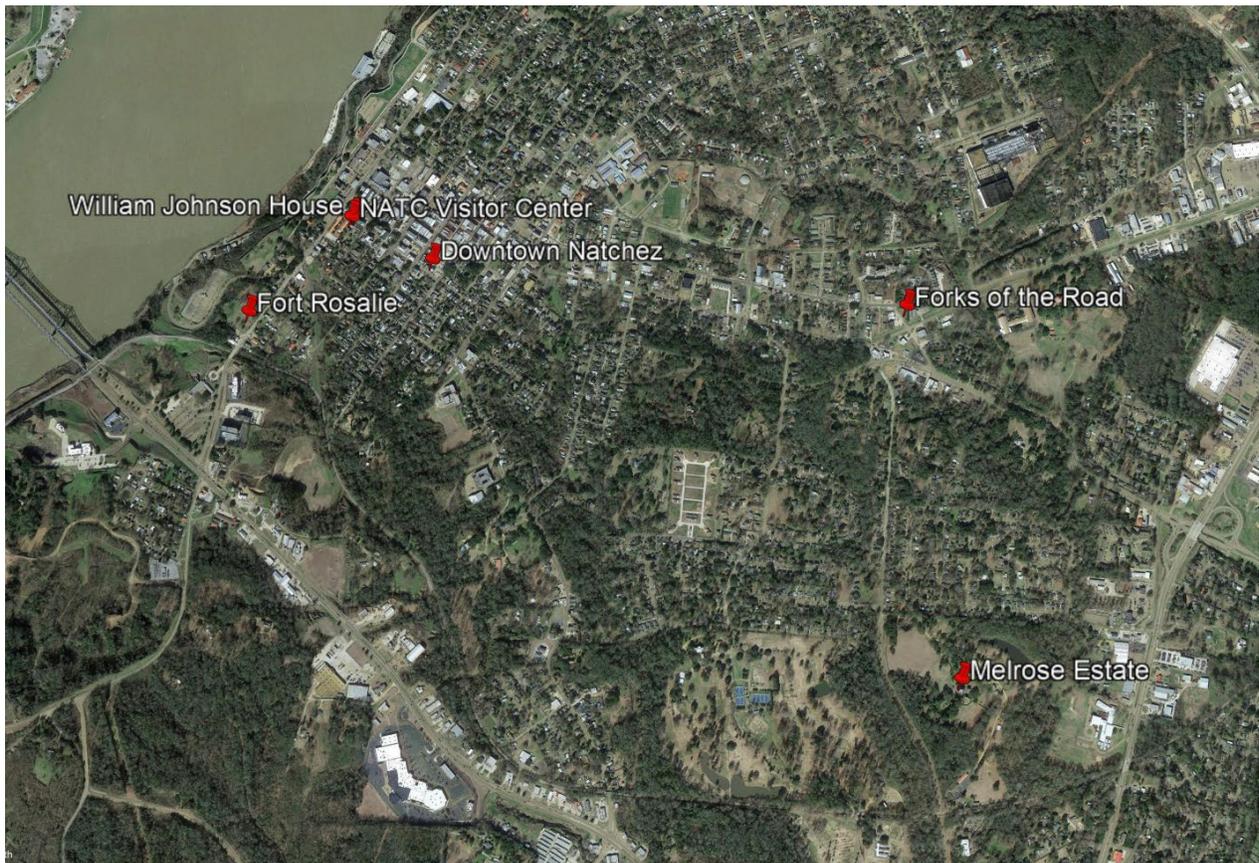


Figure 10 Natchez site map showing the sites within the park (Google Earth 2019, annotation by author).

## Section 5: National Register Information

### National Register Landscape Documentation:

**Entered – Inadequately Documented:** The inventory unit is within the boundaries of a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places but is not adequately documented in accordance with the findings of the CLI.

**Undocumented:** The inventory unit is not within the boundaries of a property determined to be eligible for the National Register.

### ***National Register Explanatory Narrative:***

In 2014, there were around 87,000 National Register listings, and only around 2,500 of these were representative of communities of color or associated with women.<sup>20</sup> Raymond W. Rast, a professor and historian who has worked with the NPS to advance the “American Latino Heritage Initiative,” wrote about the importance of the National Register in reflecting the diversity of our national heritage.

Admittedly, earlier generations of historians did ignore voices that seemed to be quieter, even silent, in the historical record: the voices of women, Native Americans, enslaved Africans, working-class immigrants, the poor, and almost anyone else other than wealthy white men who were prominent in politics, business, or the military. We now know that the stories we tell about the past are not complete if we only pay attention to the loudest voices.<sup>21</sup>

The staff at NATC has been an advocate for FotR since Friends of the Forks of the Road Society, Inc., met with them to discuss the importance of nominating the site as a National Historic Landmark.<sup>22</sup> In reviewing the decades of correspondence, one conversation in 2010 with Mark Barnes, senior archeologist at NPS, stood out. He wrote to Jim Barnett about Barry MacKintosh, who detailed the problems with the Black history sites nominated by the African-American Bicentennial Commission (ABC) that NPS listed in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement. Barnes pointed out that of the sites ABC nominated, “the NPS rejected most of these properties over the issue of “integrity.” He went on to say that he believed,

that what the NPS historians did not realize was that these eminent Black historians were looking at the “emotional integrity” of these sites, not the “integrity” of these sites as defined in the National Register bulletins. In short, the contract historian[s] were recommending sites which had tremendous emotional power for Black Americans, but which did not possess “integrity” as defined by NPS.<sup>23</sup>

The existing National Register documentation associated with the Forks of the Road Unit includes two attempts to list the site as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1999 and 2003. The first attempt to list the site as a NHL, was not accepted due to objections from property owners, including Clifton McCarstle.<sup>24</sup> According to park staff, the second attempt was not accepted because there were no above-ground

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<sup>20</sup> Raymond W. Rast, “A Matter of Alignment: Methods to Match the Goals of the Preservation Movement,” *Forum Journal*, Spring 2014, 17.

<sup>21</sup> Rast, “A Matter of Alignment,” 20.

<sup>22</sup> Jim Barnett, Director of the Division of Historic Properties, Correspondence with Cecil N. McKithan on FotR NHL submission, MDAH, June 29, 1999.

<sup>23</sup> Mark Barnes, “Re: Formats,” Correspondence with Jim Barnett, NATC, November 27, 2006.

<sup>24</sup> Cecil N. McKithan, Chief, National Register Programs Division, Correspondence with Jim Barnett on FotR NHL process, NPS SERO, June 29, 1999.

identifiable resources pertaining to the period of significance. Correspondence from Barnett stated that the nomination was not accepted because Criterion D, which is associated with prehistory or history, could not be justified.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the FotR site is not currently listed on the National Register.

The NPS is currently in the process of acquiring parcels within the legislative boundary of the Forks of the Road site. Based on the findings of this CLI, it is suggested that the Forks of the Road property be submitted to MS-HPD for review as additional documentation for the existing National Register listing of Natchez National Historical Park (01000276). This would include two contributing resources: the FotR Bridge (structure) and the Forks of the Road (site).

In 2009, the City of Natchez was considering the transfer of parcels 91 and 92 (104-21 and 104-20), the Forks of the Road site, to the NPS. A Boundary Adjustment Study was completed to evaluate the potential effects of changing the NATC park boundary to include these parcels and other properties associated with the FOTR site.<sup>26</sup> In 2017, Congress authorized NPS to acquire lands in “historic Forks in [sic] the Road Slave Market.”<sup>27</sup>

The Forks of the Road Bridge was the subject of a 2020 Historic Structure Report, and it was determined that the brick masonry bridge was constructed in 1888, which postdates the period of significance for the slave market site (**Figure 64**). With that said, the bridge has been recommended for listing on the National Register as it is “of historic interest and is potentially significant.”<sup>28</sup>

<b>National Register Eligibility</b>	Undetermined
<i>National Register Eligibility Concurrence Date</i>	TBD

*NR Concurrence Explanatory Narrative:*

To be filled in by NPS after SHPO consultation.

<b>National Register Significance Level:</b>	National
<b>National Register Significance:</b>	Contributing
National Register Classification:	Site
National Historic Landmark Status:	No
World Heritage Site Status:	No

***Statement of Significance:***

Forks of the Road is significant under Criteria A, B, C, and D, and under Criterion Consideration F.

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<sup>25</sup> Jim Barnett, “Re: Forks,” Correspondence with Kathleen Schmidt, MDAH, November 21, 2006.

<sup>26</sup> “Final Environmental Assessment for the Boundary Adjustment Study of Forks of the Road,” Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, June 2010, Appendix C, 1.

<sup>27</sup> Paul Cook, “H.R.244 - 115th Congress (2017-2018): Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017,” *Congress.gov*, May 5, 2017, Accessed February 24, 2021, [www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/244?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22forks%2Broad%2Bnatchez%22%5D%7D&s=6&r=1](http://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/244?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22forks%2Broad%2Bnatchez%22%5D%7D&s=6&r=1).

<sup>28</sup> Panamerican Consultants, Inc., Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., WFT Architects, PA. “Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report,” Natchez National Historical Park. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020, 2-4

Forks of the Road is significant under Criterion A, association with events significant to broad patterns of history related to the trafficking, forced migration, and enslavement of humans; Criterion B, for association with the lives of persons significant in our past including the collective group of African American enslaved people who were sold at the Forks of the Road, and for association with those interstate traders who bought and sold enslaved people, including Isaac Franklin, John Armfield, and Rice Ballard, as well as other well-known traders who operated at the market, including John O’Ferrall, R.H. Elam, and the firm Griffin & Pullum; and under Criterion D, as the property is likely to yield information important to the history of the interstate slave trade. The Forks of the Road site is also significant under Criterion Consideration F, as a property that is commemorative in intent for its symbolic value as a place where the destiny of hundreds of thousands of African Americans was decided.<sup>29</sup>

The Forks of the Road Bridge (circa 1888) is significant under Criterion A for “its association with the development of Natchez” and Criterion C “as an example of a largely intact masonry arch bridge constructed in the late 1800s.”<sup>30</sup> It is a locally significant structure with a separate historic context, as it post-dates the earlier period of significance of 1833 – 1865. It is currently part of the Forks of the Road unit, and It retains integrity of materials, design, and workmanship. The O’Ferrall Residence is potentially eligible under Criterion D as an undisturbed nineteenth-century landscape, and under Criterion B based on possible connection to John O’Ferrall, a known trader. This circa 1870 Greek Revival style residence is located at 217 O’Ferrall Street post-dates the period of significance for the FotR site,<sup>31</sup> however, this is the original site of Market 3.<sup>32</sup> This stand is visible on the 1856 map, north of Washington Road (Market 3). Currently, NATC is completing a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) on the FotR Bridge, the O’Ferrall Residence, and the auto dealership located west of Liberty Road.

After the import of enslaved people into the country was prohibited in 1808, the domestic or interstate trade rose in prominence and importance, as traders purchased humans from plantations in the Upper South and shipped them to the Lower South for sale at the Natchez markets. Isaac Franklin and John Armfield “created a modern machinery to support the business of human trafficking,” and established the largest slave trading firm in the country, Franklin & Armfield.<sup>33</sup> “Freedom House” (now an NHL) on Duke Street was a holding jail before there victims were sent south. From 1828 to 1837, it is estimated that these traders moved over 10,000 people from plantations in Virginia and Maryland to Natchez, by ship and overland.<sup>34</sup> The overland route was a 1,000-mile march, where the enslaved were tightly chained together in groups, known as coffles. These groups often travelled along the Natchez Trace, which was connected to the Forks of the Road site by way of Washington Road.

After one of the Franklin & Armfield ships imported a group of enslaved people to Natchez, the bodies of several African Americans were found in shallow graves. After examination, it was discovered that they died of cholera, which panicked the citizens of Natchez, and ultimately led to the ban of sale of imported enslaved people within city limits. Beginning in 1833, the Forks of the Road site, located just outside the city limits at

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<sup>29</sup> “Final Environmental Assessment for the Boundary Adjustment Study of Forks of the Road,” Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, June 2010, 6.

<sup>30</sup> “Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report,” Natchez National Historical Park. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020, 42.

<sup>31</sup> Barry White, “Re: 217 O’Ferrall St., Natchez, Adams County,” Correspondence with Jeff Mansell, MDAH, July 29, 2020.

<sup>32</sup> Carruth, “Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market,” 9.

<sup>33</sup> Hannah Natanson, “They were once America’s cruelest, richest slave traders. Why does no one know their names?” The Washington Post, September 14, 2019, Accessed October 21, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2019/09/14/they-were-once-americas-cruellest-richest-slave-traders-why-does-no-one-know-their-names/>.

<sup>34</sup> Natanson, “They were once America’s cruelest, richest slave traders.

the forks of Washington Road and Old Courthouse Road, became the major trading site for the sale of enslaved people. Cotton plantations were the destination of many of the enslaved who were sold at The FotR market. As a result of the invention of the cotton gin in 1794, the cultivation of cotton became a booming industry in the Lower South (Deep South), and the use of enslaved labor ensured its profitability.

At the Forks of the Road market, the enslaved were not sold to the highest bidder in a public auction; rather, the purchaser was welcome to peruse the selection of enslaved people at his convenience. This allowed someone to closely examine the person who was for sale, which often involved looking a person over from head to foot to assess his or her physical condition and asking questions of the person to determine the age and potential use of the person for sale.<sup>35</sup>

The sale of enslaved people at the Forks of the Road market continued for thirty years until the Union army arrived in Natchez in 1863 during the Civil War. Union forces shut down the market, and the buildings at Forks of the Road were dismantled for use in constructing Fort McPherson in Natchez. Based on the 1864 Civil War map (**Figure 31**), the Elam and James Brother's stands were taken down, however the building that was owned by O'Ferrall, located west of Liberty Road, was left in place—and perhaps this was because it was also a gin site. For the brief period of two years, many African Americans were freed by the Union army. Many of these freed slaves were housed in contraband camps, and many others enlisted in the US Colored Troops (USCT) regiments. Both refugee camps and USCT barracks were located at the Forks of the Road site, making the site significant through the end of the Civil War in 1865.<sup>36</sup>

#### *Criterion A*

Under Criterion A, the Forks of the Road site is significant for its association with the business of human chattel slavery in American history. The trafficking, forced migration, and enslavement of humans was widespread and socially accepted, as it was the foundation for the southern economy.

Behind the New Orleans market, the FotR market was the second-largest market for the sale of enslaved people in the Deep South. The enslaved were forcibly moved from plantations in the Upper South, often being beaten and/or raped during the journey to Natchez.<sup>37</sup> The author and former enslaved man, William Wells Brown described landing at Natchez on a steamboat trip down the Mississippi under the care of his master, Mr. Walker.

On landing at Natchez, the slaves were all carried to the slave-pen, and there kept one week, during which time, several of them were sold. Mr. Walker fed his slaves well. We took on board, at St. Louis, several hundred pounds of bacon (smoked meat) and corn-meal, and his slaves were better fed than slaves generally were in Natchez, so far as my observations extended."<sup>38</sup>

When the steamboat next arrived in St. Louis, Brown describes the process of buying a “cargo of human flesh” over the course of two months and how they were made ready for sale on the journey back down the river. He describes that Mr. Walker fed his enslaved large amounts of food to “fatten them up,” their beards were shaved, their hair was died black so they looked younger, and they were taught to say that they were

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<sup>35</sup> Jim Barnett and H. Clark Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Adams County, Mississippi, Natchez, MS: Mississippi Department of Archives & History, Revised October 17, 2008, Section 7, 6.

<sup>36</sup> Jim Barnett and H. Clark Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Adams County, Mississippi, Natchez, MS: Mississippi Department of Archives & History, Revised October 17, 2008, Section 7, 14-15.

<sup>37</sup> Hannah Natanson, “They were once America’s cruelest, richest slave traders. Why does no one know their names?” *The Washington Post*, September 14, 2019, Accessed October 21, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2019/09/14/they-were-once-americas-cruellest-richest-slave-traders-why-does-no-one-know-their-names/>

<sup>38</sup> Wells Brown, *Clotel & Other Writings*, 21.

younger than they were when asked before they were sold in Rodney, Natchez, or New Orleans.<sup>39</sup>

Historians Jim Barnett and H. Clark Burkett describe what might have been a typical scene of one of Franklin & Armfield's slave coffles arriving from the Natchez Trace on Washington Road in chilling visuals:

From the Forks of the Road market looking east, the column of hundreds of slaves swaying along the dusty track would have been visible a half-mile away as they covered the last few yards of a frightful journey that began for them two months earlier in Alexandria, Virginia.<sup>40</sup>

And although the long journey was over, some of these people would spend months at the market waiting to be purchased, and then they might spend years doing back-breaking labor in a cotton field. The Forks of the Road Bridge (circa 1888) is significant under Criterion A for "its association with the development of Natchez."<sup>41</sup> It is a locally significant structure with a separate historic context, although it post-dates the period of significance from 1833 – 1865.

### *Criterion B*

The Forks of the Road market was responsible for a significant portion of the influx of enslaved population from 101,878 to 768,537 in the states of Mississippi and Louisiana between 1820 and 1860.<sup>42</sup> Under Criterion B, the Forks of the Road market is associated with hundreds of thousands of enslaved people themselves, who collectively entered, were bought, and sold at this site.<sup>43</sup> In addition to the significance of acknowledging the basic humanity of this entire group of humans, their lasting impact on the economy and culture of the South is also known. Brown spent several years as an enslaved man travelling up and down the Mississippi River from St. Louis to Rodney, Natchez, and New Orleans by steamboat. When referring to this time spent working for a steamboat captain, or a "soul driver," said that he was,

hired by his master to a "soul-driver," and has witnessed all the horrors of the traffic, from the buying up of human cattle in the slave-breeding States, which produced a constant scene of separating the victims from all those whom they loved, to their final sale in the southern market, to be worked up in seven years, or given over to minister to the lust of southern *Christians*.<sup>44</sup>

Under Criterion B, the Forks of the Road market is also associated with Isaac Franklin, John Armfield, and Rice Ballard. Franklin and Armfield formed the initial company, Franklin & Ballard, and later Ballard, Franklin and Company was formed when Ballard was given leeway to manage the Natchez business.<sup>45</sup> Other notable traders at the Forks of the Road site include John O'Ferrall, R.H. Elam, Tarlton Auterburn, and the firm Griffin & Pullum. The John O'Ferrall Residence, located at 217 O'Ferrall Street, is part of an ongoing DOE, based on the potential connection to O'Ferrall. O'Ferrall purchased the property of Market 2 from Isaac Franklin and worked in the trading business. After the Civil War, he built a Greek Revival style residence on the site of the former Elam Stand (Market 3), which can be found on the earliest Sanborn maps, and still exists in the same location today.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Wells Brown, *Clotel & Other Writings*, 22-23. Natanson, "They were once America's cruelest, richest slave traders."

<sup>40</sup> Barnett and Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Section 7, 15.

<sup>41</sup> "Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report," Natchez National Historical Park. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020, 42.

<sup>42</sup> Jim Barnett and H. Clark Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Adams County, Mississippi, Natchez, MS: Mississippi Department of Archives & History, Revised October 17, 2008, Section 7, 10.

<sup>43</sup> "Final Environmental Assessment for the Boundary Adjustment Study of Forks of the Road," Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, June 2010, 6.

<sup>44</sup> William Wells Brown, *Clotel & Other Writings*, Library of Congress, Literary Classics of the United States, Inc. New York, NY, 2014, 6.

<sup>45</sup> Barnett and Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Section 7, 10.

<sup>46</sup> Barry White, "Re: 217 O'Ferrall St., Natchez, Adams County," Correspondence with Jeff Mansell, MDAH, July 29, 2020.

### *Criterion C*

The Forks of the Road Bridge (circa 1888) is significant under Criterion C Engineering “as an example of a circa 1888 largely intact arched masonry bridge.”<sup>47</sup> It is a locally significant structure with a separate historic context, although it post-dates the period of significance from 1833 – 1865. It is currently part of the Forks of the Road unit, and it retains integrity of materials, design, and workmanship.

### *Criterion D*

Under Criterion D, the Forks of the Road market is likely to yield information important to the interstate trade of enslaved people. According to preliminary archeology completed on site in 2007,

The primary goal of this project was to evaluate the site, establish the integrity of the cultural deposits, determine the research potential, and define the NRHP eligibility. Background research was conducted at the Adams County Courthouse in Natchez and the William F. Winter Archives and History Building in Jackson, Mississippi. The site was examined using a combination of strategies that included surface collection and reconnaissance, shovel testing, and unit excavation. Based upon the results of our investigation, the Forks of the Road is recommended eligible for NRHP consideration.<sup>48</sup>

The findings of the 2007 study reported that it was eligible for inclusion under Criterion D. These included deposits and materials from the antebellum period, including a cistern that was found in the location marked on the 1856 map (**Figure 25**), that may reveal details about the slave market that existed on site. The report also stated that further study is needed “to determine if human remains are present,” as correspondence between Isaac Franklin and Rice Ballard refers to many deaths of enslaved people from various illnesses.<sup>49</sup> There were logistical problems, however, there was enough evidence found that provided “a temporal cross-section of the material possessions of the local inhabitants,” and the report also stated that antebellum materials were recovered,<sup>50</sup>

The O’Ferrall Residence is potentially eligible under Criterion D as an undisturbed nineteenth-century landscape. This circa 1870 Greek Revival style residence is located at 217 O’Ferrall Street post-dates the antebellum period,<sup>51</sup> however, this is the site of the Elam Stand (Market 3), which was active from about 1856 up to the Civil War.<sup>52</sup> This stand is visible on the 1856 map, north of Washington Road.

### *Criterion Consideration F*

The Forks of the Road site is also significant under Criterion Consideration F, as a property that is commemorative in intent for its symbolic value as a place where numerous enslaved people awaited purchase by new masters that would determine how much more difficult their lives would become. Although the origins of these people would have been Africa, the Caribbean, Virginia, or the Carolinas, each of the enslaved persons shared a terrifying and unknown fate in the Deep South. Each of them spent formative time on this small plot of land that still lies between the forks of two roads, and where the destinies of enslaved people were determined by enslavers.

The site has been called a “touchstone” for the Black community, which still does not have the equal rights

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<sup>47</sup> “Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report,” Natchez National Historical Park. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020, 42.

<sup>48</sup> Carruth, “Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market,” 1.

<sup>49</sup> Barnett and Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Section 8, 2-3.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 44, Figures 6.1-7.

<sup>51</sup> Barry White, “Re: 217 O’Ferrall St., Natchez, Adams County,” Correspondence with Jeff Mansell, MDAH, July 29, 2020.

<sup>52</sup> Carruth, “Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market,” 9.

and protections that were promised after the Civil War and that were fought for during the Civil Rights Movement.

The significance of this site in our nation's history is well documented. Its symbolic importance is harder to document, but it is no less tangible. For the African-American community and anyone who has a strong appreciation for their struggle for civil rights, this site serves almost as a touchstone. It represents a poignant moment in history, a beginning point when the rights of African-Americans were at absolute zero. It is representative of the darkest moment that had to pass before the dawn could come. While the connection may not be direct, in a symbolic role the Forks of the Road has meaning and relevance to the entire civil rights struggle.<sup>53</sup>

This is clearly demonstrated by the levels of police brutality, racial bias in the criminal justice system, and levels of Black incarceration and recidivism.<sup>54</sup> The issues involving police brutality in particular, have come to light in 2020 with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests that occurred throughout the country regarding the deaths of unarmed Black people such as Rayshard Brooks, George Floyd, Daniel Prude, and Breonna Taylor to name a few.<sup>55</sup>

### **National Register Significance Criteria**

#### **National Register Significance Criteria:**

A – Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

B – Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past

C – The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction

D - The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

#### **National Register Criteria Considerations:**

Criterion Consideration F: A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance

### **National Register Period of Significance**

#### **Time Period:**

CE 1833 – 1863

#### **Historic Context Theme:**

II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements

#### **Historic Context Sub-theme:**

A. Ways of life

#### **Historic Context Facet:**

Slavery and Plantation Life

**Time Period:** CE 1863 – 1865

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<sup>53</sup> Carruth, "Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market," 45.

<sup>54</sup> "Criminal Justice Fact Sheet." *NAACP*. 10 July 2020. Web. 06 Mar. 2021.

<sup>55</sup> "List of Unarmed Black People Killed by Police - On Monuments." *Renée Ater*. 29 May 2020. Web. 06 Mar. 2021.

<b>Historic Context Theme:</b>	IV. Shaping the Political Landscape
<b>Historic Context Sub-theme:</b>	D. The Civil War
<b>Historic Context Facet:</b>	Battles in the North and South/Conquest and Emancipation/The Antebellum South
<b>Time Period:</b>	CE circa 1888
<b>Historic Context Theme:</b>	V. Developing the American Economy
<b>Historic Context Sub-theme:</b>	W. Transportation by Land and Air
<b>Historic Context Facet:</b>	Carriage Roads, Touring Roads and Parkways

**National Register Areas of Significance**

<b>Area of Significance Category:</b>	Ethnic Heritage, Commerce
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**NRIS Information**

<b>Park Alpha Code/NRIS Name (Number):</b>	Natchez National Historical Park / 01000276
<b>Primary Certification Date:</b>	Not applicable

## Section 6: Chronology and Physical History

### Inventory Unit

<b>Primary Historic Function – Major Category:</b>	Commerce/Trade
<b>Primary Historic Function – Category:</b>	Commerce/Trade - Other
<b>Primary Current Use – Major Category:</b>	08 - Recreation/Culture
<b>Primary Current Use – Category:</b>	08 H - Monument (Marker, Plaque)

### Other Current and Historic Uses / Functions

<b>Other Current Use– Major Category:</b>	05 - Education
<b>Other Historic Function– Category:</b>	05 G - Interpretive Landscape

### Current and Historic Names

<b>Both Current and Historic Name:</b>	Forks of the Road
<b>Historic Names:</b>	Forks, The James Property, City Plots 91 and 92, Negro Mart, Niggerville

### Cultural Landscape Types

<b>Cultural Landscape Type:</b>	Ethnographic Landscape: A landscape containing a variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources.
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### Ethnographic Associated Groups

<b>Ethnographic Study Conducted:</b>	No Survey Conducted
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## Chronology

Year	Event	Description
12,000-8,000 BCE	Inhabited	Paleoindian Era. (Cornelison and Hardy 22)
8,000-1,000 BCE	Inhabited	Archaic. (Cornelison and Hardy 22)
2,000-1,000 BCE	Inhabited	Poverty Point. (Cornelison and Hardy 23)
1,000-100 BCE	Inhabited	Tchula/Tchefuncte. (Woodland period inclusive) (Cornelison and Hardy 23)
100 BCE – 300 CE	Inhabited	Marksville (Woodland period inclusive). (Cornelison and Hardy 24)
300 – 700 CE	Inhabited	Baytown (Woodland period inclusive). (Cornelison and Hardy 24)
700 – 1200 CE	Inhabited	Coles Creek period. (Woodland period inclusive) (Cornelison and Hardy 24)
1200 – 1350 CE	Inhabited	Anna Phase (Plaquemine period inclusive). (Cornelison and Hardy 25)
1350 – 1500 CE	Inhabited	Foster Phase (Plaquemine period inclusive). (Cornelison and Hardy 25)
1500 – 1650 CE	Inhabited	Emerald Phase (Plaquemine period inclusive). (Cornelison and Hardy 27)
1682	Explored	Expedition led by René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, made its way down the Mississippi River from the Great Lakes, and they encountered the Natchez Indians. (Cornelison and Hardy 27)
1698	Colonized	“Louis XIV, King of France, appointed Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d’Iberville to establish a colony for France in the region previously explored by La Salle.” (Cornelison and Hardy 31)
1699	Explored	“A Taensa informant for Iberville’s 1699 expedition up the Mississippi River reported that the Thecloel tribe, the people living in the Natchez area, lived in nine villages or settlement[s]: Flour, Grigra, Jenzenaque, White Apple, Tiou, Duck, the Grand Village itself (Natchez), and another located near Fairchilds and Coles Creeks.” (Cornelison and Hardy 28)
1700	Planned	“He [Iberville] was much pleased with the country of the Natchez and considered it as the most suitable part of the province, for its principal establishment: he selected a high spot, which he laid out for a town, and called it Rosalie, in honor of the countess of Pontchartrain.” (Martin 152)
1714	Established	“Crozat contracted with Marc-Antoine de la Loire des Ursins and Louis Auguste de la Loire Flaucourt ... to establish a trading post at the landing below the bluff at Natchez.” (Cornelison and Hardy 32)
1716	Established	Bienville established Le Fort Rosalie des Natchez in 1716. (Phelps 1966:13, qtd. in Cornelison and Hardy 31)  Completion date of the fort is 08/03/1716. (Barnett 71)  Beginnings of Natchez and what would later become the Natchez Trace. (HSR Bridge, 24)

1717	Colonized	John Law and his Company of the West was tasked with developing the lower Mississippi River Valley for the French empire. To accomplish this goal, it was his intent to bring around 3,000 enslaved Africans to plantations along the Mississippi River from Louisiana to Arkansas to “cultivate tobacco, grow and ferment indigo, cut timber, build forts, and work a thriving river traffic in upcountry furs, deerskins, corn and salted meats...” (Davis, “The Black Experience in Natchez, 1)
1720	Inhabited	Around 1720, the French brought the first enslaved Africans to the region as enslaved persons. (Davis, “The Black Experience in Natchez, 1)
1723	Military Operation	Violence between the French and Natchez Indians: “the French were keenly aware of the role that black people played in the backcountry of their empire.” (Pinnen, “Free People of Color in Colonial Natchez”)
1726	Inhabited	“In 1726 the Natchez colony was comprised of 259 people: 105 Europeans in 40 households, consisting of 49 men, 29 women, and 27 children, 65 Africans and nine Indian slaves, 45 engages (indentured servants) and 35 soldiers.” (Cornelison and Hardy 38)
1729	Inhabited	“By 1729 there were roughly 200 enslaved Africans in the Natchez colony.” (Cornelison and Hardy 38)
1729, Nov. 29	Military Operation	Natchez Indians attacked Fort Rosalie. A massive uprising resulted in the entire white population of the settlement at the fort being wiped out. “The settlement’s women, children, and several hundred African slaves were carried off into captivity. Over a decade of fighting ensued. It is suspected that some enslaved Blacks fought alongside the Natchez Indians.” (Davis, <i>The Black Experience in Natchez</i> , 6)
1763	Land Transfer	“France surrendered Louisiana in order to maintain its European lands with the signing of the ‘Treaty of Paris’ in 1763. As part of the treaty, Louisiana was divided between Great Britain and Spain. All lands east of the Mississippi River, including Natchez, became English territory, while Spain held all lands to the west of the river and of the Isle of Orleans.” (Cornelison and Hardy 44)
1766	Inhabited	With the acquisition of West Florida, the British sent a garrison of 60 men to Natchez under the direction of Major Farmar. (Cornelison and Hardy 44)
1779	Military Operation	“British rule of West Florida ended in 1779, a consequence of the American Revolution. Spain declared war against England and appointed its own governor, Bernardo de Gálvez. Gálvez promptly began attacks along the Mississippi River and Fort Panmure surrendered without a fight.” (Cornelison and Hardy 46)
1783	Land Transfer	“Spain officially acquired the territory in 1783 when the treaty ending the war was signed (James 1968:25, 27).” This was the second “Treaty of Paris.” (Cornelison and Hardy 46)

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1788	Platted	"Prior to Gayoso's arrival, Grand-Pre initiated the development of a town plat for Natchez. Streets and blocks were laid out around a central plaza, thus giving birth to the town. A broad esplanade or public park separated the town from the river with the fort being located at the southern end of the esplanade." (Cornelison and Hardy 49)
1797, Feb. 24 <sup>th</sup>	Military Operation	"Andrew Ellicott, a U.S. surveyor commissioned by President George Washington as the U.S. representative to survey the border between Spanish Florida and the United States, was sent to Natchez to persuade the Spanish to abandon the Natchez District. He arrived in Natchez on February 24, 1797 and encamped at the northern end of the esplanade. There he raised the American flag. He soon demanded Gayoso to withdraw, a demand that was ignored." (Cornelison and Hardy 53)
1797, April	Military Operation	"American troops under Lieutenant 'Crazy' Percy Smith Pope arrived in April to re-enforce Ellicott (James 1968:62-66)." (Qtd. In Cornelison and Hardy 53)
1797, Dec.	Military Operation	"Additional American forces under Captain Isaac Guion arrived and peacefully took control of Natchez (James 1968:70, 74)." (Qtd. In Cornelison and Hardy 53)
1798, Mar. 30	Land Transfer	The Spanish finally withdrew from Natchez. (Cornelison and Hardy 53)
1798, Apr. 7 <sup>th</sup>	Inhabited	The United States Congress created the Mississippi Territory with Natchez becoming its first capitol. (Cornelison and Hardy 54)
1801	Planned	A survey of the Nashville to Natchez route began in 1801, largely following ancient trails used by Native Americans, bison, and deer. (Cornelison and Hardy 55)
1808	Platted	An 1808 map of the Mississippi postal routes denotes the towns of Washington and Liberty, and it also shows the "Old Court House" in center. Originally, the main routes leading out of Natchez were Washington Road and Old Courthouse Road.
1810	Platted	The original street grid of 34 blocks established by the Spanish regime had been expanded by another 15 blocks. (Cornelison and Hardy 54)
1810	Inhabited	Natchez population is 1,684, consisting of 459 slaves. Adams County population was 8,318.
1812	Military Operation	War of 1812
1818	Built	Monmouth, a historic antebellum home in Greek revival style, was built by John Hankinson. This plantation was located southwest of the Forks of the Road site. ("Monmouth (Natchez, Mississippi,")
1826	Purchased/Sold	Property that would become the two slave markets (Markets 1 and 2) was sold by George Smith to Anthony Smith. (Rosenblum, FotR Chain of Title 1826-72, 2)

1828	Established	"The two men launched the slave trading firm Franklin & Armfield and moved into the Alexandria townhouse." Armfield was based in Virginia and managed the "buying side of things" and arranged transport, while Franklin stayed in Natchez, Mississippi to sell "their human cargo to plantations in the Deep South." (Natanson, "They were once America's cruelest, richest slave traders...")
1829	Purchased/Sold	Anthony Smith sold property at FotR (Market 1) to William P. Thomas. (Rosenblum, FotR Chain of Title 1826-72, 2)
1833	Retained	Isaac Franklin, of Franklin and Armfield slave traders, rented property at the Forks of the Road. (SOW, 2)
1833	Established	A City Ordinance eliminated large-scale trading within city limits. Trading took place at the Forks of the Road site before 1833, however this spurred a more formalized development at the forks of Washington and Liberty roads, a spot which was located at the eastern corporation line, after locals blamed the cholera epidemic on the import of enslaved people who were brought into town for sale. (SOW, 1)  Between 1833 and the Civil War, FotR "grew into the second largest slave market in the Deep South... Traders like Isaac Franklin and John Armfield sent thousands of African Americans overland from Virginia to Natchez in caravans, or shipped them by boat via New Orleans." (Miller, "Downtown Trails Panels: Intersection of Main Street and South Commerce Streets")
1835	Purchased/Sold	Anthony Smith sold the land of Market 2 to Rice C. Ballard and Isaac Franklin. (Rosenblum, FotR Chain of Title 1826-72, 2)
1835	Retained	Mary Thomas leased a portion of her land (FotR site/Market 1) lying immediately within the angle formed by the juncture of Liberty and Washington roads to several slave traders including Alfred Wynne and Theophilus Freeman, Market 1. (Rosenblum, FotR Chain of Title 1826-72, 1)
1838	Built	"Irish immigrant John J. O'Ferrall arrived in Natchez about 1838 and purchased land at the Forks of the Road, where he built a store..." (Miller, "St. Catherine Street Trails Panels: Forks of the Road – Late 1800s")
1840	Purchased/Sold	Mark Izod, Sheriff sold property (Market 2) to Peter G. Creiger, Deed, September 21, 1840. (Rosenblum, FotR Chain of Title 1826-72, 5)
1840	Platted	A plat map of 1840 shows the intersection of the FotR market as Washington and Liberty roads.
1841	Purchased/Sold	Peter G. Creiger sold property (Market 2) to Isaac Franklin, Deed March 16, 1841. (Rosenblum, FotR Chain of Title 1826-72, 5)
1841	Purchased/Sold	Franklin and Ballard sell Armfield a one-third interest in Market 2. (Rosenblum, FotR Chain of Title 1826-72, 5)

1845	Purchased/Sold	Rice Ballard, Isaac Franklin & John Amfield sold the property of Market 2 to John O’Ferrall, Deed, December 15, 1845 (Rosenblum, FotR Chain of Title 1826-72, 6)  John O’Ferrall purchased Market 2 from Isaac Franklin and continued to lease the market to traders through the 1860s. (Rosenblum, FotR Chain of Title 1826-72, 2)
1846	Retained	Sarah M. Thomas leases property (Lot #1, Market 1) to John D. James, Lease, February 27, 1846. (Rosenblum, FotR Chain of Title 1826-72, 7)
1850	Retained	Sarah M. Thomas renews lease of property (Lot #1 at Market 1) to John D. James in February of 1850. (Rosenblum, FotR Chain of Title 1826-72, 7)
1853	Platted	Map of St. Catherine Street showing FotR surveyed by Thomas Kenney, for the City of Natchez. (NATC Maps, HSR Bridge, 13)
1856	Platted	Map of St. Catherine Street showing FotR and bridge over Spanish Bayou surveyed by Thomas Kenney, for the City of Natchez. (NATC Maps, HSR Bridge, 13)
1860s	Inhabited	Natchez population was 6,612, of which 2,131 were slaves. Adams County population was 13,553. At the time, “Natchez was one of the South’s largest slave markets. (Cornelison and Hardy 55)
1861	Military Operation	Civil War begins.
1862, April 29	Military Operation	Union troops took over New Orleans. (Cornelison and Hardy 57)
1863, July	Military Operation	“1,200 Union troops occupied the town. In addition to the camp, quarters, offices and messes were set up in a number of the mansions. (Groh 1999:56-57. Qtd. in Cornelison and Hardy 57)
1863, July	Military Operation	“Natchez slaves were freed in July 1863, when Union troops occupied the city.” (Parker 2014)
1862	Built	In 1862, S. Thomas and Ann Thomas take on a “mechanic’s lien” with John Crothers for constructing a two-story frame house on Lot 3 for the sum of \$1,860.47 with a 10 percent interest rate. (Rosenblum 10)
1863	Built	“Aaron Zerkowsky [sic Zewkowsky]..., a Polish Jew, immigrated to Natchez at the end of the Civil War and opened a store on St. Catherine Street...” (Miller, “St. Catherine Street Trails Panels: Forks of the Road – Late 1800s”)
1864	Removed	Forks of the Road slave market was forcibly shut down by Union forces. The building was dismantled, and the material was used to build structures at Fort McPherson. (SOW, 2)
1865	Military Operation	Civil War ends.

1867	Built	Irish immigrant, John J. O’Ferrall built a cotton gin at the same location on his land at the Forks of the Road, where he had already built a store. A 1904 Sanborn map depicts O’Ferrall’s store as brick (shown in pink) with a front porch and a shed roof side addition of wood frame construction (as indicated by yellow symbology). The large building on the left [on the map] is O’Ferrall’s Cotton Gin.” (Miller, “St. Catherine Street Trails Panels: Forks of the Road – Late 1800s”)
1867	Purchased/Sold	In 1867, S. Thomas sells Lot 3 and the new house to Edward Herndon, Esq. for \$500.00. That same year, S. Thomas leased “for a term of 5 years at 120.00 per annum all the land, known as the property of S.M. Thomas” (which may mean Lots 1 and 2), to [John] O’Ferrall. This lease was renewed for another five years in 1872. (Rosenblum 10)
1886	Built	“...entrepreneur and promotor Thomas Reber...built a street railway from the ferry landing to the Forks of the Road, where he built a casino and park.” (Miller, “St. Catherine Street Trails Panels: Forks of the Road – Late 1800s”)
1886	Platted	Sanborn map depicting the intersection of Washington and Liberty Roads. Note that there are two grocery stores on either side of Liberty Road. Also note the dwelling east of Liberty road, O’Ferrall’s [sic] Cotton Gin west of Liberty Road and his residence north of Washington Road (Library of Congress).
1888	Built	The Forks of the Road arched brick masonry bridge was constructed in 1888. “During August of the same year, bids were received, with the construction contract awarded to L. Terrell on August 14, 1888. Terrell’s design was considered the “cheapest and best” option, and he was paid for the completion of the bridge on September 19, 1888.” (HSR Bridge, 3)
1889	Land Transfer, Purchased/Sold	Until her death in 1889, Lots 1 and 2 remained in the possession of S. Thomas, before passing to Albert Perkins. A month after receiving the property, Perkins sold it to Aaron Zerkowsky. At this time, there was likely a small grocery on the property (Carruth 10)
Circa 1890	Built	The Zerkowsky’s family’s ca. 1890 cottage stood in the triangle formed by the Liberty and Washington Roads. The Zerkowsky’s owned many of the rental houses that lined St. Catherine’s Street, its alleys, and back streets.” (Miller, “St. Catherine Street Trails Panels: Forks of the Road – Late 1800s”)
1892	Platted	Sanborn map from 1892 showing one grocery store within the intersection of Washington and Liberty Roads, the O’Ferrall residence and cotton gin are still in the same location as on the 1886 Sanborn map (Library of Congress).
1897	Platted	Sanborn map showing a grocery store and saloon at the fork of Washington and Liberty roads, O’Ferrall’s gin and residence, on St. Catherine Street at Liberty Road moving from east to west is a general store, a grocery, a vacant store, and across from those is a large building that encompasses a bar, store, and warehouse. There are many more dwellings at this time (Library of Congress).

1900	Purchased/Sold	Around 1900, three small houses were added. Zewkowsky's descendants sold the property to one N.M. Steed in 1983. Steed sold the property to Clifton McCarstle (date unknown), who later sold the land to the City of Natchez in 2003. (Carruth 10)
1904	Platted	The 1904 Sanborn map depicts the growth of a neighborhood. The structure at the fork of Washington and Liberty roads is now a saloon (was a grocery), to the south on Liberty Road are "Negro Dwgs." or negro dwellings. The O'Ferrall gin still exists here, as does the residence, although it is no longer called out. The "Private Drive" from the 1897 map is now O'Ferrall Ave. From the intersection of Liberty Road and St. Catherine Street to the west is a general store, fruit stand, grocery, a vacant building on the corner of Cedar Avenue, which contains "Negro Tenements." On the north side of St. Catherine Street are numerous dwellings, a barber and two more grocery stores (Library of Congress).
1910	Platted	The 1910 Sanborn map depicts more growth. The structure at the fork of Washington and Liberty roads is again a grocery, to the south on Liberty Road, the negro dwellings are simply labeled dwellings, and there is a blacksmith (green) and a feed mill. Two alleys were built off of Liberty Road—Gold and Schleets alleys. The O'Ferrall gin is now the "Adams Ginning & Manufacturing Co., the old O'Ferrall residence still exists. From the intersection of Liberty Road and St. Catherine Street to the west is a general store, a confectionary or candy store, and two grocery stores on the corner of Cedar Alley, which still contains "Negro Tenements." On the north side of St. Catherine Street are numerous dwellings, a fire department, a barber shop, two more grocery stores, and a lumber yard on the corner of O'Ferrall Avenue (Library of Congress).
1925	Platted	The 1925 Sanborn map depicts what appears to be a healthy Black, Irish, and Italian neighborhood. The structure at the fork of Washington and Liberty roads is a store, to the south on Liberty Road, are more dwellings, a blacksmith. The old O'Ferrall gin is now the "Hiawatha Manufacturing Co. Cotton Gin, the old O'Ferrall residence still exists. From the intersection of Liberty Road and St. Catherine Street to the west are five stores that line the block to the corner of Cedar Alley, which now contains dwellings, as opposed to "Negro Tenements" and the "Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church (Colored)." On the north side of St. Catherine Street are numerous dwellings and a grist mill. Just west of O'Ferral [sic] in the dashed rectangle is a grand stand. Dwellings now appear on Lumber Street. (NATC ESA 2020, 218).

<p>Circa post 1925 – circa 1930s</p>	<p>Built</p>	<p>US Highway 61 (also known as the Blues Highway) routed through Natchez and passes FotR as part of the new federal highway system, and NPS created the current Natchez Trace configuration. (HSR Bridge, 23-25)</p> <p>The 1945 Sanborn map is the earliest map that shows the intersection of Washington Road and US Highway 61, which was installed during the 1930s. Sanborn maps through 1966 show the intersection in this orientation. US Highway 61 altered the course of Washington Road and the Natchez Trace. The current location of the Natchez Trace Parkway is approximately one mile southwest of the FotR market site by way of Liberty Road. The Natchez Trace Parkway is roughly adjacent to the historic route of the Old Natchez Trace, parts of which are still extant and can be accessed from the parkway.</p>
<p>1950</p>	<p>Platted</p>	<p>The 1950 Sanborn map shows decline of the neighborhood. The structure at the fork of Washington and Liberty roads is a store, to the south on Liberty Road, are fewer dwellings and a storage facility. The cotton gin is gone, and a storage building has replaced it, but the old O’Ferrall residence still exists. From the intersection of Liberty Road and St. Catherine Street there seem to be stores (including a new structure at the corner of Liberty Road) that line the block to the corner of Cedar Alley, but it is unclear. Cedar Alley still has dwellings, although the church has moved over two blocks to Monmouth St. On the north side of St. Catherine Street there are no dwellings, only a store, a tractor sales service shop and warehouses. Just west of O’Farrall [sic] are the Natchez Stock yards. Dwellings still appear on Lumber Street. (NATC ESA 2020, 217).</p>
<p>1966</p>	<p>Platted</p>	<p>The 1966 Sanborn map shows decline of the neighborhood. The structure at the fork of Washington and Liberty roads remains a store, to the south on Liberty Road, there are fewer dwellings, and a plant nursery has been installed south of Gold Alley. Schleet Alley has no remaining dwellings. The storage building replaced the gin is gone, and it has been replaced by a store. The old O’Ferrall residence still exists. From the intersection of Liberty Road and St. Catherine Street there is a tire store, a restaurant, and three other stores that line the block to the corner of Cedar Alley. Between Cedar and Junkin alleys, there are dwellings, a store and a motel. Further west toward Monmouth Street is a filling station, a restaurant, and another store. Cedar Alley still has dwellings, and the church remains on Monmouth St. On the north side of St. Catherine Street there are no dwellings; several stores, a used auto sales lot, an auto repair and painting shop, and another filling station line the street to O’Faarrall [sic] Avenue. Just west of O’Faarrall [sic] is an agricultural import store. Dwellings still appear on Rembert and Lumber streets along with the Pan American Petroleum Corporation on the corner. (NATC ESA 2020, 216).</p>
<p>Circa post 1966</p>	<p>Built</p>	<p>Sometime after 1966, US Highway 61 was made into a divided highway with a median. (HSR 3,23) This new highway was called Devereux Drive/ US Highway 61. Many areas around the FotR neighborhood were impacted by the expanded highway.</p>

1970s	Graded, Paved, Planned	"A significant amount of soil had been removed from the area by the previous land owner, N.M. Steed. McCarstle reported that the elevation of the area had been similar to that of the church parking lot located just east of the project area and it had extended all the way to a steep cut bank bounding Liberty Road. This would mean that close to two meters of soil had been removed. N.M. Steed was contacted, and he graciously visited the site and discussed what he remembered about the modification of the project area. He confirmed that in the late 1970s he had removed the soil to provide a parking area for a business he was considering opening. He sold the material as fill to a local real estate developer named Johnny Masters...the grade of the project area is flat east of Liberty Road until the steep cut bank of the church parking lot is encountered. The only exception to this is a narrow strip of land at the north end of the city's property where a small dirt road connects the church parking lot with Liberty Road." (Carruth 28)
1988	Established	Natchez National Historical Park established by Congress. (NATC GMP, 16)
Circa 1990s	Conserved	"Natchez National Historical Park developed a brochure about FotR." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
1992	Conserved	" <i>The Black Experience in Natchez: 1720-1880</i> , by Ron Davis was published by the National Park Service (included information about FotR slave market)." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
1995	Conserved	"Ser Seshsh Ab Heter C. M. Boxley retire[d] from career as urban planner in California and returned to his hometown of Natchez." Then he began doing research on the FotR. (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
1998 June	Memorialized	MDAH "State Historical Marker erected at the FotR site, funded by the Natchez Juneteenth Committee under the leadership of Royal Hill." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
1998 August	Planned	"Mr. Boxley called meeting with Natchez National Historical Park to seek National Historic Landmark designation. (Jim Barnett volunteered to write application.)" (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
1999 June	Conserved	"Jim Barnett & Clark Burkett's first NHL nomination sent to National Park Service; Landowners object to nomination, halting process." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...") The 16 National Millennium Trails were announced by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton on 6/26/1999, and Forks of the Road is designated as a site on the Underground Railroad trail.
Circa 2001	Established	Friends of Forks of the Road Society (FRSI) is formed by Boxley, to raise awareness about the Natchez connections to slavery and to preserve the location of the former slave market. (SOW, 2-3; Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
2001	Memorialized	"Mr. Boxley succeeded in having the FotR listed as part of the National Park Service's 'Underground Railroad Trail.'" (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")

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2000, Summer	Planned	"David Preziosi, City Planner, wrote the City's grant application for AAGP funding to purchase 4 parcels identified as core area of FotR market (Lots 90 & 90.1 on west side of Liberty Road and Lots 91 & 92 on west side of Liberty Road)." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
2001 September	Purchased/Sold	"MDAH Board of Trustees awarded City of Natchez \$200,000 (maximum amount allowed by legislation)." "MDAH & City sign Memorandum of Agreement: City will transfer FotR to NPS-NNHP; 1 year to conclude property acquisition; Deadline – September 1, 2002." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
2001, Fall	Conserved	"Barnett & Burkett's article on the FotR published by the Journal of Mississippi History." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
2002	Memorialized	Forks listed on the NPS National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, and is the only listed site in MS. (Boundary Adjustment Study 30)
2002	Purchased/Sold	FRSI obtained a state grant that allow for City purchase of two parcels of land at the Forks of the Road.
2002 July	Purchased/Sold	"Walter Brown (City Attorney) report[ed] to MDAH about stalemate: landowners at FotR (Cliff McCarstle & A. K. Moore) join forces to sell "all or none." The total property (Lots 90, 91, 92) is appraised at \$350,000; MDAH verifies that only \$200,000 is available." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
2003 January	Purchased/Sold	"McCarstle [bought] out Moore's property (Lot 91) and agree[d] to sell Lots 91 & 92 (i.e. the two parcels on the east side of Liberty Road)." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
2003 January 20	Purchased/Sold	"MDAH Board approve[d] \$115,000 (\$93,000 for property, \$22,000 to cover City's expenses)." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
2003 February	Land Transfer	"Walter Brown succeed[ed] in having Mississippi Legislature pass bill authorizing City to transfer property purchased to NPS." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
2003 April 25	Purchased/Sold	"MDAH Board approve[d] final Forks of the Road deal: \$92,080 for Lots 91 & 92 (0.388 ± acres; \$25,000 for site preparation & interpretive exhibits; \$12,920 to reimburse in part the City's expenses including appraisals. TOTAL GRANT: \$130,000." (Barnett, A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")

Forks of the Road  
Natchez National Historical Park

2003 August	Conserved	"Jim Barnett completed second (revised) NHL application and sent to the National Park Service...; The NHL nomination include[d] 2 parcels owned by City and 1 parcel owned privately; Landowners agree[d] to allow nomination to go through." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
2004 January	Conserved	"MDAH Professional Review Board approves listing the site in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP); Richard Cawthon (MDAH staff) revises NRHP nomination and forwards to NPS." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
2004 December 8	Memorialized	"Cavett Taff (Pencil 2 Paper Exhibit Design) and Jules Babineaux (Exhibits, Etc.) install exhibits and contemplative sculpture at FotR." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition..."), through NPS Lower Mississippi Delta Regional Initiative.
2005 January	Conserved	"Erika Seibert (NPS) rejects NRHP nomination based on lack of convincing evidence of site's archaeological integrity." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
2005 July 17-18	Excavated	"Jay Johnson and UM students apply remote sensing archaeological techniques at FotR site. Archaeological investigation fails to uncover evidence of buried features that might relate to slave market; however, the rim of a cistern is exposed by erosion in Lot 91." (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
2005	<b>Established</b>	Friends of the Forks of the Roads raised funds to augment the funds remaining in the state grant account, to add landscape improvements and additional wayside panels authored by Ser Boxley.
2005	Conserved	Jim Barnett revised NHL application written and sent to the National Park Service in 2003 was still pending. (Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition...")
2007	Established	FotR designated as a community Millennium Trail, as a hub on the Mississippi Millennium Trail commemorating blues music developed throughout the delta (Boundary Adjustment Study 30)
2010	Planned	A Boundary Adjustment Study for the Forks of the Road slave market site found that this site met the specified criteria required to make it part of NATC, "even though the Forks of the Road area suffered from major urban intrusions in the 20 <sup>th</sup> century, from commercial uses to overlay by four-lane roads and the installation of high-power lines and cell towers," and due to lack of integrity of above-ground resources, the previous attempt to list the site as a National Historic Landmark was unsuccessful.
2014	Established	The Friends of the Forks of the Road Society, Inc. worked with the Historic Natchez Foundation and Natchez NHP to designate the two City-owned parcels at the Forks of the Road as a Landmark Site by the Natchez Preservation Commission.
2017	Planned	A Historic Structure report was written on the brick bridge that spans the headwaters of Spanish Bayou. This is the only potential historic above-ground cultural resource on site. (SOW, 3)

## Physical History

### COLONIAL RULE 1720 – 1798

#### *Earliest Africans in Natchez*

The first enslaved Africans were brought to Fort Rosalie in 1720, four years after the structure was built. They were brought to the Natchez district of West Florida to achieve the plans of John Law's Company of the West—that is, to develop the land comprising the lower Mississippi River Valley of the New World into a profitable region of plantations for the French crown. The first enslaved people of the region were to provide both a labor force cultivating plantations and building forts, and armed forces to protect them.<sup>56</sup>

By 1783, the town population numbered only around 500, due to the fact that Natchez was still mostly isolated wilderness at the time, as well as administrative indifference and even indifference under French and British rule.<sup>57</sup> The settlement of Natchez finally began to take shape under Spanish government in 1788 when the town was first platted,<sup>58</sup> and many of the basic amenities, such as a cabildo and a Catholic church, were established during the brief period of governance.

During the period between the 1780s and 1790s, the typical family owned no enslaved persons, and those families that did usually owned between one or two slaves. This meant that the enslavers likely shared more equally in the labor with the enslaved and the dangerous frontier conditions further “diluted and shaped the slave/master relationship.” Records from this time show that only four or five families owned twenty or more enslaved persons.<sup>59</sup> At the time, many enslaved people were from Africa, the Caribbean, and there were a few from plantations in the Upper South, and they typically arrived by one of the following routes (**Figure 10**):

- By water down the Tennessee, Ohio, and Mississippi rivers
- Overland by the Natchez Trace
- By the “Three Chopped Trail” from Georgia, an inland route
- Upriver from New Orleans (typically Caribbean and African shipments)
- Along the East Coast from the plantations of the Upper South using the Coastal Trail, which was the old route of the Conquistadors<sup>60</sup>

After the American Revolution, the United States and Spain had a dispute over ownership of the Natchez District, and this was resolved with the signing of Pinkney's Treaty in 1795. It took three years of American reinforcements and rebels to encourage Gayoso to abandon Natchez in 1798. A few days afterward, the American Congress created the Mississippi Territory.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ronald L. F. Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez 1720–1880, Special History Study*, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Denver Service Center, 1993, viii.

<sup>57</sup> D. Clayton James, *Antebellum Natchez*, Louisiana State University Press: Baton Rouge and London, 1968, 29-30.

<sup>58</sup> John E. Cornelison Jr., and Meredith D. Hardy, eds. With contributions by John E. Cornelison, Jr., Meredith D. Hardy, Brian Worthington, Vincas P. Steponaitis, Jim Barnett, Jessica McNeil, Jessica Fry, Michael E. Seibert, Alex Parsons, R. Stephen Kidd, Charles Lawson, Mercedes Harrold, Joseph Frank III “Smokeye,” Jack Elliot, James A. Nyman, Clifton Hicks, and Michelle Gray, “Archeological Investigations of Fort Rosalie, Natchez National Historical Park Draft,” National Park Service, Southeast Archeological Center. Tallahassee, FL, 2017, 49.

<sup>59</sup> Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez*, 10, 15.

<sup>60</sup> Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez*, 21-22.

<sup>61</sup> Cornelison and Hardy, “Archeological Investigations of Fort Rosalie,” 52-53.

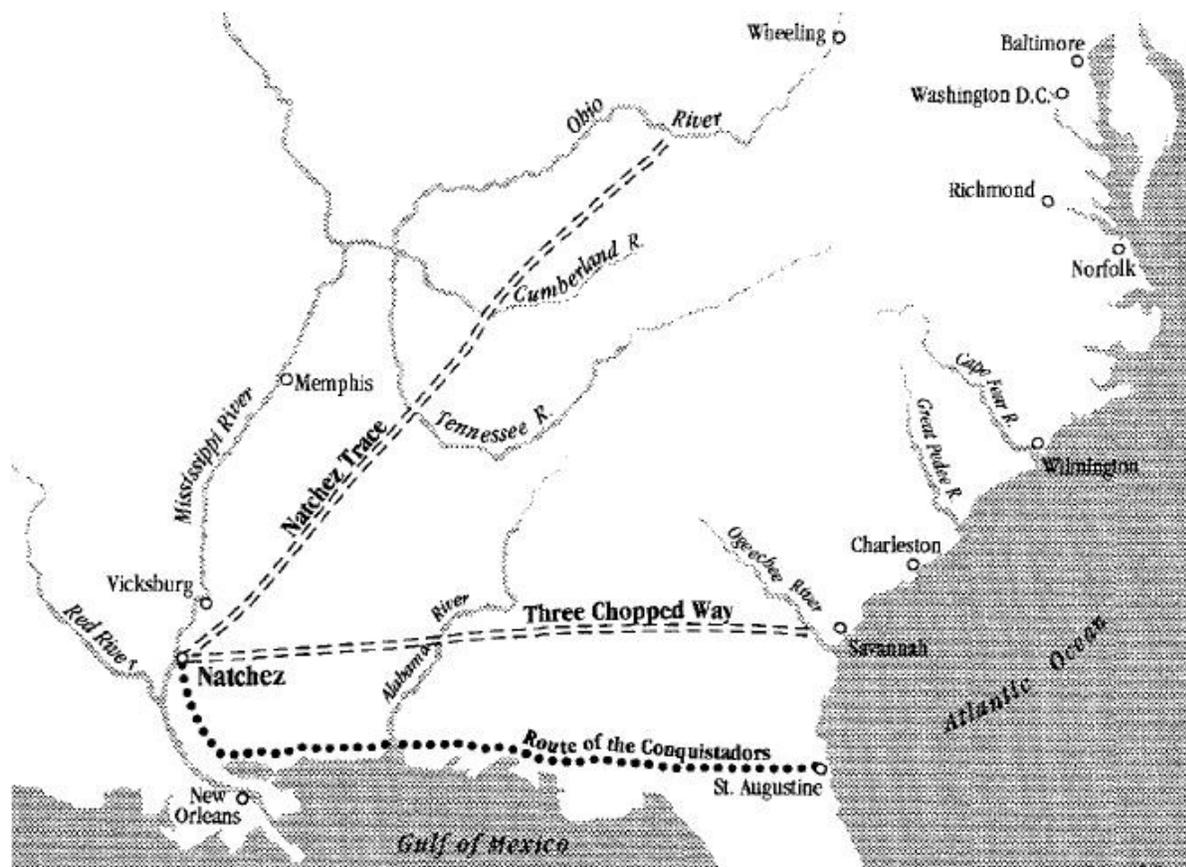


Figure 11 Five major routes of transporting enslaved persons to Natchez (Davis 14).

## ANTEBELLUM PERIOD 1798 – 1861

### *From International to Domestic Trade*

#### *International Slave Trade and the American Colonies*

Throughout the 1700s, the Natchez area was under French, British, and Spanish rule. By the end of the 1700s, the city began to develop with the arrival of new settlers from the American Colonies, specifically from tobacco growing regions such as Virginia and the Carolinas. From 1798-1820, these settlers migrated to the Natchez area. They were attracted by fertile and affordable cotton land, and the high prices paid for cotton crops. Other catalysts for growth in the region included removal of Native Americans from the area and the sale of their lands, the building of new roads and improvement of existing roads, and new direct access to the Gulf of Mexico.<sup>62</sup>

By the end of the eighteenth century, the use of enslaved labor in the production of agricultural commodities, such as cotton and tobacco, seemed to be declining in the American Colonies due to soil depletion, low profit margins, and the abolitionist movement in the American Colonies. At the time of the writing of the Constitution of the United States of America in 1789, there were around 700,000 enslaved persons in the colonies, and cotton production in the country was minimal. Georgia and the Carolinas, the slaveholding states, insisted that slavery be protected by the Constitution. At the time, many authors of the Constitution thought that the institution of slavery was “dying out” and that it would eventually become obsolete, yet they

<sup>62</sup> Charles D. Lowery, "The Great Migration to the Mississippi Territory, 1798–1819," *Journal of Mississippi History* 1968, 173–192.

succumbed to pressure from the slaveholding states. This policy decision set in motion the initial protection of slavery as an institution.<sup>63</sup>

Prior to the invention of the cotton gin in 1794, the cultivation of short staple cotton was difficult to process and often did not yield high returns, therefore it was not seen as a cash crop.<sup>64</sup> Economic innovations and forces would further secure institutional racism in the form of slavery. Namely, the cotton gin made cotton production profitable. Other inventions such as the Spinning Jenny allowed cotton textiles to be mass produced, which spurred British demand for cotton to use in textile mills as cotton fabric was mass-produced for the first time.<sup>65</sup>

In 1808, the abolition of international slave trade in the US became a catalyst for creating a thriving domestic slave trade in America, as enslaved people were forcibly taken from Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, Georgia, and the Carolinas to be sold at the Natchez slave market between 1810-1860.<sup>66</sup> In the “Old South” where the production of tobacco had become less profitable, domestic slave trade took root. It was mutually beneficial for tobacco farmers to sell their enslaved people to traders who amassed coffles that were then shipped or marched down to Natchez and New Orleans markets for sale at a high profit.<sup>67</sup>

The State of Mississippi would not be admitted to the Union of the United States until 1817, however, it had been an organized incorporated territory since 1798. In most towns within the state, the sale of the enslaved was commonplace, but early on, Natchez was the most active trading city, due to its proximity to the Mississippi River. Natchez specifically was known to be a slave trading city, even as early as 1801. With the invention of cotton gin, the steamboat in 1811, and the introduction of a new strain of cotton in the 1820s, the area was primed for the plantation economy that would emerge.<sup>68</sup> By 1820 the United States was the world’s leading supplier of cotton, producing thirty times more cotton than it had before the invention of the cotton gin.<sup>69</sup>

### *Second Middle Passage*

Around 388,000 Africans were transported to the United States before 1808 when the importation of the enslaved people was banned, and this period was referred to as “the Middle Passage.” The ban of 1808 did not stop the thriving domestic, or internal, trade. The seven decades of domestic slave trade that occurred from 1787, when the Constitution was ratified, to 1861 when the Civil War Began, is the period referred to as “the Second Middle Passage.” The three decades from 1830 to 1860, were referred to as “the worst [years] in the history of African American enslavement.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Eugene R. Dattel, “Cotton in a Global Economy: Mississippi (1800-1860),” Mississippi History Now, Mississippi Historical Society, October 2006, Accessed October 16, 2020, <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/161/cotton-in-a-global-economy-mississippi-1800-1860>.

<sup>64</sup> Dr. Kimberly Kutz Elliot, “Culture and Reform in the Early Nineteenth Century: The Cotton Kingdom,” Kahn Academy, Accessed October 16, 2020, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/the-early-republic/culture-and-reform/a/the-cotton-kingdom>.

<sup>65</sup> Eugene R. Dattel, “Cotton in a Global Economy: Mississippi (1800-1860).”

<sup>66</sup> Ronald L. F. Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez 1720–1880, Special History Study*, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Denver Service Center, 1993, 67.

<sup>67</sup> Ronald L. F. Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez 1720–1880, Special History Study*, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Denver Service Center, 1993, 67.

<sup>68</sup> Jim Barnett and H. Clark Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Adams County, Mississippi, Natchez, MS: Mississippi Department of Archives & History, Revised October 17, 2008, Section 7, 1.

<sup>69</sup> Eugene R. Dattel, “Cotton in a Global Economy: Mississippi (1800-1860).”

<sup>70</sup> Henry Louis Gates, Jr., “100 Amazing Facts About the Negro: What was the Second Middle Passage?” PBS, PBS.org, Accessed October 18, 2020, <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/what-was-the-2nd-middle-passage/>.

By the time the Atlantic Slave Trade was closed, the population of enslaved people in North America had already been increasing due to childbirth over the previous five decades. In *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, Walter Johnson states that in the seventy years prior to the Civil War, approximately one million people were forcibly relocated from the Upper South to the Lower South.<sup>71</sup> This is also referred to as the “Slave Trail of Tears,” as this forced migration was approximately twenty times larger than the campaign to remove Native Americans from Mississippi, Georgia, and Alabama in the 1830s.<sup>72</sup> The markets at Forks of the Road were the major destination of the Second Middle Passage (Figure 11).<sup>73</sup>

### ***The Business of Trading People***

#### *Traders/Enslavers*

The names of the most infamous traders or enslavers have been lost to history, and it is no surprise, as this is a dark period in history that many may think best forgotten. For this reason, it is all-the-more notable that several traders, known by name, are associated with Forks of the Road. Perhaps the most notorious enslaver was Isaac Franklin, who was the cofounder of Franklin & Armfield, the largest slave trading firm in the United States. He was born on a plantation in Tennessee into a wealthy family of enslavers, and he became interested in the domestic trade of enslaved people when the transatlantic slave trade was ended. Initially, he and his brothers began a small trading operation that transported enslaved people from Virginia to the Deep South.<sup>74</sup>

After the war of 1812, John Armfield became Franklin’s nephew by marriage. Before marrying into the Franklin family, Armfield had fathered a child out of wedlock, and was forced to leave the county in North Carolina where he had lived. He dabbled in several businesses, and ultimately settled in Virginia where he began his business in the trade of enslaved people. The pair became close friends, and this was the foundation for their working relationship when they launched Franklin & Armfield. Their company frequently utilized the Forks of the Road market. Typically, the trading process began with rounding up “human cargo” from plantations across the Upper South. Once the pair purchased between 100 to 200 people, they chained them together in coffles and forced them to march 1000 miles over rugged terrain to Natchez. Alternatively, the pair sometimes packed enslaved people onto one of the company ships, which afforded less room per person than those ships made for Atlantic crossings.

In a Washington Post article, journalist, Hannah Natanson, relays what University of Texas at Austin professor, Marie D. McNinn says likely happened:

While enslaved people waited in Franklin and Armfield’s “holding pen” in Alexandria, the two men most likely adopted classic techniques employed by slave traders to enhance enslaved people’s salability, McNinn said. That meant feeding their captives large amounts of corn pone and pork to “fatten them up,” dyeing gray hair black “so they looked younger,” and — if an enslaved person’s skin was scarred with whip marks — smearing wax into the wounds “so they looked healthier...”

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<sup>71</sup> Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MS, 1999, 5.

<sup>72</sup> Ball, Edward. “Retracing Slavery’s Trail of Tears, America’s forgotten migration—the journeys of a million African-Americans from the tobacco South to the cotton South.” *Smithsonian*. November 2015. Accessed October 21, 2019. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/slavery-trail-of-tears-180956968/>.

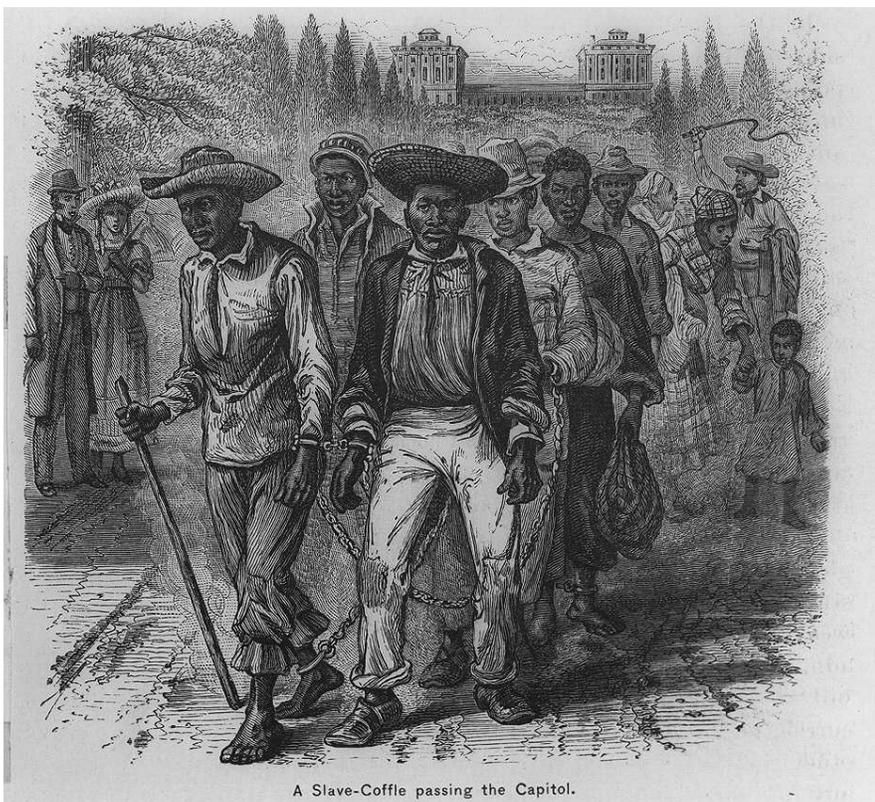
<sup>73</sup> “Final Environmental Assessment for the Boundary Adjustment Study of Forks of the Road,” Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, June 2010, 48.

<sup>74</sup> Natanson, Hannah. “They were once America’s cruelest, richest slave traders. Why does no one know their names?” *The Washington Post*. September 14, 2019. Accessed October 21, 2019. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2019/09/14/they-were-once-americas-cruellest-richest-slave-traders-why-does-no-one-know-their-names/>.

Letters between the two men describe obscene and brutal acts of atrocity, as they joked about regularly raping the women they bought and sold. Although, they conducted business in much the same way as many other traders, they did it on a larger scale and created the “modern machinery to support the business of human trafficking,” moving an estimated 10,000 enslaved persons over the span of their careers.<sup>75</sup> Other notable traders during the height of the Forks of the Road market included John O’Ferrall, Rice Ballard, R. H. Elam, and Tarlton Auterburn.

### *The Enslaved in Coffles*

A coffle is defined as a line of animals or enslaved humans fastened or driven along together, and it is derived from the Arabic word *qāfila* (**Figure 12**), meaning caravan or travelling company.<sup>76</sup> Typically, a coffle could range from fifteen to several hundred enslaved. The men were chained together with iron collars and chains and marched in single- or double-file lines, and the women were usually tied together with ropes. The coffles were forced to walk twenty to thirty miles per day, and a 1000-mile trip from Virginia to Natchez could take several months. To avoid extreme heat, these marches usually occurred during the winter months between October and May. Although grueling, there is little documentation of deaths, accidents, or riots; there is no way to understand the emotional or spiritual loss of these individuals, most who would never see their families again. This anguish and loss was often overheard in the singing of the enslaved on these long marches.<sup>77</sup> These spirituals and call and response songs were the foundation for modern Blues music.



*Figure 12* The image above shows a coffle of enslaved people travelling through Washington (Library of Congress).

As a people who were not allowed basic freedoms such as the ability to learn reading and writing, nor the ability to own property, the recorded songs that the enslaved sang are a strong example of workmanship and lasting cultural material. Forcing those in coffles to sing was a tool used by traders “to pace the slaves in step and to counter emotional depression that often led to malingering and insubordination.”

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<sup>75</sup> Natanson, “They were once America’s cruelest, richest slave traders.”

<sup>76</sup> “Coffle,” Merriam-Webster, Accessed October 21, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/coffle>.

<sup>77</sup> Ronald L. F. Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez 1720–1880, Special History Study*, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Denver Service Center, 1993, 71-72.

Below are the sad lyrics of a song commonly sung by the enslaved:

“Coffle Song”

Oh! Fare ye well, my bonny love,  
I'm gwine away to leave you,  
A long farewell for ever love,  
Don't let our parting grieve you  
(Chorus) Oh! Fare ye well, etc.

The Way is long before me, love,  
And all my love's behind me;  
You'll seek me down by the old gum tree  
But none of you will find me

I'll send you my love by the whoop-o'-will;  
The dove shall bring my sorrow;  
Leavy you a drop of my heart's own blood,  
For I won't be back to-morrow.

And when we're moldering in the clay,  
All those will weep who love us;  
But it won't be long till my Jesus come,  
He sees and reigns above us.<sup>78</sup>

Williams Wells Brown, who worked as an enslaved man on steamboats between his Kentucky home and New Orleans, and later authored *Clotel*, recorded far angrier words:

The following song I have often heard the slaves sing, when about to be carried to the far south. It is said to have been composed by a slave.”

See these poor souls from Africa  
Transported to America;  
We are stole, and sold to Georgia [Mississippi]  
Will you go along with me?  
We are stolen, and sold to Georgia—  
Come sound the jubilee!

See wives and husbands sold apart,  
Their children's screams will break my heart;—  
There's a better day a coming—  
Will you go along with me?  
There's a better day a coming,  
go sound the jubilee!<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ronald L. F. Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez 1720–1880, Special History Study*, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1993, 72-73.

<sup>79</sup> Ronald L. F. Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez 1720–1880, Special History Study*, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1993, 73.

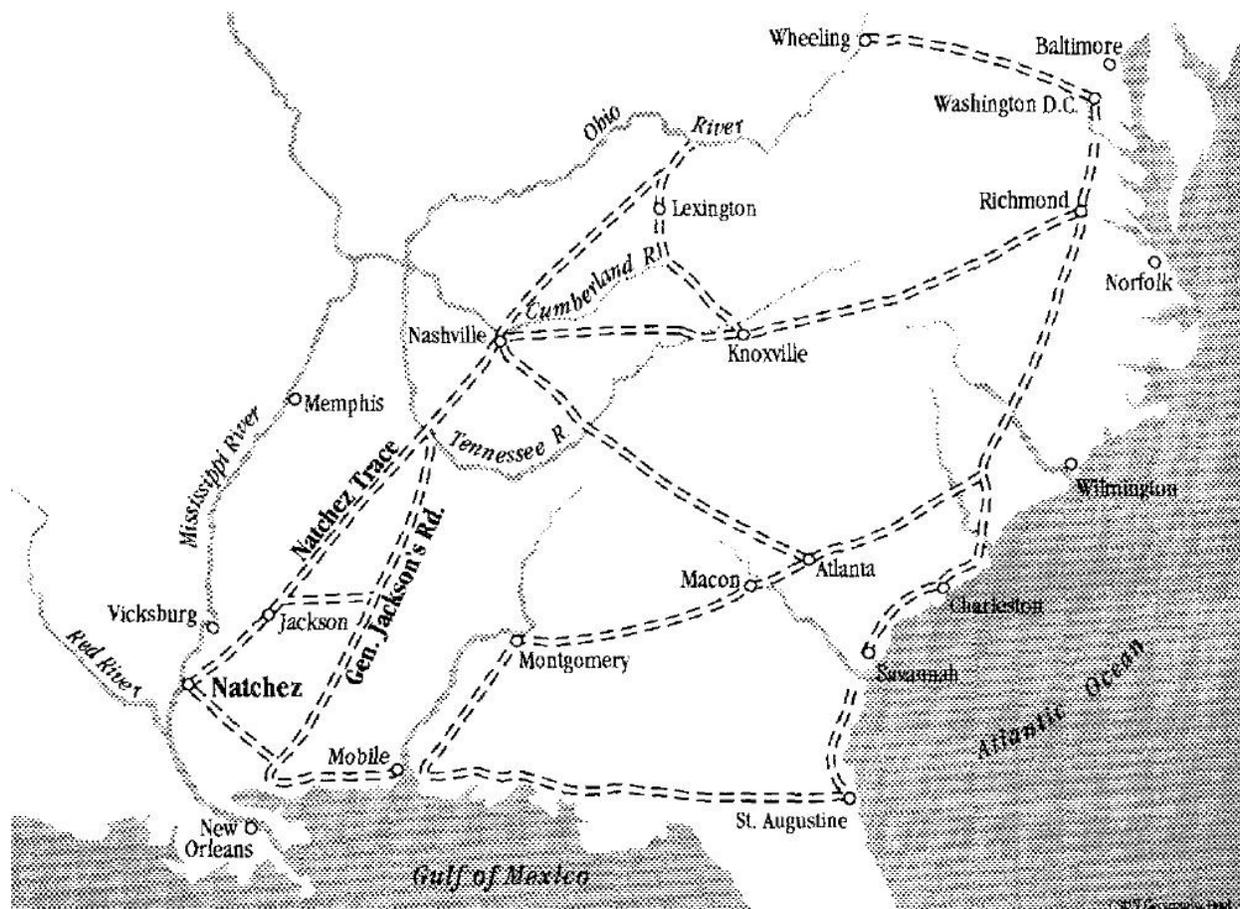


Figure 13 Overland routes of the slave trade from 1830-1860 (Davis 69).

There were three overland slave routes that were typically used: the first was from the Upper South on the Wilderness Road through the Cumberland Gap then to Nashville and the Natchez Trace; from the Carolinas via stage roads; and from coastal Florida to either Mobile or Pensacola and then to Natchez (Figure 13).<sup>80</sup> Figure 14 delineates the trail from the City of Natchez, through Northwest Alabama, and across the Tennessee River, eventually reaching the City of Nashville.

<sup>80</sup> Ronald L. F. Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez 1720–1880, Special History Study*, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Denver Service Center, 1993, 71.

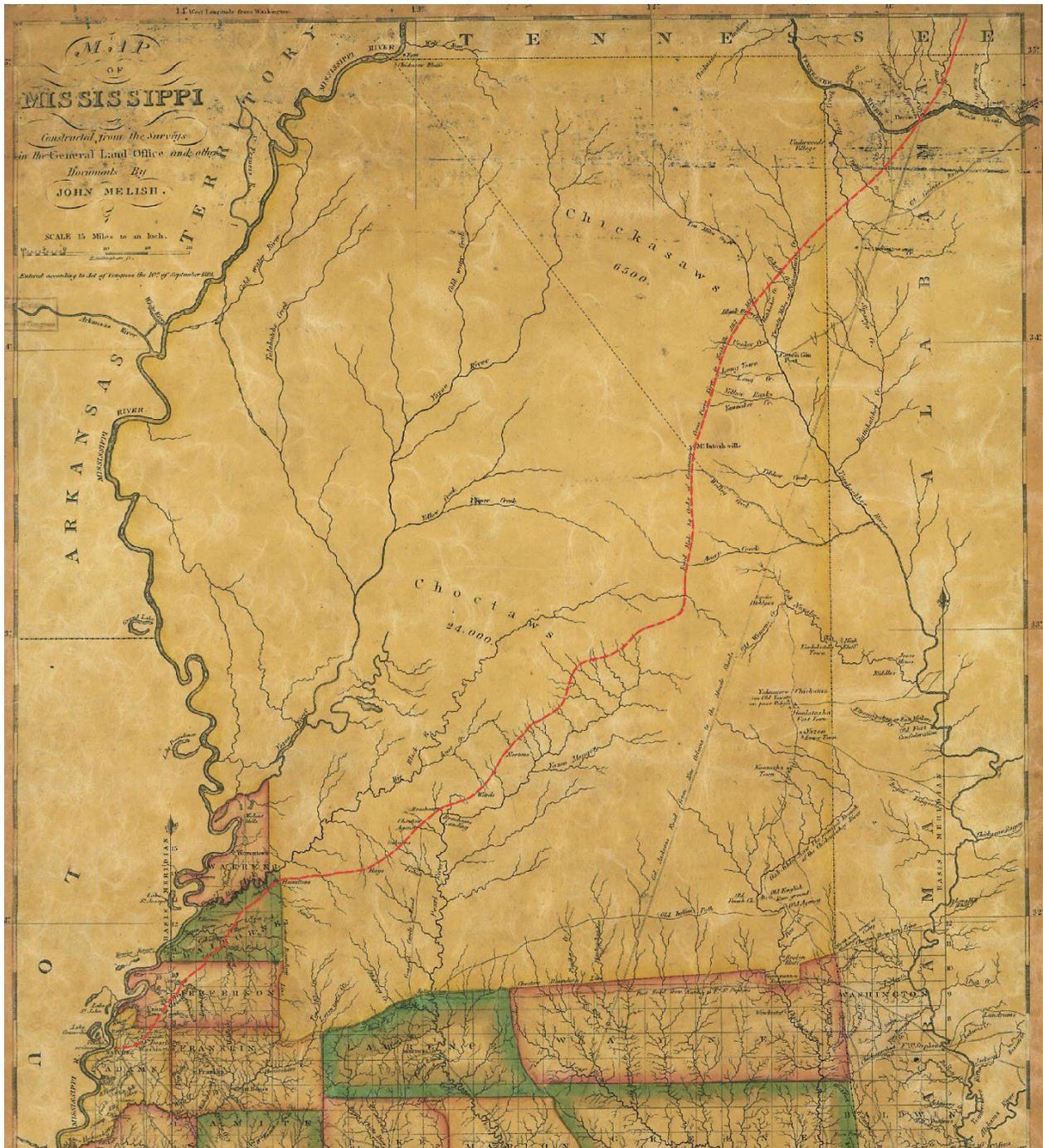


Figure 14 1820 Map of Mississippi with the path of the Natchez Trace, from Nashville to the southwest Frontier town of Natchez, in red (Constructed from the Surveys in the General Land Office and other Documents by John Melish Library of Congress).

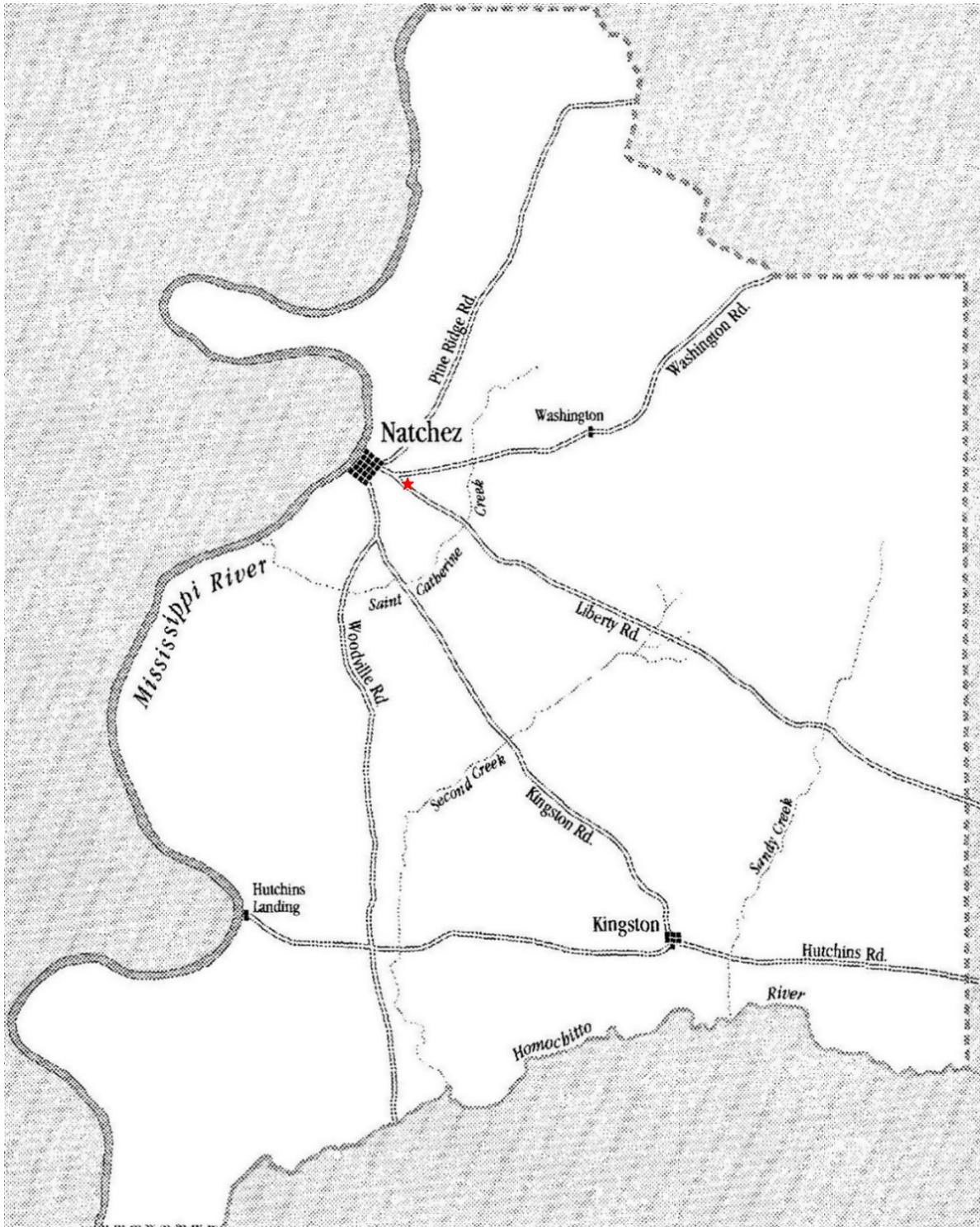


Figure 15 Antebellum map of the early settlement of Adams County showing the intersection of Washington and Liberty roads, and a major bend in the river immediately north of Natchez that later became an oxbow lake (Davis 11).

Within the City of Natchez, there were several routes that led into and out of the city. Two of these routes formed the Forks of the Road at Washington and Liberty roads (**Figure 15**) which led northeast and southeast, respectively, to those towns.

### Creation of Forks of the Road Market

Sale of the enslaved was commonplace in most cities within Mississippi in the early 1800s. Within the City of Natchez, it was no different. Local traders routinely traded enslaved people Under the Hill, at Main Street stores, and at the Courthouse.<sup>81</sup> Ingraham noted that “they were publicly sold, the marts being on nearly every street.”<sup>82</sup> With the rise of the domestic trade in the 1830s, large-scale traders began transporting large quantities of people to Natchez. This often occurred in unsanitary conditions, which increased the threat of spreading diseases such as cholera. Business may have gone on as usual, however, the actions of one slaveholder caused public outcry—for the endangerment of Natchez citizens and the denial of the right of burial for the deceased.

We had not then, the least intimation of the circumstances which were unfolded on the Saturday night following, respecting the Negroes spoken of from New Orleans,—neither had we any presentiment of the horrid discoveries disclosed on that night, and the next day. We knew that our citizens were generally in a fine state of health, and that the city was in a healthy condition. We called the attention of the public to the negroes, in consequence of the unusual number for sale here, believing, crowded as they were in several houses thus occupied, diseases of a malignant kind might be created among them, and thus endanger the lives of the citizens, and jeopardize the interest of the city.<sup>83</sup>

Due to close confinement and unsanitary conditions aboard Isaac Franklin’s ships, several enslaved people on his ships contracted cholera. An excerpt from an article in the *Mississippi Free Trader* details that someone found partially covered bodies of slaves in a ravine and illustrates the gruesome task of the citizens that had to remove them. Several bodies were found, including one infant, most of which were declared deaths from cholera. To avoid the public stigma of the disease, and perhaps the cost of burials, they were hastily disposed of. After word got out, other enslavers came forward to clear their names, and the article gives a brief glimpse into the inhumane character of Isaac Franklin.

The other traders immediately came forward, and before a magistrate gave an account of the number of negroes each brought to this place, the number they had sold or that had died, and did every thing we understand to satisfy the public, that the negroes who had died, had not been thrown into the ravine by them. We have not heard that Mr. Franklin took the least trouble to satisfy

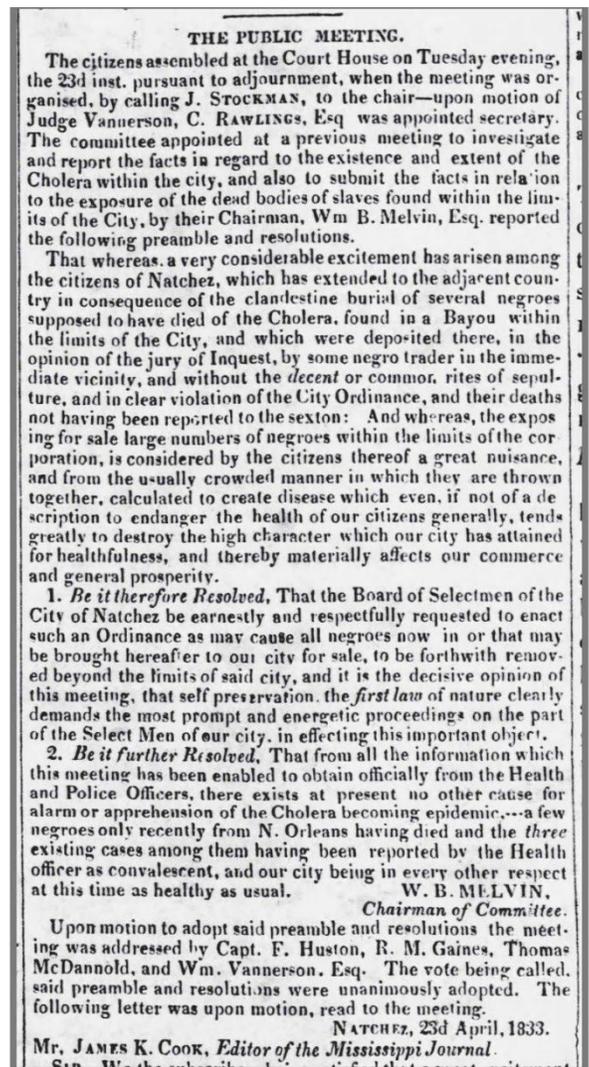


Figure 16 City Ordinance from April 23, 1833 resolving that the sale of enslaved persons must occur outside of the limits of the city (Newspapers.com).

<sup>81</sup> Ronald L. F. Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez 1720–1880, Special History Study*, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Denver Service Center, 1993, 81.

<sup>82</sup> Joseph Holt Ingraham, *The South-West. By A Yankee*, New York: Harper & Brothers, Cliff-St., 1835, 237.

<sup>83</sup> James K. Cook, Editor of the *Mississippi Journal*, “The Excitement,” *Mississippi Free Trader* (Natchez, MS), April 26, 1833, Accessed October 6, 2020, Newspapers.com.

the public feeling on the subject, on the contrary it seems according to the general opinion he was more disposed to brave public opinion than to take any measures satisfactory to the people in the matter; besides, the outrage committed by him, or by his overseer, or the keepers of his slaves, other charges were alleged against him, and the public excitement consequently became increased to a very great degree. It was expected too by the people, that the "Select Men" of the city would have immediately assembled after hearing the circumstances;<sup>84</sup>

After hearing negative feedback from the people of Natchez, the City Council quickly resolved that the sale of enslaved people could no longer occur within the boundaries of the city limits, and also that there was no cause for the apprehension of a cholera outbreak if the markets were moved outside of the city (Figure 16).<sup>85</sup> This City Ordinance eliminated large-scale trading within city limits. Trading took place at the Forks of the Road site before 1833, however this spurred a more formalized development at the forks of Washington and Liberty roads, a spot which was located just beyond the city corporation line.



Figure 17 Map depicting the locations of slave markets throughout the city of Natchez after the establishment of the Forks of the Road market (Davis 81) Note: The Main Street stores are indicated incorrectly on Franklin Street on this map.

<sup>84</sup> James K. Cook, Editor of the *Mississippi Journal*, "The Excitement," *Mississippi Free Trader* (Natchez, MS), April 26, 1833, Accessed October 6, 2020, Newspapers.com.

<sup>85</sup> James K. Cook, Editor of the *Mississippi Journal*, "The Public Meeting," *Mississippi Free Trader* (Natchez, MS), April 26, 1833, Accessed October 6, 2020, Newspapers.com.

Although the Forks of the Road was established outside of the city limits, the sale of local enslaved people still occurred within Natchez through the early 1860s. **Figure 17** shows the locations where “traders swapped, sold, exhibited, bargained, and plied the slave trade with an abandonment that turned the entire community into a veritable slave market for half the year.<sup>86</sup>” Generally the sales of enslaved people that occurred within City limits “handled local slaves in smaller lots,” such as probate and sheriff sales, which occurred at the courthouse, or auction and store sales, which happened along Main Street. All other transactions involved trade of those enslaved people that had been trafficked from the Upper South plantations; these typically occurred at the boat landing on the Mississippi River (before the enslaved were transported to FotR) and at Forks of the Road.<sup>87</sup>

The location of the new market was determined by several factors, the first being that new market had to be located outside of city limits to follow the ordinance. It was also located near traffic coming off of the Natchez Trace, which was a known route of traders bringing coffles of enslaved to Natchez, and within view of several plantations that offered protection in the case of an uprising. At the time, tensions were high from fears of revolt from the enslaved people, especially after the Nat Turner Rebellion, which was a slave revolt that occurred in Virginia, that nearly ended the interstate trade in the state. There was a real fear of “the importation of potentially dangerous sleeves [sic] who might incite similar insurrections in Natchez,” and situating the markets within view of the nearby plantations had the added benefit that armed planters could react quickly to gain control, should an uprising occur (**Figure 25**).<sup>88</sup> The FotR site was within view of Devereux, Linden, and Monmouth plantations.<sup>89</sup>

In 1834, eyewitness traveler, Joseph Holt Ingraham described the Forks of the Road market as follows:

A mile from Natchez we came to a cluster of rough wooden buildings, in the angle of two roads, in front of which several saddle horses, either tied or held by servants, indicated a place of popular resort. ‘This is the slave market,’ said my companion, pointing to a building in the rear; and alighting, we left our horses in charge of a neatly dressed yellow boy belonging to the establishment. Entering through a wide gate into a narrow courtyard, partially enclosed by low buildings...<sup>90</sup>

Traditionally, the trading season occurred during winter, and shelter would have been needed for several hundred enslaved people at a time. It was not uncommon for the enslaved to be housed in tents or booths, or to remain at the FotR site for months while awaiting sale. There would have been a need for additional land to use for housing and providing basic needs such as food, clothing, sanitation, and medical treatment.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Ronald L. F. Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez 1720–1880, Special History Study*, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Denver Service Center, 1993,77.

<sup>87</sup> Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez*, 79-80.

<sup>88</sup> Jim Barnett and H. Clark Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Adams County, Mississippi, Natchez, MS: Mississippi Department of Archives & History, Revised October 17, 2008, Section 7, 9.

<sup>89</sup> Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez*, 20, 82.

<sup>90</sup> Jim Barnett and H. Clark Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road*, Section 7, 5.

<sup>91</sup> Jim Barnett and H. Clark Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road*, Section 7, 7-8.

### How Properties at the Market Changed Hands

The first American to hold the parcel of land that would become the Forks of the Road market was Ebenezer Dayton, according to the 1792 Spanish census data. The tract contained 122.44 acres as is shown in the 1807 plat (Figure 18) from the General Land Office platbook. The map shows that “Washington Road, the terminating end of the Natchez Trace, is clearly seen crossing the northwest corner of the Dayton property just west of Spanish Bayou.”<sup>92,93</sup> This land was sold to Robert and George Smith, according to the archeology report written in 2007.

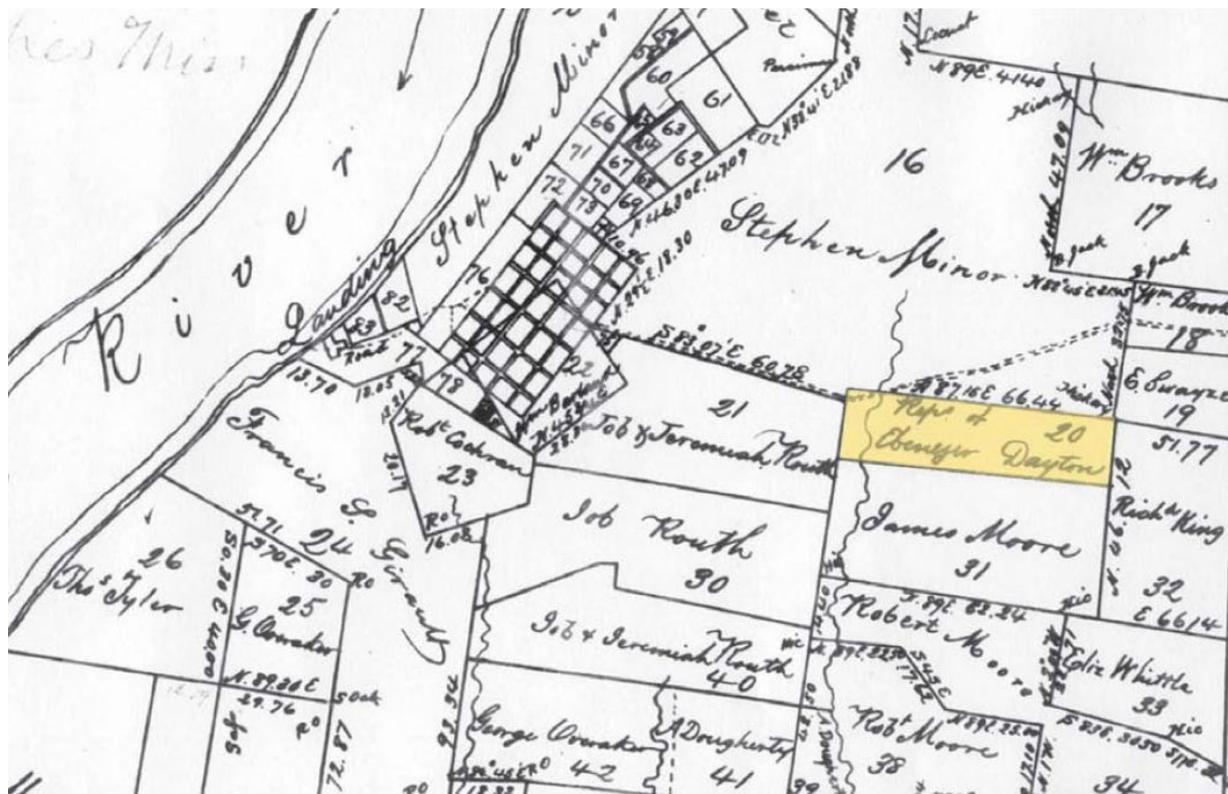


Figure 18 Image of an 1807 plat map of the FotR showing that Ebenezer Dayton owned the property that contained Washington Road/Natchez Trace and Spanish Bayou (Carruth 7).

Research completed by Jim Barnett of MDAH shows the approximate location of the two markets that were situated across from each other on Liberty Road (Figure 19).<sup>94</sup> These have also located on the site plan (Figure 2). Further research completed by the historian at NATC, Thom Rosenblum, traced the chain of title for the property located on both sides of Liberty Road for the period from 1826 – 1872. This property was originally owned by Ebenezer Dayton, and then sold to George Smith. In 1826, Smith deeded the property to his brother, Anthony Smith.<sup>95</sup> In 1829, Anthony Smith transferred a portion of the property to William P. Thomas as an “indenture,” which likely meant that there was a loan on the property. The 2.6 acre property was located east of Liberty Road.<sup>96</sup> This property will be referred to as *Market 1*. The parcel located

<sup>92</sup> Carruth, “Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market,” 6-7.

<sup>93</sup> It is unlikely that Washington Road was the “terminating end” of the Natchez Trace. The HSR notes that Washington Road connected Natchez to the Natchez Trace, which ultimately continued to Alabama and Tennessee, and this is likely more accurate.

<sup>94</sup> Carruth, “Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market,” 2.

<sup>95</sup> Thom Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation: Forks of the Road Chain of Title 1826-1872,” Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, May 2004, 1.

<sup>96</sup> Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation,” 1-2.

on the west side of Liberty Road, will be referred to as *Market 2*.

#### *Market 1, Lot 1*

Market 1 was platted in circa 1840, and the familiar “Y” shape that the Forks of the Road is known for is visible (**Figure 20**). In 1835, Mary Thomas (wife of William Thomas) leased a portion of Lot 1 to Benjamin C. Eaton and Theophilus Freeman for five years. Theophilus Freeman was a known New Orleans trader who began in the slave trade in 1833.<sup>97</sup>

After the death Mary Thomas in 1844, the tract was divided into three lots—Lots 1-3—which were purchased by their daughter, Sarah Thomas, hereafter referred to as S. Thomas (**Figure 21**). At the time, Lot 3 had a stable and Lot 2 contained a family residence, and in 1846, Lots 1 and 3 were leased to traders.<sup>98</sup>

In 1846, S. Thomas leased Lot 1, a portion of Market 1, to John D. James, and this lease is renewed in 1850. The lease states that James is allowed

...to have and to hold for rent of \$100 during which term of five years the said James is hereby allowed and authorized to erect upon said lot...such buildings and improvements in addition to those already erected under former leases...<sup>99</sup>

James was in partnership with Benjamin F. Cochran of Virginia from about 1845-1850. In 1850, James subleases his property at Market 1 to Samuel H. Davis, a Tennessee trader. In a verbal agreement, Davis allows Thomas G. James (who may be a brother to John D. James) to jointly occupy the property in 1850. This agreement lasted for one year before a court case ensued.<sup>100</sup> The result of the case was not disclosed. In 1856, S. Thomas leased Lot 1 to Thomas G. James for four years.

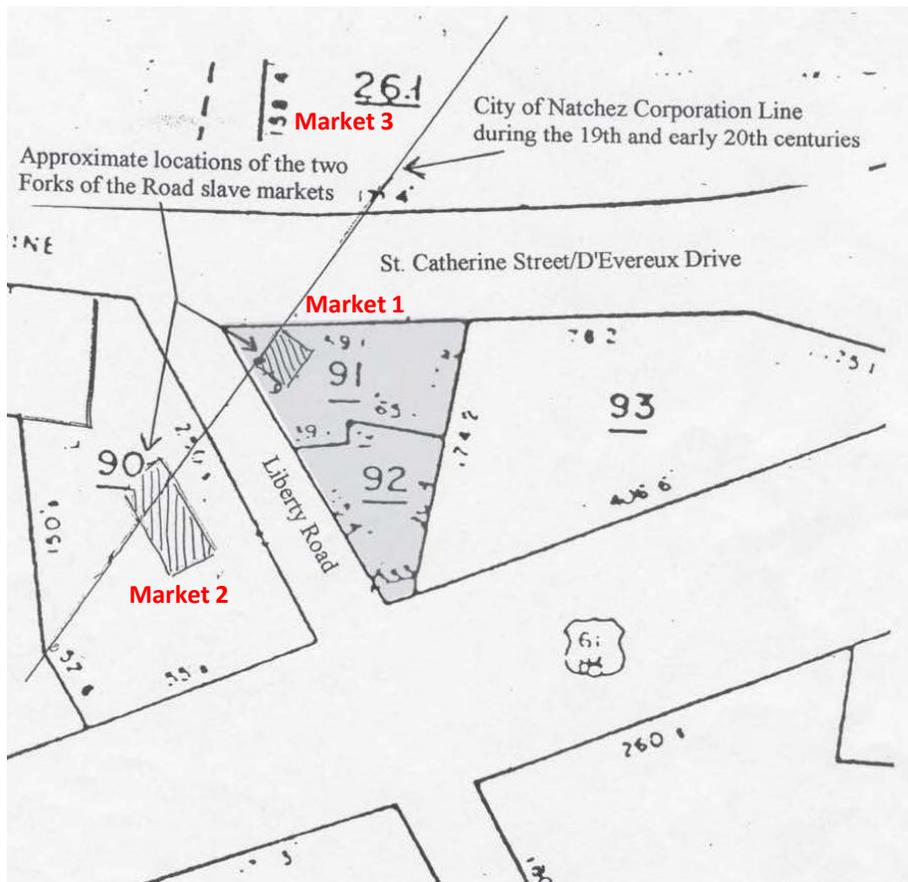


Figure 19 A 1998 property map showing the Forks intersection, the corporation line, and the approximate location of the two slave markets (Carruth 2).

<sup>97</sup> Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation,” 3-4.

<sup>98</sup> Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation,” 1-2.

<sup>99</sup> Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation,” 8.

<sup>100</sup> Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation,” 7-8.

### *Market 1, Lot 3*

In 1853, S. Thomas leased Lot 3, a portion of Market 1, to William Branton for 5 years. This deed authorized Branton

...to pull down the old Cistern House adjoining the stable and to use the lumber thereof in erecting such buildings, fences & c. as he may think proper...the right of free egress to stable and stall therein for a horse and room for buggy.... [in] the condition that should the cistern fail to yield a supply of water, Thomas agrees to permit Branton to take from her Cistern a supply of water for drinking and cooking purposes.<sup>101</sup>

A year later, S. Thomas leased Lot 3 to Thomas G. James (who was previously in a verbal agreement with Samuel Davis regarding Lot 1) for six years. As this was the same lot leased to William Branton, it seems that that lease was terminated early. It was noted in the lease that

Thomas agrees to allow James to pull down the old cistern house on the lot and use the lumber thereof in erecting buildings, fences & c. if he think proper to do so.<sup>102</sup>

In 1862, S. Thomas and Ann Thomas take on a “mechanic’s lien” with John Crothers for constructing a two-story frame house on Lot 3 for the sum of \$1,860.47 with a 10 percent interest rate.<sup>103</sup> In 1867, S. Thomas sells Lot 3 and the new house to Edward Herndon, Esq. for \$500.00.<sup>104</sup> That same year, S. Thomas leased “for a term of 5 years at 120.00 per annum all the land, known as the property of S.M. Thomas” (which may mean Lots 1 and 2), to [John] O’Ferrall. This lease was renewed for another five years in 1872.<sup>105</sup> Until her death in 1889, Lots 1 and 2 remained in the possession of S. Thomas, before passing to Albert Perkins. A month after receiving the property, Perkins sold it to Aaron Zewkowsky. At this time, there was likely a small grocery on the property. Around 1900, three small houses were added. Zewkowsky’s descendents sold the property to one N.M. Steed in 1983. Steed sold the property to Clifton McCarstle (date unknown), who later sold the land to the City of Natchez in 2003 (**Figure 22**).<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation,” 9.

<sup>102</sup> Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation,” 9.

<sup>103</sup> Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation,” 10.

<sup>104</sup> Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation,” 10.

<sup>105</sup> Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation,” 10.

<sup>106</sup> Carruth, “Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market,” 10. Jim Barnett, “A Chronology of Public Acquisition & Interpretation at the Forks of the Road Slave Market Site,” Mississippi Department of Archives & History, 2005.

### *Market 2*

The parcel referred to as Market 2 was located “to the southwest directly across [from Market 1 and] Liberty Road.” In 1835, Market 2 was owned by Anthony Smith who sold the property to Isaac Franklin and Rice C. Ballard for a sum of \$2,000.00. It is likely that Franklin was leasing this land prior to purchase as, “it is known that Franklin was operating near Forks of the Road as early as Winter 1831 and had already erected a structure.”<sup>107</sup>

For the sake of clarity, a portion of the Chain of Title that states each of Franklin's business interests at FotR is below.

Between 1828 and 1836, Franklin formed several concerns to conduct the Natchez trade: **Franklin, Armfield & Company** (1828-1841) a partnership between Franklin and his nephew-by-marriage John Armfield, the firm brokered slaves for a number of Chesapeake traders from 1828 to 1835 including Jordan Saunders, George Kephart, and Thomas M. Jones. In addition to their Natchez slave yard, Franklin and Armfield owned or leased properties in Alexandria, VA, New Orleans, LA, and Baltimore, MD.

**Franklin, Ballard & Company** (1831-1833 & 1833-1835) a partnership between Franklin and Armfield and the Virginia firm of Rice C. Ballard and Samuel Alsop which had been selling slaves in Louisiana and Mississippi since 1828. The agreement stipulated that Ballard and Alsop trade only under the name of the new company. Franklin and Armfield, however, remained unencumbered to continue to trade in their name and broker slaves for others.

**Isaac and James R. Franklin & Company** (1833-1835?) although the terms of the agreement with Ballard and Alsop were renewed for an additional two year period in 1833, Franklin formed yet another concern to work the Natchez trade. The new partnership consisted of Franklin, Armfield, Ballard, Franklin's younger brother James and his brother-in-law James Purvis. The first records for the concern appear in October 1833 and they continue in business into 1834.

**Ballard, Franklin & Company** (1835-1841) a partnership of Franklin, Armfield and Ballard.<sup>108</sup>

In 1840, Peter G. Creiger, administrator to Andrew L. Wilson, sued Isaac Franklin, and was allowed to purchase the land that comprised Market 2 for \$500. In 1841, Franklin purchased the land back for \$2,198.07. That same year, Rice C. Ballard and Isaac Franklin sell John Armfield one third of Market 2 for a sum of \$666.66.<sup>109</sup> In 1845 Ballard, Franklin & Company liquidate assets and sell the market property to John O'Ferrall for \$3000.00. In 1857, O'Ferrall offered his real estate for sale, which included Market 2.<sup>110</sup>

### *Market 3*

In 1856, Robert H. Elam established a trading stand north of Washington Road.<sup>111</sup> The Elam building is present on the 1856 map however, nothing appears in that area north of Washington Road on the 1853 map. On the 1864 Civil War map (**Figure 30**) many structures appear north of Washington Road in the area where the Elam stand was located, however, it is likely that this stand was demolished at the same time (1863) that the James Stand (Market 1) was dismantled. The 1886 Sanborn map (Figure 34) shows the O'Ferrall Residence in the location of the former Elam Stand.

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<sup>107</sup> Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation,” 1-2.

<sup>108</sup> Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation,” 3.

<sup>109</sup> Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation,” 5.

<sup>110</sup> Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation,” 6.

<sup>111</sup> Carruth, “Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market,” 9.

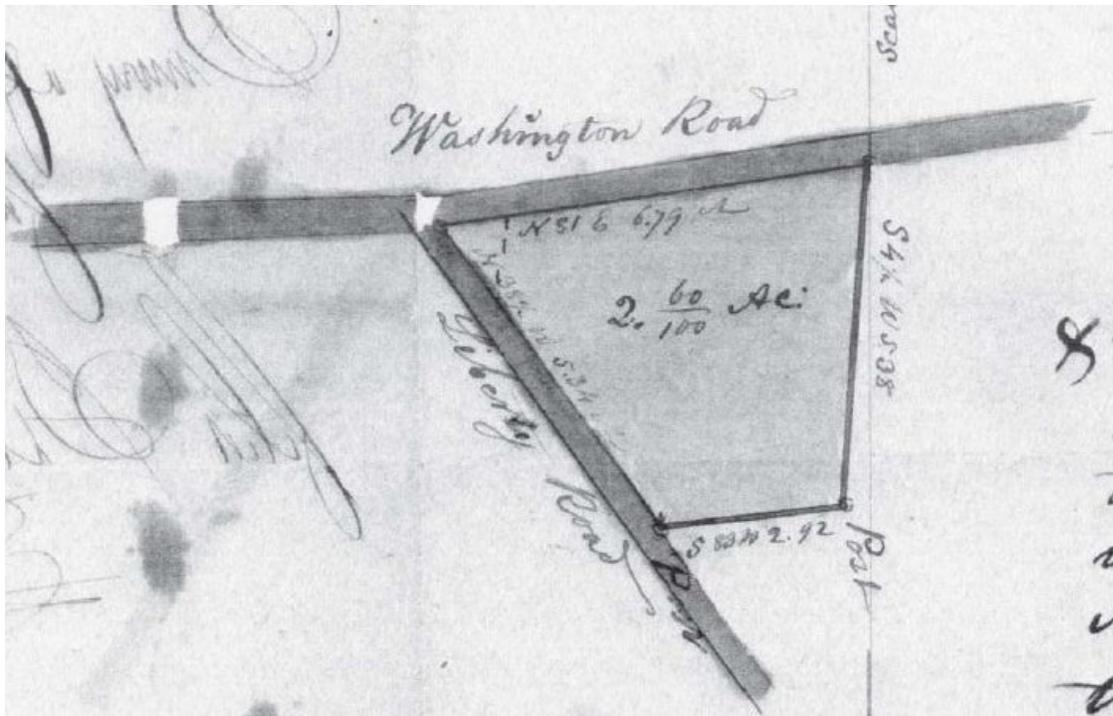


Figure 20 The Thomas tract, circa 1840 (Market 1) showing the “Y” shape of Forks of the Road at the intersection of Washington Road and Liberty Road (St. Catherine Street begins west of Liberty Road). (Carruth 18).

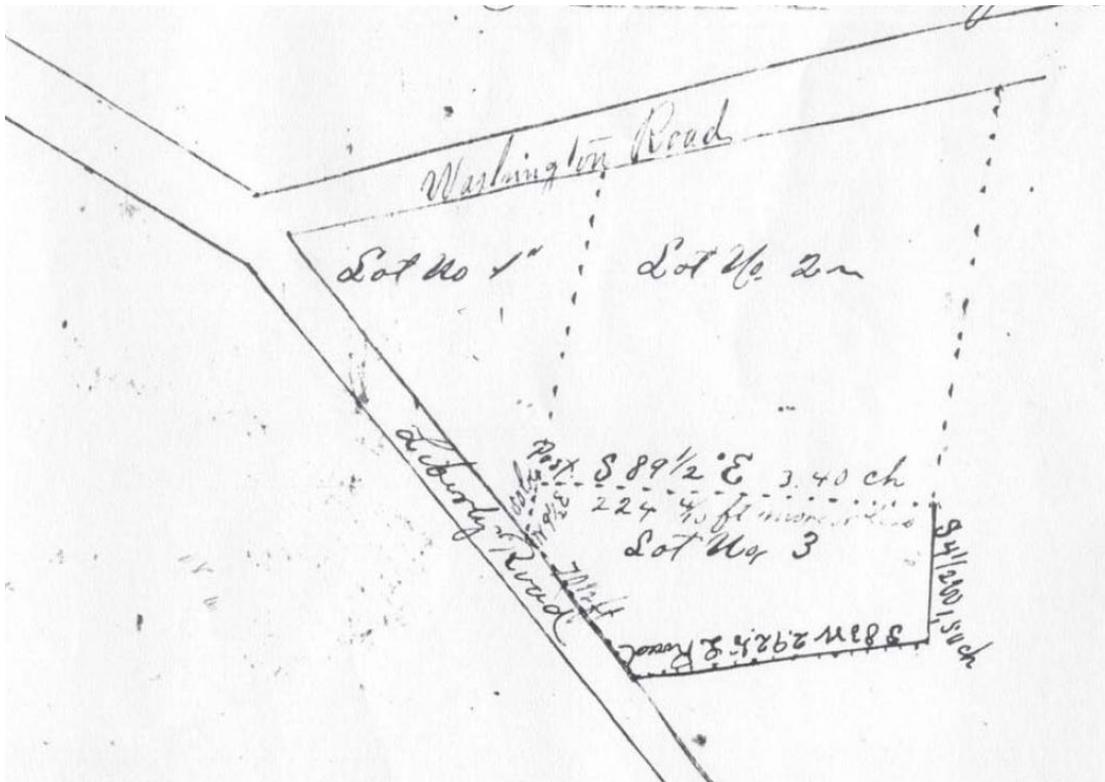


Figure 21 An 1844 survey showing division of the Thomas tract at Forks of the Road into Lots 1, 2, and 3. Lots 1 and 3 comprise Market 1 (Carruth 20).

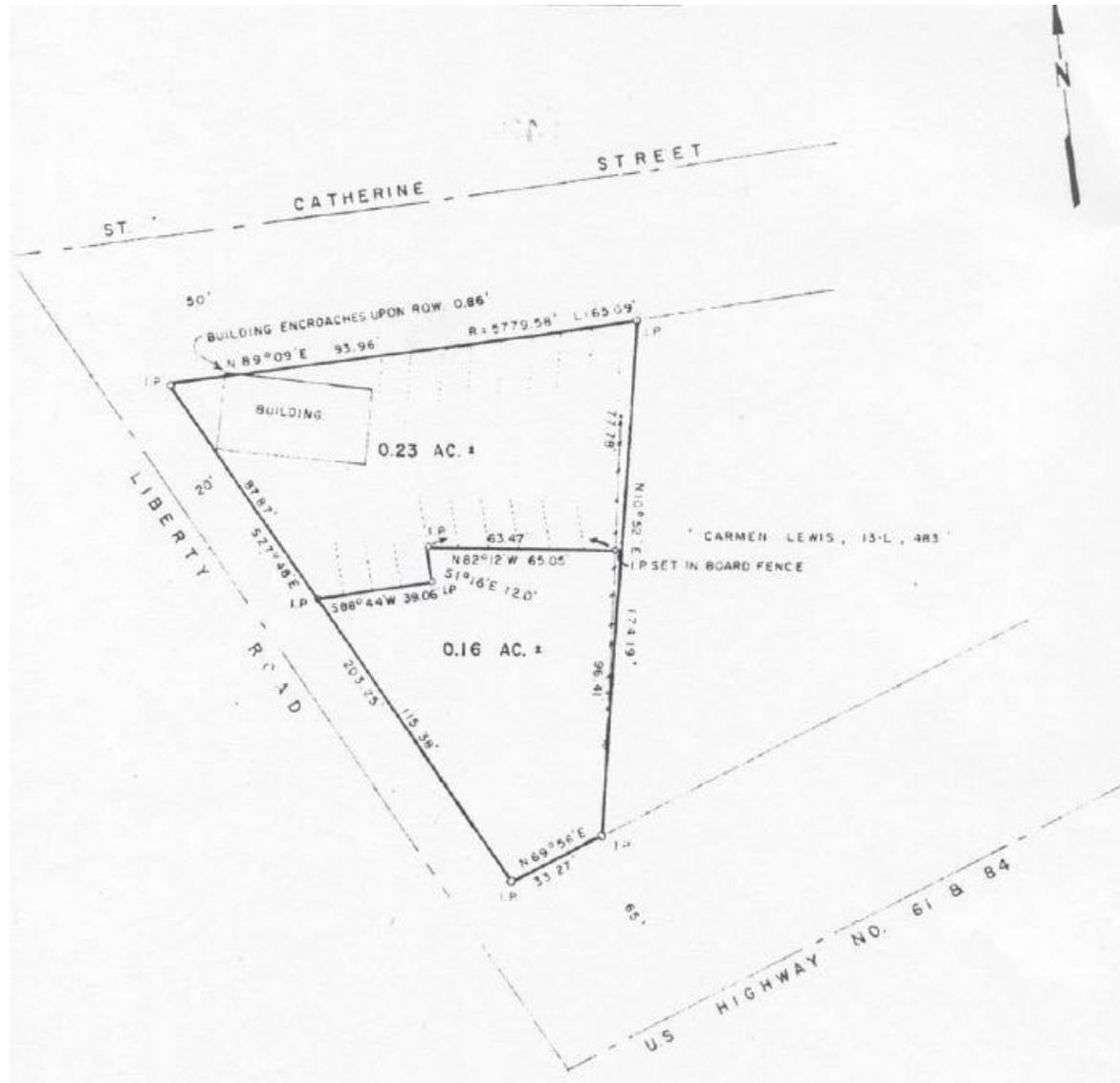


Figure 22 A 1985 map of the property located between St. Catherine St./Devereux Drive and Liberty Road showing the grocery/bar (Carruth 12).

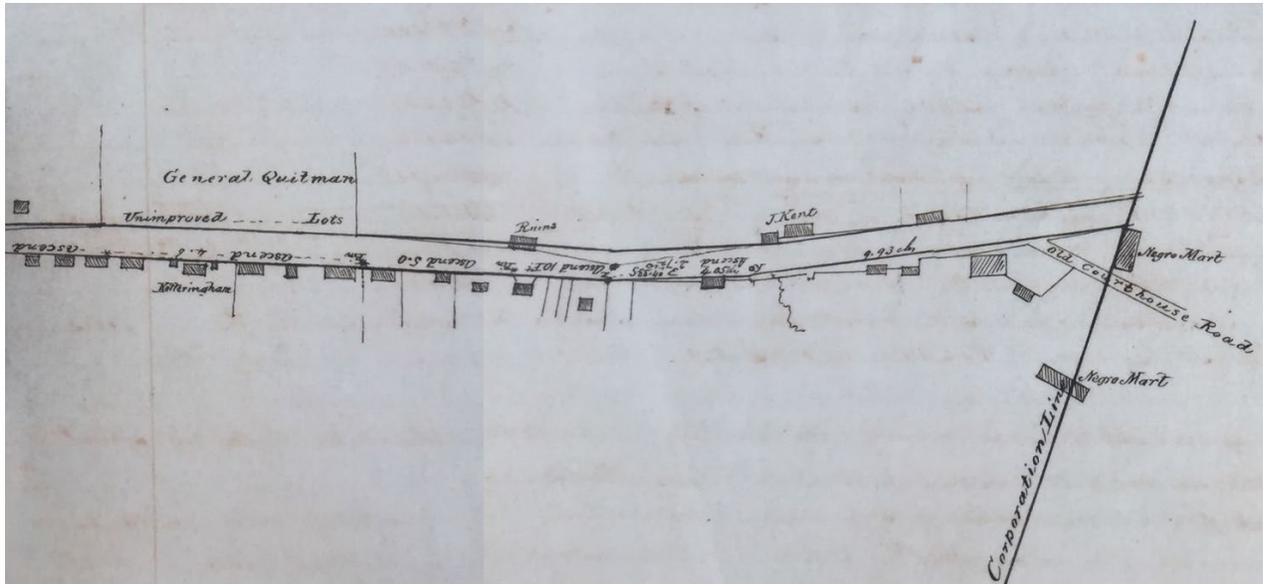


Figure 23 A photograph of a wayside sign near the site shows an 1853 map of St. Catherine Street with the Forks of the Road market on right adjacent to the corporation line (STA 2020).

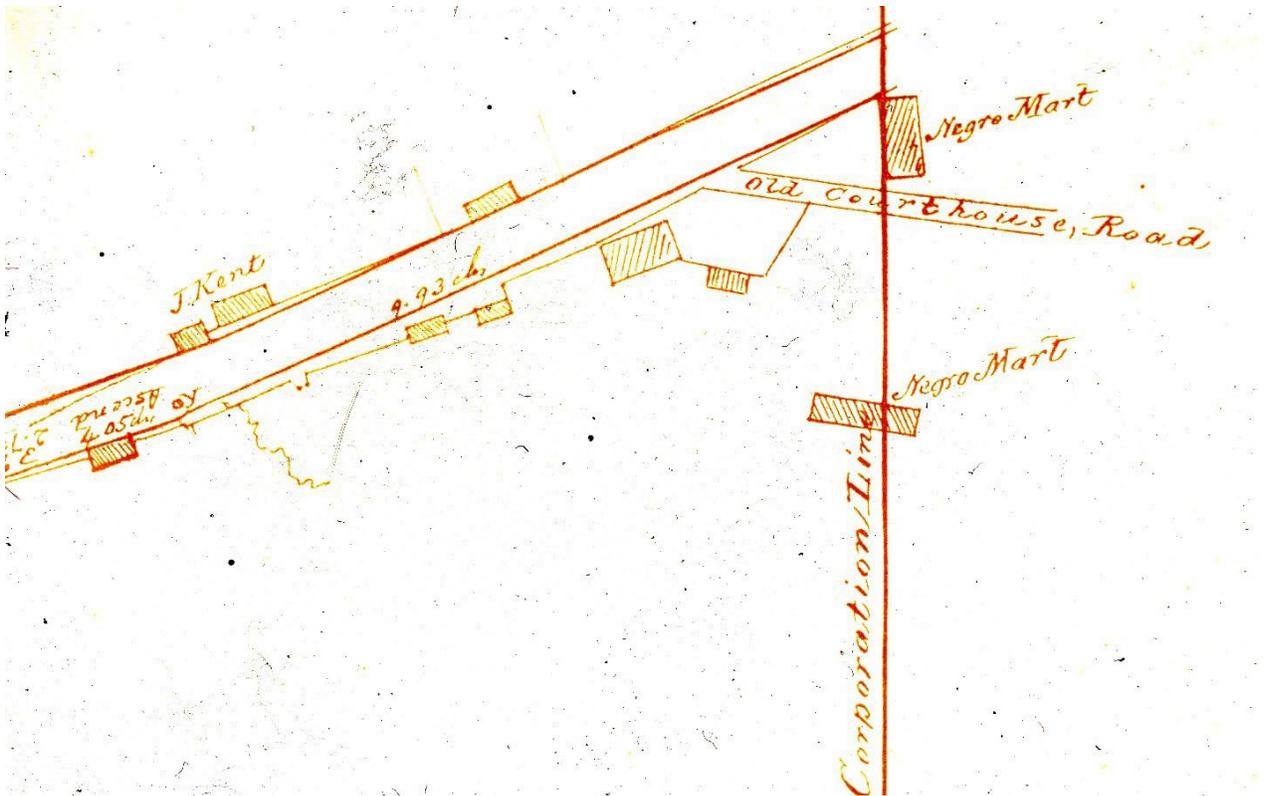


Figure 24 Enlargement of 1853 map showing the Forks of the Road market and the corporation line (NATC).

**Figures 23 and 24** show the 1853 survey of St. Catherine Street to the area just passed the Corporation line. Notice the two buildings labeled “Negro Mart” just across the Corporation Line. The defined spaces around the road fork likely indicate exercise yards or pens used by the slave traders. James operated out of the building adjacent to the space that faces onto St. Catherine Street.

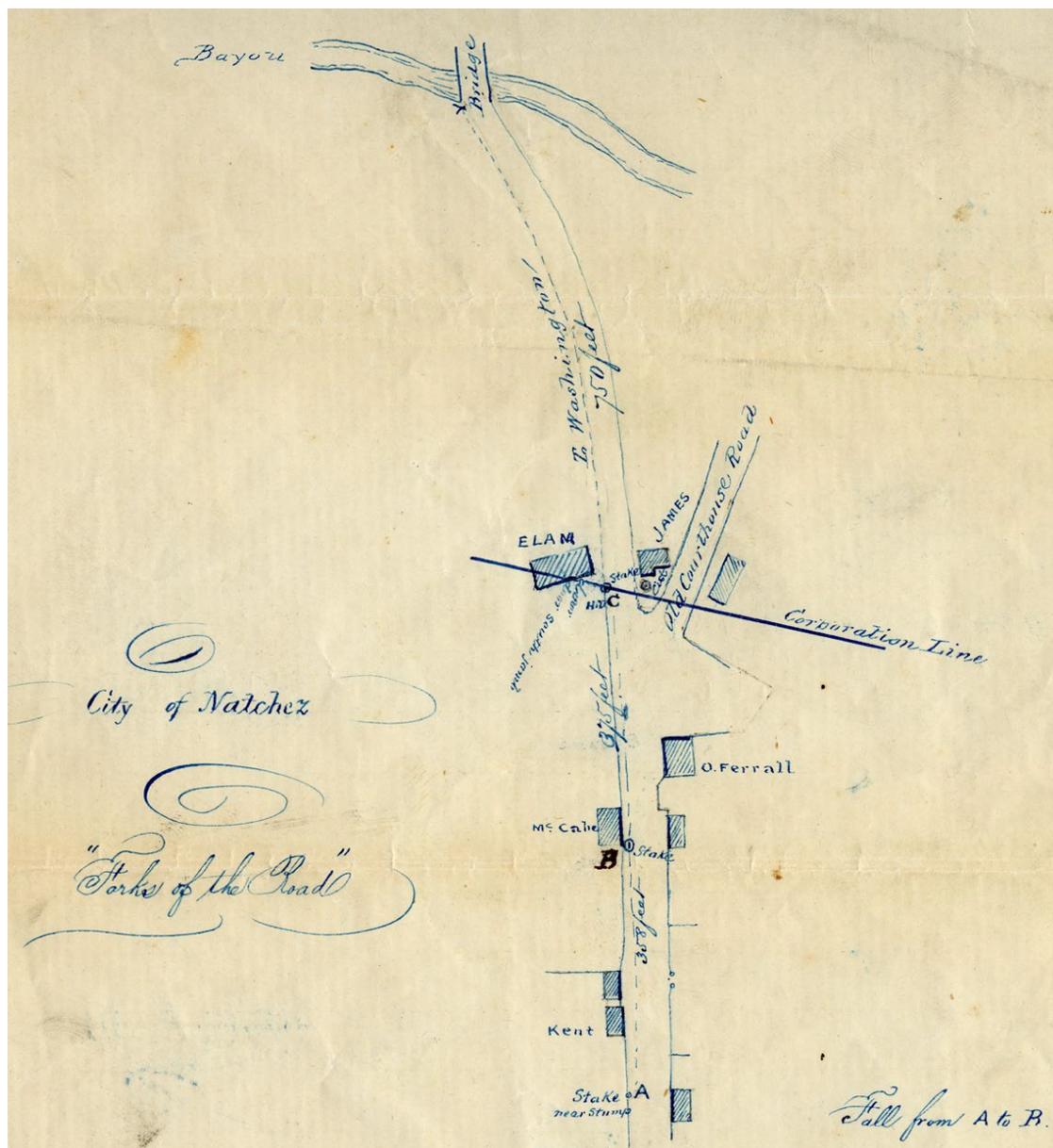


Figure 25 1856 Forks of the Road survey, showing Washington Road, the Bridge over Spanish Bayou, and Old Courthouse Road (Liberty Road). The map also shows the three trading stands—Elam, James, and a third unnamed market (the Isaac Franklin property) west of the James property—all located east of the corporation line. The map is tilted so that north is left (MDAH).

The map in **Figure 25** shows the Forks of the Road site in 1856. St. Catherine Street and Washington Road are depicted here, along with Old Courthouse Road (Liberty Road), with the familiar ‘Y’ shape visible. The James Brothers property is located between the forks, which is referred to as Market 1 in this report. The Elam (Market 3) and O’Ferrall (Market 2) properties were also the sites of notable slave stands. The Elam building is in the location of the O’Ferrall Residence, shown on Sanborn maps later in this document (**Figures 33 – 36**). The property located to the right of the James Stand on this map was previously owned by Isaac Franklin. The Bridge over Spanish Bayou is also visible on the top portion of this map. The FotR market was an open-air market where stalls belonging to multiple slave traders were scattered across several acres. The sale of other items such as livestock also occurred at the market.

## Operation of FotR

### Life at the Market

At the Forks of the Road, transactions did not take the form of large or general auctions, rather each person was sold alone or in small parties. Newspaper advertisements describe the types of enslaved people who are for sale, and R. H. Elam states that “a quick penny is worth more than a slow shilling,” and advises purchasers to call on him (**Figure 26**). Buyers were invited to peruse the stock, and because there was not a tense auction atmosphere, it was likely that the buyer could get a bargain or a more customized purchase.<sup>112</sup>

The biography of an enslaved man, Isaac Stier, describes arrival at FotR from the perspective of the enslaved written in the author’s attempt at reproducing a spoken dialect.

When dey got to Natchez de slaves was put in de pen ‘tached to de slave market. It stood at de forks of St. Catherine an’ de Liberty road. Here dey was fed an’ washed an’ rubbed down lak race horses. Den dey was dressed up an’ put through de paces that would show off dey muscles. My daddy was sol’ as a twelve year old, but he always said he was nigher twenty.<sup>113</sup>



Figure 26 Forks of the Road advertisement, Elam (NATC).

This biography, which was part of the 1936 Federal Writers’ Project, illustrates the recognition on the part of the enslaved that they both possessed humanity but were treated with a lack of humanity, and instead, as animals.

The writer, Joseph Holt Ingraham described a typical scene at the market in 1834:

A line of negroes ... extended in a semicircle around the right side of the yard. There were in all about forty. Each was dressed in the usual uniform of slaves, when in market, consisting of a fashionably shaped, black fur hat, roundabout and trousers of coarse corduroy velvet, precisely such as are worn by Irish laborers, when they first ‘come over the water;’ good vests, strong shoes, and white cotton shirts, completed their equipment. This dress they lay aside after they are sold, or wear out as soon as may be; for the negro dislikes to retain the indication of his having recently been in the market. With their hats in their hands, which hung down by their sides, they stood perfectly still, and in close order, while some gentlemen were passing from one to another examining for the purpose of buying.<sup>114</sup>

Ingraham goes on to describe the importance of a buyer to an enslaved person, and states that “for every stranger may soon become his master and command his future destinies.” It is difficult to imagine the fear of being separated from family. Although it was a common practice for some sellers to refuse a sell unless family members were bought together, it was equally as commonplace for family ties—beyond that of a mother and small child—to be disregarded. The other pressing fear was that of

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<sup>112</sup> Jim Barnett and H. Clark Burkett, “The Forks of the Road Slave Market at Natchez,” *Mississippi History Now*, Mississippi Historical Society, February 2003, Accessed October 22, 2020, <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/47/the-forks-of-the-road-slave-market-at-natchez>.

<sup>113</sup> “Isaac Stier, Natchez, Mississippi,” *Federal Writers’ Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 9, Mississippi, Allen-Young*. Manuscript/ Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, 1936, [www.loc.gov/item/mesn090/](http://www.loc.gov/item/mesn090/), 1-2.

<sup>114</sup> Barnett and Burkett, “The Forks of the Road Slave Market at Natchez.”

obtaining a “bad master,” and there was nothing to be done to avoid this scenario.<sup>115</sup> Further, thousands of enslaved people were purchased and then “returned” because they were seen as “unfit or diseased,” only to be “sold again, swapped, mortgaged, inherited, traded, and handled as mere property.”<sup>116</sup>

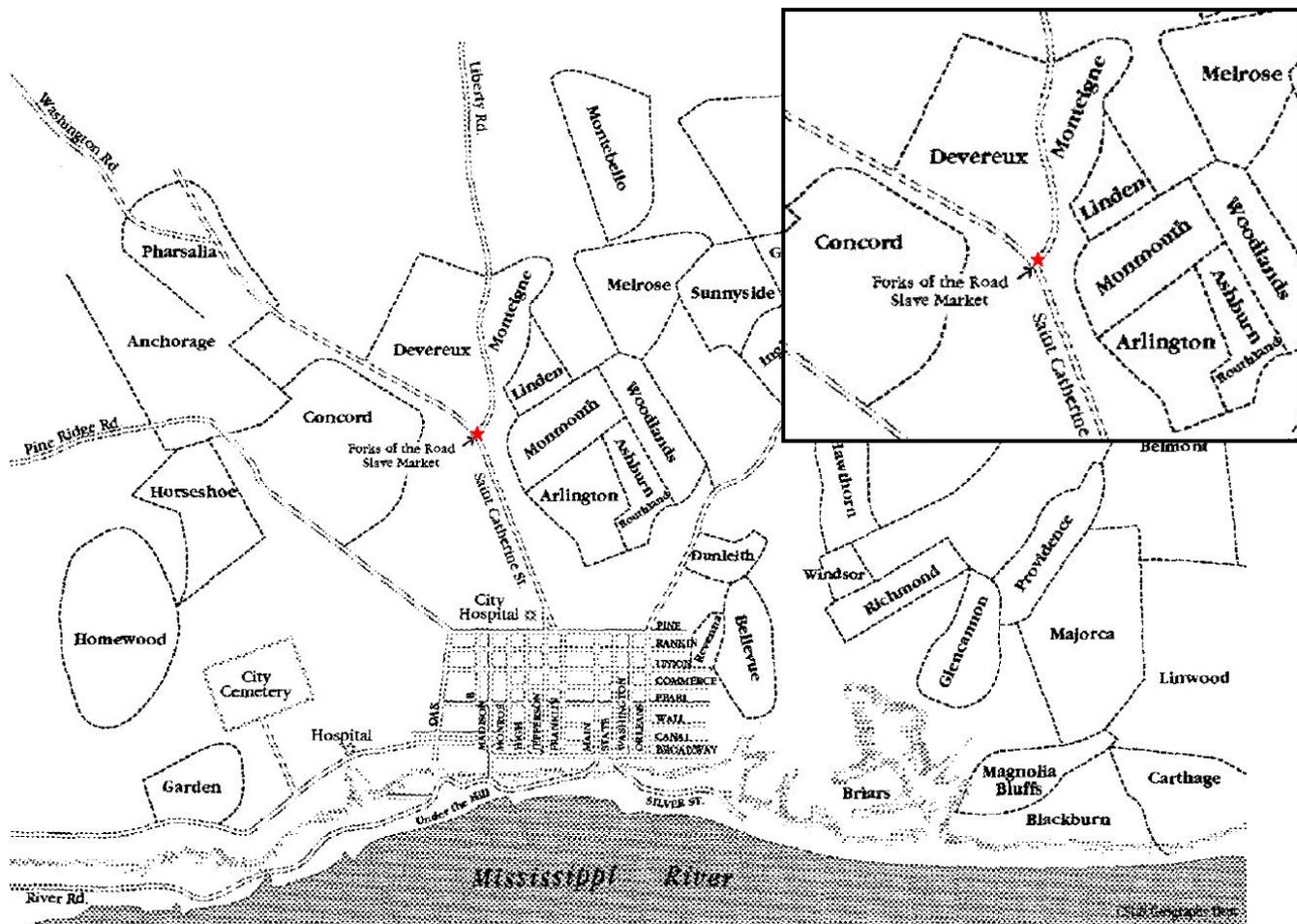


Figure 27 Antebellum map of the Natchez suburban estates, with Concord, Devereux, Linden, Monteigne, and Monmouth shown in the enlargement on right. The FotR market property was located at the intersection of Washington and Liberty roads (shown in red), which connected Natchez to adjacent towns to the northeast and southeast respectively (Davis 20).

### Life After the Market

Frank Tannenbaum, the notable historian and author of *Slave and Citizen: the Negro in the Americas*, stated that slavery in the United States was “unique in defining a slave as chattel, an unanimated inheritable property, whose master enjoyed the powers of life and death over his body.”<sup>117</sup> The institution of slavery during the Spanish colonial period typically meant a shared division of labor between enslaved and enslaver. However, plantation life at the time was similar to slavery at the height of the domestic trade.

<sup>115</sup> Jim Barnett and H. Clark Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Adams County, Mississippi, Natchez, MS: Mississippi Department of Archives & History, Revised October 17, 2008, Section 7, 6-7.

<sup>116</sup> Ronald L. F. Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez 1720–1880, Special History Study*, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Denver Service Center, 1993, 92.

<sup>117</sup> Ann Beha Associate, “Natchez National Historical Park Historic Resource Study,” Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Atlanta: Southeast Region, 1997, 80.

Plantation owners typically had a minimum of twenty enslaved people<sup>118</sup> who completed all work necessary under threat of severe corporal punishment or being separated from family members if they were sold.

In antebellum Natchez, most enslaved people ended up as field hands on plantations.<sup>119</sup> The Forks of the Road slave market site was “the underside of the opulent plantation lifestyle.” It is key to understanding the role of hundreds of thousands of enslaved persons<sup>120</sup> in creating the wealth that is still exhibited in the lavish plantations found throughout Natchez. In viewing these properties, it is difficult for many to imagine their darker side—the stories of the hardship countless enslaved endured throughout the Antebellum period—that sustained the cotton economy that made this level of wealth possible.<sup>121</sup>

Plantation life, however, was not the only possibility for enslaved people sold at FotR. Many worked in “lumber camps, on riverboats, and as the slaves and hirelings of small farmers,”<sup>122</sup> while others still became “town slaves.” About 15 percent of the enslaved of Adams County lived and worked in Natchez. It is thought that they worked conveying cotton on the docks, on the estates (**Figure 27**)<sup>123</sup> and in downtown households.

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<sup>118</sup> Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez*, 10.

<sup>119</sup> Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez*, 21.

<sup>120</sup> “Final Environmental Assessment for the Boundary Adjustment Study of Forks of the Road,” Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, June 2010, 6.

<sup>121</sup> “Final Environmental Assessment for the Boundary Adjustment Study of Forks of the Road,” Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, June 2010, 5-6.

<sup>122</sup> Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez*, 21.

<sup>123</sup> Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez*, 39.

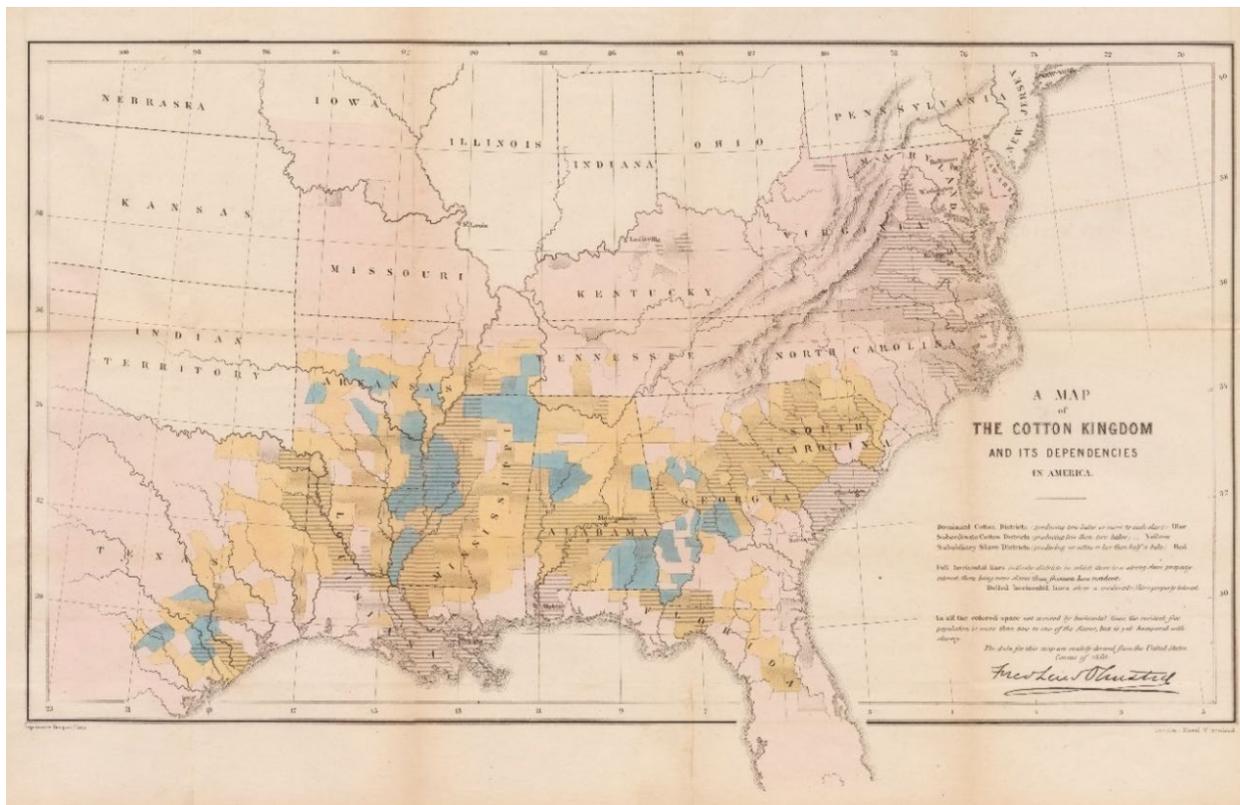


Figure 28 Map of the Cotton Kingdom created by Frederick Law Olmsted (Cornell University – PJ Mode Collection of Persuasive Cartography).

### **The Center of Cotton Kingdom**

For the South, the institution of slavery was crucial to the economic, social, and political development of the region. From 1800 – 1850, the North was industrializing, however the South was still operating the same plantation-based economy that it had been in the early 1800s, with the exception that it was vastly larger and focused almost entirely on cotton. By 1850, the Deep South had earned the name “Cotton Kingdom,” and Natchez, Mississippi seemed to be at the heart of this kingdom (Figure 28).<sup>124</sup>

The chart in Figure 29 demonstrates the direct relationship between enslaved labor and cotton production. The growth in population that occurred in Mississippi after 1810 can be correlated with the rise in sales of enslaved persons and easy production of cotton due to the cotton gin—both in the migration of free white men from the North and Upper South, and in the volume of enslaved people who were marched across the country as chattel in a massive, forced migration.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>124</sup> Eugene R. Dattel, “Cotton in a Global Economy: Mississippi (1800-1860),” Mississippi History Now, Mississippi Historical Society, October 2006, Accessed October 16, 2020, <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/161/cotton-in-a-global-economy-mississippi-1800-1860>.

<sup>125</sup>Dattel, “Cotton in a Global Economy.”

Mississippi Population					Mississippi Cotton Production	
White	Free*	Colored*	Enslaved	Total	Year	Millions of Pounds
1800*	5,179	182	3,489	8,850	1800	0
1810*	23,024	240	17,088	40,352	-	-
1830	70,443	519	65,659	136,621	1833	70
1840	179,074	1,366	195,211	375,651	1839	193.2
1850	295,718	930	309,878	606,526	1849	194
1860	353,901	773	436,631	791,305	1859	535.1
*Mississippi Territory (present-day Mississippi and Alabama)						

Figure 29 Growth of MS population and cotton production from 1810-1860 (Dattel, MS Historical Society)

With the beginning of the Civil War, the demand for cotton in Europe increased with the advent of textile manufacturing, which allowed for the mass production and cheap sale of cotton fabrics to millions. The demand for cotton also increased the need for cheap labor—this created a second wave of slavery, which secured the institution in the country until the 1860s. The combination of cheap fertile land, enslaved labor, and a cash crop brought about something like a cotton “gold rush.”<sup>126</sup>

The Forks of the Road market was the destination of most of the enslaved people who trekked through the back country over hundreds of miles from the Upper South. These enslaved people were responsible for the labor involved in the production of cotton—they were responsible for the success of the Cotton Kingdom.

#### *The Reach of Cotton Kingdom*

The Cotton Kingdom of the South was far reaching, with strong ties to the northern US and to the international slave trade. Although the abolitionist movement was strongest in the northern states, there were pockets of notable investors in the cotton economy and the slave trade—especially in the Northeast. The American Land Company and the New York Land Company represented speculators from New York, Boston, and New England. In a piece called, “Cotton in a Global Economy: Mississippi (1800 – 1860),” Eugene R. Dattel, a Mississippi native and economic historian, makes the case that New York was the capital of the South by 1860, due to the dominant role of its investors in the cotton trade. He also states that New York was the financial center of America at that time because of cotton revenues—an estimated \$200 million annually—as the city supplied financing, insurance, and shipping to southern planters. And although importation of enslaved people was prohibited in the US in the early 1800s, many New York investors financed slave ships that bought enslaved people from West Africa and sold them in Cuba and Brazil, making exorbitant profits.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Eugene R. Dattel, “Cotton in a Global Economy: Mississippi (1800-1860),” Mississippi History Now, Mississippi Historical Society, October 2006, Accessed October 16, 2020, <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/161/cotton-in-a-global-economy-mississippi-1800-1860>.

<sup>127</sup> Dattel, “Cotton in a Global Economy.”

## CIVIL WAR IN NATCHEZ 1861 - 1863

### *The Market Closes*

#### *A Changing Landscape*

With the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, the Town of Natchez experienced many changes. Many young Confederate soldiers were being readied and sent off to fight Union forces, and there was an increased militia presence, due to rumors of an insurrection. The potential insurrection was rumored to be headed by a runaway enslaved man named Orange, who allegedly plotted to “rise up and kill their masters and ‘ravish white wives and daughters’” after the North defeated the South. Although, no plot occurred, and there is little evidence to substantiate it, the rumors excited frenzy, tension, and fear among the white ruling class who “believed their slaves capable of almost anything once the war had begun.”<sup>128</sup>

The town of Natchez was not actually occupied by Union forces until July of 1863 after Vicksburg fell to Ulysses S. Grant’s army.<sup>129</sup> At this time, Union officers quartered and set up hospitals in many of the Natchez mansions. In 1863, the Forks of the Road market was forcibly shut down, and the materials from the slave pens were used to construct Fort McPherson.<sup>130</sup>

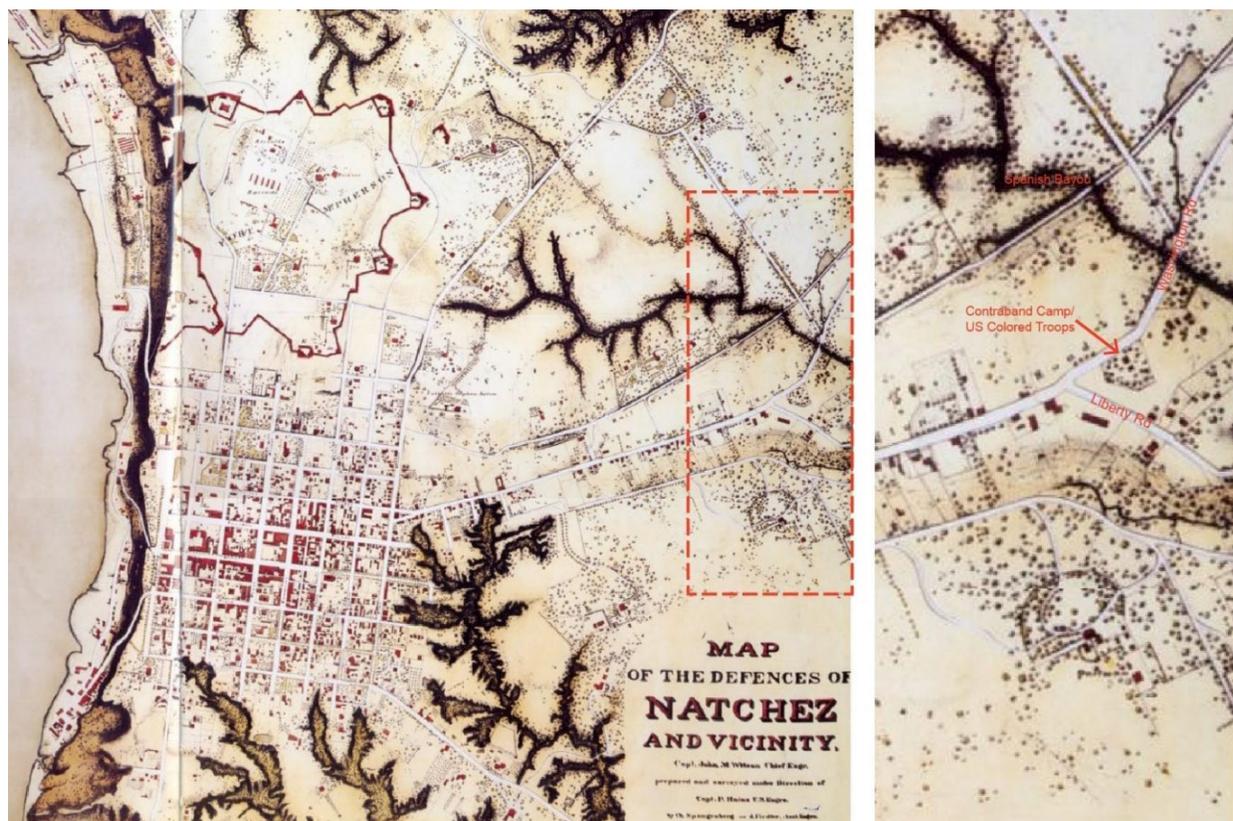


Figure 30 John M. Wilson’s 1864 Map of the Union defenses of Natchez and Fort McPherson north of the City, with enlargement showing the contraband camps at Forks of the Road and Washington Road crossing Spanish Bayou (Library of Congress).

<sup>128</sup> Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez*, 144-145.

<sup>129</sup> Ronald L. F. Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez 1720–1880, Special History Study*, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Denver Service Center, 1993, 145-146.

<sup>130</sup> “Statement of Work: Forks of the Road,” Cultural Landscape Inventory Services, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interior Region 2, 2017, 2.

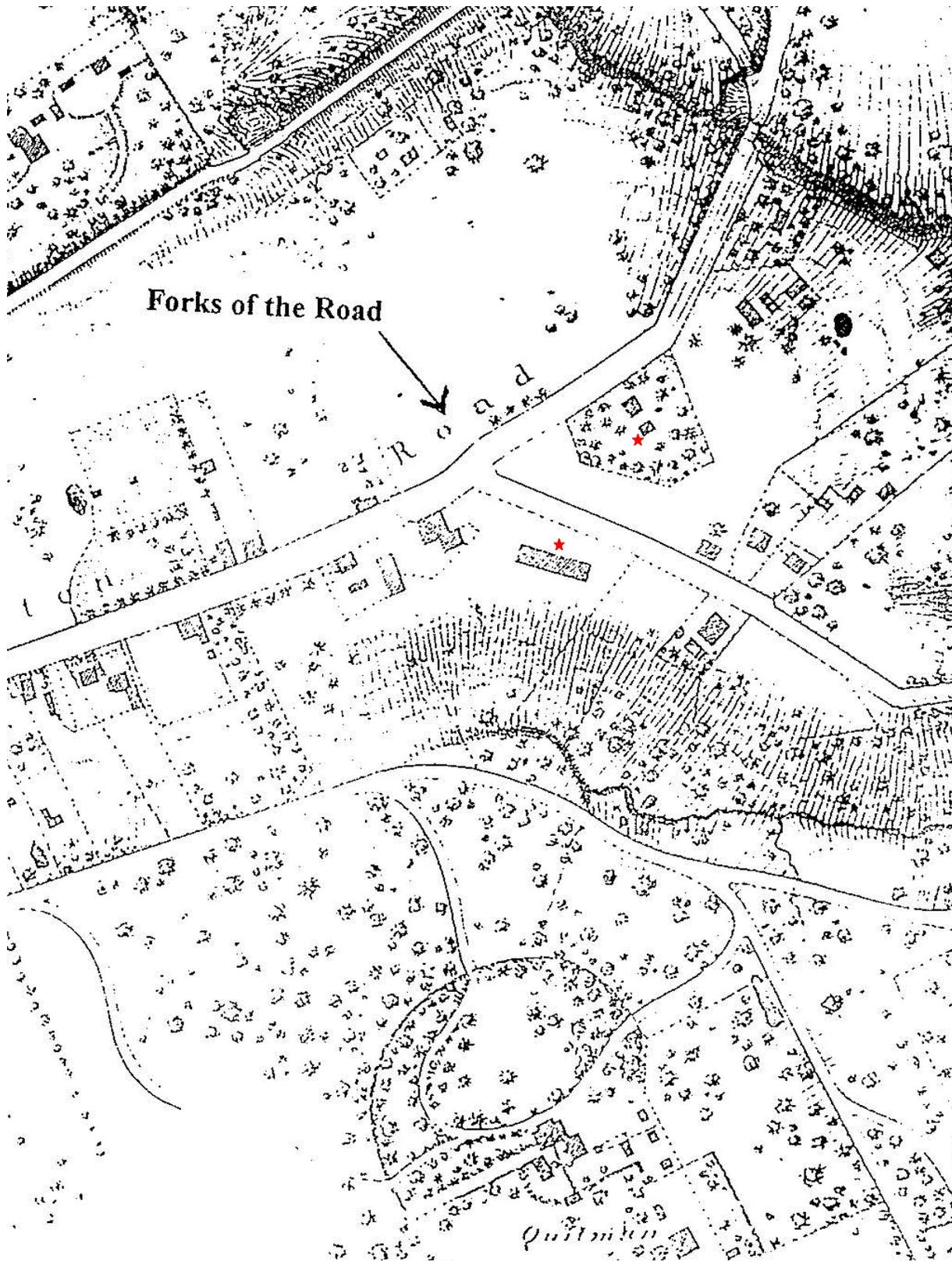


Figure 31 An enlargement of John M. Wilson's 1864 Map showing USCT barracks at the location of the former market and Washington Road crossing Spanish Bayou in the top right. The O'Ferrall stand may have been left because it was also a cotton gin (NHL 1999, 11).



Figure 32 Enlargement of John M. Wilson's 1864 Map of the defenses of Natchez and vicinity, depicting the Contraband Camps along the Mississippi near the Marine Hospital at the top right (NATC).

#### *Contraband Camps/USCT*

When the Union occupied Natchez, enslaved people who had been in hiding from the Confederates flocked to the city. Many refugees flocked to Natchez from Vicksburg, where Civil War battles were occurring. Those able-bodied men enlisted, and others were placed in contraband camps. Of the 5,000 men enlisted as Union soldiers in Natchez, 3,150 were Black men, known as the US Colored Troops. These Black troops were housed in barracks at Natchez Under the Hill, on the bluffs north of town, and at the former Forks of the Road market. One irony of this situation is that many of the freedmen that barracked at the FotR site were likely housed there for sale in the years prior to 1863 (**Figures 30 – 32**).<sup>131</sup>

The Black troops in the Natchez militia enlisted during wartime with no prior training, and many of them had to be concerned about their wives and children, who would have been left behind on plantations or placed in contraband camps. About 38 percent of the Black soldiers died from diseases they contracted in the

<sup>131</sup> Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez*,” 168-169.

barracks or camps after enlisting, and numerous others deserted. One of every three Black soldiers stationed in Natchez died because the conditions were so poor, with ailments such as diarrhea, pneumonia, fevers, smallpox, and measles being common in the hospitals.<sup>132</sup>

During the war, many enslaved and self-emancipated people were “confiscated” from Confederates. Formerly enslaved people who were confiscated and those self-emancipated people, skilled tradesman who were able to purchase their freedom from their masters, were all referred to as contrabands.<sup>133</sup> The camps set up to house them during the war were called contraband camps. The contraband camps in Natchez were on the river, north of Natchez Under the Hill. Those refugees in contraband camps likely experienced worse conditions than the soldiers experienced, considering that there were around 4000 refugees in the summer of 1863, and 2000 of those had died of disease by the fall of that same year.<sup>134</sup>

## RECONSTRUCTION 1863 – 1877

The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 applied only to states in rebellion against the US, and only took effect in those areas when the Union Army showed up to enforce it. The Thirteenth Amendment emancipated all enslaved people in the country.<sup>135</sup> During the period of Reconstruction, a biracial city government was forged in Natchez, which included three Black and three white aldermen. The first Black US Congressman Hiram Revels, a Zion Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church minister, hailed from Natchez.<sup>136</sup> Later, he replaced Jefferson Davis in the Senate. John Roy Lynch, freed by the Union Army when he was sixteen, became politically active, and eventually was elected to the US Congress. He later published *The Facts of Reconstruction*, which offered an overview of the Reconstruction Era politics and contested the conservative views of the time.<sup>137</sup> But these stories are the exception, as sharecropping replaced slavery for most freedmen, many of whom never benefitted from the promises made by the United States government after the Civil War.

Stier details, with an attempt to reproduce a spoken dialect, the promises made to many freedmen after the war—the familiar story of not receiving the promised forty acres and a mule to earn their livelihood.

De slaves spected a heap from freedom dey didn' git. Dey was led to b'lieve dey would have a easy time – go places widout passes – an have plenty o' spendin' money. But dey sho' got fooled. Mos' of 'em didn' fin' deyse'ves no better off. Pussonally, I had a harder time after de war den I ded endurin' slav'ry. De Yankees passed as us frien's. Dey made big promises, but dey was poor reliance. Some of 'em meant well towards us, but dey was mistol' 'bout a heap o' things. Dey promised us a mule an' forty acres o' lan'. Us aint seen no mule yet. Us got de lan' all right, but twant no service. Fac' is, 'twas way over in a territory where nothin' 'ud grow.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez*, 166, 171.

<sup>133</sup> "Self-Emancipation: The Act of Freeing Oneself From Slavery." *American Battlefield Trust*. 09 Dec. 2020. Web. 07 Mar. 2021.

<sup>134</sup> Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez*, 172-173.

<sup>135</sup> -Thomas Nast, Alfred R. Waud, Henry L. Stephens, James E. Taylor, J. Hoover, George F. Crane, and Elizabeth White. "The African American ODYSSEY: A Quest for Full Citizenship Reconstruction and Its Aftermath." 09 Feb. 1998. Accessed 05 Mar. 2021. <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african-american-odyssey/reconstruction.html>.

<sup>136</sup> Ann Beha Associate, "Natchez National Historical Park Historic Resource Study," Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Atlanta: Southeast Region, 1997, 2.

<sup>137</sup> "John R. Lynch: Natchez's Reconstruction Era Icon," Historic Natchez Foundation: Education, Accessed March 2, 2021, <https://natchez.org/education/historic-natchez/john-r-lynch-dunleiths-most-famous-resident>.

<sup>138</sup> "Isaac Stier, Natchez, Mississippi," *Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 9, Mississippi, Allen-Young*. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, 1936, [www.loc.gov/item/mesn090/](http://www.loc.gov/item/mesn090/), 5.

By the close of the Civil War in the summer of 1865, all Natchez Blacks were free. An excerpt from a piece called “The African American Odyssey: A Quest for Full Citizenship, Reconstruction and its Aftermath” states

with the protection of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution and the Civil Rights Act of 1866, African Americans enjoyed a period when they were allowed to vote, actively participate in the political process, acquire the land of former owners, seek their own employment, and use public accommodations. Opponents of this progress, however, soon rallied against the former slaves' freedom and began to find means for eroding the gains for which many had shed their blood.<sup>139</sup>

They were free, but there was no system in place to provide shelter or food, to earn wages, much less to own property. Without these accommodations, they were bound to the land and a system by which wages were withheld until the end of the season, or they could be sent off without any pay for perceived misbehavior. The freed Black people were docked wages for any number of reasons, including time lost, tardiness, or poor work. Wages were so low that the freedmen could not afford to purchase land themselves, which prompted many freedman to work for shares—or sharecropping, which usually entailed the disenfranchised farmer paying the property owner two-thirds of the crop in rent, with no daily supervision.

### **FOTR DEVELOPMENT 1877 – 1966**

Over the years since the market was closed and dismantled, the site has been subject to twentieth century developments, and most of the antebellum landscape has been erased. From 1886 – 1966, development at FotR can be traced through Sanborn Insurance maps. The following Sanborn maps detail the healthy growth of a stable neighborhood and the eventual disinvestment there, with a steady rise through 1925 and a quick decline there afterward.<sup>140</sup> The population seems to have been a mix of African Americans, as well as Irish, Polish, and Italian immigrants before the erosion of housing stock and development of industries, such as the Natchez Stock Yards. Later, development of Devereux Drive/US Highway 61 likely spurred more decline in an already fragmented neighborhood.

Researchers have documented the chain of title on the Market 1 and 2 sites, however more research is needed to understand the potential importance of other properties within the FotR legislative boundary. Researchers have been unable to locate any redlining maps. These might have spurred disinvestment within the neighborhood around the FotR market, and it is likely that this practice did occur.

The story of how it has become what it is today is much clearer, although it is still incomplete. It is now a disinvested area of predominantly Black and low-income residents, with a smattering of vehicle-oriented businesses situated around a divided highway. The St. Catherine Street neighborhood around the market is a forgotten land with a forgotten history.

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<sup>139</sup>Thomas -Nast, Alfred R. Waud, Henry L. Stephens, James E. Taylor, J. Hoover, George F. Crane, and Elizabeth White. "The African American ODYSSEY: A Quest for Full Citizenship Reconstruction and Its Aftermath." 09 Feb. 1998. Accessed 05 Mar. 2021. <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african-american-odyssey/reconstruction.html>.

<sup>140</sup> Jim Barnett and H. Clark Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Adams County, Mississippi, Natchez, MS: Mississippi Department of Archives & History, Revised October 17, 2008, Section 7, 15.

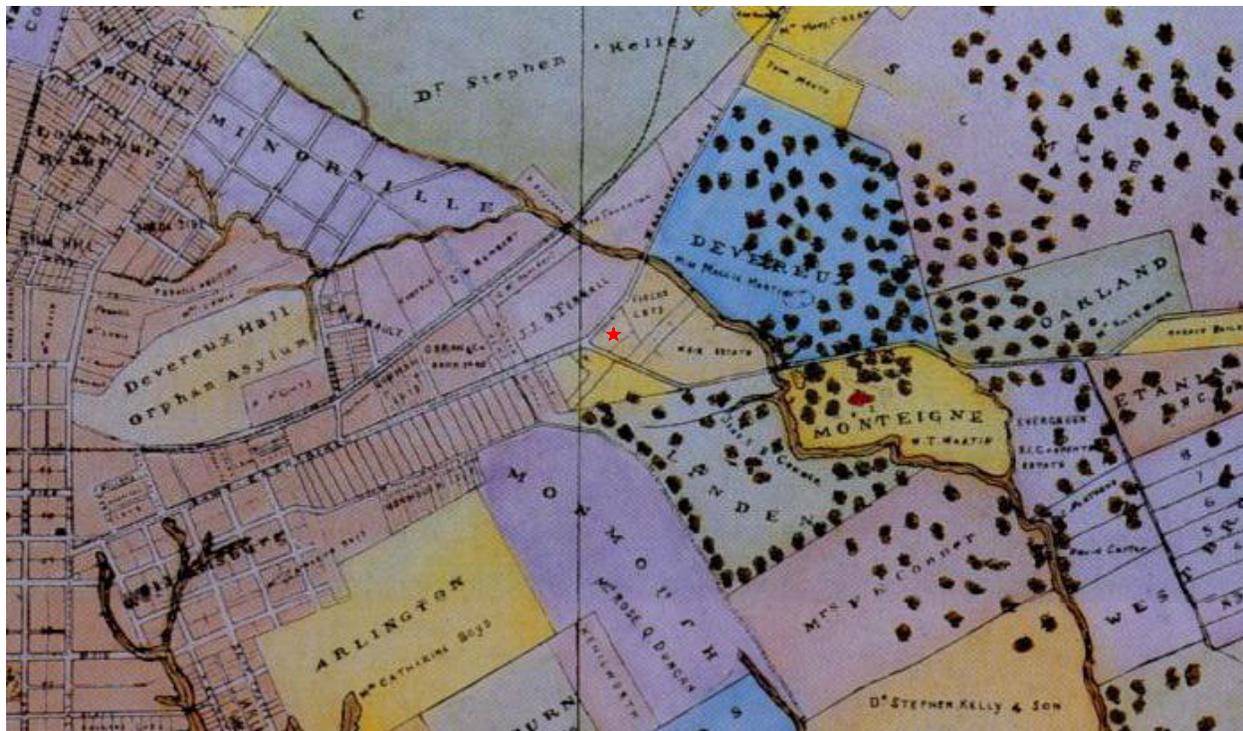


Figure 33 An enlargement of the 1891 map of the Suburbs of Natchez, showing the “Y” intersection that signifies the market location at center, east of the corporation line. The suburban estates are visible around the FotR market site. Note the development of lots along St. Catherine Street (Thomas H. and Joan W. Gandy).

### ***Development of a Neighborhood at Forks of the Road***

After the Civil War, the city began to grow eastward, and many new businesses and homes began to populate the St. Catherine Street Neighborhood (**Figure 33**). Around 1838, the Irish immigrant, John J. O’Ferrall, arrived in Natchez, purchased property near the FotR market, and built a store.<sup>141</sup> After the Civil War, in 1867 he built a cotton gin in the same location where he had built his store—the property of Market 2 (**Figure 8**).<sup>142</sup> The gin shows up in the 1904 Sanborn map. Around the same time, Aaron Zerkowsky, an immigrant of Polish and Jewish descent, came to Natchez (circa 1863).<sup>143</sup> He and his family opened a store on St. Catherine Street. In 1889 he purchased Lots 1 and 2 of the property within the triangle of the forks of Washington and Liberty roads from Albert Perkins (who had inherited from Sarah Thomas). The 1886 Sanborn map shows that there was a grocery store on the property, and deed research shows that there were three small houses added to the property around 1900.<sup>144</sup> Around 1890 the Zerkowskys built a cottage on one of these lots, and the family owned many of the rental houses that lined St. Catherine’s Street, its alleys, and back streets.<sup>145</sup>

On the 1886 Sanborn map, there is a building in the area immediately within the forks of Washington and Liberty roads that was constructed circa 1880s, labeled “Gro.” in **Figure 34**. This was the same property

<sup>141</sup>Mary W. (Mimi) Miller, “St. Catherine Street Trails Panels,” Historic Natchez Foundation Accessed March 2, 2021, <https://natchez.org/education/historic-natchez/st-catherine-street-trails-panels>.

<sup>142</sup>Miller, “St. Catherine Street Trails Panels.”

<sup>143</sup> Miller, “St. Catherine Street Trails Panels.”

<sup>144</sup> Carruth, “Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market,” 10. Jim Barnett, “A Chronology of Public Acquisition & Interpretation at the Forks of the Road Slave Market Site,” Mississippi Department of Archives & History, 2005.

<sup>145</sup> Miller, “St. Catherine Street Trails Panels.”

that Aaron Zewkowsky purchased, and it was extant until the City took possession of the property in the early 2000s.<sup>146</sup>

In 1881, telephone service was installed in Natchez, and in 1886, Thomas Reber built a “street railway” that led from the ferry landing to Forks of the Road. That same year, Reber installed an “electric light plant” to provide light to a casino that he built, which was then a place for entertainment (not gambling).<sup>147</sup> In 1885, the automobile was invented, and it began to replace horses shortly after. In 1888, a contractor by the name of L. Terrell, completed construction of the FotR Bridge over Spanish Bayou.<sup>148</sup> This city was bustling with activity and new technology.

The first city hospital was located on the west end of St. Catherine Street on a hill on the north side of the street. As documented by an 1813 newspaper article, it was “fifty-feet square and two stories above the basement.” It is still referred to as “Hospital Hill” today.<sup>149</sup> It was demolished in 1886 and that property was divided into lots—some of which became the homes of notable Black Natchezians, such as the saddle maker Louis Kastor and Doctor John Bowman Banks. It was also the home of the parsonage of the Zion Chapel. This area eventually became to the home of the Rhythm Nightclub—the place where a fire took the lives of over two hundred Black citizens in 1940.<sup>150</sup>

There were several African American churches in the neighborhood including the Holy Family Catholic, the China Grove Baptist, and Zion Chapel A.M.E. The last of these was the location of several prominent speakers during the Civil Rights Movement, and the church is also known for its minister, Hiram Revels who was the first Black US Congressman.<sup>151</sup>

In 1889, Dr. Banks, the first African American doctor in Natchez, began practicing in Natchez. Later, he recruited Dr. Albert Woods Dumas to work with him, and they engaged in “every aspect of civic improvement in the African American community.” Together they founded the Bluff City Savings Bank, which was the only African American owned bank in the city. During the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Banks’ house served as headquarters for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).<sup>152</sup>

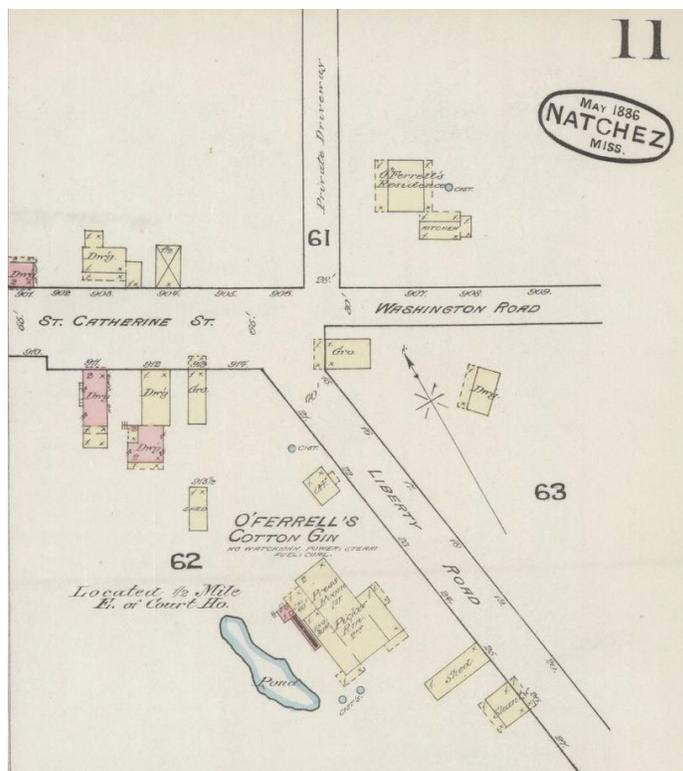


Figure 34 1886 Sanborn map depicting the intersection of Washington and Liberty Roads. Note that there are two grocery stores on either side of Liberty Road. Also note the dwelling east of Liberty road, O'Ferrell's [sic] Cotton Gin west of Liberty Road and his residence north of Washington Road (Library of Congress).

<sup>146</sup> Carruth, “Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market,” 33.

<sup>147</sup> Miller, “St. Catherine Street Trails Panels.”

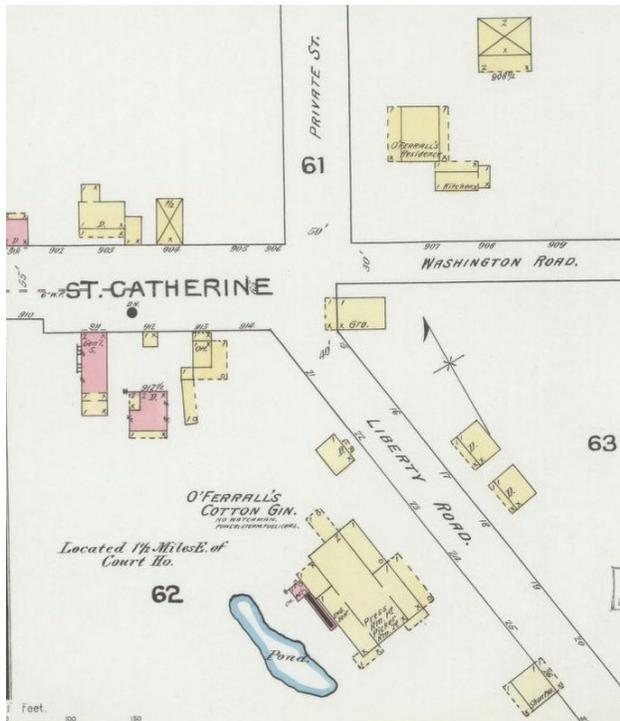
<sup>148</sup> Panamerican Consultants, Inc., Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., WFT Architects, PA. “Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report,” Natchez National Historical Park. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020, 3.

<sup>149</sup> Miller, “St. Catherine Street Trails Panels.”

<sup>150</sup> Miller, “St. Catherine Street Trails Panels.”

<sup>151</sup> Ann Beha Associate, “Natchez National Historical Park Historic Resource Study,” Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Atlanta: Southeast Region, 1997, 2. Miller, “St. Catherine Street Trails Panels.”

<sup>152</sup> Miller, “St. Catherine Street Trails Panels.”



The 1892 Sanborn map shows slightly more development from the 1886 map. The 1897 Sanborn map shows a grocery store and saloon at the fork of Washington and Liberty roads and O'Ferrall's gin and residence. Moving from east to west on St. Catherine Street at Liberty Road, is a general store, a grocery, a vacant store, and across from those is a large building that encompasses a bar, store, and warehouse. There are many more dwellings than were present in the 1892 map (Library of Congress).

Figure 35 Sanborn map from 1892 showing one grocery store within the intersection of Washington and Liberty Roads, the O'Ferrall residence and cotton gin are still in the same location as on the 1886 Sanborn map (Library of Congress).

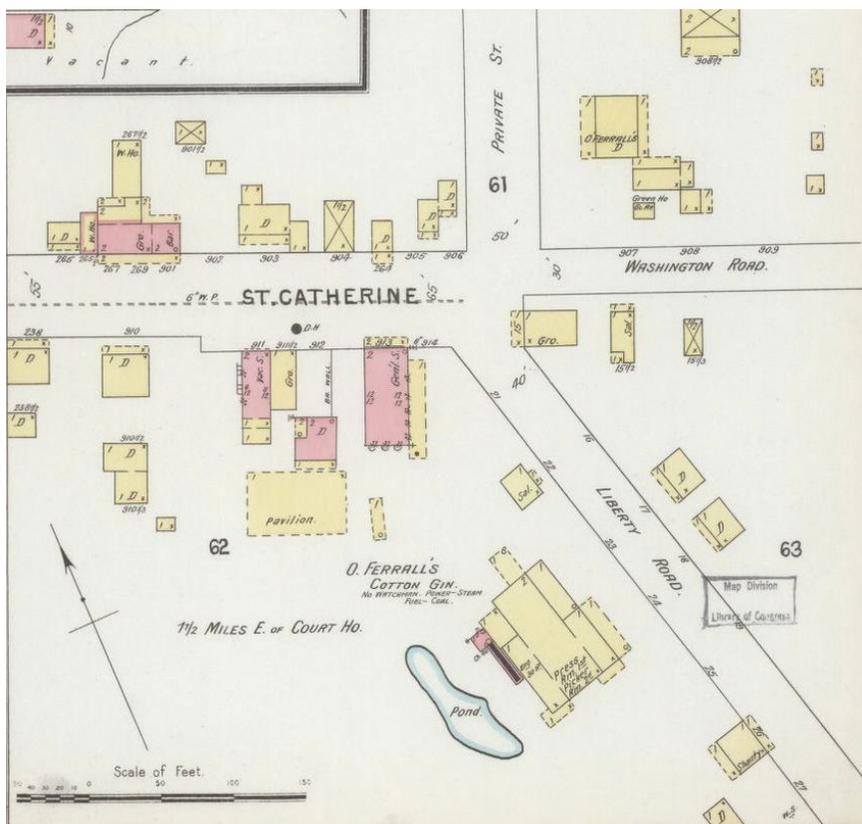


Figure 36 1897 Sanborn map showing the beginning of the growth in the neighborhood (Library of Congress).

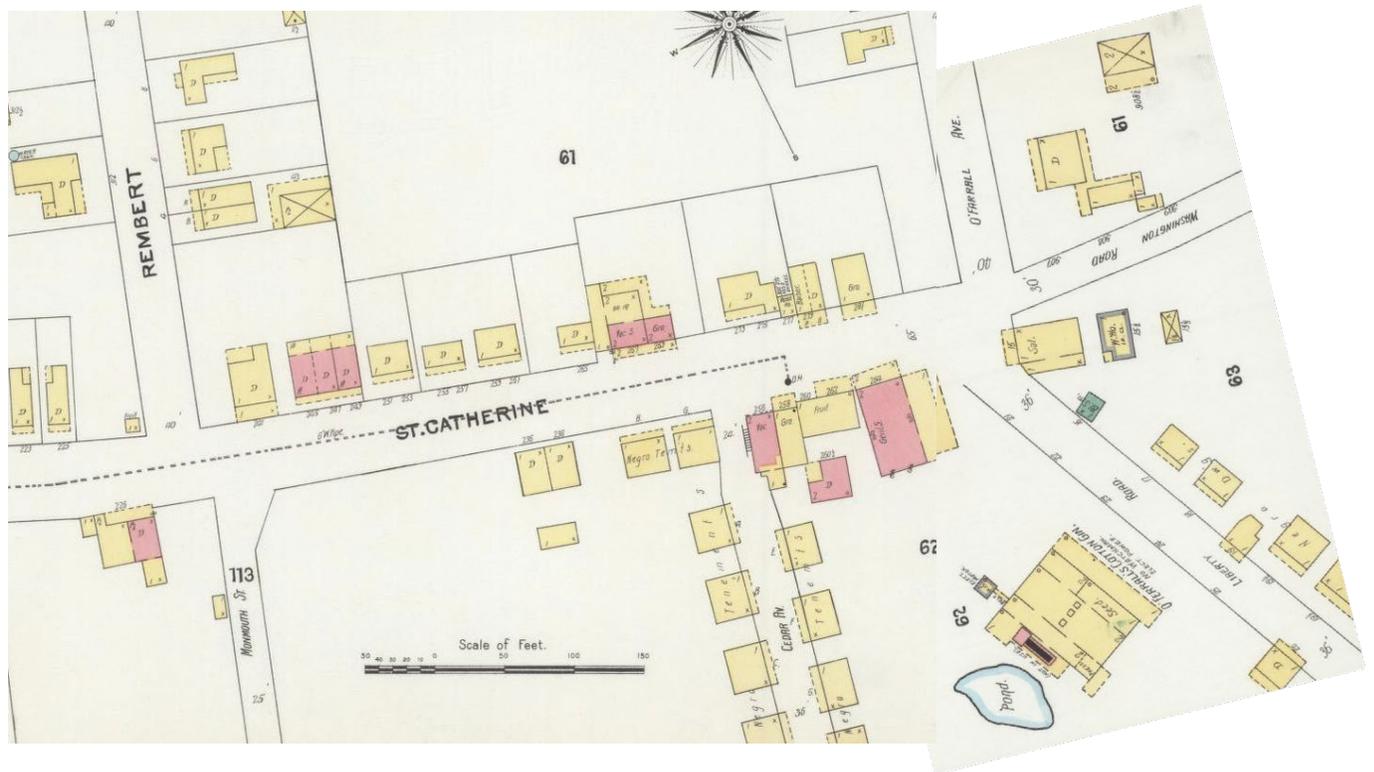


Figure 37 The 1904 Sanborn map depicts the growth of a neighborhood (Library of Congress).

The 1904 Sanborn map depicts the growth of a neighborhood. The structure at the fork of Washington and Liberty roads is now a saloon (was a grocery), to the south on Liberty Road are “Negro Dwgs.” or negro dwellings. The O’Ferrall gin still exists here, as does the residence, although it is no longer called out. The “Private Drive” from the 1897 map is now O’Ferrall Ave. From the intersection of Liberty Road and St. Catherine Street to the west is a general store, fruit stand, grocery, a vacant building on the corner of Cedar Avenue, which contains “Negro Tenements.” On the north side of St. Catherine Street are numerous dwellings, a barber and two more grocery stores (Library of Congress).



Figure 38 The 1910 Sanborn map depicts more growth within the neighborhood (Library of Congress).

The 1910 Sanborn map depicts more growth. The structure at the fork of Washington and Liberty roads is again a grocery, to the south on Liberty Road, the negro dwellings are simply labeled dwellings, and there is a blacksmith (green) and a feed mill. Two alleys were built off of Liberty Road—Gold and Schleets alleys. The O'Ferrall gin is now the “Adams Ginning & Manufacturing Co., the old O'Ferrall residence still exists. From the intersection of Liberty Road and St. Catherine Street to the west is a general store, a confectionary or candy store, and two grocery stores on the corner of Cedar Alley, which still contains “Negro Tenements.” On the north side of St. Catherine Street are numerous dwellings, a fire department, a barber shop, two more grocery stores, and a lumber yard on the corner of O'Ferrall Avenue (Library of Congress).



Figure 39 The 1925 Sanborn map depicts what appears to be a healthy Black, Irish, and Italian neighborhood (NATC ESA 218).

The 1925 Sanborn map depicts a healthy Black, Irish, and Italian neighborhood. Notice the intersection of Washington and Liberty roads still exists in this image. The structure at the fork of Washington and Liberty roads is a store, to the south on Liberty Road, are more dwellings, a blacksmith. The old O'Ferrall gin is now the "Hiawatha Manufacturing Co. Cotton Gin, the old O'Ferrall residence still exists. From the intersection of Liberty Road and St. Catherine Street to the west are five stores that line the block to the corner of Cedar Avenue, which now contains dwellings, as opposed to "Negro Tenements" and the "Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church (Colored)." On the north side of St. Catherine Street are numerous dwellings and a grist mill. Just west of O'Ferrall [sic] in the dashed rectangle is a grand stand. Dwellings now appear on Lumber Street. Dwellings appear on Rembert and Lumber streets along with an oil company on the corner.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>153</sup> "Final Environmental Assessment for the Boundary Adjustment Study of Forks of the Road," Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, June 2010, 218.



Figure 40 The 1950 Sanborn map the beginning of decline in the neighborhood (NATC ESA 217).

In the 1950 Sanborn map, there are early signs of decline in the neighborhood. Notice US Highway 61 that now intersects with Washington Road to the east of the FotR market site. The structure at the fork of Washington and Liberty roads is a store, to the south on Liberty Road, are fewer dwellings and a storage facility. The cotton gin is gone, and a storage building has replaced it, but the old O'Farrall residence still exists. From the intersection of Liberty Road and St. Catherine Street there seem to be stores (including a new structure at the corner of Liberty Road) that line the block to the corner of Cedar Alley (Ave), but it is unclear. Cedar Alley still has dwellings, although the church has moved over two blocks to Monmouth St. On the north side of St. Catherine Street there are no dwellings, only a store, a tractor sales service shop and warehouses. Just west of O'Farrall [sic] are the Natchez Stock yards. Dwellings still appear on Rembert and Lumber streets along with the Pan American Petroleum Corporation on the corner.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>154</sup> "Final Environmental Assessment for the Boundary Adjustment Study of Forks of the Road," Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, June 2010, 217.



Figure 41 The 1966 Sanborn map shows decline of the neighborhood. (NATC ESA 216).

In the 1966 Sanborn map, the structure at the fork of Washington and Liberty roads remains a store, to the south on Liberty Road, there are fewer dwellings, and a plant nursery has been installed south of Gold Alley. Schleet Alley has no remaining dwellings. The storage building replaced the gin is gone, and it has been replaced by a store. The old O'Ferrall residence still exists. From the intersection of Liberty Road and St. Catherine Street there is a tire store, a restaurant, and three other stores that line the block to the corner of Cedar Alley. Between Cedar and Junkin alleys, there are dwellings, a store and a motel. Further west toward Monmouth Street is a filling station, a restaurant and another store. Cedar Alley still has dwellings, and the church remains on Monmouth St. On the north side of St. Catherine Street there are no dwellings; several stores, a used auto sales lot, an auto repair and painting shop, and another filling station line the street to O'Faarrall [sic] Avenue. Just west of O'Faarrall [sic] is an agricultural import store. Dwellings still appear on Rembert and Lumber streets along with the Pan American Petroleum Corporation on the corner.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>155</sup> "Final Environmental Assessment for the Boundary Adjustment Study of Forks of the Road," Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, June 2010, 216.

Sometime after 1966, US Highway 61 was made into a divided highway with a median. In **Figure 41**, US Highway 61 has not yet become a divided highway. The FotR Bridge HSR states that it was constructed circa 1960s, so it must have occurred shortly after this map was drawn.<sup>156</sup> This new highway was called Devereux Drive/US Highway 61. Many areas around the FotR neighborhood were impacted by the expanded highway as can be seen in **Figure 52**. (See Section 7 on Circulation.) The residences along Gold Alley were completely removed, and St. Catherine Street was likely widened at the time.

## CIVIL RIGHTS ERA 1960S

Racial prejudice was a continuum from the antebellum through post-bellum and up to the Civil Rights Movement. In Natchez, it persisted even longer. Notably, the civil rights activist and scholar, W.E.B. Dubois, stated that

The discovery of personal whiteness among the world's peoples is a very modern thing—a nineteenth- and twentieth-century matter indeed...This assumption that of all the hues of God whiteness alone is inherently and obviously better than brownness or tan leads to curious acts.<sup>157</sup>

According to the Mississippi Civil Rights project, the seeds for the Civil Rights Movement in Natchez were sewn in 1940, when a new chapter of the NAACP was chartered. After the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling in 1955, the group petitioned the school board to desegregate the schools. The signers of the petition were opened up to backlash from the white community, which forced many to remove their names.<sup>158</sup> Segregation remained, and tensions rose among Natchez citizens.

In December of 1963, the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Mississippi is formed as an offshoot of the Original Knights of Louisiana, and this group amassed 200 people by February of the following year. Almost immediately, men wearing hoods begin kidnapping and harassing Black people within the community, and eventually, the attacks become more violent and deadly. They target Black people and anyone that supported them. By 1964, the FBI began investigating the increasing violence that had been occurring within the city.<sup>159</sup>

When Black citizens began to campaign for their civil rights in the 1960s Dr. Martin Luther King was shedding light on systemic racism and injustice within the country. The Mississippi movement was predominately a grass-roots local effort. Much Civil Rights activity was centered around the west end of St. Catherine Street, about 1 mile west of the Forks of the Road site – in the shadow of Zion Chapel AME Church where Hiram Revels had served as pastor before going to the US Senate as the first black man to serve in Congress. Several black churches (Holy Family, Beulah, Rose Hill, among others) served as meeting sites. Dr. Banks House, which served as the NAACP headquarters, was across from Holy Family on St. Catherine Street. At the time, there were many secret meetings occurring at Black churches, and the Natchez chapter of the NAACP was quartered at the house of the Dr. John Banks.<sup>160</sup> In 1965, George Metcalf, who was president of the organization at the time, became the target of a pipe bomb attack. Civil Rights protests occurred in Natchez in September through December of 1965, with the city eventually conceding to the demands of the protesters.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Panamerican Consultants, Inc., Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., WFT Architects, PA. "Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report," Natchez National Historical Park. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020, 3, 23.

<sup>157</sup> Steven Hoelscher, "Making Place, Making Race: Performances of Whiteness in the Jim Crow South," Vol. 93, No. 3, Taylor & Francis, Ltd., September 2003, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1515502>, 657.

<sup>158</sup> "The Movement in Natchez – Narrative Timeline," Mississippi Civil Rights Project, Accessed March 21, 2021, <https://mscivilrightsproject.org/adams/event-adams/the-movement-in-natchez-narrative-timeline/>.

<sup>159</sup> "The Movement in Natchez."

<sup>160</sup> Mary W. (Mimi) Miller, "St. Catherine Street Trails Panels," Historic Natchez Foundation Accessed March 2, 2021, <https://natchez.org/education/historic-natchez/st-catherine-street-trails-panels>.

<sup>161</sup> "The Movement in Natchez."

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS 1960S – PRESENT

### *Advocacy for Forks of the Road*

Over the past thirty years, there has been an effort to remedy the lack of Black representation within the heritage tourism industry in the South. In 1990, the Natchez Association for the Preservation of Afro-American Culture was established by a small group of Black women who saw evidence that people wanted to learn about Black history. They developed the Natchez Museum of African American Culture in Downtown Natchez.<sup>162</sup> During this time, NATC developed a FotR brochure, the Historic Natchez Foundation created a Black history tour,<sup>163</sup> and the first Black tour director was hired by the Natchez Convention and Visitors Bureau.<sup>164</sup> And in 1992, the NPs published “The Black Experience in Natchez: 1720 – 1880,” by Ronald L. F. Davis,<sup>165</sup> which includes detailed information on the trading and conditions at the market.

The staff at NATC has been an advocate for FotR since 1998, when NATC staff attended a meeting with members of the Friends of the Forks of the Road Society, Inc., in Natchez, where a discussion of the importance of nominating Forks of the Road as a National Landmark occurred. That same year, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) placed a marker to recognize the FotR Market 1 site. A year later, MDAH nominated the former site at Forks of the Road for National Historic Landmark Status, but the nomination was rejected due to objections from three property owners.

One notable Black Natchezian, Ser Seshsh Ab Heter-Clifford M. Boxley (Ser Boxley), became a vocal advocate for the Forks of the Road market after several years spent in California as an advocate for several Black social movements there. When he returned to Natchez in 1995, he saw the FotR site “as a place of significant importance that must be preserved,” and began advocating for the site to be added to Natchez National Historical Park (NATC). Ser Boxley documented the sale and purchase of enslaved people at the Forks of the Road Market. A sample of his “Forks Seller/Buyers Chart” hangs as an interpretive panel at the Natchez National Historical Site Visitors Center. The sample details dealers and their lot numbers at the slave market; buyers; enslaved persons; distribution, if known; and years of sales.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Jack E. Davis, “A Struggle for Public History: Black and White Claims to Natchez’s Past,” *The Public Historian*, vol. 22, no. 1. University of California Press on behalf of the National Council on Public History: Winter 2000, 61.

<sup>163</sup> Jim Barnett, “A Chronology of Public Acquisition & Interpretation at the Forks of the Road Slave Market Site,” Mississippi Department of Archives & History, 2005.

<sup>164</sup> Davis, “A Struggle for Public History,” 61.

<sup>165</sup> Barnett, “A Chronology of Public Acquisition.”

<sup>166</sup> “Natchez Interpretive Panels,” Natchez National Historical Park Visitor Center, NPS, U.S. Department of the Interior, Natchez.



Figure 42 Map showing Network to Freedom listings and National Heritage Areas (NPS).

In 2001, Ser Boxley founded the Friends of the Forks of the Roads Society, Inc. (FRSI).<sup>167</sup> That same year, a series of articles were written that highlighted the history of slavery within Natchez, including an article in *Preservation Magazine* titled, "The Bonds of History," which was a critical indictment of the ignorance of Black history within the city.<sup>168</sup>

In 2002, the Friends of the Forks of the Road Society, Inc., received a grant from the NPS Underground Railroad Network to Freedom for Ser Boxley to develop an exhibit regarding international slave routes. He located a newspaper advertisement that detailed the escape from Forks of the Road by a fugitive slave, which helped to earn the designation.<sup>169</sup> As part of the NPS National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom initiative, a \$7,500 grant was awarded for research to be completed on the Mississippi River as an escape route on the Underground Railroad. The goal is for the work to tell the stories of the enslaved within the Deep South as they escaped to the Upper South and the North.<sup>170</sup> The Network to Freedom commemorates the Underground Railroad (UGRR) and includes 650 sites that have been recognized as having a verifiable connection to the UGRR in America (**Figure 42**).<sup>171</sup>

<sup>167</sup> Lauren Elizabeth Burton, "Evaluating the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program of the National Park Service," (Master's Thesis) University of Pennsylvania, PA, 2014, [http://repository.upenn.edu/hp\\_theses/569](http://repository.upenn.edu/hp_theses/569), 47-48.

<sup>168</sup> Jim Barnett, "A Chronology of Public Acquisition & Interpretation at the Forks of the Road Slave Market Site," Mississippi Department of Archives & History, 2005.

<sup>169</sup> Burton, "Evaluating the National Underground Network to Freedom," 48.

<sup>170</sup> "Forks of the Road Enslavement Market Terminus," National Underground Railroad Network To Freedom, National Park Service, Accessed October 15, 2020, [https://www.nps.gov/subjects/ugrr/about\\_ntf/upload/UGRR\\_2002\\_14\\_Forks\\_of\\_Road.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/ugrr/about_ntf/upload/UGRR_2002_14_Forks_of_Road.pdf).

<sup>171</sup> "Explore the Underground Railroad," Underground Railroad, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Accessed October 23, 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/undergroundrailroad/explore-ugrr-sites.htm>.



*Figure 43* A 2003 image taken from an Entergy bucket truck showing a view looking southwest at the “Y” intersection synonymous with the FotR market. Visible between Devereux Drive (left) and Liberty Road (right) is the Market 1 site. At center, the building, which was a grocery store and a saloon, was torn down shortly after the photograph was taken (NATC).

### ***Recent Developments Since the 2000s***

Recent developments within the legislative boundary include a divided highway, the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses church, two low-income apartment complexes, a mental health facility, a classic rock radio station, KZKR, and several other businesses including a muffler shop and a window tinting shop. Material evidence, however, is not the only evidence that demonstrates a historic site’s integrity.

In the early 2000s, the FotR market site was home to a shuttered bar (**Figure 43**), and the only evidence of its gruesome history was a small marker placed at the intersection.<sup>172</sup> The FRSI group has been a strong advocate for promoting public understanding of the “chattel slavery history and cultural contributions of African Americans.” In December of 2002, the group obtained funds that allowed the City of Natchez to purchase the two parcels at Forks of the Road Market 1 site, which was transferred to NPS in February of

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<sup>172</sup> Matt Volz, “Struggling to Tell a Slave Market’s History,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 11, 2004, Accessed October 22, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2004-jan-11-adna-slaves11-story.html>.

2003.<sup>173</sup> The building was torn down between 2003 and September of 2004, based on a review of aerial imagery, although it is unclear if the city or NPS removed it.

In 2004, Cavett Taff of Pencil 2 Paper Exhibit Design, and Jules Babineaux of Exhibits, Etc., installed exhibits at the FotR market site.<sup>174</sup> These include the “bus stop” style exhibit kiosk and the outdoor sculpture of shackles cast in concrete. These additions to interpretation at the FotR market site were made possible by funding through the NPS Lower Mississippi River Delta Initiative. All other exhibits located east of Liberty Road were installed by Ser Boxley. Overall, it seems that the installations have been installed piecemeal, as several groups are working to implement change at the site as can be seen in the image from 2007 (**Figure 44**).

In 2005, Jim Barnett revised NHL application written and sent to the National Park Service in 2003 was still pending, however this nomination was rejected due to a lack of above-ground identifiable resources.<sup>175</sup> That same year, several students from the University of Mississippi completed remote sensing archeology on the site in hopes of finding evidence of the slave market. They were unsuccessful, but erosion exposed the rim of a cistern on site.<sup>176</sup> The FotR market site was designated as a community Millennium Trail, as a hub on the Mississippi Millennium Trail commemorating blues music developed throughout the delta in 2007.<sup>177</sup>



*Figure 44* An image of the FotR market site looking north toward Devereux Drive, showing that installations of small garden beds and wayside panels were not present until after 2007. Note the Historic Natchez Foundation “Forks of the Road Historical Site” sign on left (Carruth 4).

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<sup>173</sup> Jim Barnett, “A Chronology of Public Acquisition & Interpretation at the Forks of the Road Slave Market Site,” Mississippi Department of Archives & History, 2005.

<sup>174</sup> Jim Barnett, “A Chronology of Public Acquisition & Interpretation at the Forks of the Road Slave Market Site,” Mississippi Department of Archives & History, 2005.

<sup>175</sup> Jim Barnett, “A Chronology of Public Acquisition.”

<sup>176</sup> Jim Barnett, “A Chronology of Public Acquisition.”

<sup>177</sup> “Final Environmental Assessment for the Boundary Adjustment Study of Forks of the Road,” Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, June 2010, 30.

The 16 National Millennium Trails were announced by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton on 26 June 1999, and Forks of the Road is designated as a site on the Underground Railroad trail. In 2003, the MDAH Professional Review Board approved listing the site in the National Register of Historic Places, and the parcels located between the Washington and Liberty roads were transferred from MDAH to NPS.<sup>178</sup>

In December of 2010, a Boundary Adjustment Study (BAS) was completed by NPS for the City of Natchez, which provided justification for NATC to include FotR within the NATC park boundary. The BAS found that this site met the specified criteria required to make it part of NATC,<sup>179</sup> even though the Forks of the Road area suffered from major urban intrusions in the twentieth century, from commercial uses to overlay by four-lane roads and the installation of high-power lines and cell towers. The authors though inclusion of FotR would help NATC tell “a more complete story of the commercial and agricultural history along the Mississippi and in the Cotton Kingdom.”<sup>180</sup>

In 2019, NPS completed a Historic Structure Report for the Forks of the Road Bridge, and it was determined that the existing bridge was constructed in 1888—after the period of significance. However, there would have been a bridge over Spanish Bayou in a similar place during the antebellum period. The FotR Bridge is eligible as a locally significant structure with a separate historic context. The FotR Bridge retains integrity of materials, design, and workmanship as an arched masonry bridge from the late 1800s. dates the period of significance, as it retains integrity of materials, design, and workmanship as an arched masonry bridge from the late 1800s.

In 2020, Mississippi State University began creating an institutionally supported digital database intended to give greater access to legal records that help with identifying victims of slavery. “The Lantern Project” utilizes records, such as inventories, bills of sale, and probate and court records, that were used by slave holders to track enslaved people. The goal is to help descendants discover their ancestries that were impacted by the system of slavery.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Jim Barnett, “A Chronology of Public Acquisition.”

<sup>179</sup> Final Environmental Assessment for the Boundary Adjustment Study of Forks of the Road,” Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, June 2010, ii.

<sup>180</sup> “Final Environmental Assessment for the Boundary Adjustment Study of Forks of the Road,” Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, June 2010, Appendix A, 28.

<sup>181</sup> “Celebrating Black History: MSU Libraries to digitize records of enslaved Mississippians for the first time.” Mississippi State University Newsroom, February 18, 2020, <https://www.msstate.edu/newsroom/article/2020/02/celebrating-black-history-msu-libraries-digitize-records-enslaved?fbclid=IwAR04bWngmJMLzMdmwFqtfwafu9jEuSCTNkLWrSYxWRZMdJSu3D8WsKtHk>, accessed March 2, 2021.

## Section 7: Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity

### Analysis and Evaluation Summary

#### *On Integrity*

“Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance.”<sup>182</sup> Until recently, landscapes of enslavement have not been deemed significant in the same way that, for example, antebellum plantation mansions have been historically, culturally, and economically valued. As a result, many if not most, landscapes of enslavement have been disinvested, erased over time, and/or forgotten. Historians face challenges in evaluating the integrity of these types of landscapes. Pre-Civil War sites such as Forks of the Road often lack material evidence: early buildings and structures were either destroyed during the Civil War or dismantled during later periods, historic vegetation patterns may not be known, or circulation may have been altered. To varying degrees, each of these is true for Forks of the Road. Additionally, documentation of the origins, lineages, and destinations of the enslaved who were sold at the markets in Natchez are difficult to trace.

These factors task landscape historians to think critically—with a higher level of interpretation of historic context—about the integrity of landscapes of enslavement. National Register Bulletin 40, “Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluation, and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields” (Bulletin 40) offers a path for evaluating the integrity of Forks of the Road. Like landscapes of enslavement, Civil War battlefields

are places that have been profoundly marked by human endeavor. While the significance of many battlefields derives from a brief and extraordinarily violent moment in time, the basic principles for identifying, evaluating, documenting, registering, and protecting these properties can be applied more broadly, particularly to significant historic rural landscapes... The threats to rural landscapes — changing land uses, loss of vegetation, alteration to natural features, loss and replacement of historic buildings — are also occurring on many battlefields.<sup>183</sup>

The same can be said about landscapes of enslavement in urban and modernized areas. Over the years, Forks of the Road, located in a modernized but disinvested area of Natchez, has experienced erasure resulting from changing land uses and replacement of historic buildings. There is one historic building within the 18.7-acre legislative boundary of Forks of the Road—the O’Ferrall Residence, which is a circa 1870 Greek Revival style residence, located on a lot that is considered to be an undisturbed nineteenth-century landscape.<sup>184</sup>

The National Register recognizes seven aspects or qualities that contribute to integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Bulletin 40 includes the following distinction:

A property, such as a battlefield, important for its association with a historic event or persons ideally might retain some features of all seven aspects of integrity. Integrity of design and workmanship, however, might not be as important to the significance and would not be relevant to the battlefield. A basic test of integrity for a battlefield important for its association with a historic event or person is whether a participant in the battle would recognize the property as it exists today. Generally, the most important aspects of integrity for battlefields are **location, setting, feeling,** and

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<sup>182</sup> Patrick W. Andrus, “Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating, and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields,” National Register Bulletin 40 (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1992; Revised 1999), 10.

<sup>183</sup> Andrus, “Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating, and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields,” (Lawrence E. Aton) iii.

<sup>184</sup> Barry White, “Re: 217 O’Ferrall St., Natchez, Adams County,” Correspondence with Jeff Mansell, MDAH, July 29, 2020.

**association.**<sup>185</sup>

Integrity of the Forks of the Road site has been determined by evaluating and comparing the current conditions of landscape features—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association—with their conditions during the period of significance, from 1833 to 1863. It has also been determined with guidance by National Register Bulletin 40, “Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluation, and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields. STA visited Forks of the Road on October 16, 2019 and documented the site’s existing conditions. Documented features included the area that is currently interpreted, the parcel containing the abandoned roadbed, and the brick bridge over Spanish Bayou.

Based on the evidence observed and consideration of historic records and historic context, the Forks of the Road site today retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. In addition to maintaining integrity of association, location, setting, and feeling, the site holds highly meaningful significance to the collective history of our country, as well as the strong capability for its significance and integrity to be revealed and interpreted. For these reasons, Forks of the Road should be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Forks of the Road Bridge is also eligible as a locally significant structure with a separate historic context that post-dates the slave market and US Colored Troops period of significance. Additionally, it retains integrity of materials, design, and workmanship. As the F Residence, located north of St. Catherine Street/Devereux Drive, is a site that has been undisturbed since the 1870s, and there is a possible connection to John O’Ferrall, this site may be eligible under Criteria B and D. Currently, NATC is completing a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) on the FotR Bridge, the O’Ferrall Residence (Market 3 site), and the auto dealership (auto shop) located west of Liberty Road (Market 2 site).

Discussion of location, setting, feeling, and association, as they pertain to the Forks of the Road site, follows. After, a discussion occurs of the remaining aspects, materials, design, and workmanship.

*Location*

Location is defined by the National Register as the place where the historic property was constructed, or the place where the historic event occurred. “For a battlefield, location is the place where the historic military event occurred;”<sup>186</sup> it follows that for a slave market, location is the area in which the historic sales of enslaved people occurred.

It is unknown when the Forks of the Road site was first used as a site for the sale of enslaved people, however the market was most active as a slave pen during the period from 1833 – 1863. After an 1833 City Ordinance required that the slave markets be moved outside of the city limits, effectively limiting the threat of cholera to the city’s white population and isolating it to the enslaved population, Isaac Franklin was one of the first to purchase property within the forks of Washington and Liberty roads. The FotR market was deliberately located at this intersection, which enabled it to remain in close proximity to Natchez, while it was technically outside of the corporation line.

The location of the FotR site also took advantage of traffic coming off of the Old Natchez Trace. Washington Road connected Natchez to the town of Washington, the Natchez Trace, and ultimately, to northern Alabama and Tennessee.<sup>187</sup> The Natchez Trace was a major route travelled by slave traders transporting coffles of enslaved people to Natchez. Therefore, the FotR location was more easily accessible to traders

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<sup>185</sup> Andrus, “Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating, and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields,” 10.

<sup>186</sup> Andrus, “Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating, and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields,” 10.

<sup>187</sup> Panamerican Consultants, Inc., Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., WFT Architects, PA. “Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report,” Natchez National Historical Park. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020, 1-2.

than the former sale site Under the Hill, which is why many chose to operate businesses there. The site was also situated within view of several elite plantations including Concord, Devereux, Montaigne, Linden, and Monmouth (Devereux, Linden, and Monmouth are still in existence), for the ability of armed planters to easily control an uprising.<sup>188</sup>

The FotR site retains integrity of location because the site where the historic sale of enslaved people occurred still exists, largely in the same physical configuration in which it existed at the time. Though the Natchez city limits have expanded, the Forks of the Road site is still located at the historical corporation line boundary, and the roadbed of Washington Road is still visible on site near the FotR Bridge that crosses Spanish Bayou.

### *Setting*

Setting is defined by the National Register as the physical environment of a historic property. According to Bulletin 40, for a battlefield, “setting refers to the character of the place in which the property played its historic role...it involves *how*, not just where, the property is situated and its relationship to surrounding features and open space.”<sup>189</sup> Whereas location at Forks of the Road refers to the specific places where the sales of enslaved people occurred, setting refers to *how* enslaved people were brought to the markets—the terrain they traversed, the natural and manmade things they would have seen. Both the historic route of the Natchez Trace, which connected to Old Washington Road, and the crossing at Spanish Bayou retain integrity of setting, due to the fact that the original fabric of the topographic features, roadbed, and FotR Bridge remain intact.

The overall circulation patterns and topography are nearly the same as they were during the period of significance. St. Catherine Street originally connected to Washington Road (now Old Washington Road), which connected Natchez with the Natchez Trace (now Old Natchez Trace) and intersected with Liberty Road (sometimes referred to as Old Courthouse Road or Second Creek Road). Today, St. Catherine Street connects to Devereux Drive at Liberty Road. The familiar “Y” intersection remains; the minor difference is that Washington Road no longer connects the historic brick bridge to the site of the historic markets. As early as 1904, maps show several historic side streets that still exist, including O’Ferrall Avenue,<sup>190</sup> Monmouth Street, and Rembert Street.<sup>191</sup>

Though the area around these features has been subject to modern development including roadways, modern buildings and structures, and invasive vegetation, the waterway and trace of Washington Road remain intact. The historic roadbed of Washington Road still exists, as does the topography of the crossing over Spanish Bayou and the prominent knoll on which the slave markets were located.<sup>192</sup> Within this portion of the site, the topographic setting is similar to what enslaved people travelling to the market would have traversed during the early to mid-1800s as they crossed the bridge over Spanish Bayou. Although the circa 1888 bridge post-dates the antebellum period, an older bridge in a similar place would have aided the crossing of Spanish Bayou during the 1830s through the 1860s.

### *Feeling*

Feeling is defined by the National Register as a property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of

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<sup>188</sup> Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez*, 20, 82.

<sup>189</sup> Andrus, “Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating, and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields,” 10-11.

<sup>190</sup> O’Ferrall Avenue originated as a private driveway to the O’Ferrall residence (now the location of the mental health facility), as found on Sheet 11 of the 1886 Sanborn map.

<sup>191</sup> 1904 Sanborn map, Sheets 15 and 22.

<sup>192</sup> Barnett and Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Section 7, 3.

a particular period of time. According to Bulletin 40, “feeling is a battlefield’s expression of the historic sense of a particular period of time...if a battle occurred in a rural district, then the presence of farm roads, agricultural buildings, and field systems combine to convey the feeling of the area at the time of the battle.”<sup>193</sup> In the case of the slave market, the paths that the enslaved travelled to get to the site remain largely the same, and the general sense that the FotR site was removed from the core of Natchez proper, though commercial endeavors cropped up around the site is still extant. Given the current expression of that historic sense of time, the FotR site retains integrity of feeling.

Today, it is easy to recognize the “Y” configuration of St. Catherine Street and Liberty Road. The last 158 years of development within the legislative boundary has removed most of the above-ground evidence of a dark historical past. With that said, the City and NPS have made strides to acquire property that further adds to the historic integrity of feeling on site. The circa 1888 arched brick bridge that crosses over Spanish Bayou postdates the FotR period of significance, but the alignment of Old Washington Road suggests that there was a bridge or crossing over the bayou when the market was active, as the route does not veer off course. Spanish Bayou would have been the last natural topographical feature traders, travelers, and the enslaved crossed on the Natchez Trace as they made their way from Virginia, Tennessee, or Alabama to the Natchez market. This area is currently overgrown with kudzu vine, and it is difficult to discern what is present.<sup>194</sup>

With management of overgrown vegetation, it would not be difficult to imagine the footfalls of a coffle of enslaved people, as they raised their voices in song. Given the current smattering of commercial enterprises surrounding the market area, it is also not difficult to imagine the experience that the enslaved encountered of traversing the bridge and Natchez Trace to emerge at an area of commerce—one that was and remains distinct from downtown Natchez.

### *Association*

Association is defined by the National Register as the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. Bulletin 40 further states that “a property retains association if it *is* the place where the event occurred.”<sup>195</sup>

The Forks of the Road site, which was the second largest market for the sale of enslaved people in the Lower South during the antebellum period, retains indisputable integrity of association, as it is directly linked to the domestic slave trade that occurred between 1833 – 1863. The domestic slave trade was an important period in history and is associated with the collective group of African Americans who were sold at the Forks of the Road market. They were not allowed basic human freedoms, yet they were forced to build the wealth of the country. Their contributions during the antebellum period of history are significant and are associated directly with the Forks of the Road market site. Notably, Ser Boxley identified by name some of the enslaved people bought and sold at the Forks of the Road market through research he conducted in the mid-1990s through the early 2000s. Some of these names are displayed at the Natchez National Historical Park Visitor Center but deserve to become a prominent part of interpretation at the FotR site itself.

The association between the domestic slave trade, enslaved humans, and the FotR markets is strengthened by the brick bridge that enslaved people crossed as they made their way to the site. The circa 1888 arched brick bridge that crosses Spanish Bayou postdates the FotR period of significance, but the alignment of Old

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<sup>193</sup> Andrus, “Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating, and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields,” 11.

<sup>194</sup> Panamerican Consultants, Inc., Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., WFT Architects, PA. “Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report,” Natchez National Historical Park. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020, 1-4.

<sup>195</sup> Andrus, “Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating, and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields,” 11.

Washington Road suggests that there was also a bridge or crossing over the bayou when the market was active. Though this particular structure postdates the period of significance, the bridge is significant in and of itself as a historic arched brick masonry structure from the late 1800s. The bridge has been recommended for listing on the National Register as it is “of historic interest and is potentially significant.”<sup>196</sup>

There is also a high degree of association for the site’s association with enslavers who traded at the market, specifically Isaac Franklin and John Armfield, who created the trading firm, Franklin & Armfield. These men created an elaborate interstate business which imported enslaved people from failing tobacco plantations in Virginia and Maryland down to the Deep South, where cotton plantations were thriving. They were able to purchase the enslaved from the tobacco planters for a low price and sell them at the Forks of the Road market for a profit in the Natchez market, where there was growing demand for enslaved labor.<sup>197</sup>

An attorney who worked for the trading firm, Ballard, Franklin and Company, estimated that there might have been 600 to 800 enslaved people at the market for sale during the market’s height. Along with the people born into slavery, the Forks of the Road market had a significant role in the influx of enslaved population, which increased from 101,878 to 768,537 in the states of Mississippi and Louisiana between 1820 and 1860.<sup>198</sup>

A man by the name of Ethan Andrews kept a travelogue journal, and he witnessed John Armfield leading a coffle of enslaved people from the Duke Street headquarters of Franklin & Armfield in Alexandria, Virginia

In 1834, Armfield sat on his horse in front of the procession, armed with a gun and a whip. Other white men, similarly armed, were arrayed behind him. They were guarding 200 men and boys lined up in twos, their wrists handcuffed together, a chain running the length of 100 pairs of hands. Behind the men were the women and girls, another hundred. They were not handcuffed, although they may have been tied with rope. Some carried small children. After the women came the big wagons—six or seven in all. These carried food, plus children too small to walk ten hours a day...Then the coffle, like a giant serpent, uncoiled onto Duke Street and marched west, out of town and into a momentous event, a blanked-out saga, an unremembered epic. I think of it as the Slave Trail of Tears.<sup>199</sup>

In 1833, Isaac Franklin rented a building at the intersection of Washington Street (St. Catherine Street/Devereux Drive) and Old Courthouse (Liberty) Road.<sup>200</sup> In 1835, Franklin purchased a tract of land across from Liberty Road, however he had been operating at the FotR as early as 1831. Franklin formed several entities to conduct the Natchez business during the period between 1828 – 1836, including Franklin, Armfield & Company; Franklin, Ballard & Company; Isaac and James R Franklin & Company; and Ballard, Franklin & Company.<sup>201</sup> Other notable traders associated with the operations at FotR were Rice Ballard,

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<sup>196</sup> Panamerican Consultants, Inc., Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., WFT Architects, PA. “Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report,” Natchez National Historical Park. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020, 2-4

<sup>197</sup> Jim Barnett and H. Clark Burkett, “The Forks of the Road Slave Market at Natchez,” Mississippi History Now. Mississippi Historical Society, February 2003, Accessed October 21, 2019, <http://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/articles/47/the-forks-of-the-road-slave-market-at-natchez>.

<sup>198</sup> Jim Barnett and H. Clark Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Adams County, Mississippi, Natchez, MS: Mississippi Department of Archives & History, Revised October 17, 2008, Section 7, 10.

<sup>199</sup> Ball, Edward. “Retracing Slavery’s Trail of Tears, America’s forgotten migration—the journeys of a million African-Americans from the tobacco South to the cotton South.” Smithsonian. November 2015. Accessed October 21, 2019. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/slavery-trail-of-tears-180956968/>.

<sup>200</sup> Barnett and Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Section 7, 3.

<sup>201</sup> Thom Rosenblum, “Analysis of Historic Occupation: Forks of the Road Chain of Title 1826-1872,” Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, May 2004, 2-3.

Tarlton Auterburn, and R. H. Elam.<sup>202</sup>

### *Materials*

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited within the period of significance in a pattern or configuration to give form to the property. Buildings and structures have been removed; however, the historic site of the market, the road trace, and the bayou are intact, and no reproductions have been made. The archeological items previously found and potential archeological research may reveal important evidence of and insights into the history of the interstate slave trade.

The Forks of the Road site retains integrity of materials due to the artifacts recovered on site. In 2007, Panamerican Consultants completed an archeological study of the FotR site which revealed “numerous human-made items, mostly glass, brick, and mortar fragments.”<sup>203</sup> The team completed shovel testing, surface collection and reconnaissance, and unit excavation. Antebellum materials were recovered, and it was expected that further materials, including human remains, from the period of significance would be found with further testing. In addition, the Panamerican researchers began excavation of a historic cistern, which “had to be terminated before the bottom was reached,” leaving the date of this structure unknown, but also leaving open the possibility that it is within the period of significance. Based on the archeology alone, the report authors definitively recommended that “the Forks of the Road site be considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.”<sup>204</sup>

### *Design*

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. The Forks of the Road site retains a high level of integrity of design for its historic association with the Natchez Trace and several plantations, and also for the conscious decisions made in the placement of the original market stalls, which reinforced historic institutional and environmental racism and oppression.

The FotR market was an open-air market where stalls belonging to multiple slave traders were scattered across several acres. The sale of other items such as livestock also occurred at the market. However, the configuration of the Y formed a triangle of land that effectively functioned as a central market area, in the way a central square occurs in a gridded market area.

The Forks of the Road “Y” intersection retains its original configuration and reflects important design features. First, it created a logical and easily accessible connection to the Natchez Trace (now Old Natchez Trace), where enslaved people, treated as commercial goods, would immediately arrive at their market destination, to be displayed.

The “Y” configuration also formed a triangle of land, which created a central shopping mall, of sorts, distinct from the traditional gridded pattern found inside the city limits. This triangle of land enabled market stalls to line its three edges. Enslavers perusing enslaved people could easily circulate the entire parameter in a way that was conducive to returning to those stalls or vendors where the enslavers would ultimately purchase enslaved people.

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<sup>202</sup> Barnett and Burkett, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination form: Forks of the Road Slave Market site*, Section 8, 1. “Final Environmental Assessment for the Boundary Adjustment Study of Forks of the Road,” Natchez National Historical Park, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, June 2010

<sup>204</sup> Carruth, “Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market,” 47, 1.

### *Workmanship*

Workmanship is defined as the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory, and in the case of Forks of the Road, workmanship is embodied in the role the site and the enslaved, who were forcibly moved there, played in the creation of the Cotton Kingdom. The pursuit of wealth in the Deep South was powered by the enslaved work force, as the production of cotton was dependent on the cheap labor that slavery provided.

Enslaved people who were sold at the Forks of the Road market were the cultivators of the cotton that powered an economy, which made Mississippi the center of cotton production in the world during the early to mid-1800s. Because the production of cotton was so labor-intensive, demand for cotton increased demand for enslaved labor, and without this labor, the millions of pounds of cotton could not have been produced (**Figure 29**).<sup>205</sup>

As this was a group people who were not allowed basic freedoms such as education or property ownership, the recorded songs that the enslaved sang as they marched in coffles provide a strong example of workmanship. The case can be made that these cottle songs and those sang laboring in the cotton fields, also called “field hollers,” provided the foundation for spiritual, gospel, blues, soul, jazz, and even hip-hop music.<sup>206</sup> While it is difficult to say that workmanship is easily visible or understood, or that its original fabric has been retained, it is important to note the possibility to interpret the workmanship that emerged as a direct result of this site and the enslaved people who traveled through it.

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<sup>205</sup> Eugene R. Dattel, “Cotton in a Global Economy: Mississippi (1800 – 1860), Mississippi History Now, Mississippi Historical Society,” October 2006, Accessed October 14, 2020, <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/161/cotton-in-a-global-economy-mississippi-1800-1860>.

<sup>206</sup> “African American Song,” Library of Congress, Accessed November 8, 2020, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200197451>.

## Landscape Characteristics

### *Archeological Sites*

There are two types of archeological sites within the 18.7 acre legislative boundaries of the Forks of the Road site: those artifacts documented by previous archeology research at the location of the market site, and the historic Old Washington Road trace. From February 28, 2007 to March 8, 2007, Panamerican Consultants conducted an archeological survey of the Forks of the Road market site. The 2007 Panamerican Consultants Archeology report included the following statement:

The significance of this site in our nation's history is well documented. Its symbolic importance is harder to document, but it is no less tangible. For the African-American community and anyone who has a strong appreciation for their struggle for civil rights, this site serves almost as a touchstone. It represents a poignant moment in history, a beginning point when the rights of African-Americans were at absolute zero. It is representative of the darkest moment that had to pass before the dawn could come. While the connection may not be direct, in a symbolic role the Forks of the Road has meaning and relevance to the entire civil rights struggle.<sup>207</sup>

Beyond providing this eloquent advocacy for the site's documented national significance and symbolic importance, the report included concrete evidence. The Panamerican Consultants investigation involved "surface collection and reconnaissance, shovel testing, and unit excavation," which revealed materials important to the Antebellum and Civil War periods in history. Based on the archeology alone, the report authors definitively recommended that **"the Forks of the Road site be considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places."**<sup>208</sup>

The authors further recommended that additional study of the property in order to explore a cistern feature, because "the excavation of the cistern had to be terminated before the bottom was reached," and "The most significant question remaining involves dating the construction of the cistern itself."<sup>209</sup> The 1856 map (**Figure 25**) shows a cistern located near the James property, which is the approximate location where the archeology team excavated the cistern in **Figure 45**. As Franklin owned the property across from James, the archeology report notes that the excavated cistern was built in the same manner as the one found on Franklin's plantation in Angola—both were constructed using a method commonly practiced in Tennessee.

In a circumstance that may be more than [sic] just ironic, a nearly identical cistern was found archaeologically on Isaac Franklin's Angola Plantation in Louisiana (16WF122) (Isaac Franklin owned property across Liberty Road from the Forks of the Road site.). Even though the Angola Plantation cistern was not excavated, collateral evidence collected by the archaeologists suggested that it was constructed in the 1840s. Its existence there is quite unusual because in low-lying areas like southern Louisiana underground cisterns are almost unheard of as the area is prone to floods and has a high water-table. Maintaining potable water within these reservoirs posed too many problems so most opted for above-ground cisterns. Underground cisterns are so rare in this region that the archaeologist working on the site conjectured that the decision to build one there related to Franklin's life experience in Tennessee where they work well and are, in fact, common.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Carruth, "Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market," 45.

<sup>208</sup> Carruth, "Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market," 47, 1.

<sup>209</sup> Carruth, "Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market," 44.

<sup>210</sup> Carruth, "Archaeological Testing of the Forks of the Road Market," 42.

Several other sites within the legislative boundary may also reveal artifacts that are important to the Antebellum and Civil War periods in history, although, modern construction and disturbance of the sites may have compromised some of these materials. These sites include the location of the market across Liberty Road, the market across St. Catherine St./Devereux Drive from the FotR site, the St. Catherine Hospital for the enslaved, the area around the bridge over Spanish Bayou, and the Old Washington Roadbed (**Figure 46**). The latter may hold significant archeological remains from the many travelers on Old Washington Road, which led to the nearby Natchez Trace. According to Ser Boxley there are two cisterns underground on the James lot and another cistern under the existing muffler shop.

*Landscape Features*

Forks of the Road market site archeology	Contributing
Plastered Concrete Cistern, with brick domed top	Contributing
Old Washington Roadbed	Contributing



*Figure 45* Photograph of partially exposed plastered concrete cistern excavated during 2007, thought to be the cistern near the James property on the 1856 map (Carruth 30).



*Figure 46* View looking northwest toward the Old Washington Roadbed on left, brick bridge at center, apartments in background. The site is overgrown with kudzu, which makes it difficult to discern specific features (STA 2020).

### ***Natural Systems and Features***

Natural systems and features are defined as any natural aspects that have influenced the development and physical form of a landscape. Natchez is located on a high bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. Early maps show that there was a bend in the Mississippi River that flowed westward, and this likely provided calmer waters at Natchez (**Figure 15**). Since then, that westward bend has become an oxbow lake that floods when the river is high, and the river has a straighter course near Natchez.

A series of creeks ring the City of Natchez—Sandy Creek, Second Creek and St. Catherine Creek. Located between the Mississippi River and St. Catherine Creek is the Spanish Bayou, just east of the Forks of the Road market site. This bayou branches off from St. Catherine Creek south of Highland Boulevard, snakes upward and runs along the eastern edge of Melrose, then jogs west, where it crosses over Devereux Drive and Old Washington Road, before ending near North Dr. M.L. King Street.<sup>211</sup>

The crossing at Spanish Bayou and Old Washington Road is important to the story of Forks of the Road, because it provided access from the nearby Natchez Trace, which was heavily traveled by traders and coffles of enslaved people headed towards the market at the Forks of the Road. Today, Spanish Bayou remains in the same location as when it was crossed by the enslaved marching towards the market. Its atmospheric and physical qualities and immediate surroundings continue to evoke the feeling that would have been associated with the site during the period of significance (**Figure 47**).

### ***Landscape Features***

Spanish Bayou

Contributing



*Figure 47* View of Spanish Bayou and roadbed of Old Washington Road from the Forks of the Road Bridge. The split of Devereux Drive/Highway 61 is in the background. Most of the site is overgrown with kudzu vine and other invasive plants. The bayou is located at the center of the photo in the depression (STA 2019).

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<sup>211</sup> “Site Map for the Nation: USGS 07290910 Spanish Bayou at Natchez, MS,” USGS, October 30, 2020, Accessed October 30, 2020, [https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/nwismap/?site\\_no=07290910&agency\\_cd=USGS](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/nwismap/?site_no=07290910&agency_cd=USGS).

### ***Spatial Organization***

Spatial organization is defined as the three-dimensional organization of physical forms and visual associations in the landscape, including the articulation of ground, vertical and overhead planes that define a space. Spatially, the most important feature needed to recognize the Forks of the Road market site is the “Y” shape, now formed by Devereux and Liberty Roads as they connect to St. Catherine Street. Historically the roads that bounded the FotR site were Washington (now Old Washington) and Old Courthouse roads, respectively. The historic roadbed of Washington Road still exists near the crossing at Spanish Bayou, though the modern-era divided highway does not follow that exact path and is located slightly to the south.

Historically, views from the site revealed sitelines to several surrounding suburban estates including Devereux, Monmouth, and Linden. However, views to and from the site are currently impeded by modern construction. Other than the “Y” shape that marks the FotR site (**Figure 48**), much of the spatial organization that was present during the period of significance has been dismantled and/or built over.

It is essential to acknowledge that the Forks of the Road market site was located at this “Y” intersection for two reasons. First, this location was as close as one could be to town, while also being outside of the city limits. Second, this location was adjacent to Washington Road and therefore, in close proximity to the end of Natchez Trace. Although the present Natchez city limits have expanded, one is at the historical boundary location, from which the Old Washington roadbed remains visible. The organization of these two elements is both intentional and legible.

### ***Landscape Features***

Forks of the Road “Y” Intersection

Contributing

Views from site to nearby Plantations

Noncontributing



*Figure 48* The “Y” shape of the roads forking at Liberty and St. Catherine Street where it meets US Highway 61 (Google Streetview).

### **Circulation**

Circulation is defined as the spaces, features, and applied material finishes which constitute systems of movement in a landscape. Originating from the same point at St. Catherine Street, Devereux and Liberty roads form the fork for which the site earned its moniker. Historically, Washington Road (now Old Washington Road) extended to the intersection of Liberty Road and St. Catherine Street. The Old Washington Roadbed still exists on the property that contains the FotR Bridge.

An 1808 map of the Mississippi postal routes denotes the towns of Washington and Liberty, and it also shows the “Old Court House” in center (**Figure 49**). Originally, the main routes leading out of Natchez were Washington Road and Old Courthouse Road. A plat map of 1840 (**Figure 20**) shows the intersection of the FotR market as Washington and Liberty roads, however, the 1853 and 1856 surveys (**Figures 24 and 25**), show the intersection as Washington and Old Courthouse roads. These two surveys are the last to show the Old Courthouse Road name.

The 1808 postal map shows a road called “Road to Nashville” that connects to “Washington.” Old Washington Road connected the Market, and Natchez, to the Natchez Trace, now referred to as the Old Natchez Trace. In 1885, the automobile was invented, and over the next forty years, it altered the development of cities as people transitioned from using horses to cars and trucks.<sup>212</sup> The 1925 Sanborn map is the last map to depict Washington Road intersecting with St. Catherine Street at Liberty Road (**Figure 50**). Using the existing Washington Road US Highway 61 was built in Natchez. The 1945 Sanborn map is the earliest map that shows the intersection of Washington Road and US Highway 61, which was installed during the 1930s (**Figure 51**). Sanborn maps through 1966 show the intersection in this orientation. US Highway 61 altered the course of altering the course of Washington Road and the Natchez Trace. The current location of the Natchez Trace Parkway is approximately one mile southwest of the FotR market site by way of Liberty Road. The Natchez Trace Parkway is roughly adjacent to the historic route of the Old Natchez Trace, parts of which are still extant and can be accessed from the parkway.

Sometime after 1966, US Highway 61 was made into a divided highway with a median.<sup>213</sup> This new highway was called Devereux Drive/ US Highway 61. **Figure 52** shows one image of the new highway and a second diagram with the new highway overlaid on the 1966 Sanborn map. Although this second diagram is not exact, it shows the areas around the FotR neighborhood that were impacted by the expanded highway.

### **Landscape Features**

Historic Circulation: Old Washington Roadbed	Contributing
Historic Circulation: Liberty Road (Old Courthouse Road)	Contributing
Historic Circulation: St. Catherine Street	Contributing
Historic Circulation: Forks of the Road “Y” Intersection	Contributing
Devereux Drive/US Highway 61	Noncontributing
O’Ferrall Alley	Unknown

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<sup>212</sup> Panamerican Consultants, Inc., Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., WFT Architects, PA. “Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report,” Natchez National Historical Park. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020, 14.

<sup>213</sup> Panamerican Consultants, “Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report,” 3 and 23.



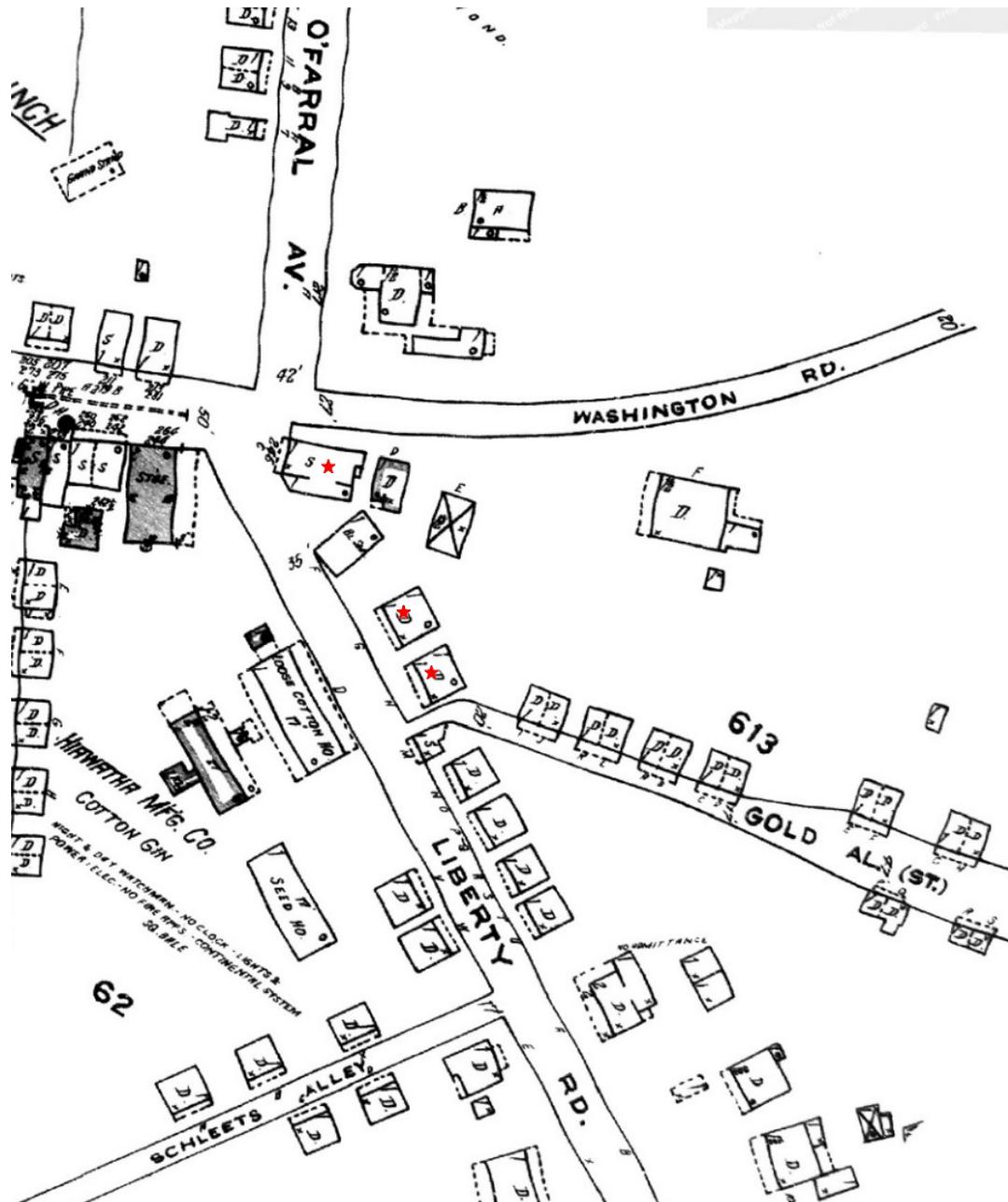


Figure 50 The 1925 Sanborn map depicts Washington Road intersecting with St. Catherine Street at Liberty Road. Note Gold and Schleets alleys and the three starred buildings, as they remain on the next map (NATC ESA 218).

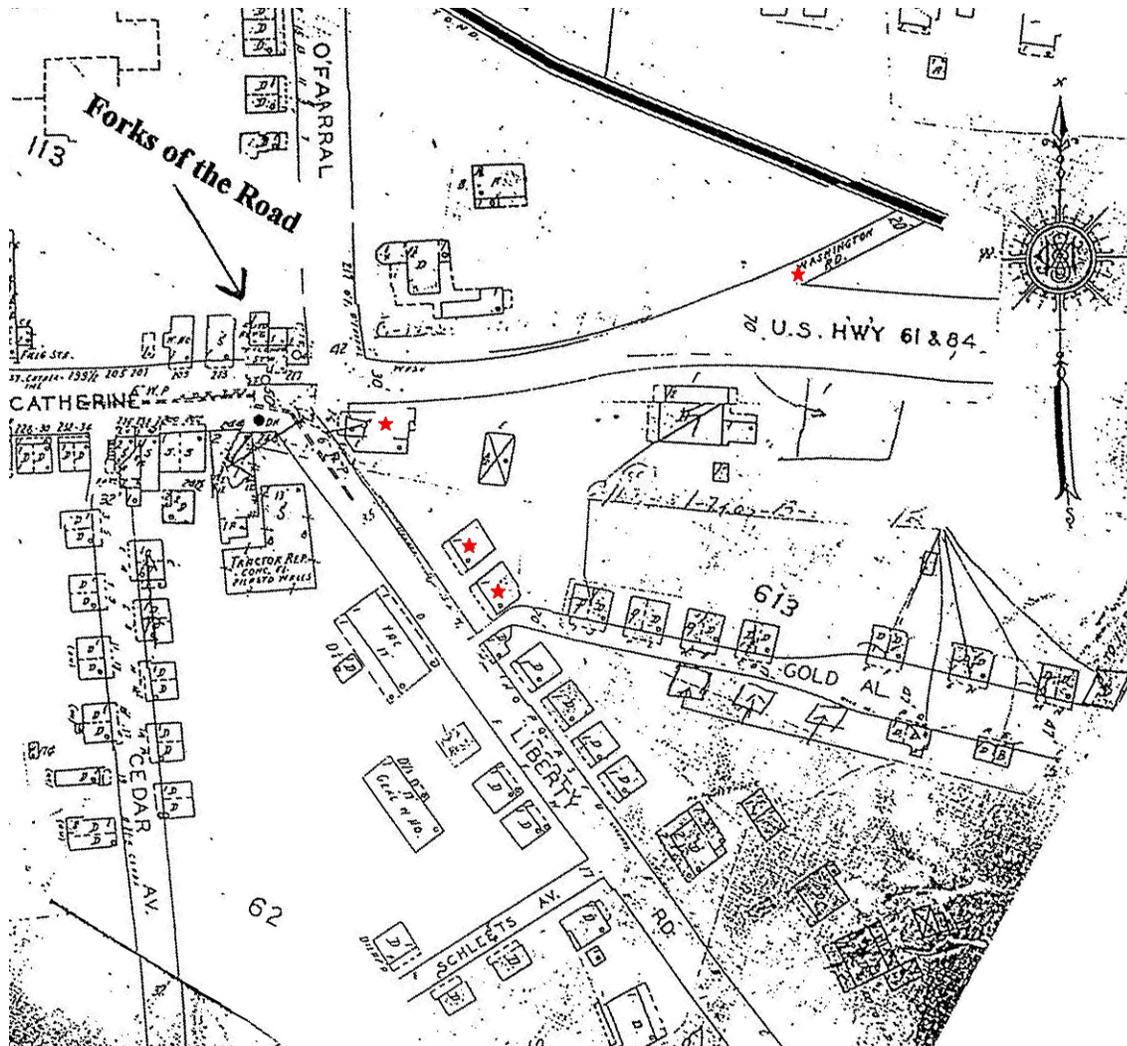


Figure 51 A portion of the 1945 Sanborn map is the earliest map that shows the intersection of Washington Road and US Highway 61, which was installed during the 1930s. Sanborn maps through 1966 show the intersection in this orientation (NHL 1999, 18).

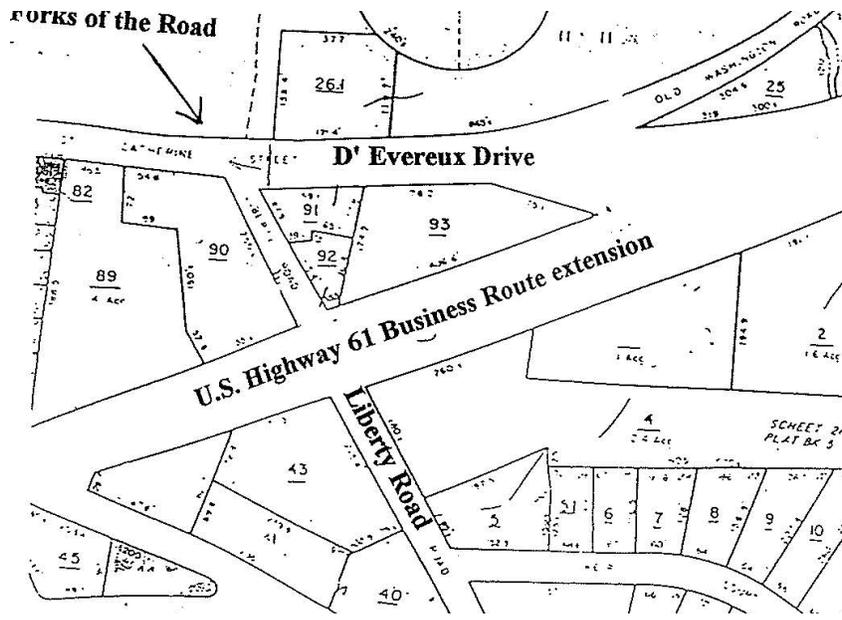


Figure 52 Image above is a 1998 map showing the divided highway that was constructed circa post 1966 (NHL 1999, 19). The diagram (approximation not to scale) below shows the 1966 Sanborn map with the new divided highway overlaid in pink. Shown in gray are setbacks, in orange is the approximate location of Old Washington Road, and Spanish Bayou in blue (NATC ESA 216, annotations STA).







*Figure 55* View of Devereux Drive/US Highway 61 looking east toward FotR Bridge, with the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses church in background. Images shows the cut made in the landscape when the highway was constructed (STA 2019).

**Figure 53** shows a 1996 aerial image of the FotR market area after Devereux Drive/US Highway was built. The building at the northeast corner of the Market 1 site and a residence that was first present on the 1925 Sanborn map are visible. Also, the Old Washington Roadbed is visible in the top right of the image. The trace of the roadbed is shown diagrammatically in the next map depicting historic circulation (**Figure 54**). Finally, **Figure 55** shows Devereux Drive/US Highway 61 from the northwest corner of the site.

### **Vegetation**

The vegetation on site historically would have likely been minimal, because it would have been a heavily traversed commercial landscape, and because it would have been maintained in such a way to increase visibility and white surveillance of the site. The researchers found no images of the site, only descriptions. Today, researchers look for witness trees that remain from the period of significance that may have been in place and have “witnessed” historic events. The staff has reviewed current aerials and it looks like most of the site has been clear cut for development at some point. The only potential area where witness trees might exist is along the banks of Spanish Bayou. Notice the kudzu vine growth that covers everything on the parcel (**Figure 56**).

The vegetation currently on site includes a Leyland cypress hedge on the eastern border, a few small crape myrtles on the northern border, and several small beds bordered with river red interlocking concrete edgers. There are five small beds, which were created and are tended by the Adams County Master Gardeners. None of this vegetation contributes to the historic setting, as there likely was no planting in the area of the market, and the vegetation on site has been added within the last twenty to thirty years (**Figures 57 – 61**).

### *Landscape Features*

Existing vegetation:

Kudzu Vine, on FotR Bridge parcel	Noncontributing
Leyland cypress hedge	Noncontributing
Crape myrtles, eastern edge of site	Noncontributing
Crape myrtles, northern edge of site	Noncontributing
Crape myrtles, southern edge of site	Noncontributing
Small Planting Beds, lined with river red interlocking concrete edgers	Noncontributing



Figure 56 Kudzu Vine, on FotR Bridge parcel (STA 2019).



Figure 57 View looking south toward Leyland cypress Hedge (STA 2020).



*Figure 58* View looking east toward two small crape myrtles, at the eastern edge of site, north of Leyland cypress hedge (STA 2019).



*Figure 59* View looking north toward crape myrtles, northern edge of site. From left, one small tree, two mature trees, and one small tree on right (STA 2020).



Figure 60 View looking southwest of crape myrtles, southern edge of site (STA 2020).



Figure 61 View of Small Planting Beds, lined with river red interlocking concrete edging (STA 2019).

### ***Buildings and Structures***

There were historically three buildings that comprised the FotR market site—the James building, the building owned by Isaac Franklin across Liberty Road, and the Elam building across Washington Road. The archeology report, written by Panamerican Consultants (PCI) states

The historical record demonstrates that this was the location of the James brothers slave market. The 1856 map of Saint Catherine Street clearly shows the other two structures that were actively involved in the domestic slave trade, literally only a stone's throw away. A structure just across Liberty Road was property owned by Isaac Franklin and later John O'Ferrall. Immediately north of Washington Road was an establishment run by Robert Elam. It is PCI's belief that the sites of all three structures are eligible for inclusion in the NRHP under Criterion A.

These are all shown on the 1856 map of the site (**Figure 25**). There is also a cistern shown on this map near the James building, which was excavated by the archeology team in 2007. There was a bar/grocery store that was present in the northwest corner of the site. It was demolished between 2003 and 2004 (**Figures 43 and 53**).

The O'Ferrall Residence (**Figure 62**) is currently undergoing a DOE, as it is thought that the site is potentially eligible under Criterion B based on possible connection to John O'Ferrall, a known trader. This circa 1870 Greek Revival style residence, which is located at 217 O'Ferrall Avenue, post-dates the period of significance for the FotR site, although it is thought to be an undisturbed nineteenth-century landscape.<sup>214</sup> The final structure is the FotR Bridge over Spanish Bayou (**Figure 63**). A Historic Structure Report (HSR) was completed for the Forks of the Road Bridge in 2019 by PCI.<sup>215</sup> The brick masonry bridge was constructed in 1888, which postdates the period of significance for the FotR site. With that said, the bridge has been recommended for listing on the National Register as it is locally significant.<sup>216</sup>

### ***Landscape Features***

James Brothers Slave Market Building (Market 1)	Noncontributing
Plastered Concrete Cistern, with brick domed top	Contributing
Isaac Franklin Building and later O'Ferrall Building (Market 2)	Noncontributing
Elam Building, north of Market 1	Noncontributing
Bar/Grocery Store, demolished post 2003	Noncontributing
O'Ferrall Residence, 217 O'Ferrall Street, Pending DOE	Unknown
FotR Bridge over Spanish Bayou	Contributing

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<sup>214</sup> Barry White, "Re: 217 O'Ferrall St., Natchez, Adams County," Correspondence with Jeff Mansell, MDAH, July 29, 2020.

<sup>215</sup> Panamerican Consultants, Inc., Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., WFT Architects, PA. "Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report," Natchez National Historical Park. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020, 51-53, 79-83.

<sup>216</sup> Panamerican Consultants, Inc., Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., WFT Architects, PA. "Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report," Natchez National Historical Park. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020, 2-4



*Figure 62* View of the O'Ferrall Residence, which was once the site of the Elam Stand. The O'Ferrall Residence is labeled on the 1886, 1892, and 1897 Sanborn maps, and it is present on all consecutive Sanborn maps (NATC 2020).



*Figure 63* View looking south towards the FotR Bridge over Spanish bayou (HSR 30).

### **Land Use**

There are several twentieth-century developments within the FotR legislative boundary, including the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses church, two low-income apartment complexes or subsidized housing developments, a mental health facility, a radio station, and several other auto-oriented businesses including a muffler shop and a window tinting shop. This area used to house many more residences, grocery stores, bars, and businesses such as the O'Ferrall Cotton Gin, feed stores, barbers.

Land use is defined as the principle activities in the landscape that have formed, shaped, or organized the landscape as a result of human interaction. The current land use on the FotR market site is culture and recreation. The market site is a small greenspace with informational signage and a small sculpture (**Figure 64**). Historically, the site was used as a market and camp site for enslaved people. There is very little left of the land use during the period of significance.

### **Landscape Features**

Greenspace

Noncontributing



Figure 64 FotR Market 1 site looking south with view of Leyland cypress hedge and kiosk in background (STA 2019).



*Figure 65* FotR Market 1 site looking north towards Devereux Drive/US Highway 61 and Old Washington Road, with wayside signage and planting bed in foreground, and crape myrtles in background on left (STA 2019).

### **Small-Scale Features**

Small-Scale Features are the elements which provide detail and diversity for both functional needs and aesthetic concerns in the landscape. The most prominent small-scale features are the signage, which includes signs and markers, a kiosk, and waysides (**Figures 65 – 70**). Currently, there are no above-ground resources on site that date to the period of significance. Interpretation is key to telling the story of what happened here—without it, this park’s significance is less legible. The current signage is listed as noncontributing but compatible; this signage can be replaced when treatment is considered. The MDAH 1998 historic marker is on the FotR site, located across Liberty Road on St. Catherine Street. There is also signage that was installed by the Historic Natchez Foundation, which is located along St. Catherine Street.

There is a small outdoor sculpture (**Figure 71**) on site where many visitors leave flowers and tokens. The sculpture consists of shackles and chains in concrete, created by Cavett Taff and Jules Babineaux in 2004. Other features include several small concrete pads leading to the outdoor sculpture, a right-of-way concrete post, a concrete bench, and pull-off parking (**Figures 72 – 75**).

*Landscape Features*

Signage

Historic Natchez Foundation “Forks of the Road Historical Site” sign	Noncontributing (compatible)
“Forks of the Road” MDAH 1998 historic marker	Noncontributing (compatible)
Wayside exhibits and kiosk	Noncontributing (compatible)
Historic Natchez Foundation “St. Catherine Street Trails” panels	Noncontributing (compatible)
Friends of Forks of the Road Society wayside panels	Noncontributing (compatible)
Outdoor Sculpture, with shackles and chains in concrete	Noncontributing (compatible)
Concrete pads	Noncontributing
Right-of-Way concrete post	Noncontributing (compatible)
Concrete Bench	Noncontributing
Pull-off Parking Area	Noncontributing
Asphalt sidewalk	Noncontributing



Figure 66 1998 “Forks of the Road” MDAH historic marker, with Devereux Drive/US Highway 61 on left, site and Leyland cypress hedge visible at horizon line behind vehicles (STA 2019).



Figure 67 View looking south toward Historic Natchez “Forks of the Road Historical Site” sign (STA 2019).



Figure 68 View of Wayside exhibits and kiosk with concrete base looking south, monument in center of signage (STA 2019).



Figure 69 Image of a Historic Natchez Foundation “St. Catherine Street Trails” panel on the corner of St. Catherine Street and Liberty Road. Market 1 site is visible in background as are waysides and kiosk (Google Streetview June 2016).

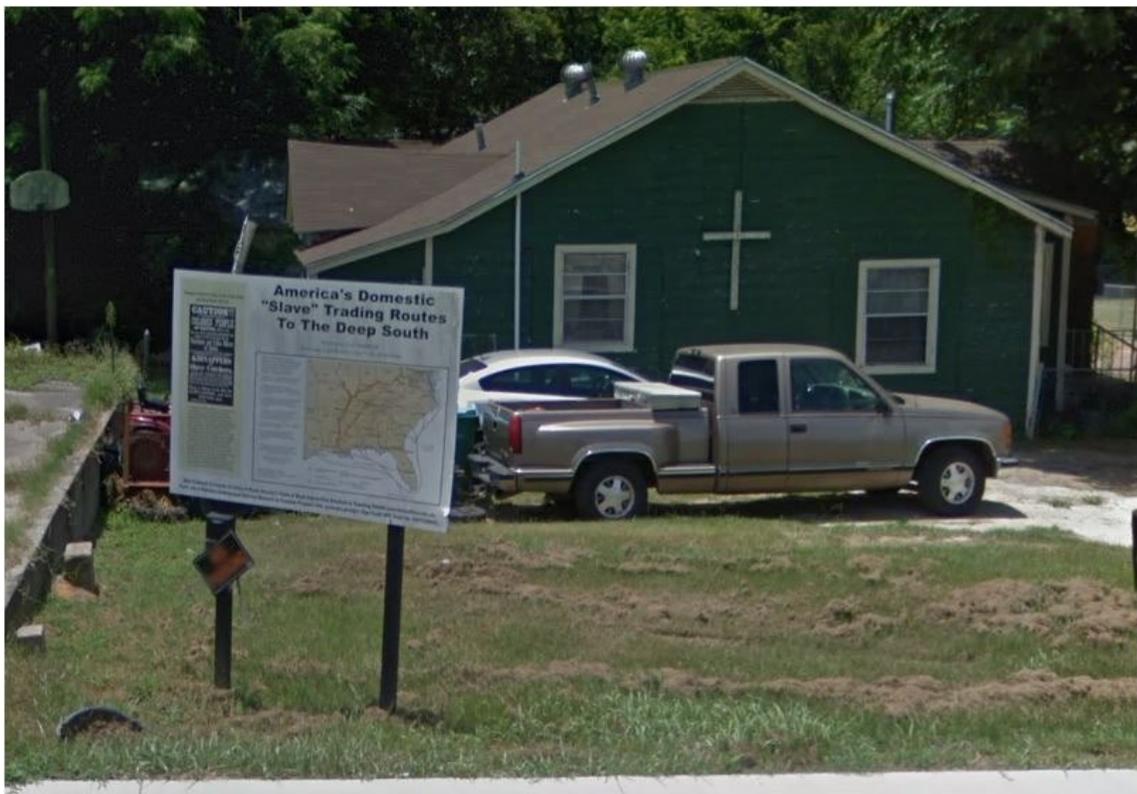


Figure 70 Friends of Forks of the Road Society sign in front of a church on St. Catherine Street near Junkin Street (Google Streetview June 2016).



Figure 71 Forks of the Road Outdoor sculpture with shackles and chains in concrete (STA 2019).



Figure 72 View looking south toward US Highway 61 at Concrete pads leading to Forks of the Road Outdoor sculpture with shackles and chains in concrete (STA 2019).



Figure 73 Right-of-Way concrete post on northwestern edge of property, with pull-off parking in background (STA 2019).



Figure 74 Concrete bench on north side of property, Leyland cypress hedge in background (STA 2019).



*Figure 75* View looking north toward St. Catherine Street/Devereux Drive with Pull-off parking on left and exhibits at center, and asphalt sidewalk in foreground (STA 2020).

## Section 8: Condition Assessment

### *Stabilization*

The brick bridge over Spanish Bayou needs to be stabilized as parts are deteriorated. A Historic Structure Report (HSR) was completed for the FotR of the Road Bridge in 2019 by Panamerican Consultants for the NPS. Based on this HSR, the treatment recommendation for the circa 1888 bridge is preservation, including stabilization and repair of the masonry structure. This report includes detailed architectural drawings of the bridge, with notations of where the bridge is damaged or in need of stabilization.<sup>217</sup>

### **Condition Assessment**

**Condition Assessment:** Poor  
**Condition Assessment Date:** 11-04-2020

### **Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:**

The current condition of the Forks of the Road market site is poor. Few above-ground resources from the antebellum period remain within the 18.7 acre legislative boundary. Views out from the site include modern construction, including an auto shop, the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses church, and a divided highway. The antebellum structures were torn down during the Civil War, and since then, the FotR site has been home to residences, a grocery store, and a bar, among other things. When Highway 61 was further divided after 1966, there was likely major disturbance of the site, and archaeological resources were likely damaged during this construction. When looking at the location of the historic Washington Roadbed, it comes in flush with current westbound intersection of Liberty Road, St. Catherine Street/Devereux Drive. Therefore, the "Y" intersection is in much the same place as earlier, with the caveat that St. Catherine Street/Devereux Drive was widened and graded lower.

Currently, the site is covered in lawn with a smattering of small crape myrtle trees and a Leyland cypress hedge. Wayside signage lines the western edge of the site, and there is a kiosk with more exhibits, and a small outdoor sculpture of shackles in concrete. For the level of significance that the site holds for the collective history of the country, what is currently on site is not demonstrative of this level of importance.

The adjacent bridge site has some landscape features that are critical in telling the story of the people who passed through the Forks of the Road site, although it too is in poor condition with overgrown vegetation, encroachment of views of the neighboring housing development, and a bridge that is in disrepair. To bring the condition of this site from poor to fair would require acquisition of neighboring properties and major screening of modern developments.

Any intervention on site must help the visitor understand what it would have been like to have been an enslaved person journeying from a plantation in the Upper South, then to endure the dehumanizing scrutiny of potential buyers while awaiting acquisition by a new enslaver, only to further experience the realities of brutal slavery in the Deep South. Intervention on the site must also help the visitor understand the lasting impacts of the transactions that occurred on the site, at a broad scale. This would include the contributions hundreds of thousands of enslaved people made to the cotton economy of the South, and it would include a celebration of the material culture of song-storytelling, lamentation, and documentation that emerged as a result of human beings forced to march along a difficult and dehumanizing journey as part of coffles. In addition, the site needs to be addressed holistically as a part of NATC, and connections must be made to

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<sup>217</sup> Panamerican Consultants, Inc., Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., WFT Architects, PA. "Forks of the Road Bridge Historic Structure Report," Natchez National Historical Park. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Atlanta: Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region, 2020, 51-53, 79-83.

existing resources such as Melrose, the William Johnson House, and the FotR Bridge.

### **Impacts to Inventory Unit**

An impact is defined as a detectable result of an agent or series of agents having a negative effect on the significance, characteristics of the integrity of the resource, and for which some form of mitigation or preventative action is possible.

**Impact Type:** Adjacent lands

**Internal or External:** External of FotR market site (Internal: within legislative boundary)

**Impact Narrative:**

Development has occurred all around the Forks of the Road site, and in many places within the legislative boundaries, that detracts from the integrity and impacts the inventory unit. Namely, there are two areas of low-income and subsidized housing development within view of the FotR site, as well as an auto shop across the street. The divided highway that passes on the north and south borders of the site also has a negative impact.

**Impact Type:** Neglect & Deterioration & Vegetation/Invasive Plants

**Internal or External:** External of FotR market site (Internal: within legislative boundary)

**Impact Narrative:**

The property where the Forks of the Road Bridge is located is impacted by neglect and deterioration. The property is overgrown with invasive plants and the bridge is in need of stabilization. The parcel has been recently acquired and is the subject of a recent Historic Structure Report.

**Impact Type:** Removal/Replacement

**Internal or External:** Internal at FotR market site (Internal: within legislative boundary)

**Impact Narrative:**

Since the 1860s the buildings and structures on site that would be contributing features have been removed and replaced with modern-day construction. To date, the markets or stands no longer exist. The hospital and stores that were present during the period of significance, and are located within the current legislative park boundary, are also missing.

## Section 9: Bibliography and Supplemental Information

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