

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Aillet House
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 845 North Jefferson Avenue N/A not for publication
city, town Port Allen N/A vicinity
state Louisiana code LA county West Baton Rouge code 121 zip code 70767

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Louisiana's French Creole Architecture
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
LP Tassin
Signature of certifying official Leslie P. Tassin, LA SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism Date July 2, 1991
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:) _____
Entered in the National Register
Michelle Byers 8/9/91
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Museum**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: French CreoleFederal

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brickwalls weatherboardroof metal

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Aillet House (c. 1830) is a one-and-one-half story frame Creole residence which also contains elements of the Federal style. It is located on the grounds of the West Baton Rouge Museum in Port Allen in West Baton Rouge Parish. The house was moved to this site in 1990 from elsewhere within the parish in order to save it from demolition. The original site was just north of Brusly about five miles away. Due to its recent exterior restoration, the home is in excellent condition. Its integrity and rarity make it a strong National Register candidate despite the move.

Creole features found within the Aillet House include the following:

- 1) a heavy pegged timber frame with bousillage infill,
- 2) a Class III umbrella roof with gabled ends (see attached figure),
- 3) a floorplan featuring a full length front gallery, two equal sized front rooms, two cabinets of unequal size, and a hallway between the cabinets. Architectural evidence suggests that this hall (situated in the space where an open loggia was usually located) was enclosed from the beginning.
- 4) exposed beaded ceiling beams on the gallery and in the two cabinets,
- 5) three sets of interior French doors featuring ten lights per leaf,
- 6) unusual single leaf French doors in the attic gables,
- 7) turned colonettes,
- 8) original gallery curtain hooks which reflect the Creole custom of using the gallery as living and sleeping space, and
- 9) original twin wraparound cypress mantels with paneled sides in the home's front rooms.

The mantels also reflect the home's Federal decorative motif and are vernacular adaptations of the style. They feature plain engaged pilasters with tapered bases and corbelled mantel shelves. Built of planks stacked one atop the other, these shelves mimic the more sophisticated examples usually created by

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combining several molding profiles. Other Federal elements found in the home include three rectangular transoms subdivided into geometric shapes by delicate muntins, wide molded and beaded baseboards, a molded and stepped cornice, and delicately molded door and window facings.

In addition to its Creole and Federal styling, the Aillet House contains other important features. These include twelve over eight windows (many displaying their original wrought iron hardware and antique glass panes), batten shutters with original wrought iron hinges on the facade, an unusual side door and interior staircase, and the remains of the original blue paint pigment on the interior.

Most of the changes to the home occurred at the time of the 1990 - 1991 move and restoration. These were as follows:

- 1) The brick hearths, chimney breasts, chimneys, and foundation piers were rebuilt.
- 2) The tin roof was replaced.
- 3) The weatherboarding was badly deteriorated and had to be replicated.
- 4) Several gallery colonettes were patched.
- 5) The severely damaged attic gable doors were replicated.

Changes which occurred while the house was still occupied as a residence include the removal of the gallery balustrade (date unknown) and the replacement of the facade's original French doors with double leaf screen doors in the 1920s.

Assessment of Integrity

The present site of the Aillet House is not that much different from its original location. It formerly stood facing the Mississippi River on a semi-wooded River Road plot. Because of the encroachment of development, another residence stood close to the building on its north side. The house now stands on the grounds of the West Baton Rouge Museum, which occupies a large wooded lot in the old residential section of the small community of Port Allen. To the north of the Aillet House is the main museum building and to the rear is a moved-in cabin. The present park-like setting is reminiscent of the house's former rural environment. It still faces the Mississippi River and stands within sight of the levee in the same parish in which it was built. Because its former site has been purchased for development, the home would have been destroyed had its move not been accomplished.

CONTINUED

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Even standing in a new location, the Aillet House is a prime National Register candidate due to its rarity and integrity. In addition to its status as an example of a small Creole plantation house, the Aillet House contains five features which are themselves unusual within the Creole context. These include the single leaf attic gable doors, the interior French doors, the unusual side door, the interior staircase, and the enclosed hallway filling the loggia space. Because it was changed very little before 1990 and then underwent a careful exterior restoration, the integrity of the Aillet House also remains intact. In fact, the facade's missing French doors are the home's only serious loss. However, these doors were found in the attic shortly before the move and are available for future re-installation. The re-built masonry features use original brick whenever possible. In addition, the as yet unrestored interior retains all of its 1830s Federal features. For all of these reasons, the Aillet House deserves serious consideration for National Register listing.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
architecture

Period of Significance
c.1830

Significant Dates
c.1830

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Aillet House is locally significant in the area of architecture within West Baton Rouge Parish. Its significance is based upon its status as a rare intact example of a small Creole plantation house as well as upon its rare Federal decorative elements.

As part of the area originally settled by the French during Louisiana's colonial period, West Baton Rouge Parish must have once been dominated by small Creole plantation homes such as the Aillet House. Because the parish survey has only just begun, it is impossible to accurately estimate the number of these homes which remain. However, a review of the parish's only published history suggests that only a small number of Creole houses survive. Additionally, a review of the few surveys completed to date suggests that most of the surviving Creole structures are in a deteriorated condition or have been altered to the extent that their integrity has been compromised. For example, the Creole house at Catherine Plantation has been Victorianized by the addition of an inappropriate balustrade and a set of pointed Gothic-like arches spanning the five bays of its gallery. Homestead, another Creole survivor, is in fact only the upper floor of the original two story, fully raised Creole home. In contrast to these altered structures, the Aillet House stands as a rare example with its integrity largely intact.

The limited published sources and survey information for West Baton Rouge Parish also suggest that the Federal styling of the Aillet Home's transoms and interior woodwork is both rare and, perhaps, the finest example in the parish. In addition, the gallery's Creole turned colonettes are elaborately made. Available evidence indicates that most of the surviving homes from the 1830s were smaller than the Aillet House and would not have incorporated such relatively fine detail.

Historical Note

The building now known as the Aillet House was built by J. Dorville Landry c. 1830 for his bride. Landry was a successful planter who lived in the house

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Historic Structures Survey of West Baton Rouge Parish, LA (partially completed).

Historical sketch submitted by West Baton Rouge Museum, Thomas L. Bernard, Researcher, based largely on primary sources such as conveyance records. Copy in National Register file.

- Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

- Primary location of additional data:
- State historic preservation office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property less than an acre

UTM References

A

1	5
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6	7	2	2	4	0
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3	3	7	0	9	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Please see attached sketch map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries cut close to the building because it has been moved to this location and there is no historic setting to recognize. To have followed the property lines of the West Baton Rouge Museum, where the Aillet House is now located, would have meant including two non-contributing elements.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date May 1991

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone 504-342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state Louisiana zip code 70804

Owner: West Baton Rouge Museum
845 Jefferson
Port Allen, LA 70767

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until his death in 1864. The house passed to two other owners before being purchased by Anatole Aillet in 1880. It remained in the hands of his descendants until 1990. In that year the property was purchased by the Louisiana Division of the Dow Chemical Company, which planned to develop the site. Dow donated the house to the West Baton Rouge Historical Association for display at the West Baton Rouge Museum in Port Allen. The company also donated funds to move the home to its new location and complete an exterior restoration.

Aillet House
Port Allen, West Baton Rouge Parish,
Louisiana

Scale: 1" = 20'
Boundary: - - - -

North →

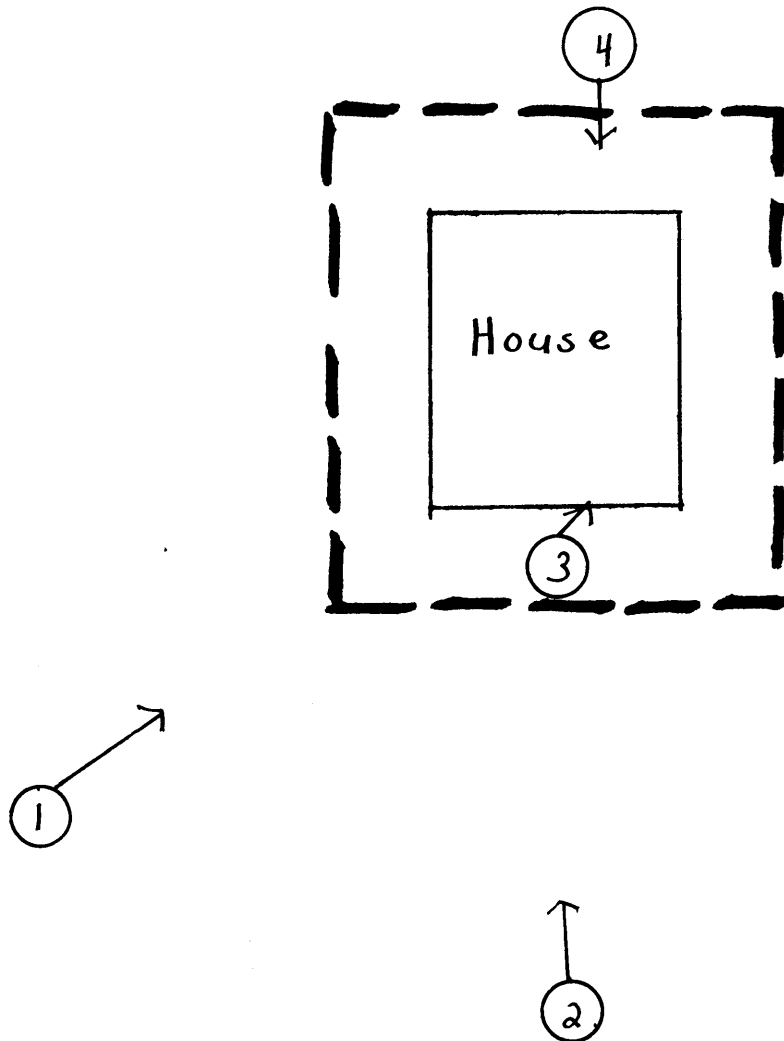
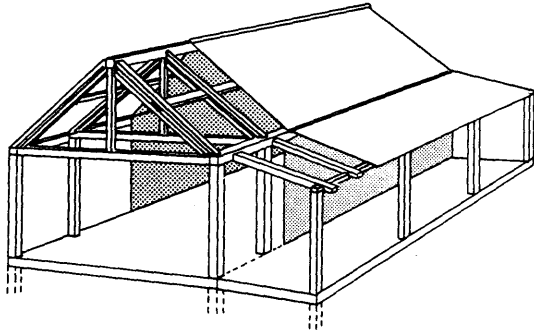


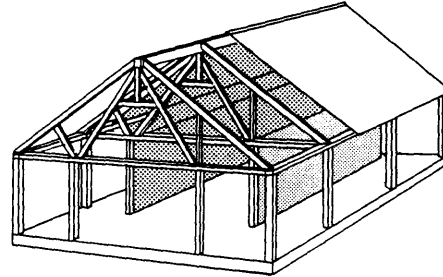
FIGURE 5

SOME CLASSES OF CREOLE VERNACULAR HOUSES



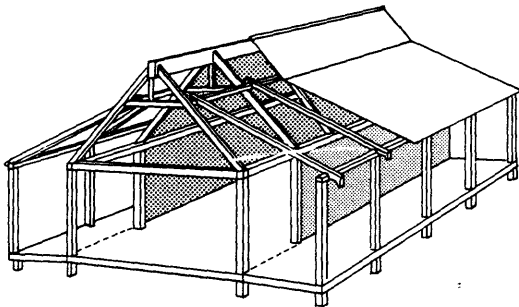
CLASS I

Single-pitch roof. Truss system includes the use of a king post and a double rafter system. Rafters set on wall plate. Inner rafters (truss blades) set on tie beam. Gallery optional. If present, gallery rafters tied into wall plate or front wall, and supported by an outer gallery plate, which is itself supported by light weight colonnettes.



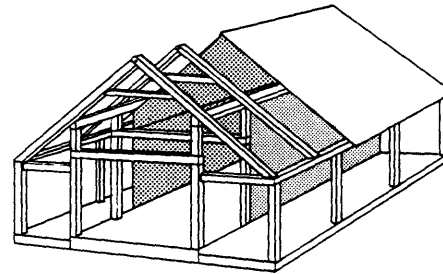
CLASS IIIa

Full (single-pitch) umbrella roof. Truss blades (principal rafters) mounted on wall plates. Long outer rafters mounted on outer gallery wall plates and let into or notched over the roof ridge. These rafters supported in their middles by posts (right side) or braces (left side), or by purlins supported by these.



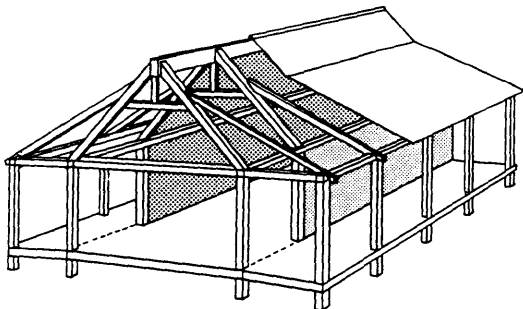
CLASS IIa

Mississippi Valley French Colonial broken-pitch roof (early form). Gallery always present. Gallery rafters notched over principal purlin and supported on outer gallery plate.



CLASS IIIb

Full (single-pitch) umbrella roof (later form). Truss blades now absent. Outer rafters supported in their middles by posts or by post-supported purlins. Roof ridge generally not present.



CLASS IIb

Mississippi Valley French Colonial broken-pitch roof (later form). Principal rafters (single or doubled) set on wall plate. Gallery rafters let into backs of principal rafters and supported on outer gallery plates.