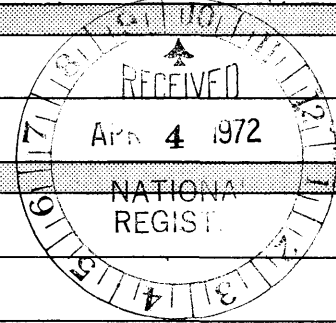


**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
COUNTY:
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER: **MAY 5 1972** DATE:



1. NAME

COMMON: **The Historic New Orleans Collection
The Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation**
AND/OR HISTORIC: *** Merieult House**

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: **533 Royal Street**
CITY OR TOWN: **New Orleans**
STATE: **Louisiana** CODE: **22** COUNTY: **Orleans Parish** CODE: **071**

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC | |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress | Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Comments | |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: **The Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation**
STREET AND NUMBER: **National Bank of Commerce 210 Baronne Street**
CITY OR TOWN: **New Orleans** STATE: **Louisiana** CODE: **1690**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: **Conveyance Office of Orleans Parish; Civil District Court Bldg.**
STREET AND NUMBER: **421 Loyola Avenue**
CITY OR TOWN: **New Orleans** STATE: **Louisiana** CODE: **1690**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: **SEE: Attached sheet**
DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

MAY 5 1972

12-19-72

Handwritten initials

7. DESCRIPTION

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
| | (Check One) | | | (Check One) | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Merieult House is a fine example of the type of house being erected in New Orleans during the period following the devastating fires of 1788 and 1794.

It is a two story structure of brick construction, with a moderately pitched roof with its ridge parallel to the front of the house. The roof, now slate, was originally covered with tiles. The facade, built flush with the property line, extends the full width of the lot--one of the original city lots of 60 by 120 French feet.

A boldly molded cement-plaster cornice extends across the entire facade at the eaves, broken at each end to form a sort of capital to the plain plastered pilasters at each end of the second story.

A series of seven similar and equally spaced triple hung windows, with louvred shutters, extends across the second floor front, all opening onto a handsome cast iron balcony of an unusual geometric design. The wrought iron supporting stanchions are topped by polished brass balls and divide the railing into about ten panels. The full length windows are enframed by broad flat stucco bands, the remainder of the brick wall being covered with a smooth cement stucco, scored to represent stone jointing. The triple hung wood sash and louvred blinds of the second story, as well as the balcony railing, are probably part of the extensive remodelling that took place in the 1830's. The original openings in 1792 would undoubtedly have been fitted with double casement doors with a wood panel in the lower part of each leaf and small, glazed lights above.

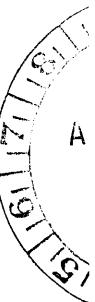
The ground floor facade is also a part of the 1830's renovation, and consists of a series of monolithic square granite pilasters with molded granite capitals that are typical of the period. These support a broad flat granite lintel crowned by a simple bold granite Greek Revival torus molding. Above this extend the wrought iron supports for the balcony. The doors and show windows, set between the granite pilasters, are conjectural restorations of the 1830's shop fronts, designed by Richard Koch, architect, for the present owner in 1938.

In the rear of the house is an extensive courtyard, formerly entered by a carriage way, but now by a pedestrian way in which a stairway to the second story has been erected. The rear facade of the principal house is almost obscured by the two and three story service wings that flank the courtyard.

The original plan of the main house was apparently L shaped, and the half gable end of the ell can be seen above the balcony of the rear facade. An original dormer window, with a steeply pitched roof and batten shutter is original. The open space between the front part of the house and the ell was covered with a flat roof, and additional rooms, with fine Greek Revival detail, were added in this area in the 1830's.

The two story wing on the upper side of the courtyard behind the original ell, has an extremely high first story with three long arched doors, glazed fanlight transoms and massive panelled shutters. The great room inside,

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) Erected in 1792

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This building is significant for the following reasons:

1. It was built in 1792, during the Spanish Colonial period in New Orleans.
2. It is the only surviving building in the area of a destructive fire that razed the upper part of the little City of New Orleans from Orleans Street to Canal Street in 1794.
3. It is one of the seven oldest buildings in the city: Ursuline Convent, 1745-50; Mne John's Legacy, 1788; Lafitte Blacksmith Shop, post 1781; Ossorno House, 1784; St. Louis Cathedral, 1789-94; Cavelier House, 1789; Merieult House, 1792.
4. Merieult House is an important example of a combined business establishment and dwelling in colonial New Orleans. It was customary here for the commercial or professional operation to be on the ground floor with the family residence above. In Merieult's inventory the ground floor was described as having "six Magasins." From here Merieult conducted his far-flung shipping enterprises.

Jean Francois Merieult was a merchant prince of his day who operated a fleet of ships between Le Havre, London, the West Coast of Africa, St. Domingue, Havana and New Orleans. Around 1788 he settled here as a commission merchant, making New Orleans his headquarters and home for the rest of his life.

It was the commission merchants who financed the plantation system of the deep south, advancing money on crops, buying abroad for their clients on this credit. They were, in effect, private bankers; for there was no bank in New Orleans until Territorial times, when Governor Claiborne established the Bank of Louisiana and the Federal Government built a branch of the Bank of the United States to stabilize the uncertain economy.

Merieult House has served as a commission establishment until after 1857, and as such played a significant role in the local economy. After Merieult's death two of his business associates occupied the property. Then it was sold in 1832 to Lizarda Hermanos, Cuban commission merchants with offices in Havana, Mexico City, Paris and London.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Wilson, Samuel, Jr.: "A Guide to the Architecture of New Orleans, 1699-1959"
 "The Vieux Carre, New Orleans: Its Plan, Its Growth, Its Architecture"
 Curtis, Nathaniel C.: "New Orleans, Its Old Houses, Shops & Public Buildings"
 Arthur, Stanley: "Old New Orleans"
 Federal Writers Project: "New Orleans City Guide"
 Lynn, Stewart: "New Orleans"
 "Catalogue Historic American Building Survey, Supplement"
 Ricutti, Italo William: "New Orleans and Its Environs; The Domestic Architecture, 1727-1870"

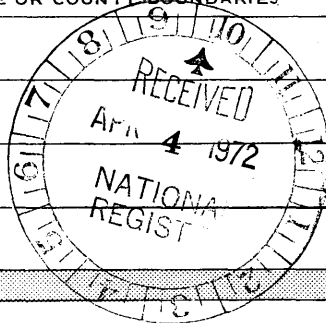
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | OR | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|----|---|-----------|---------|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | |
| | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds |
| NW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | 29 | 57 | 26 |
| NE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | 90 | 3 | 57 |
| SE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Approximately one-half acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Edith E. Long, Archivist

ORGANIZATION: The Historic New Orleans Collection DATE: Feb. 16, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: 533 Royal Street

CITY OR TOWN: New Orleans STATE: Louisiana CODE: 1690

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name George W. Peake

Title 1 March, 1972

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert M. Utley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 5/5/72

ATTEST: William H. ...
 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

15/922 ...

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

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| STATE | |
| COUNTY | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| | MAY 5 1972 |

(Number all entries)

6. Representation in Existing Surveys Continued:

Title of Survey:

- (1) Catalogue of Historic American Building Survey (Supplement)
- (2) Vieux Carre Survey
- (3) "Historic District Demonstration Study: Plan and Program for the Vieux Carre"

Dates of Surveys:

- (1) 1941
- (2) 1966
- (3) 1968

Depository for Survey Records:

- (1) Library of Congress
- (2) Howard Tilton Memorial Library
The Historic New Orleans Collection
Vieux Carre Commission
- (3) Bureau of Governmental Research

Street and Number:

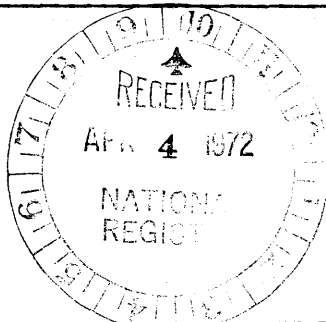
- (1) -----
- (2) Tulane University
533 Royal Street
630 Chartres Street
- (3) Richards Building, 837 Gravier Street

City or Town:

State:

Code:

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-------|
| (1) Washington | D.C. | 20540 |
| (2) New Orleans | Louisiana | 70118 |
| New Orleans | Louisiana | 70130 |
| New Orleans | Louisiana | 70130 |
| (3) New Orleans | Louisiana | 70112 |



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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| MAY 5 | 1972 |

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Merieult House, Physical Appearance Continued:

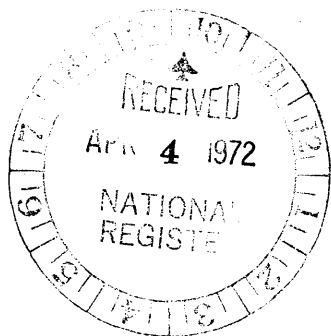
with its handsome Greek Revival detail of pilasters, Ionic columns and plaster ceiling rosette or center flower, is in the process of restoration. The second floor rooms, with louvre-shuttered casement doors, also have some interesting Greek Revival detail. On this wing the second floor wood balcony, which continues across the rear of the main house at a lower level, has turned wood columns and simple wooden balustrades of the 1830's type.

The three story wing on the opposite side of the courtyard has wood balconies with Greek Revival type rectangular posts with molded wooden caps of the 1840's or 50's style. Parts of the walls of these service wings probably date from a much earlier period.

The main house has been extensively remodelled on the interior with elegant detail on the second floor, including door and window trim and marble mantels of the 1830's Greek Revival type. Some detail, however, remains from the original 1790's period, including doors and cornices.

Across the front are three large nearly square rooms, each with its fireplace and mantel. A cross hall, with a stairway to the attic at one end, lies behind these three front rooms, and other large rooms and the stair hall extend beyond it in the former ell wing and the open courtyard area that was once in front of it.

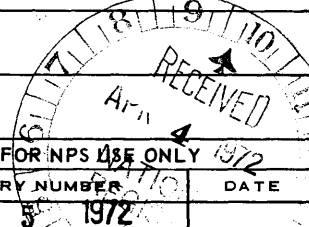
The entire upper story has been remodelled recently as exhibition galleries for The Historic New Orleans Collection, with modern heating, air conditioning, lighting, etc.; but the original features of this important house have been carefully preserved and restored.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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| STATE | |
| COUNTY | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY 1972 | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| MAY 5 | 1972 |



(Number all entries)

Statement of Significance Continued:

With this purchase they established Merieult House as their New Orleans headquarters.

At this time an old terrace-roofed warehouse in the courtyard was given a new front and a second story. Fine Greek Revival interior detail was installed in some second story rooms and the great ground floor chamber, which seemingly became the "counting house." From this elegant private bank the Lizardis operated their shipping interests, invested in railroads, managed their extensive real estate, and continued to finance the plantation economy.

In 1857, at the death of the senior partner, the Lizardi firm sold this property, and its life as a significant commercial enterprise ended.

5. Merieult House is now the repository of a great collection of paintings, prints, maps, books, documents, ephemera and artifacts concerned with Louisiana and New Orleans. As a necessary adjunct to the pictorial collection a large and important compilation of biographical and critical material on Louisiana artists, both native and transient, has been assembled through many years of unremitting research. This unique collection has proven to be of value to scholars and fellow art institutions throughout the state as an important reference resource.

In its recent adaptation to museum purposes, the original rooms have been made into eleven galleries for the public display of this collection. These exhibitions are to be changed periodically throughout the year. In this adaptation the original nature of these late 18th century rooms, updated with early Greek Revival detail, has not been altered.

The second story of the counting house is presently serving as curatorial quarters and a library--which is not yet open to the public. It is planned that the great ground floor room of the counting house will become the study center, when the library is ready to be opened to scholars in 1972.

6. During recent restoration, walls were opened and extremely important information was gleaned on late colonial building techniques in New Orleans. A set of interesting documentary photographs was taken of all these finds.
7. It was discovered, when the walls of the counting house were exposed, that the thrifty Merieult House masons had bonded their Spanish brick onto existing portions of an older French brick wall--probably belonging to the previous house on this site, erected in 1757 and destroyed by fire.

In these walls were French arches topped by Spanish-style arches of later vintage. Long narrow apertures, in the lower portion of the walls, contained wrought iron "thistle" inserts through which the rooms "breathed."

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

(Continuation Sheet)

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|----------------------------|------|
| STATE | |
| COUNTY | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER MAY 5 1972 | DATE |

(Number all entries)

Statement of Significance Continued:

Here, too, were old bricks coated with a burnt-looking glaze, indicating the fierce heat of a great conflagration--the only such artifacts remaining as physical evidence of the early destructive fires that twice destroyed the colonial city.

8. A collection of artifacts was acquired as the restoration progressed: old iron hardware, shards of old plaster moldings and cornices, layers of late 18th and early 19th century French wall paper and borders, narrow French chimney breasts topped with delicate wooden moldings, encased in broad-bosomed Victorian overmantels, etc. All these details were carefully documented as to site and use, anticipating an exhibition on the architecture and archeology of the site.
9. Merieult House is architecturally true to type, being an excellent example of a Creole town house of both the period in which it was built and the date of its early Greek Revival alteration.
10. Merieult House has been restored in scrupulous detail by the leading scholarly restoration architectural firm in this area: Richard Koch and Samuel Wilson, Jr.

