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

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	sville Historic Distri	ct			
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same					
2 LOCATION	V				
STREET & NUMBER					
Royal and I	Prosperity streets		NOT FOR PUBLICATION		
CITY, TOWN			CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT		
St. Francis	sville	_ VICINITY OF	8th - Gillis Lo	ng	
STATE		CODE	COUNTY	CODE	
Louisiana	 	022	West Feliciana	125	
3 CLASSIFIC	CATION				
CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE		
DISTRICT	X PUBLIC	X_OCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM	
X_BUILDING(S)	X.PRIVATE	X_UNOCCUPIED	X COMMERCIAL	PARK	
STRUCTURE	вотн	WORK IN PROGRESS	X EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDENCE	
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	**	
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	X_YES: RESTRICTED	X GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC	
	BEING CONSIDERED	X_YES: UNRESTRICTED	INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATION	
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CITY, TOWN			STATE		
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6 REPRESEN	NTATION IN EXIST	ING SURVEYS			
TÎTLE					
	Louisiana Historic Si	tes Survey			
DATE	1979	FEDERAL	XSTATECOUNTYLOCAL		
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS	Stat 5/ ic Preser	vation Office			
CITY, TOWN	Bat		STATE Louisiana		



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★ORIGINAL SITE

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The St. Francisville Historic District comprises two principal streets (Royal and Prosperity) which provide a high concentration of buildings which date from the early nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. The old river town is set on a high plateau of slightly undulating ground near the Mississippi River. Boundaries reflect the historic district ordinance passed by the St. Francisville town council. Buildings are predominantly frame, one and a half stories high, with late nineteenth century details. Intrusions are few and of no visual consequence. The buildings are relatively closely spaced, and as a result, many can be taken in in one view. This effect is heightened at the curving ends of Royal St., and at the intersection of Royal and Prosperity. This provides a closely packed, village-like streetscape in which the buildings shape the space. The district derives most of its character from this drawing together of essentially humble buildings rather than the ambiance of individual monuments.

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INVENTORY

- I. Buildings of major significance to the district (numbers correspond to those on attached map):
 - 1. Grace Episcopal Church 1860, 5-bay, red brick building with small tower at west end of transept, buttresses, lancets, fine stained-glass windows.
 - 2. Courthouse 1905, attenuated Georgian Revival, composite quadrastiple portico on each facade, central Baroque dormer; wing added 1963 through west portico.
 - 5. Camilla Leake Barrow House ca. 1810, 3-bay, 2-story clapboard; large Greek Revival one-story galleried addition.
 - 14. Hill Croft 1905, grand Colonial Revival clapboard residence, ballustrades, urns, central portico, 2-story, hip roof.
 - 15. Brooks-Mathews House ca. 1890, bousillage raised cottage, 5-bay, Victorian massive dormer in center. Gazebo on west side.
 - 16. Martin House Late 19th century, frame cottage; Renaissance Revival door and window frames; Eastlake porch.
 - 19. Propinquity ca. 1809, 2-story, 4-bay, gable parapets, Classical details on entrance side.
 - 23. Bank of Commerce & Trust 1909, brick Romanesque Revival with curved stone corner columns articulating corner entrance.
 - 28. Virginia 1817, 2 stories, 3-bay main block and galleried side wing, balconies with castiron railings.
 - 31. Methodist Church 1899, clapboard tower, fronted Gothic, Queen Anne shingles in gable, high quality catalog arched stained glass.
 - 34. Audubon Hall 1819, two-story, gable-fronted structure, diminuitive portico doors since replaced, recovered in clapboard mid-19th century.
 - 39. Seabrook early 19th century, 5-bays, 4 columns; galleried raised cottage, Federal front door featuring panels and sun-bursts.

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- 43. Wade-Dawson House late 19th century, 1½ stories, clapboard Queen Anne residence; massive balcony dormer, curving porch, elaborate Eastlake columns and detailing.
- 44. Savoy House late 19th century, Queen Anne clapboard, "L" plan with good porch, double columns, fanforms and seim-octagonal alcove for the front door.
- 48. Kilbourne and Dart Law Office 1842, Greek Revival with unusually thin columns and front portico; gable incraibing pediment.
- II. Buildings contributing the the character of the district:
 - 3. Registrar's Office ca. 1920, clapboard frame shotgun moved onto site.
 - 9. Smart House early 20th century, frame cottage; bargeboard ornament, bungalow, porch addition.
 - 10. Picou House late 19th century, 3-bay, side hall shotgun, bracketed porch.
 - 11. Saundras House late 19th century, frame clapboard shotgun, 3-bay front.
 - 12. Weber Store late 19th century, frame clapboard shotgun, 3-bay front.
 - 17. Robinson House mid to late 19th century, clapboard raised cottage on old brick piers, screened-in porch.
 - 18. St. Francisville <u>Democrat</u> News Office Early 20th century, commercial brick building.
 - 20. Martin House 1900, 2-story, gable fronted, galleried; Queen Anne gable transom doors.
 - 21. Old Drug Store ca. 1900, gabled shop front clapboard commercial building.
 - 22. Old Courthouse early 19th century, 2-story stuccoed commercial building.
 - 24. Pillet House late 19th century, raised clapboard residence, six-column gallery.

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- 25. Presbyterian Church late 19th century, frame clapboard, with gable front, steep gable, four columns and Gothic arches.
- 26. Julius Freyhan School 1907, 3-story brick school, sequential arches over windows, massive door and metal porch.
- 30. Caldwell House 1907, one-story, Queen Anne cottage with Eastlake porch.
- 32. Robb House 1895, two-story, shiplap gable-fronted, 3-bay, lower story reworked about 1920.
- 33. Old Methodist Parsonage ca. 1900, small cottage, frame, clapboard with Queen Anne central gable.
- 35. White Cottage ca. 1900, 5-bay, raised frame clapboard, bracketed porch, pediments over front doors and windows.
- 37. Willis-Ramshure Building ca. 1900, large square 2-story clapboard commercial building with galleries at South end; Renaissance Revival details in doors; windows replaced.
- 38. Harrington Studio late 19th century, 12-story clapboard frame, commercial building.
- 49. Kilbourne and Dart Annex mid-19th century Acadian raised cottage, front gallery, two front doors.
- 50. Masonic Hall 1927, 2-story, bay frame building, 2-story portico, beveled ends.
- 51. Jackson Hall 1896, 1-story frame, four large columns on the portico with panels set in, Renaissance Revival details, fan-lighted door; some alterations in 1940.

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St. Francisville Historic District - West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana

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Description (cont'd)

Despite the exclusion of certain areas of the town which contain 50 year old buildings, the nominated district is distinguished from these other areas by two factors.

- l. There is a separation between the district and the other areas which occur at either end of Royal Street. In both cases this separation is several lots wide.
- 2. The ancillary areas do not reflect the history of the river port the way the district does. This is because they contain exclusively late 19th and early 20th century structures. By contrast the district contains early, mid, and late 19th century buildings as well as early 20th century structures.

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III. Nonconforming intrusions:

- 4. Police Jury House ca. 1930, rambling clapboard cottage.
- 6. Perkins House ca. 1940, 1-story, asbestos-sided, small bungalow.
- 7. Hayden House ca. 1940, 1-story small frame bungalow with porch.
- 8. Rinando Duplex ca. 1940, 1-story bungalow, double door version of number 7; duplex.
- 13. Shade Tree Antique Shop ca. 1940, new but old-looking 1½-story, commercial brick building.
- 27. Vinci House ca. 1930, bungalow, frame clapboard with porch.
- 29. Methodist Parsonage ca. 1950, 1-story, frame ranch house.
- 40. Hobgood House ca. 1940, frame clapboard, non-descript small ranch house.
- 41. Marchand House ca. 1920, porch-fronted hip roof clapboard bungalow.
- 42. Bennett House (same as number 41).
- 45. Renick House ca. 1950, imitation 5-bay Creole, sympathetic to district.
- 46. Renick Office (small version of number 45).

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW **PERIOD** PREMISTORIC __ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC __COMMUNITY PLANNING __LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE __RELIGION __LAW 1400-1499 __ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC __CONSERVATION __SCIENCE 1500-1599 __AGRICULTURE __ECONOMICS __LITERATURE __SCULPTURE XARCHITECTURE 1600-1699 __EDUCATION __MILITARY __SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN __ART 1700-1799 ___ENGINEERING __MUSIC __THEATER X COMMERCE 1800-1899 __EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT __PHILOSOPHY _TRANSPORTATION 1900-__COMMUNICATIONS __INDUSTRY __POLITICS/GOVERNMENT __OTHER (SPECIFY) __INVENTION

PECIFIC DATES ca

ca. 1810-1920's

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

TATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The St. Francisville Historic District is significant in the areas of architecture and commerce because its high concentration of nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings and few intrusions enable it to retain the ambiance of a nineteenth century river port.

St. Francisville's development in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries came about as a result of its river trade and rich agricultural surroundings. St. Francisville's history is closely related to the history of the town of Bayou Sara, located at the conjunction of Bayou Sara Creek and the Mississippi River and at the base of the bluff on which St. Francisville rests. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Bayou Sara grew into one of the most flourishing ports between Natchez and New Orleans. It was because of its proximity to Bayou Sara that St. Francisville was able to reap the benefits of the bustling river trade. While these two were separate and distinct towns with separate governments, they were for all practical purposes one town. There was no real line of demarcation between them and only the initiated knew when they had left one town and entered the other.

Around 1800 there was an influx of settlers from the Eastern Seaboard and the Natchez area. Cotton soon replaced both indigo and tobacco as the major cash crop and the opening of the Mississippi to American flatboaters made the landing at the mouth of Bayou Sara a popular place. Because the landing was subject to frequent flooding, market places were established up on the bluff, i.e., at St. Francisville. Audubon Hall (1819) is an example of such a market. Reflective of previous Spanish ownership and influence, this building was designed with open-air stalls and a central passageway large enough for wagons to be driven through. Although this structure has undergone major alterations, one can still see its essential characteristics.

During the early decades of the 1800's, the commerce of St. Francisville centered around the cotton crop. Supplies were brought in and cotton was shipped by barge for sale in New Orleans. The two-story almost salt-box part of the Camilla Leake Barrow House, flush with the sidewalk and street, its French doors opening directly onto the walk, typifies the building of this period and is the only example remaining from that time.

During the 1820's, St. Francisville continued to develop in conjunction with the staple crop economy of the area. Farmers planted cotton and bought

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corn--there was little subsistence farming done. The factorage system, commission merchants in cities, and increased river traffic, both by flatboats and the new and improving steamboat, also contributed to the economic growth of St. Francisville. Business partnerships proliferated, profits soared, store and counting houses such as Propinquity (1819) and the Old Court House (ca. 1824) were built. Clever businessmen from Cincinnati, Philadelphia, and Baltimore opened branch offices in St. Francisville. It was the common practice for them to bring a load of goods down the river, sell them over the winter months, and return north for the summer.

From 1825-1860 cotton continued to be a dominant commodity and vital to commercial trade. Many planters in the area around St. Francisville prospered. Grace Church (1858), one of the finest examples of church architecture during this time, was as much a representation of the plantation owners' great wealth (and their nobler aspirations) as were the area's great plantation homes.

After the Civil War and its aftermath came the emergence of the "New South"—a period of crop deversification, new patterns of land use, subsistence and tenant farming, and therefore increases in the number of small merchants. The True Democrat, a newspaper located in the same building as today's Democrat, was a strong supporter of the commercial innovations. Many of these new merchants were of Jewish ancestry, and they became a vital force within St. Francisville. Not only did they establish a synagogue (the present Presbyterian Church) but they were also largely responsible for the construction of the Julius Freyhan High School (1907).

As the railroads began to cut deeply into the steamboat traffic, Bayou Sara declined in importance. The late 1890's and early 1900's marked St. Francisville's ascendancy as a major railroad shipping center for agricultural produce and cattle.

During this time St. Francisville was blossoming forth in the vigorous arachitectural styles the whole of America embraced. The exuberance of ginger-bread matched the enthusiasm of belief in the "New South." Wooden frame buildings painted white outshone the old brick buildings of the earlier part of the nine-teenth century when brick construction had been far cheaper than wood. Timber was readily available and cheap. Power saws and quick turning lathes rendered it cheaply and easily into fanciful shapes that reflected the mood of the times.

But in the first half of the twentieth century, prosperity eluded St. Francisville, as the town struggled against depression, war, and the boll weevil. The double shotgun-like 'bungalows' appeared in this era and by World War II, a few modern suburban house types appeared. The town's economic decline, in a sense, forced the preservation of many of its historic buildings, since there was little demand for new construction. Economic revival did not occur until after World War II, and its effects are only now being assimilated.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

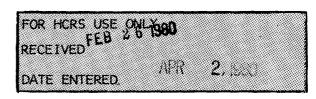
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St. Francisville Historic District
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10: Verbal Boundary Description

This verbal boundary description replaces all visual material as the final and accurate boundary description.

Begin at the northwest corner of the northern intersection of Royal and Ferdinand Streets. Proceed generally northward along the east side of Ferdinand St. to the side property line of building #37, the Willis-Ramshure building. Then proceed generally southeastward along the side property line and continue to follow the rear property lines of the properties fronting along Royal St. terminating at the northeast property line of building #29, the Methodist Parsonage. Then proceed southeast along this property line and continue along the northeast property line of building #30, the Caldwell House, to its terminus. Then proceed generally southwestward following the southeastern property lines of buildings #30, 26, and 25, the Caldwell House, Freyhan School and the Presbyterian Church, crossing Fidelity and Prosperity Streets, terminating on the south side of Prosperity Street. Then proceed northwest along the southeast side of Prosperity Street to the southeast property line of building #22, the old Courthouse. Then proceed generally southwest along the rear property lines of the buildings which front onto Royal Street terminating at the northeast side of Johnson Street. Then proceed southeast along the northeast side of Johnson Street to circumnavigate the property boundaries of building #18, the Democrat news office, terminating at the southeast property line of building #17, the Robinson House. Then proceed generally southwest following the rear property lines of the properties which front onto Royal Street terminating at the southwest side of Ferdinand Street. proceed northeast along the southeast side of Ferdinand Street crossing Royal, terminating at the northern property line of building #12, the Weber Store. Then proceed generally northeastward following the rear property lines of the properties which front onto Royal Street crossing Johnson Terminate at the Courthouse property line, building #2, 3 and 4. Then proceed northwest along the southwest side of the Courthouse property terminating at the southwest side of Ferdinand Street. Then proceed to cross Ferdinand and circumnavigate the Episcopal Church property, building #1, and return to Ferdinand deviating so as to include the Jackson Hall property #51. Then recross Ferdinand and proceed generally southeast along the rear property lines of the properties which front onto Prosperity Street terminating at the rear property line of building #46, the Renick Then proceed generally northward along the rear property lines of the properties which front onto Royal Street crossing Felicity Street and terminating at the southeast side of Ferdinand Street. Then proceed northward to the starting point.

Photo Key: Drow slows ared a direction of picture ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE: major significance contributes character intrusions **□** 36 FERDINAND STREET 'odo' RECTATA MAY 2 2 1979 FRE CISVILLE **HISTORIC DISTRICT** ST. NATIONAL REGISTER YAL & PROSPERITY ST.)

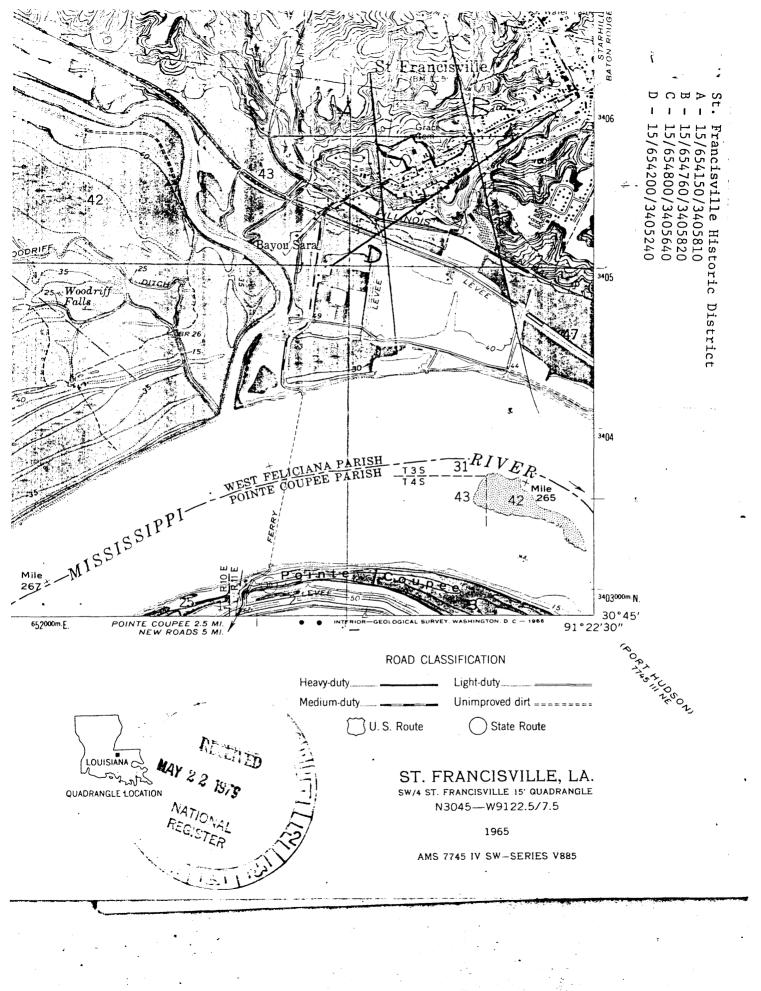
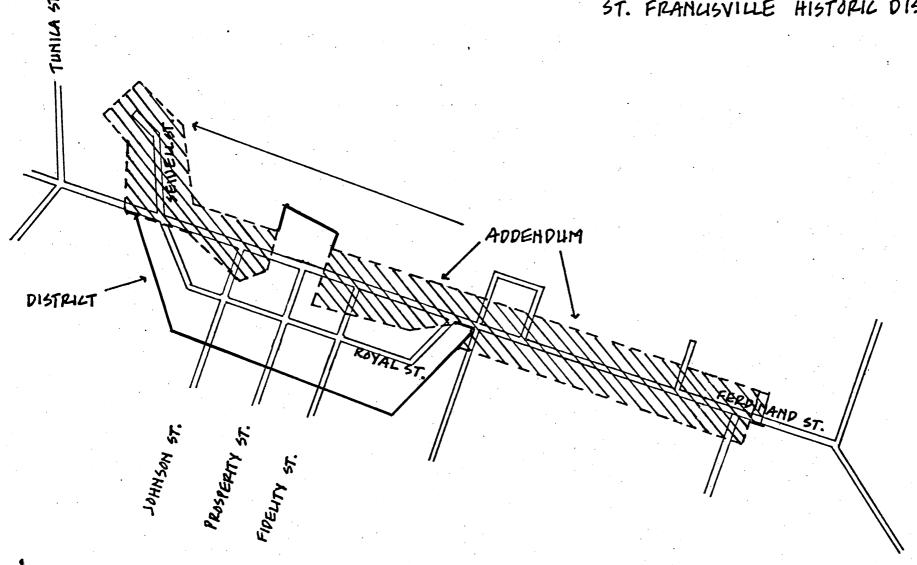


PHOTO KEY: ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE: direction of picture major significance contributes character intrusions Пэ 3 ROYAL FERDINAND STREET "ODO" ,₃ [] RECEIVED MAY 2 2 1979 ST. FRANCISVILLE **HISTORIC** DISTRICT NATIONAL REGISTER (% YAL & PROSPERITY ST.)

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L___ EXISTING DISTRICT

DISTRICT ADDENDUM

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