

PH009707

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
COUNTY:
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE
JUN 4 1973

1. NAME

COMMON:
Rip Van Winkle House and Gardens

AND/OR HISTORIC:
~~Old Joseph Jefferson~~ Home known as (Bob Acres Plantation) *Wine House*

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Jefferson Island

CITY OR TOWN:
Jefferson Island

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
3rd

STATE: Louisiana CODE: 22 COUNTY: Iberia CODE: 045

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mr. J. Lyle Bayless, Jr.

STREET AND NUMBER:
Mailing Address - Box 284, New Iberia, La. 70566

CITY OR TOWN: Jefferson Island STATE: Louisiana CODE: 22

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Iberia Parish Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: New Iberia STATE: Louisiana CODE: 22

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

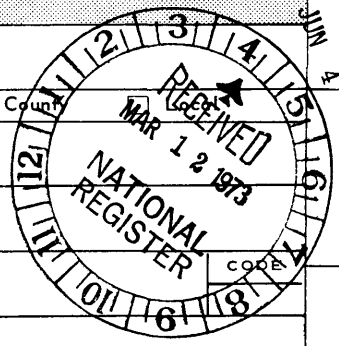
DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE:
COUNTY:
ENTRY NUMBER:
DATE:

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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 type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In 1869 Joseph Jefferson purchased his plantation at Orange Island (now Jefferson Island) ten miles west of New Iberia, Louisiana.

In 1870 he designed and built the lovely home which he named Bob Acres. Moorish, Gothic and French architecture, as well as Southern plantation themes are evident. Virgin cypress timber cut from trees on the plantation was used for the construction of the house. The house was built under Jefferson's direction by French craftsmen brought from New Orleans, working around an earlier cottage.

The house is a rambling, hospitable structure one and one half stories high, with a belvedere on the roof and verandas on three sides. A central hall twelve feet wide traverses the house and leads into the dining room at the rear, where there is an immense fireplace capable of accommodating five foot logs. An outstanding feature in the dining room is the beautiful carved beamed ceiling.

To the left of the hallway are double parlors both measuring 18' by 19' and left of the parlors is a small sitting room 6' by 18'.

Right of the hallway are two bedrooms both measuring 17' by 18'. Two baths are in this area.

In the rear of the house are a hallway (6' by 18'), a library (18' by 19'), and a kitchen (18' by 18').

On the second floor are three bedrooms, a study and a 12' by 40' hall. The Gulf of Mexico is visible from the 9' by 11' belvedere.

The house and gardens are located on the site of one of the largest operating salt mines in the western hemisphere.

The gardens have been turned into what can be described as one planted in the English style using typical Southern plants: camellias, azaleas, oleanders, gardenias, crape myrtle and magnolias.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



8. SIGNIFICANCE

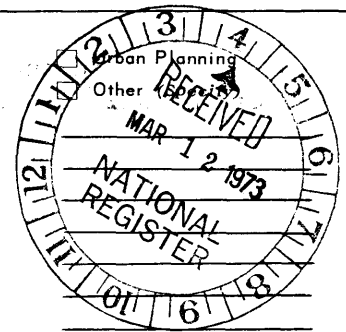
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" 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)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy
<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conservation		



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Jefferson Island, first of the famous "Five Islands" of south Louisiana, found its origin in prehistory when the enormous pressures of the earth forced a plug of pure rock salt up from a mother bed, five miles below the surface. This elevated several low hills in the coastal marshes.

"Treasure Island" might equally well be its name, for, besides the inexhaustible deposits of salt, there are also mineral deposits of oil, gas, and sulphur. A gentle climate, adequate rainfall and a fertile soil help to produce a gardener's dream thus making possible the abundant and luxuriant floral beauty of the Island. Full advantage has been taken of these valuable natural resources, as well as the rolling terrain, in the creation of twenty acres of gardens on Jefferson Island.

Originally a Spanish land grant, "Orange Island," as it was first known, fell into the hands of a brother-in-law of Jean Lafitte, the notorious pirate and privateer. During the time he was terrorizing the Gulf and Caribbean areas, Lafitte often sought refuge here, since his shallow-draft pirate boats were able to negotiate Bayou Carlin into beautiful Lake Peigneur, where he could not be followed by Men-of-War. Hence, it is rumored that Lafitte, at various times, buried his booty and treasure here on the Island. Actually, this was partially substantiated in 1923, when a treasure consisting of 3 pots of Spanish, Mexican, French and American gold and silver coins was uncovered by an old Voodoo Doctor named Daynite. Close by the site of this discovery, near the tropical glen stand the magnificent twin Live Oaks known as the Lafitte Oaks.

In 1869, the Island was bought as a hunting and fishing preserve by Joseph Jefferson, the world-famous nineteenth century actor, who immortalized the character Rip Van Winkle in the play of that name by Washington Irving. Jefferson played the role of "Old Rip" in theatres throughout the world, winning fame, fortune, and many illustrious friends. Amongst the latter was President Grover Cleveland, who, together with many other celebrities, visited Jefferson Island on various occasions. Rip Van Winkle Gardens are named in honor of this great actor and the character that he immortalized. Besides acting for 71 of his 76 years, Jefferson was an ardent painter.

The "Big House" was built by Jefferson in 1870, from native Cypress cut on the Island. The original and unique design reflects the influence of Jefferson's travels, with hints of the Spanish (Moorish), French, Gothic

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Louisiana Historical Quarterly, Vol. 26, Life and Art of Joseph
 Jefferson - William Winter's Jan. - Oct., 1943
 Joseph Jefferson in New Orleans - John Smith Kendall
 State Times - 1968
 Times Picayune - 1955
 Lafayette Acadiana Profile Magazine - 1960
 Times Magazine - 1937

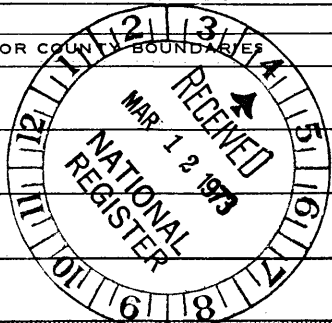
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	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	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	29° 58' 36"	91° 58' 25"				
NE	29° 58' 32"	91° 58' 20"				
SE	29° 58' 23"	91° 58' 32"				
SW	29° 58' 27"	91° 58' 37"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **20 acres**

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:
J. L. Bayless, Jr.

ORGANIZATION: _____ DATE: **March 1, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER:
P. O. Box 284

CITY OR TOWN: **New Iberia** STATE: **Louisiana** CODE: **22**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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: *Joseph Bayless*
 Title: Director, Department of Art, Historical and Cultural Preservation
 Date: March 9, 1973

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

Robert M. Utley
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historical Preservation

Date: 6/4/73

ATTEST:
R. Bradford
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 5/30/73

NW15/598710 NW15/598710
 SW15/599040/3316450 NW15/598710
 SC 15/599170/3316300 3316100
 SW15/598860/3316020
SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
COUNTY	
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(Number all entries)

8. Statement of Significance (cont'd)

and Southern in its architecture.

From the third story belvedere the Gulf of Mexico is visible. As this site was said to have been originally occupied by the residence of Jean Lafitte, the trees in the area were planted by the pirate - or so Jefferson professed to believe. The tradition of his presence lent glamor to the vicinity and Jefferson liked to remind his guests of the story.

In 1917, the present owner's father bought the Island from the heirs of Jefferson. At that time only a small area immediately around the home was landscaped, the remainder of the hills being virgin woodland. Following World War II, Mr. J. L. Bayless, Jr., the present owner, began more ambitious ventures into horticulture with the planting of the Old Fashioned Camellia Garden, and the East Lawn. There followed extensive planting of Azaleas in the wooded area. Then, in 1965, an English horticulturist was engaged to continue the work and develop a true "English Garden in a Tropical Setting". This estate is being made into a Foundation.

In creating these Gardens great effort has been made to achieve the restful atmosphere which Old Rip would have appreciated. To accomplish this all of the old favorites, such as Oleanders, Gardenias, Yellow Jasmine, Crape Myrtle and Magnolias are mingled among the moss-draped Live Oaks, reflecting the charm of the deep South. Along the trails, from which the visitor is free to wander at will, are conveniently located benches for those who wish to relax and enjoy the views.

