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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

JUN 14 1995

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. ~~NATIONAL PARK SERVICE~~ Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Keegan House

other names/site number Cook House

2. Location

street & number 143 Chaplin Loop N/A not for publication

city or town Robeline N/A vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Natchitoches code 069 zip code 71469

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

June 7, 1995

Signature of certifying official/Title W. Edwin Martin, Date  
Deputy SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Greg M. Sapsley

Entered in the National Register Date of Action

7/14/95

Keegan House  
Name of Property

Natchitoches Parish, LA  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel  
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls weatherboard

roof asphalt

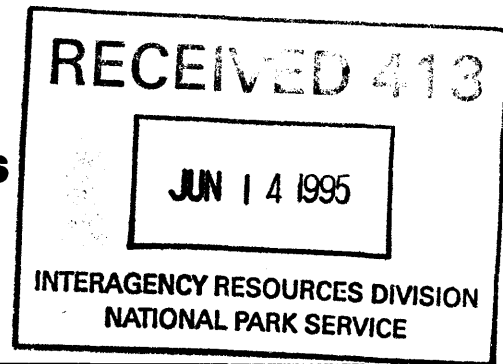
other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Keegan House, Robeline, Natchitoches Parish, LA

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The Keegan House (c.1855) is a two story frame Greek Revival plantation house located in the former railroad community of Robeline. It stands in an open hilltop setting on the northern edge of town. Research indicates that the house was moved from its original rural plantation setting sometime prior to 1890 (see section on the move). Despite some lost features and a few alterations, the house retains its National Register eligibility.

Surviving physical evidence plus a c.1900 photograph of the facade make it possible to determine the original appearance of the house in all but a few aspects. The house began as a two story frame plantation house with a central hall on each floor. On each side of the hall was one large front room and a smaller rear room. To the rear was a single story ell dining room wing which lined up with the central hall. The five bay facade featured a two story gallery with single story Doric pillars and a more or less full entablature. The capacious unfinished attic was lit and ventilated by a set of dormers -- two on the front, one each side and probably two on the rear. (Concerning the latter, the photograph shows the facade only.) Due to a fire and subsequent repairs, all physical evidence of the dormers has been lost.

**The Move:**

James E. Keegan moved the house approximately three miles within Natchitoches Parish to its present location sometime between 1881, the year the town of Robeline was founded by the railroad, and 1890, when a source refers to the house as having been moved to the new town. The 1892 Sanborn map of Robeline shows the house as the Keegan House Hotel. Given its proximity and orientation to the railroad (facing the tracks about 125 feet away), it is clear that it was a railroad hotel.

It appears that the house was moved intact. In the course of the move the chimneys were destroyed and the mantels presumably discarded. There is no evidence of them today. Given the tightness of the window spacing on each side elevation, it seems certain that the chimneys were located between the front and rear rooms on each story. This is confirmed by cuts in the rafters showing where one chimney once protruded through the roofline. There was almost certainly a chimney to heat the rear ell wing, but no evidence of it survives.

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Keegan House, Robeline, Natchitoches Parish, LA

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**Other Alterations:**

Evidently the original Greek Revival front gallery deteriorated and was rebuilt sometime about 1930. At that time the lower columns were replaced with brick posts and the upper columns with battered wooden posts. This gave the house an overall bungalow style appearance. It should be noted that the molded entablature surmounting the gallery was not replaced. In addition, the aforementioned dormers were removed (after a fire, it appears), but the pitch of the hip roof was not changed. Also about this time the old rear gallery on the ell wing was rebuilt, enlarged and screened in. The renovated gallery which survives today has the appearance of a sleeping porch. Finally, a small room was added to the rear of the ell with a door cut to provide access.

The interiors were adjusted also. Bathrooms and closets were installed on both stories. Today only the front and rear rooms on the lower western side of the house retain their original sizes. There have also been some minor alterations such as the installation of double windows in the ell, the replacement of the original front doors with twentieth century French doors and the replacement of most of the baseboards.

**Surviving original Greek Revival features:**

1. the entablature surmounting the main block of the house and the gallery.
2. the front doorway with its transom and side lights.
3. the pilasters which mark the ends of the flush boarded facade.
4. the ten handsomely detailed facade openings, each of which is encompassed by an aedicule motif featuring pilasters with molded capitals and a full entablature with a molded cornice.
5. the downstairs interior shoulder molded doorways.
6. the doorway to a small closet under the upper hall staircase which features primitive shoulder molding and a pediment shaped top.

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Keegan House, Robeline, Natchitoches Parish, LA

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**The Restoration:**

In 1994 the house faced almost certain demolition because the site was slated for redevelopment for HUD funded senior citizens' housing units. This federal funding triggered the Section 106 environmental review procedure, and thus the project had to be reviewed by the Divisions of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. The staff flagged the Keegan House as potentially eligible for the National Register, and, in the course of the project, an alternative site was selected. Subsequently, the present owners purchased the property and replicated the original front gallery columns using the surviving pilasters as a model. This was done under advisement from the Division of Historic Preservation. The dormers have not been reconstructed. As part of this renovation, the ell was subdivided for a kitchen and dining room.

**Assessment of Integrity:**

Despite the alterations and losses the house has sustained over the years, it still retains enough of its original Greek Revival features to establish it as a major example of the style. Of particular significance are the ten nicely detailed facade openings (see Part 8), which, of course, are original. Also, as noted above, thanks to a recent restoration, the gallery looks as it did originally. In terms of Criterion A, the house looks much as it did when it was a railroad hotel, and hence would be easily recognizable to someone from the historic period.

**Non-contributing Element:**

To the rear of the house is a frame dependency built in 1994.

Keegan House  
Name of Property

Natchitoches Parish, LA  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

architecture

transportation

**Period of Significance**

c.1855 (architecture)

c.1890-c1915 (transportation)

**Significant Dates**

c.1855; c.1890

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Keegan House  
Name of Property

Natchitoches Parish, LA  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property @ 1/2 acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 5	4 7 1 2 2 0	3 5 0 6 2 8 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

2			
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3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

4			
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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title National Register Staff  
 organization Division of Historic Preservation date May 1995  
 street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone (504) 342-8160  
 city or town Baton Rouge state Louisiana zip code 70804

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Mr. and Mrs. John M. Jarvis  
 street & number 143 Chaplin Loop telephone 318-472-8610  
 city or town Robeline state Louisiana zip code 71469

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Keegan House, Robeline, Natchitoches Parish, LA

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The Keegan House is of local significance in the area of transportation as the resource that best represents the railroad town history of Robeline. It is also of local significance in the area of architecture as a rare and important example of the Greek Revival style within Natchitoches Parish.

**Transportation Significance:**

Railroads changed the face of Louisiana and were a very important force in the economy throughout the historic period. Prior to the heyday of railroading, much of the state was a wilderness. But beginning in the postbellum years, construction of railroads opened much of the state to development, making possible the "great Louisiana lumber boom" and creating railroad towns such as Ruston, DeRidder and Robeline. Between 1880 and 1910 over five thousand miles of mainline trackage were laid in the state. Resources directly associated with railroading such as depots, roundhouses, machine shops, warehouses and railroad hotels, though once numerous, have not survived in great numbers.

Although the area around Robeline was settled in the antebellum decades, the town of Robeline did not come into being until the arrival of the New Orleans and Pacific Railroad in 1881 (later the Texas and Pacific). That same year the townsite was platted and a post office established. On February 1, 1883 the town was chartered, and the first meeting of the town council was held in March.

An 1890 book, Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northwest Louisiana, refers to Robeline as a "modern railroad town," noting that James E. Keegan had moved his plantation home from three miles away "into the new town." As noted previously, the house appears as Keegan House Hotel on a 1892 Sanborn map, the first available. It faced the railroad tracks about 125 feet away.

Without the above background, one might wonder why Keegan would go to such trouble to move a large house. It seems clear, however, that he moved it specifically to be in the new railroad town of Robeline and opened it as a hotel to take advantage of opportunities brought by the railroad. It certainly was not unheard of in Louisiana for people to move buildings from areas bypassed by the railroad to those that were not. In fact, there are at least two instances of whole communities relocating.

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Keegan House, Robeline, Natchitoches Parish, LA

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Today the Keegan House is the best surviving resource to represent the railroad history of Robeline. The depot is gone and even the tracks have been removed. There are a few surviving historic commercial buildings which reflect the prosperity made possible by the railroad in a general way, but the Keegan House has the most compelling, direct association. The exact date range for the house's use as a railroad hotel is not known. On the 1899, 1904, 1909, and 1914 Sanborn maps it is labeled simply "Keegan House," although it seems clear that it was still a hotel. (It appears as a listing in the index, which is for businesses and public buildings and not private residences, and there is a notation about it having an office.) For the purposes of this nomination, it seems reasonable to use c.1890 as the beginning date for the period of significance and c.1915 as the ending date. The house may have continued in use as a railroad hotel after this date, but this cannot be documented.

**Architectural Significance:**

Natchitoches Parish is a French enclave in an otherwise Anglo Saxon North Louisiana. It was a very early area of French settlement, with the town of Natchitoches being founded in 1714, only fifteen years after the founding of the Louisiana colony. Natchitoches County was one of twelve counties in the Territory of Orleans created by Governor William C. C. Claiborne in 1805. Two years later the counties were partitioned into parishes, and Natchitoches Parish was created. Because of its age and French background, Natchitoches Parish had time to develop a significant Creole building stock, including some of the finest examples in the state. But the area was bypassed by development in the mid-nineteenth century due in part to the Red River changing its course and leaving Natchitoches on an oxbow lake. For whatever reason, the emerging American Greek Revival style had little impact in the parish. There are only a handful of fully developed examples. Apart from these the only impact the style made can be found in a number of Creole houses with one or two applied Greek Revival features such as mantels.

The Keegan House is one of the small select number of complete statements in the Greek Revival style, with surviving original features including the shoulder molded door surrounds (probably the only ones in the parish), the facade pilasters and entablature, the

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transom and side lights on the front doorway and the closet doorway with its pediment shaped top. Particularly noteworthy are the facade opening surrounds, which are certainly the finest of their kind anywhere in the parish. (Other examples have plain molded surrounds, which is more typical for the state as a whole.)

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**Bibliography**

C.1900 photo, copy in Register file, Division of Historic Preservation.

Sanborn Insurance Company Maps, Robeline, 1892, 1899, 1904, 1909, and 1914.

Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northwest Louisiana. Nashville and Chicago: The Southern Publishing Company, 1890.

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**Boundary Description:** Lots 9-12, Block 24, Chaplin's Addition, Town of Robeline.

**Boundary Justification:** Boundaries follow property lines of the parcel of land upon which the nominated resource is located.