

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. 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 Downtown Abbeville Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number bounded roughly by State St., First St., Vermilion Bayou,
Pere Megret St. and Concord St. N/A not for publication

city or town Abbeville N/A vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Vermilion code 113 zip code 70510

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.)
Gerri Hobdy September 29, 1995
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Gerri Hobdy,
LA 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:)

Edson A. Beall Signature of the Keeper
Date of Action 11.7.95

Entered in the
National Register

Downtown Abbeville Historic District
Name of Property

Vermilion 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	
59	45	buildings
	1	sites
		structures
		objects
59	46	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

15

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store, dept. store, financial institution

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: manufacturing facility

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store, dept. store, financial institution

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: manufacturing facility

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Queen Anne Revival

Bungalow

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick, stucco, weatherboard

roof tin, asphalt, other: tar and gravel

other _____

Narrative Description

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

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

NA

(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)

- commerce
- industry
- transportation
- architecture
- community development

Period of Significance

- c.1905-1945 (commerce)
- c.1894-1945 (industry & transportation)
- c.1905-c.1940 (architecture)
- c.1890-1945 (community development)

Significant Dates

1892 (coming of railroad)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

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:

Downtown
Abbeville Historic District
Name of Property

Vermilion Parish, LA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property @ 50 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
Zone Easting Northing
2 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 8 | 0 |

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

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 July 1995

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

city or town Baton Rouge state LA 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 multiple ownership

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

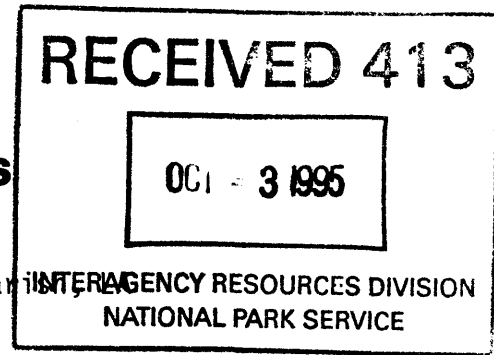
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain 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.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Downtown Abbeville Historic District, Vermilion Parish, Louisiana
Section number 7 Page 1



The boundaries of the Downtown Abbeville Historic District encompass 119 buildings and one small non-contributing cemetery. The nominated district includes a small commercial district already on the Register as well as another individually listed Register property, St. Mary Magdalen Church and Rectory. Contributing elements include commercial buildings, residences, institutional buildings, and industrial facilities along the railroad corridor. They range in date from c.1890 to c.1940. Despite a fairly high non-contributing rate of 38%, the district easily retains sufficient historic character to merit National Register listing, as explained below and as is evident from the photos accompanying this submission.

Located on the Vermilion River, the town of Abbeville traces its founding to 1843, when Father Antoine Megret purchased a tract of land on the river for construction of a chapel. This developed into the settlement that would be incorporated as Abbeville in 1850. In 1854 it became the parish seat of Vermilion Parish. Apparently the town was small and grew slowly until the arrival of the Iberia and Vermilion Railroad (soon to be the Southern Pacific) in 1892. With the coming of the railroad, Abbeville emerged as a major rice processing center. Like other southwestern Louisiana communities (for example, Crowley and Jennings), Abbeville benefitted enormously from the "Great Louisiana Rice Boom" of the turn-of-the-century in which mechanized agricultural techniques previously used in the Midwest for wheat production were brought to the prairies of Acadiana for the large-scale production of rice. Rather remarkably, the two large brick rice mills that appear on a 1907 Sanborn map of Abbeville survive. They, along with other businesses which relied upon the railroad, are an important component of the nominated district.

Because of the railroad and the rice boom it made possible, Abbeville grew rapidly (from a population of 1200 in 1895 to 2500 in 1907) and prospered greatly, as can be seen in the district's building stock. Despite its early founding, there are believed to be no buildings in the town that pre-date c.1890. The nominated district to a great extent reflects the frenzy of building that occurred in Abbeville at the height of the rice boom (c.1890-c.1910). Also, much of the old wooden downtown burned in 1903 and was rebuilt almost immediately.

While the inventory below provides a description of each building, a general statement can be made about the overall character of the district. At its southern edge is the previously mentioned industrial/railroad corridor, whose components include a freight depot, two large turn-of-the-century brick rice mills, a wholesale grocery warehouse, and a large, well-preserved early twentieth century lumber shed. At the northern edge and extending down State Street to the railroad corridor (see map) is a mainly party wall brick CBD. Anchored by the impressive twin-

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towered Bank of Abbeville (1904, #119), the CBD has a two story scale along Concord. Along State Street, the scale is one story. Several of the commercial buildings have elaborate brickwork, with the predominant style being a vernacular, small town version of Italianate. Also at the northern edge, in the heart of the CBD, is Magdalen Square, a park shaded by oak trees. This urban oasis was part of the original plan for the community. Adjacent to the park is the St. Mary Magdalen Church square previously mentioned. The district's 25 or so contributing residences are located on and beyond Lafayette Street on Main, Washington and Jefferson (please refer to map). Essentially, they are between the CBD and the industrial/railroad corridor. Most of the residences reflect the Queen Anne Revival style, with the second most predominant style being the bungalow. With but very few exceptions, the residences are one story (or one-and-a-half) in scale.

INVENTORY

Note: The district's buildings were dated mainly from Sanborn maps (1895, 1899, 1907, 1912, 1923, 1929, and a 1949 update) and the architectural evidence when Sanborn maps, for whatever reason, were not of use. (For example, a significant portion of the district was not mapped until 1907.) In a few instances, there were date tablets on buildings. Of invaluable use in determining alterations were various historic photographs of individual buildings.

Buildings 74, 102 and 104- 119 are in the existing downtown Register district, which was listed for its architectural significance. St. Mary Magdalen Church and Rectory (#s 23 & 24) are also Register listed.

1. Abbeville Rice Mill/Mill #3 of Louisiana State Rice Milling Company. Contributing element. Large two to four story brick industrial facility with segmental arch openings built c.1900 adjacent to railroad. This section of Abbeville (the railroad/industrial corridor) does not appear on Sanborn maps until 1907. The two story section of the building is shown as a rice warehouse while the mill occupied the four story section. By 1912 map, mill is shown as partly dismantled; facility used as rice warehouse and for storage. On 1929 map, the two story section is labeled rice warehouse on first story and miscellaneous storage on second story; four story section labeled offices.
2. Iberia and Vermilion Railroad Depot (later Southern Pacific). Contributing element. One story frame freight depot missing its freight platforms. Built sometime between 1892, when the railroad arrived, and 1894, when it appears in a publication. Originally closer to Vermilion River and had extensive freight platforms. Moved to its present location (still

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on railroad line, same side about 50 feet from its original location) sometime prior to 1949 Sanborn map update.

3. Non-contributing element. Modern one story hardware store.
4. Non-contributing element. Modern one story tin-sided building.
5. Non-contributing element. Modern one story frame commercial building.
6. Contributing element. One story frame plain residential looking building which appears on Sanborn maps between 1923 and 1929; labeled oil warehouse.
7. 212 S. Main. Contributing element. One and a half story frame galleried house. Although the house has an older Greek Revival looking character, one suspects that it dates from the turn of the century. One also suspects that the present dormers are not original.
8. Contributing element. 1920s one and a half story house in the bungalow style with porte-cochere. Small one story brick side addition..
9. 204 S. Main. Non-contributing. Less than fifty year old frame residence.
10. 200 S. Main. Non-contributing. Less than fifty year old frame residence.
11. Contributing element. E. Wise Residence (per photo in 1894 publication). c.1890 large two story residence with two story polygonal bay on facade and northern side elevation. The windows on the bays are defined by prominent pilasters. Historic photo shows that house originally had two story Eastlake gallery that extended from the bay, across the front, and curved to wrap around the corner by a few feet. Presently house has a partially enclosed one story porch. Its Eastlake columns were undoubtedly salvaged from original gallery. Besides aforementioned bays, house's other character-defining original feature is a tall opening on the side elevation crowned with a round arch window with muntins in a radial pattern.
- 12.. 130 S. Main. Non-contributing element. 1940s asbestos clad commercial building with plain stucco front. First appears on 1949 Sanborn map update. Because it is likely that the building is not fifty years old, it is being labeled as non-contributing.

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13. 128 S. Main. Contributing element. 1930s one story frame residence with steeply pitched side gabled roof; prominent front gables and a gabled porch -- a very watered down version of the so-called Tudor Revival style. Porch columns and balustrade replaced with wrought iron.
14. 118 S. Main. Contributing element. Wells-Fargo Office. One story double brick store with decorative brickwork cornice built in 1897, per mention in local newspaper. 1899 Sanborn map has "agricultural implements" notation. By 1907 map, the southern portion is labeled as an express office and the northern, a hardware warehouse. 1912 map shows southern portion as express office and northern as furniture store or warehouse. Southern portion continued as Wells Fargo office until c.1915. During 1920s building was used as a garage, at which time the northern portion received a garage opening. Southern portion retains its original segmental arch openings. Building was converted to a residence in 1970s.
15. 114 S. Main. Contributing element. 1920s one story stuccoed commercial building; shopfront replaced.
16. Contributing element. 1920s one story stuccoed commercial building; shopfront replaced, although transom windows visible. May be remodeled older building.
17. Non-contributing element. Historic one story stuccoed commercial building that has been too altered to be considered contributing -- modern picture window at shopfront level. Unlike #16, it no longer retains the basic rhythm and configuration of a historic building at the shopfront level.
18. Non-contributing element. Historic frame commercial building that has been too altered to be considered contributing -- vinyl siding and new shopfront.
- 19-20. Non-contributing elements. Modern small one story concrete block automotive buildings.
21. Non-contributing element. Modern one story brick office building.
22. Contributing element. Abbeville Water Works. Earlier water works building remodeled by city in 1922. All that remains of the original building's character are the round arch windows. Per historic photo, roofline originally featured quite elaborate Romanesque

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Revival detailing, including blind arcading. This all removed in 1922 when building acquired its present tile roof. Present stucco most likely dates from remodeling.

23. Contributing element. National Register. St. Mary Magdalen Church (1911). Large brick church with Romanesque Revival details. Because of its size and soaring spire, it has a commanding presence in downtown Abbeville.
24. Contributing element. National Register. St. Mary Magdalen Rectory (1921). Two story stuccoed building with a two-tier porch extending across the front and down one of the side elevations. The second story of the porch features arcading.
25. Non-contributing element. Modern one story brick and wood commercial building.
26. Contributing element. 1920. One story stuccoed commercial building with stepped parapet and prominent, multi-paned windows above the shopfront level. Shopfront replaced.
27. Contributing element. c.1940 one story stucco and black carrera glass commercial building.
28. Non-contributing element. One story historic commercial building too altered to be considered contributing.
29. Non-contributing element. One story modern commercial building.
30. Contributing element. c. 1920 plain one story stuccoed commercial building; retains transoms, although shopfront level replaced. Historically a separate building, although now used by building #31.
31. Contributing element. Large two story, stucco over brick, corner commercial building. Present building is a 1920s or '30s remodeling of an older very elaborately articulated brick building, per historic photographs. Only exterior decorative elements it retains of older building are segmental arch windows on second story and bartizan-like elements at the corners. On the interior the building retains much of its original c.1890 character, most notably, very distinctive cast-iron columns with a pineapple motif. Shopfront level replaced on present building, but transom windows remain.

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32. Non-contributing element. Fairly small one story tin support building to #31.
33. Non-contributing element. Small one story altered older commercial building.
34. Non-contributing element. One story frame historic house with unsympathetic porch enclosure/extension across the front.
35. 123 S. Main. Non-contributing element. Modern two story brick residence.
36. Non-contributing element. Small one story brick ranch house looking building.
37. 135 S. Main. Contributing element. c.1915 one story stuccoed commercial building with decoratively shaped parapet and round head windows.
38. 203 S. Main (also 311 W. Lafayette). Non-contributing element. Non-historic one story commercial building.
39. 211 S. Main. Non-contributing element. One story non-historic frame commercial building.
40. 213 S. Main. Contributing element. 1920s stuccoed bungalow.
41. 217 S. Main. Contributing element. 1920s frame residence with bungalow detailing.
42. 219 S. Main. Contributing element. Early twentieth century brick residence; porch enclosed.
43. 221 S. Main. Contributing element. 1890s one-and-a-half story frame Queen Anne Revival house with front-facing polygonal bay, wraparound Eastlake gallery, and shinglework in the gables.
44. 222 S. Washington. Contributing element. 1920s frame bungalow.
45. 220 S. Washington. Non-contributing element. Per Sanborn maps, present house is a one story version of what was originally a two story Queen Anne Revival house.

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46. 218 S. Washington. Contributing element. Plain two story frame house. Sanborn maps indicate that this house may have evolved over time during the historic period. A house of the right shape (i.e., the polygonal bay on the first story) appears on the 1907 map (the first for this section of town). By 1923, the house had grown to two stories and is shown with a two story porch. The second story porch is now gone; the first story porch is now wrought iron; and an addition has been made on the side toward the rear.
47. 212 S. Washington. Contributing element. 1920s frame bungalow.
48. 210 S. Washington. Non-contributing element. One story brick ranch house.
49. 208 S. Washington. Contributing element. 1920s frame bungalow; partial porch enclosure.
50. Contributing element. One story frame 1890s Queen Anne Revival cottage; front polygonal bay features shinglework and prominent brackets with a fan-like design. Porch replaced in bungalow style.
51. Contributing element. c. 1915 raised frame house with Colonial Revival posts resting on brick bases; prominent hipped roof dormer.
52. 306 W. Lafayette. Contributing element. Plain early twentieth century galleried frame cottage.
53. Contributing element. One story plain frame bungalow.
54. Non-contributing element. Theatre built sometime between 1929 Sanborn map and 1949 update. It may be over 50 years old, but is being considered non-contributing because of serious alterations at the ground floor level and its generally deteriorated state.
55. 106 S. Washington. Contributing element. One story plain frame shotgun-like building which has historically been in commercial use.
56. Non-contributing element. Non-historic fairly small one story warehouse set inside the block to service #25.

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57. "GET" Service Station-now a private residence. 1930s. Contributing element. Second GET service station on the site. Named for original owners, Gooch, Edwards and Theall; GET name prominently displayed in panels. Concrete structure located on corner in heart of downtown. Drive through gasoline section partially enclosed (low brick wall and iron grilles) and a small one story wing has been added; however, it still is clearly a historic filling station.
58. Non-contributing. Historic two story auto dealership with facade completely reworked in the last few years.
59. Contributing element. 1890s one story frame cottage with prominent projecting polygonal bay with panels above and below windows and pilasters between. Simple Eastlake columns on porch.
60. 205 S. Washington. Non-contributing element. Rambling one story frame residence. According to owner, it is a remodeled older house.
61. 207 S. Washington. Contributing element. 1890s one-and-a-half story hipped roof frame Queen Anne house with projecting polygonal bay featuring large distinctive pierced work brackets. Porch has Eastlake columns with small pierced brackets. Prominent gabled dormer.
62. 211 S. Washington. Contributing element. 1890s Queen Anne cottage with projecting polygonal bay featuring pierced work brackets with a star motif. Side extension to left in place by 1912 Sanborn map. Porch replaced in bungalow style and extended to form a porte-cochere.
63. 213 S. Washington. Contributing element. 1938 one story brick gym and auditorium for Abbeville High School. Low-key neo-classical detailing on facade (facing Washington). Complementary one story brick classroom wing added to rear in 1949.
64. Non-contributing element. Small frame residential-looking building which is part of Vermilion Parish School Board complex.
65. Contributing element. Huge brick rice mill built in 1900 on railroad corridor ranging from two to four stories. Shown as Planters Rice Mill on 1907 Sanborn map; by 1912 was Louisiana State Rice Milling Company Mill #2. On this map, four story section was the

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- mill. The large two story section was labeled "rough rice warehouse" on the first floor and "polish and clean" on the second; also an office on first floor. By the 1949 update the mill had acquired the present tin sided six story rice dryer (east corner). For a rice mill, the building is very nicely detailed, including segmental arch openings and elaborate decorative brickwork (see closeup photo). Now owned and operated as a rice mill by Riviana Foods, the mill has received some modern additions at the rear, but it easily retains sufficient integrity.
66. Contributing element. Built in 1941 -- Louisiana State Rice Milling Office. Large two story stucco over concrete block office building with restrained Modernistic styling on slightly projecting central portion. Now the offices of Riviana Foods.
67. Non-contributing element. Modern one story brick building (part of Vermilion Parish School Board complex).
68. Contributing element. Former Abbeville High School (1902)--now headquarters for Vermilion Parish School Board. Three story brick school featuring segmental arch windows and square head windows. Some of latter have jack arches. Windows have received blind-like coverings on exterior that make them appear boarded over.
69. Non-contributing element. Modern one story brick building (part of Vermilion Parish School Board complex).
70. 212 S. Jefferson. Contributing element. One story frame cottage with bungalow porch (1920s).
71. 212 S. Jefferson. Contributing element. One story blacksmith shop with board and batten false front facade. A blacksmith shop appears at this location as early as 1912, but the building on the map is not long enough to be the present one. By the 1929 map the building shown is long enough to be the current one. Labeled as blacksmith shop on subsequent maps, up to and including the 1949 update.
72. Contributing element. 1920s frame bungalow.
73. Contributing element. c. 1940 plain two story apartment building (asbestos sided).

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74. Frank's Theatre. Contributing element. c.1925 two story stuccoed brick building with bas relief panels and a parapet designed to suggest a Mission style roof. The building's present appearance is probably the result of a c.1925 alteration of an earlier building. Small single story side wing that appears to be over fifty years old.
75. Non-contributing. Small drive through bank, probably from the 1950s or '60s.
76. 115 W. Lafayette. Contributing element. Large two story frame house built between 1899 and 1907 Sanborn maps; features Queen Anne two story shingled projecting bay with decorative brackets and two-tier Eastlake gallery that wraps around the corner. Small room built out onto gallery on second story.
77. 201 S. Jefferson. Non-contributing element. One story brick ranch house-looking building.
78. 203 S. Jefferson. Non-contributing element. One story non-historic stucco commercial building.
79. 205 S. Jefferson. Contributing element. 1930s frame one-and-a-half story cottage with steeply pitched front gable and steeply pitched entrance gable--watered down version of so-called Tudor Revival style.
80. 207 S. Jefferson. Contributing element. One story frame house with bungalow style porch.
81. 209 S. Jefferson. Contributing element. Early twentieth century one-and-a-half story frame house with prominent hipped roof dormer.
82. 211 S. Jefferson. Contributing element. Early twentieth century one story house with bungalow style porch across the front.
83. 217 S. Jefferson. Contributing element. 1900-1910 one story side gable frame cottage with projecting polygonal bay on facade; present porch which extends to form a carport and addition is most likely from bungalow period.

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84. Contributing element. Early twentieth century one story frame house with bungalow style carport.
85. 223 S. Jefferson. Non-contributing element. Small one story modern brick building.
86. Non-contributing element. Non-historic long metal sided building with curving roof.
87. Contributing element. Large and long frame one story wholesale grocery warehouse on railroad corridor dating from 1920s; clipped gables; decorative ventilators along roof ridge.
88. Contributing element. 1930s one story false front frame building.
89. Contributing element. Built between 1923 and '29 Sanborn maps--shown on '29 map as a bakery. One story stucco over brick building with corner entrance and stepped parapet.
90. Contributing element. 1930s one story stuccoed Modernistic commercial building adjacent to railroad.
91. Contributing element. L. H. Summers Lumber Shed. Large one to two story frame lumber shed adjacent to railroad built sometime between 1912 and 1923 Sanborn maps. Shown on '23 map as L. H. Summers Lumber Shed with a sash and door warehouse in the partial second floor; stacked lumber elsewhere--also an office. By the 1949 map update, it is the Abbeville Lumber Company shed.
92. Non-contributing element. Quonset hut long building built originally for a movie theatre--opened in 1948 (appears on 1949 map). Marquee gone.
93. Contributing element. 1930s commercial building with tin clad sides and stuccoed decoratively shaped false front.
94. Non-contributing element. Small modern one story brick office/commercial building.
95. Non-contributing element. Small modern one story brick office/commercial building.
96. Contributing element. 1930s one story brick commercial building with geometric decorative brickwork (see closeup photo).

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97. Non-contributing element. Small modern one story brick office/commercial building.
98. 216 S. State. Contributing element. c.1905 one story brick commercial building with decorative brickwork, cast-iron columns defining its shopfront, and name (O. J. Chauvin) displayed in raised panel at top.
99. 214 S. State. Contributing element. c.1920 plain one story brick commercial building.
100. Non-contributing element. Less than fifty year old one story office building.
101. Contributing element. c.1940 one story brick Modernistic building with curving front and large glass block window.
102. 200-202 S. State St. Contributing element. Single story c.1910 brick Italianate commercial building with three-tier decorative parapet, multiple brick cornices, numerous brick panels, segmentally arched openings and a corner entrance. Shopfront largely original.
103. Contributing element. Early twentieth century plain one story false fronted stuccoed brick building.
104. 124 S. State. Contributing element. c. 1905; first appears on 1907 Sanborn map. Single story brick Italianate commercial building with decorative brick panels, round arch openings, and a corner entrance. Shopfront largely original.
105. 122 S. State. Contributing element. c.1905; first appears on 1907 map. Single story brick Italianate commercial building with decorative brick panels. Cast-iron columns survive from original shopfront.
106. 120 S. State. Contributing element. c. 1905; first appears on 1907 Sanborn map. Single story brick Italianate commercial building with decorative brick panels and original cast-iron shopfront details. Windows have been covered with shutters and the central doorway has been replaced.

CONTINUED

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107. 118 S. State. Contributing element. Built between 1895 and 1899. Single story brick Italianate commercial building with multiple brick cornices and a decorative parapet culminating in a central pedimented tablet.
108. 114-116 S. State. Non-contributing element. Older single story brick commercial building stuccoed and completely modernized c.1960.
109. 112 S. State. Non-contributing element. Older single story brick commercial building stuccoed and completely modernized c.1960.
110. 110 S. State. Non-contributing element. Small two story Italianate commercial building stuccoed and completely modernized c.1960.
111. 108 S. State. Non-contributing element. Older single story commercial building stuccoed and completely modernized c.1960.
112. 104-06 S. State. Contributing element. 1914. Single story brick commercial building with step gabled front. Shopfront completely modernized below transom level.
113. 102 S. State. Contributing element. c.1910. Small single story Italianate commercial building with brick cornice and decorative paneled parapet.
114. 100 S. State. Contributing element. 1904. Beauxis Building. Single story Italianate commercial building with corner entrance, brick pilasters, panels, and a name-date tablet.
115. 107 Concord. Non-contributing element. Older single story brick commercial building, stuccoed, completely modernized c.1960.
116. 111-113 Concord St. Contributing element. c. 1925. Two story classical commercial building with four Tuscan pilasters supporting a full entablature. The building is surmounted by a shaped gable parapet. The shopfront has been completely modernized, which involved the removal of the bottom portion of the two central pilasters.
117. 115-17 Concord. Contributing element. c. 1905; first appears on 1907 Sanborn map. Two story brick Italianate commercial building with multiple brick cornices, brick panels, and segmentally arched windows. The shopfront has been replaced.

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Downtown Abbeville Historic District, Vermilion Parish, LA

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118. 119 Concord St. Contributing element. 1903. Two story brick Italianate commercial building with a bracketed cornice, decorative keystones, and an ornamental date tablet. Shopfront replaced.
119. Bank of Abbeville (1904). Contributing element. Two story brick Romanesque Revival building with an arched corner entrance flanked by towers. Each tower terminates in a conical metal top with a finial. The building also features rock-faced cast cement "stonework" and a blind arcade. Two relatively modern shopfronts have been added. These account for about half of the length of the ground story elevation.
120. Non-contributing element. Small cemetery that does not meet the criteria consideration generally excluding cemeteries from the Register.

BUILDINGS PREVIOUSLY LISTED ON REGISTER:

#s 23 & 24 (St. Mary Magdalen Church and Rectory)

Abbeville Commercial Historic District: #s 74, 102, 104-119

Assessment of Integrity

The contributing elements in the district are in a fairly good state of preservation for the most part; those with serious integrity problems were counted as non-contributing. Most of the commercial buildings have been modified at the shopfront level, but such is the norm across the state and in other National Register districts.

Upon first glance, a non-contributing rate of 38% would lead one to question whether the district retained sufficient historic integrity (although it should be noted that there are other districts in Louisiana on the Register with similar non-contributing rates). Of course, one must look beyond mere numbers and instead examine the size and scale of the non-contributing elements and their impact upon the adjacent historic buildings, or vice versa. All but four of the non-contributing elements are one story in scale, and most have a small footprint. (The four larger buildings are two stories.) Also, most of the non-contributing buildings are altered historic buildings and hence do not disrupt the rhythm of a given streetscape. As can be seen in the representative streetscape views accompanying this submission (the most important evidence), Abbeville has a strong historic character, despite a 38% non-contributing rate. Such is the case

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because the district's historic buildings are usually larger and almost always more visually distinctive than the non-contributing elements.

PHOTO INFORMATION (common to all)

Photographer: Donna Fricker
Location of negatives: Louisiana SHPO
Date taken: June 1995

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Downtown Abbeville Historic District, Vermilion Parish, LA

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The Downtown Abbeville Historic District is locally significant in the following respects:

(1) It is significant in the area of commerce because it was the focus of commerce for a large rural area. The period of significance under commerce spans from c.1905, the date of the earliest commercial buildings, to 1945, the fifty year cutoff. Downtown Abbeville continued to be a major supplier of goods and services into the modern era when downtowns were supplanted by strip development.

(2) The district is significant in the areas of industry and transportation because its railroad/industrial corridor survives surprisingly intact to illustrate the economic foundation of the community. The period of significance in this regard spans from c.1894, the date of the freight depot, to 1945, the fifty year cutoff. The buildings in question continued in industrial use up to and past the fifty year cutoff, and the industrial corridor remained the foundation of Abbeville's economy. The two rice mills are also individually eligible as rare surviving examples of their type within southwestern Louisiana.

(3) The district is significant in the area of architecture because its CBD is easily the finest in the parish, exhibiting elaborate brickwork and a range and quality of commercial buildings not found elsewhere. The period of architectural significance spans from c.1905, the date of the earliest contributing elements in the CBD, to c.1940, the date of the youngest.

(4) Finally, the district is significant in the area of community development because in it one can read much of the story of Abbeville's development. Here the period of significance spans from c.1890 (the earliest buildings in the district as a whole) to 1945 (the fifty year cutoff).

COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

As the seat of a large rural parish, downtown Abbeville obviously was a center of commerce. It provided goods and services not only to its citizens (population of 4500 in 1912) but also to the numerous rice farmers and other agriculturalists in the area.

Downtowns such as Abbeville's provided virtually all the goods and services a person could need. General mercantile stores of the type once found in various extant buildings in the CBD carried everything from clothing, to furniture, to patent medicines, to buggy harnesses. Sanborn maps and other sources reveal that Abbeville had the usual range of more specialized

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Downtown Abbeville Historic District, Vermilion Parish, LA

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commercial establishments one would expect in a good size town, as represented in the present building stock: furniture stores, hardware stores, drugstores, a bakery, the Get filling station, grocery stores, a bakery, a blacksmith shop, a Wells-Fargo freight office, a lumberyard, a jewelry store, and the very important Bank of Abbeville, which obviously provided invaluable services.

Abbeville's role as a commercial center for the surrounding agricultural area, of course, increased immeasurably with the automobile age. In this respect the CBD represents a shift that occurred in rural Louisiana's commercial history. Prior to the automobile age, the focus of commercial history in rural areas was the ubiquitous country store. Although cars were in use in Louisiana in the first decade of this century, it was the 1920s that witnessed the full-scale arrival of the automobile age, due largely to creation of the state's highway system in the early years of the decade. The comment of one rural housewife in another state on the importance of the automobile to farm folk is equally true for Louisiana. When asked to comment on the report that Americans owned more automobiles than bathtubs, she replied: "Well, you can't drive a bathtub to town." And increasingly, to town was where rural folk wanted to go. Even small towns, and certainly large ones like Abbeville, offered far more in the way of shopping amenities and other services than could the isolated country store.

INDUSTRIAL/TRANSPORTATION SIGNIFICANCE

Among the most important resources in the district is the railroad/industrial corridor, which graphically represents the foundation of the town's economy -- the railroad and the large-scale rice industry that it made possible. The original freight depot survives to represent the critical importance of the railroad in shipping agricultural products to market. A photo appearing in an 1894 publication shows it surrounded with agricultural freight. An accompanying chart shows the huge volume of what it labels "produce" that was shipped from Abbeville in the preceding year (1893). Included were sugar, cotton, rice and cotton seed.

The most important of these was rice, which, as noted previously, was the foundation of Abbeville's economy. Amazingly, the town's two rice mills survive, with one still in operation (although, one suspects, with new equipment). It should be noted that these mills were central factories which purchased rice from area farmers, processed it, and shipped it to market. Abbeville's two mills were originally independently owned and operated -- the larger known as the Planter's Rice Mill and the smaller, the Abbeville Rice Mill. In 1911 they became part of an amalgamation of 30 rice mills in southwestern Louisiana known as the Louisiana State Rice Milling Company. The present 1941 Modernistic office building was the headquarters for the firm.

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(Whether Louisiana State Rice Milling Company was headquartered in Abbeville from the beginning is uncertain.) In addition to the two surviving rice mills being important because they illustrate the foundation of Abbeville's economy, they are important as rare surviving examples of a type within the southwestern Louisiana rice belt. While there are numerous rice mills surviving in the area, it is exceedingly rare to find historic examples with any degree of integrity, much less two large brick facilities, one of which is elaborately detailed for an industrial building. The only other historic rice mills with any degree of integrity known to the SHPO are in the Crowley Historic District (NR), and in New Iberia, the Conrad Rice Mill (NR). These, however, pale in comparison to the two in Abbeville in terms of representing the large scale of the rice industry during the boom years.

Also along the railroad corridor are a wholesale grocery warehouse and a lumber shed, which obviously were built where they were to take advantage of the transportation advantages brought by the railroad.

ARCHITECTURE

The Abbeville CBD is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is by far the finest grouping of historic commercial buildings in Vermilion Parish. In fact, it is the only CBD of any size in the parish. The handful of other towns, all fairly small, have only a scattering of historic commercial buildings.

Factors that distinguish the Abbeville CBD within Vermilion Parish, besides its size, include:

(1) In contrast to the other CBDs in the parish, the majority of the commercial buildings in Abbeville are well detailed (particularly in terms of brickwork) and exhibit a recognizable architectural style (albeit a vernacular interpretation). Other CBDs in the parish are characterized almost exclusively by false front commercial buildings with little or no stylistic detailing. In this regard the district's commercial vernacular Italianate buildings are particularly important because they constitute the only such collection in the parish.

(2) The CBD's centerpiece, the Bank of Abbeville, is easily the most architecturally impressive commercial building in Vermilion Parish, and arguably, in a several parish area. It is the only commercial building with towers in the parish and one of only two non-ecclesiastical examples of the Romanesque Revival style.

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Downtown Abbeville Historic District, Vermilion Parish, LA

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The nominated district is also of local significance in the area of community development because it tells the story of much of Abbeville's development. And in so doing, it illustrates one of the various ways in which the coming of the railroad changed the face of towns in Louisiana. Many towns were literally created by the railroad, and in these towns the railroad corridor is the heart of the CBD, with a predictable pattern of commercial and residential development. In other instances, towns actually relocated to be on the railroad. The particular pattern of mixed development found in Abbeville is peculiar to towns which were already well established when the railroad arrived. That portion to the north, the CBD proper (with its commercial buildings and church -- the heart of "old Abbeville") was the sole focus of the town until the coming of the railroad in 1892. The railroad was built south of the CBD, and the area in between developed as largely residential, with the exception of the school and the fact that the commercial buildings on State Street expanded down the street to join the railroad corridor. Hence the nominated district is of special importance because it epitomizes a critical chapter in the town's development. And it should be noted that towns which developed along these lines (hybrid towns, so-to-speak) have a varied and complex building scape not found in communities created by a single mode of transportation (for example, a railroad town).

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Sanborn Insurance Company Maps, 1895, 1899, 1907, 1912, 1923, 1929, 1949 update.

Various historic photographs of buildings in district, copies in National Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Scattered early twentieth century issues of *Abbeville Meridional*.

Vermilion Historical Society, *History of Vermilion Parish, Louisiana.* Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1983.

Historic Structures Survey, Abbeville, Vermilion Parish.

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Boundary Description: See sketch map.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries were drawn to recognize the concentration of significant historic buildings as described in Part 8. They do not include all of what locals would consider historic Abbeville because of non-contributing elements. For example, there is an almost solid (over 90%) "wall" of non-contributing elements on the other side of State Street running from above Concord Street to the beginning of the district (#91) -- see map. The area immediately to the north of the district is also characterized largely by non-contributing elements, beyond which is a small residential district already listed on the Register. The area to the south of the industrial/railroad corridor has a largely modern character, and the nominated district is bounded on the west by Bayou Vermilion, an obvious natural boundary. (In any event, the area west of the bayou is modern.)

The only boundary line that requires some explanation is the "finger" that extends down to take in building #66. It was important to include the building because it the office building to the district's largest and most impressive rice mill (#65). The entire block (bounded by the railroad, First Street, Main and Washington) was not included because of the presence of non-contributing dependencies to the rice mill.

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 87000767

Date Listed: 11/7/1995

Downtown Abbeville Historic District
Property Name

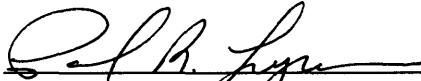
Vermilion
County

LA
State

N/A

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

6/19/00
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Resource Count:

The status of the former Iberia and Vermilion Railroad Depot [#2] is changed from a contributing building to a noncontributing building, as a result of its relocation on February 24, 2000. [see attached comments].

These revisions were confirmed with the Louisiana SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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Abbeville Historic District Additional Documentation
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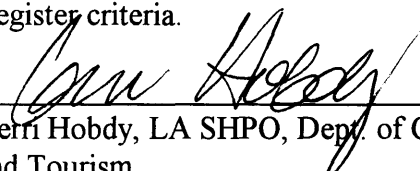
Vermilion Parish, LA

ABBEVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT, VERMILION PARISH

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Item 3

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination addendum 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 the National Register criteria.


Gerri Hobby, LA SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation
and Tourism

May 2, 2000

Date

Item 7

On February 24, 2000, an 1890s frame freight depot was moved from one location in the Abbeville National Register district to another within the same district (see map). The sole surviving reminder of Abbeville's railroad heritage, the building was truly in a "move it or lose it" situation in its historic location adjacent to the tracks. The depot is now one long block from the tracks (see map), facing the central business district. The block in which it is located was and is mainly residential. Sited on the corner of Jefferson and Lafayette streets, the depot has a historic residence to the side and rear. Its relationship to various buildings can be seen in the enclosed photos. The rail line is about 700-800 feet away and can be seen if one stands on the sidewalk of Jefferson Street. (Buildings and vegetation prevent it from being seen easily from the depot itself.)

The long vacant depot sat on land owned by Riviana Foods, a large rice corporation with historic manufacturing facilities along the railroad corridor. The land was needed for expansion, and the depot was available to anyone who would bear the expense of moving it. Local attorney Charles Sonnier decided to take on the project in order to save the building.

As part of the move, Mr. Sonnier removed roughly twenty feet at the rear (see annotated

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photo copy) because it appeared to him to be an addition to the original depot – chiefly due to a change in the width of the clapboards. The exact evolution of the depot's rear portion will never be known. The Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office staff did not have the occasion to examine the building carefully in its old location and at this point is relying upon "before" photos. The only known historic photo of the building (from 1894) is taken at a very oblique angle. Suffice it to say, it is clear that something happened at the rear – either an addition or a reworking (one suspects the former). The clapboard width does change -- beginning at the point where a freight door was removed and continuing to the end of the building (see annotated photo). The fact that a freight door was removed is evident on the interior, where the framing survives. One suspects that the removed door was reused at the very end of the building, where there is a freight door lower than the others and without a transom.

But except for the change in clapboard width and the lower freight door, the rear section that was removed read as a continuation of the depot -- same roofline and the same brackets. (See "before" photos.) In addition to not being able to document the exact nature of the work at the rear, it is not known when it occurred, although it gives every appearance of meeting the Register's definition of historic (more than fifty years old).

With the exception of this removal and the dismantling of the loading docks, the depot was moved in one piece. The loading platforms are being rebuilt using materials saved from their dismantling. The new rear elevation was covered in materials salvaged from the portion removed, and in addition, there is some patching on the sides toward the rear (where the freight doors were located), again using salvaged material. The building's interior retains the unfinished appearance one would expect of a freight depot. The only exception is a small office at the front which is sheathed in beaded boards and has a wainscot. (For the record, the office has been sandblasted, but this was done several years ago.)

Mr. Sonnier is asking that the depot retain its Register status in its new location so that he can apply for the 20% tax credit to help offset renovation expenses. He plans to open the building as a local museum and retail establishment offering Louisiana products and crafts.

Per National Register guidelines, the new location admittedly is not compatible with the historic one (i.e., not appropriate for a depot); however, it should be noted that the options were extremely limited in this case. The land along the south side of the tracks in the downtown is owned by Riviana Foods and/or is occupied by historic buildings. On the north side (from west to east) is a modern commercial building, a cemetery, a school board complex (between Washington

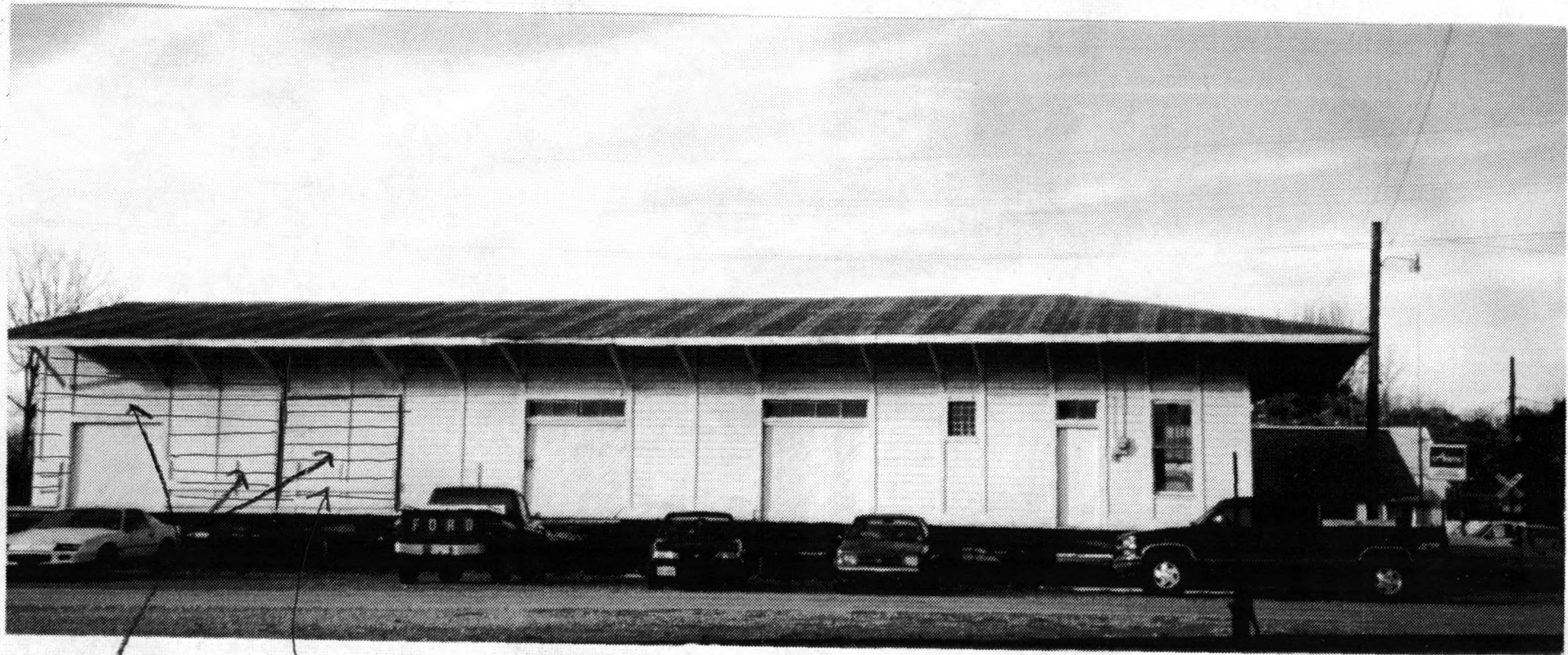
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and Jefferson) and then more buildings. The only vacant piece of land adjacent to the tracks (and not part of the Riviana Foods industrial complex or the school board complex) is a small parcel between the cemetery and the railroad. This would have been the only compatible new location available in the downtown. However, it was not the individual who owned this land who was willing to take on the expense of moving and restoring the depot. In order to save the building, Mr. Sonnier moved it to property he already owned.

In so doing he was able to save the sole surviving resource directly associated with the railroad – a critical force in the development of Abbeville. Located on the Vermilion River, the town traces its founding to 1843. Abbeville, however, was small and grew slowly until the arrive of the Iberia and Vermilion Railroad (soon to be Southern Pacific) in 1892. With the coming of the railroad, Abbeville emerged as a major rice processing center. Because of the railroad and the rice boom it made possible, the town grew rapidly (from a population of 1200 in 1895 to 2500 in 1907) and prospered greatly. The freight depot in question, which appears in an 1894 publication, dates from the very arrival of the railroad. This is quite a rarity because first generation depots are virtually unheard of in Louisiana. Sanborn maps show that Abbeville also had a freight depot, but it is long gone.



area w/
harrow
clipboards

removed freight door (on each side)

Abbeville Historic District Additional Documentation
Vermilion Parish, LA

Depot in historic location

Downtown Abbeville Historic District

Vermilion Parish,
Louisiana.

--- BOUNDARY

■ Contributing
⊠ Non-contributing

1" = @ 100'

former depot
location

new depot
location

