

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 5 1979
DATE ENTERED	JUL 24 1979

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Old Castillo Hotel

AND/OR COMMON

Mercy High School

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

220 Port Street

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

St. Martinville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

7th-John Breaux

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Louisiana

22

St. Martin Parish

099

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Corporation of the Sisters of Mercy of Louisiana

STREET & NUMBER

1017 St. Andrew Street

CITY, TOWN

New Orleans

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Louisiana

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

St. Martin Parish Courthouse, Clerk of Court's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

St. Martinville

STATE

Louisiana

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Louisiana Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1979

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Baton Rouge

STATE

Louisiana

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old Castillo Hotel is set on the west bank of Bayou Teche near the center of St. Martinville.

Originally it was built as a two and one half story, brick bearing wall building with a central hall plan and a one-story gallery in front. The following changes have been made:

- 1) The front gallery, which was surmounted by a second floor balcony, has been removed due to rot.
- 2) Two of the interior walls have been moved to provide for a large classroom on each side of the downstairs central hall, and a small principal's office and bathroom.
- 3) The elliptical fan-lighted front door was moved over one bay towards the center of the house, and a decorative door from has been added around it.
- 4) All chimneys and mantels have been removed.
- 5) A rear wing has been added.
- 6) The front French doors, which originally characterized both stories of the facade, have been replaced by ordinary sash windows with paneled infill below.

Despite these changes, many salient features of the original building remain. These include the form and basic shape of the building, the bay pattern, the structure, and most of the windows. Much of the detailing also remains, including the three handsome Federal dormers, many of the interior door and window frames, and the roofline frieze. The entire frame structure also remains.

In any case the present owners have every intention of returning the hotel to its original facade appearance. In addition the interior restoration architect Robert Smith (vita enclosed) has indicated that despite the altered facade, restoration would be relatively easy.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

ca. 1835

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Jean Pierre Vasseur, builder

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Castillo Hotel is of commercial and social significance because it is the only surviving example of the type of hotel which served the steamboat trade on Bayou Teche during the era of steamboat transportation. Steamboat travellers stayed there, along with other visitors to St. Martinville, which in this period was a fashionable resort as well as a commercial focal point. In addition, the hotel served the community as a restaurant and tavern, and as a setting for community activities, including balls, parties, and banquets. Today it is generally recognized by local citizens as a historical landmark reflecting St. Martinville's heritage as a steamboat town.

Extensive research into court records and old newspapers indicates that this building was probably constructed between 1835 and 1840 as a residence or business-residence combination by Jean Pierre Vasseur, a local merchant. Vasseur advertised in the Attakapas Gazette (December 19, 1840) the opening of the Union Ballroom (Salle de l'Union), "handsomely decorated and furnished," offering "an excellent room with a good fire...especially for the use of the ladies as a dressing room. Another room with a fire for gentlemen who may wish to retire to play at domino (sic) or other games." The ad announced that a gumbo would be served in the "grand hall" and "liquors of the first quality" would be furnished at the bar. An invitation, addressed to a "Madame Veuve Veillon et sa Famille" dated January 12, 1841, requests their presence at "le Bal de Societe" to be held at "Salle de l'Union chez Vasseur" in St. Martinville on January 23, 1841.

Court records and census records indicate that the building was owned by Charles Dutel from 1843 to 1850, at which time it was sold to Don Louis Broussard who continued the operation of the hotel to 1858. From 1858 to 1876, the brothers Anton and Wilhelm Hesse owned and managed the establishment known under their stewardship as "Maison des Allemands." During these Civil War years, the building continued to serve as a meeting place and focal point for community activities.

Under the succeeding ownership of Charles Gauthier, the Charles Gauthier Estate, and Stanislas Dabadie (1876-1899), the building reached its foremost significance. It was during this period that Delia Greig Castillo, widow of a well-known steamboat captain, Edmond Castillo, undertook the management, and the hotel soon became known for its fine hospitality.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Davis, Edwin A. Louisiana, A Narrative History. Baton Rouge, Claiborne Book Store, 1965, p. 295.
- Davis, Edwin A. Louisiana, The Pelican State. Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1959, p. 246.
- Fortier, Alcee. Acadians of Louisiana and Their Dialect. Baltimore, 1891.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME \_\_\_\_\_

QUADRANGLE SCALE \_\_\_\_\_

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,5 6,1,2,9,5,0 3,3,3,2,6,2,5

B               

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C               

D               

E               

F               

G               

H               

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Old Castillo Hotel is bounded on the north by Port Street, on the south by New Market Street, on the east by the Bayou Teche, on the west by St. Martin Street.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marian T. Barras and Jane G. Bulliard

ORGANIZATION

DATE

June 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

415 Port Street

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

St. Martinville

Louisiana

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE     

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Donald Lamar*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

6/22/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Charles A. Henry*  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 7-24-79

DATE 7/20/79

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In 1885, Madame Castillo's granddaughter, Eva Bonin, was married to Alphonse Guerin, who first distinguished himself locally when he was appointed librarian for a subscription library which was established at the hotel. Guerin, a gourmet cook by avocation, brought fame to the hotel and the St. Martinville area by catering banquets and dinners which were praised in area news media for the originality of the menus and the expertise of the cook.

In the spring of 1887, Charles Dudley Warner, noted journalist, described in Harper's New Monthly Magazine his visit to the hotel.

When St. Martinville was again visited by a noted writer in 1890, the Castillo Hotel was the only hotel in town. Dr. Alcee Fortier, distinguished educator and historian, chronicles his overnight stay at the hotel in his article "Acadians of Louisiana and Their Dialect." The hotel is mentioned in an excerpt from this article used by Edwin A. Davis in compiling his textbook on Louisiana history which is still in use today.

The death of Madame Castillo in April, 1899 brought a close to the hotel era of the building. A month later, the property was purchased by the Sisters of Mercy for the purpose of expanding their educational facilities which already encompassed most of that block. For the past eighty years this building has housed Mercy High School.

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Johnson, Margaret Avery. In Acadia. New Orleans, Hansell, 1893, p. 62.

Perrin, William Henry. Southwest Louisiana, Biographical and Historical. New Orleans, Gulf Publishing Company, 1891, p. 71.

Warner, Charles Dudley. "The Acadian Land." Harpers New Monthly Magazine, New York, February, 1887, v. 74, pp. 334-354.

NEWSPAPERS

Attakapas Gazette and St. Mary, St. Martin and Lafayette Advertiser. December 19, 1840.

Weekly Messenger. St. Martinville, Louisiana. 1886-1936.

OTHER SOURCES

Annals of the Sisters of Mercy. Manuscript. Volumes: 1881-1919.

Court Records: Various Conveyance, Mortgage and Estate Files. St. Martin Parish Courthouse. St. Martinville, Louisiana.

Voorhies, Edward. Private files. St. Martinville, Louisiana.