

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

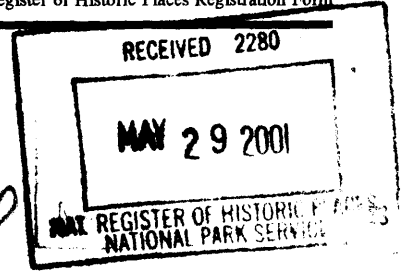
OMB No. 1024-0018

Bernard, Joseph D. House, Rayne, Acadia Parish, LA

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119 RESUB

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Bernard, Joseph D. House

Other Name/Site Number: Bernard-Bertrand House

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 1023 The Boulevard

Not for publication: NA

City/Town: Rayne

Vicinity: NA

State: Louisiana Code: LA County: Acadia

Code: 001

Zip Code: 70578

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: Statewide: Locally: X

Signature of Certifying Official/Title Gerri Hobdy, LA SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

January 8, 2001 Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official/Title

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
Determined eligible for the National Register
Determined not eligible for the National Register
Removed from the National Register
Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper (Handwritten: Joseph D. Bernard)

Date of Action (Handwritten: 6/29/01)

5. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property
Private:
Public-Local: X
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Category of Property
Building(s): X
District:
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing
1

Noncontributing
buildings
sites
structures
objects
0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: NA

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling

Current: Recreation and Culture Sub: Museum

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Italianate

Materials:

Foundation: concrete

Walls: weatherboard

Roof: asbestos

Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Located in the Acadia Parish town of Rayne, the Joseph D. Bernard House is a one-and-one-half-story frame cottage constructed in 1881. A restrained, vernacular version of the Italianate style, the house was moved about a mile in 1999 from downtown Rayne to the southwest corner of a busy intersection near Interstate 10. Despite this relocation and various alterations (mostly historic), the home remains eligible for National Register listing.

The Move:

Sanborn Fire Insurance maps illustrate that during the historic period (the last map is from 1949) the viewsheds from the Bernard House's original block were of a mixed commercial/residential nature. The house originally faced east on a downtown block owned by merchant and mayor Joseph D. Bernard. Bernard purchased this block in April 1881, and the house appears appropriate to that date. In 1898 (the year of the first Sanborn map for Rayne), the front porch overlooked the rear elevations of a line of commercial buildings. Immediately to the north were more commercial buildings (again the rear elevations). (The block is on the edge of the one-page 1898 map, and the areas to the west and south are not included (to the rear and side of the house, respectively).

In 1918 Bernard sold the home to E. J. Bertrand, who shortly after the purchase had the house turned 90 degrees so that it then faced south. Later Bertrand had the house moved a second time (to the southwest corner of the block, still facing south) and moved a rental house onto the block. The first Sanborn map to document the house in its south-facing position is from 1926. As before, the view to the east and north from the parcel of land is of the rear elevations of commercial buildings. Sitting on the front porch looking south/southwest, one would have seen residences, but off to the southeast immediately across the street was a small feed warehouse. On the west side of the lot, across Wiltz Street, were residences. The overall environment was roughly the same on the 1933 map. But by the time of the 1949 update, the block immediately across the street (the viewshed from the front) was occupied by a house and a fire station. Immediately beyond to the east, within the viewshed from the front porch, were stores and a used auto lot.

By 1999, the year of the move, the house was surrounded on two sides within its block by a bank and parking lots. (Present-day views of the block and viewsheds from the block are enclosed.) The bank also owned the house and wanted to build a support facility on its site. Aware of the home's historical importance, bank officials offered it to the City of Rayne, with the proviso that it be moved. Concerned with saving a dwelling they considered to be the home of a founding father, city officials accepted the offer. Had they not, the bank would have demolished the building. (A pre-fabricated bank annex now stands on the site - see photos.) The city moved the dwelling intact about a mile to a piece of vacant property under municipal ownership and converted the building into a museum.

The new location is about a half mile from Interstate 10 on a four-lane thoroughfare leading from downtown to the interstate. The house was carefully placed so that its relationship to nearby trees is similar to that of its final Bernard Block site. As a result, the view of the home's facade and front yard from the street is residential in nature. And the trees in the front help screen the house from adjacent development. Across the street is a gas station (although largely screened from the house by trees). To the west is a parking lot for the candidate and then a brick chamber of commerce building. To the south is a parking lot for the candidate and then a parcel of vacant land. To the north is a street and then a non-historic commercial building.

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The Building:

The original portion of the dwelling consists of a galleried cottage with gabled ends. Italianate motifs found on the facade include boxed gallery columns whose capitals feature heavily layered molding and necking and a four paneled door whose top two panels are arched. This door is accompanied by a four-pane transom and three-pane sidelights which rise above molded wood panels. The boxed columns support a rough entablature which does not wrap around the gallery's sides. The plan is composed of a narrow central hall with two rooms on each side. The two rear rooms are not as deep as those facing the street. Mantels for three coal burning fireplaces – one in the parlor, one in the bedroom behind it, and one in the central hall – share a single flue. The parlor's mantel features Italianate pilasters supporting a simple mantel shelf.

The house appears to have been remodeled at least twice. The first changes occurred during Bernard's ownership and are visible on the 1903 Sanborn map. They include the installation of a bay window (with molded decorative panels below the sashes) on one side of the facade (the window opens into the parlor), the addition of a dining room and kitchen wing to the rear of the home, and the construction of a porch paralleling one side of the addition.

A later set of alterations probably dates to c. 1918 or shortly thereafter. Presumably they were made by second owner E. J. Bertrand. They include:

1. the re-surfacing of some interior walls with masonite panels.
2. the conversion of one original back room into a bath.
3. the re-working of the roof to feature the overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, and brackets associated with the Craftsman/Bungalow style. At this time the chimney was removed above the roof line and two of the fireplaces were sealed. The third received a gas stove for heating. The removal of two original wooden mantels and their replacement with brick mantels suggestive of the bungalow style may also have occurred during this project. (The brick mantels were rebuilt as part of the move.)
4. the decoration of the dining room with a Craftsman style wainscot approximately six feet in height and a boxed, beamed ceiling. Interestingly, the cased opening which connects the central hall to the dining room contains two wooden piers with recessed panels, but no columns rise from the piers to support the opening's horizontal casing as one might expect.
5. the enclosure and expansion of the side porch. Also, the attic may have been finished at this time, for its gable end windows resemble those found on the porch expansion.

Alterations associated with the 1999 move include the construction of a handicap ramp on one side of the building, the partial reconfiguration of the bath to provide for storage, and the construction of a staircase to the attic. Previously, this space had been reached by a ladder which rose from a small landing next to the central hall.

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Assessment of Integrity

None of the foregoing changes to the physical fabric of the house are serious enough to negatively impact its National Register eligibility. The original exterior architectural character of the house easily overwhelms the Craftsman/Bungalow style roofline features. Hence there is no doubt that Joseph D. Bernard would recognize the building if he were shown the home today. In terms of the move, the house was truly in a "move it or lose it" situation. And, very importantly, the new setting is not as dramatically different from the old one as might be thought. To summarize, the viewsheds during the historic period were of a mixed commercial/residential nature, and some were less than optimal. The same was true of the viewsheds in 1999 when the house was moved (see enclosed sketch map and photos). As the only surviving resource associated with a town founder and early mayor, the house is a legitimate candidate for National Register listing.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable National Register Criteria: A_ B X C_ D_

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A_ B X C_ D_ E_ F_ G_

Areas of Significance: Exploration/Settlement; Politics/Government

Period(s) of Significance: 1881 - 1918

Significant Dates: 1881

Significant Person(s): Bernard, Joseph D.

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Unknown

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The Joseph D. Bernard House is locally significant in the areas of Exploration/Settlement and Politics/Government because it is the only surviving resource associated with Bernard, a co-founder and the first mayor of the town of Rayne. The home's period of significance ranges from 1881, the date of construction, to 1918, the year Bernard sold the residence.

Like many towns across Louisiana, Rayne came into being when the railroad arrived in the area. In 1880, the Louisiana Western Railroad bypassed the nearby hamlet of Pouppeville, where three merchants (Bernard, M. Arenas and Francois Crouchet) had businesses. Dr. William H. Cunningham, a railroad employee, purchased land along the route and established a new town named Rayne Station after railroad official B. W. L. Rayne. Town lots went on sale in November 1880. As occurred so often in similar cases, Bernard and his two fellow merchants relocated their stores to the new community, as did church officials with their building. The town incorporated on March 20, 1883, and Bernard was appointed to serve a two year term as the community's first mayor. Five councilmen, a town clerk and a town marshal were available to assist him. Because all Town Council records prior to July 1886 were destroyed by a fire, it is impossible to obtain an exact accounting of Bernard's activities as mayor. However, a newly formed community has a number of needs, and research into the activities of the City of Westwego's first mayor, Conrad A. Buchler (for the National Register nomination of his home), has identified some of these issues.

First, it would have been necessary to organize town government, provide the supplies and equipment it needed to function, and find a place in which it could be housed. The first town hall was probably a rented facility, but by March 1885 the community boasted its own large town hall. Another immediate problem would have centered upon fiscal issues, i.e., setting salaries for public workers; opening a bank account for the town; passing statutes designed to attract new businesses and industries to the vicinity; and providing revenue through taxes, fees and fines. Municipal improvements would also have been a major focus, as towns must provide safe streets and sidewalks and keep them in repair. Health and safety issues, such as the provision of a safe water source, would also have been addressed. Ordinances providing for other needs, as well as those defining and punishing various forms of lawless behavior, were required. Fortunately, the town charter gave officials the power to enact whatever laws and regulations they thought necessary.

Bernard's term as mayor ended in the spring of 1885. Around that time the editor of the Crowley (the Acadia Parish seat) newspaper visited Rayne.

He reported . . . that he had heard of the rapid growth and development of the place, but "was not prepared for the wonderful development" which he had witnessed. . . .

"Now it is an incorporated town whose limits cover a mile and a half square, with commodious business houses fronting on each side of the Louisiana Western Railroad and neat residences spreading in every direction, facing well-graded streets and forming the pleasant home of about 600 as hospitable, energetic and thrifty inhabitants as occupy any country."

Obviously, Bernard did not personally cause this boom. However, the mayor and his administration did lay the foundation for the town. Clearly, Bernard was mayor at a critical time in the town's history -- the period of its birth. For this reason, as well as for his status as one of the area's first three businessmen, Rayne citizens honor Joseph D. Bernard as a community founder and city officials deem it important to preserve his

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home.

NOTE:

Bernard continued to serve intermittently on the Town Council after his retirement as mayor and was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives for two terms (1888-1892). In 1907 he was serving as a director of the Commercial Bank. He sold his home to the Bertrand family in 1918 and died the following year.

Other Buildings Associated with Joseph D. Bernard

Other properties associated with Bernard in Rayne would have been the community's first town hall and Bernard's business establishment. Both have been lost. Between 1895 and 1920 the town's central business district suffered a series of disastrous fires. Many of the early commercial and public buildings (all of which were of frame construction) were destroyed, and those which survived were replaced by masonry structures as soon as their owners could afford to do so. Only Bernard's house survives to represent his contribution to the establishment and early growth of Rayne.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Fontenot, Mary Alice and Rev. Paul B. Freeland. *Acadia Parish, Louisiana: A History to 1900*. Baton Rouge, LA.: Claitor's Publishing Division, n.d.

Fontenot, Mary Alice. *Acadia Parish, Louisiana: A History to 1920, Volume II*. Lafayette, LA: Acadiana Press, 1979.

Gossen, C. Timothy. "The E. J. Bertrand House." Manuscript, 1989; copy in National Register file.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Rayne, Louisiana, 1898, 1903, 1909, 1926, 1933, 1949 update.

Site visit by National Register staff.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- 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 (Specify Repository):

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Less than an acre

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**
 15 570240 3346250

Verbal Boundary Description: Please see attached sketch map.

Boundary Justification:

Because the building has been moved, there are no historic boundaries to recognize. The nomination's boundaries have been cut very close to the building on the south and west sides in order to exclude nearby asphalt parking lots. They follow adjacent streets on the north and east sides in order to include the trees and lawn which reinforce the building's domestic appearance.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: National Register staff

Address: Division of Historic Preservation, P. O. Box 44247, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Telephone: (225) 342-8160

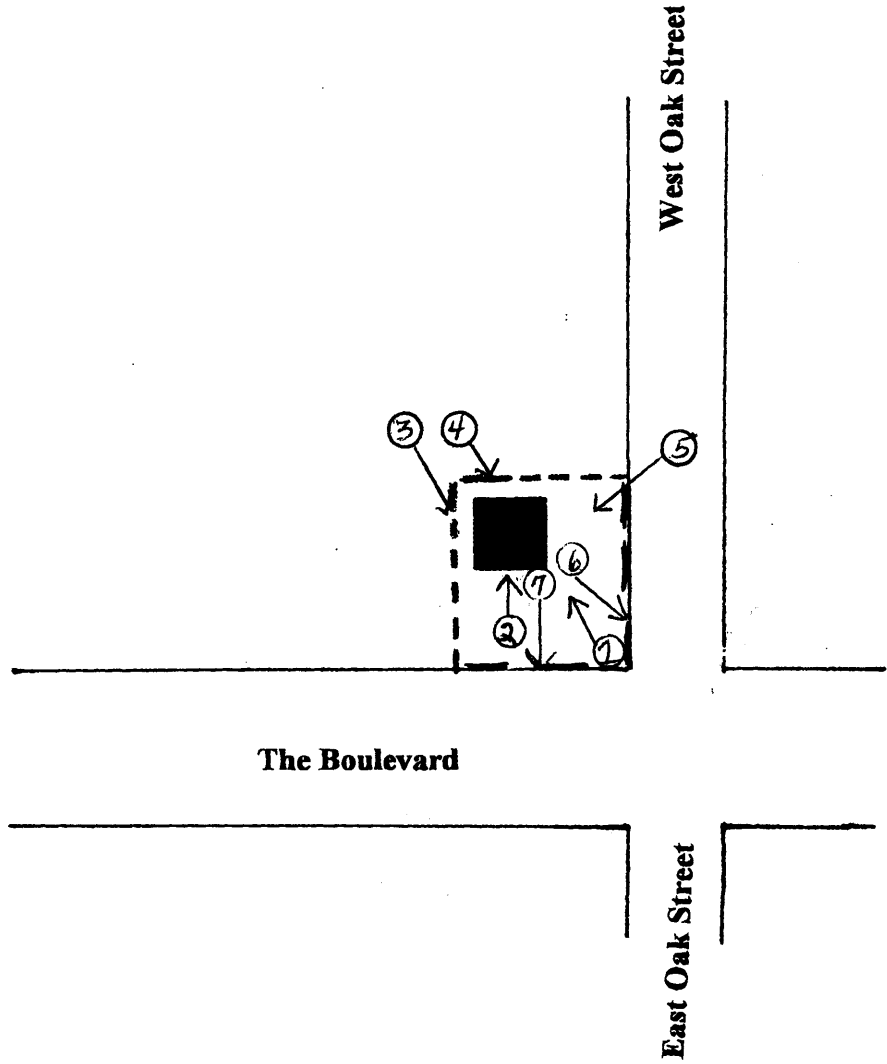
Date: September 2000

PROPERTY OWNERS

City of Rayne
801 The Boulevard
P. O. Box 69
Rayne, Louisiana 70578
(337) 334-3121


NOTE: Museum telephone number is (337) 334-8347, Cheryl McCarty, Cultural Director, City of Rayne

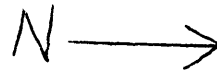
JOSEPH D. BERNARD HOUSE
Rayne, Acadia Parish, LA



Boundary: - - - -

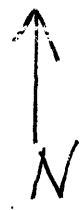
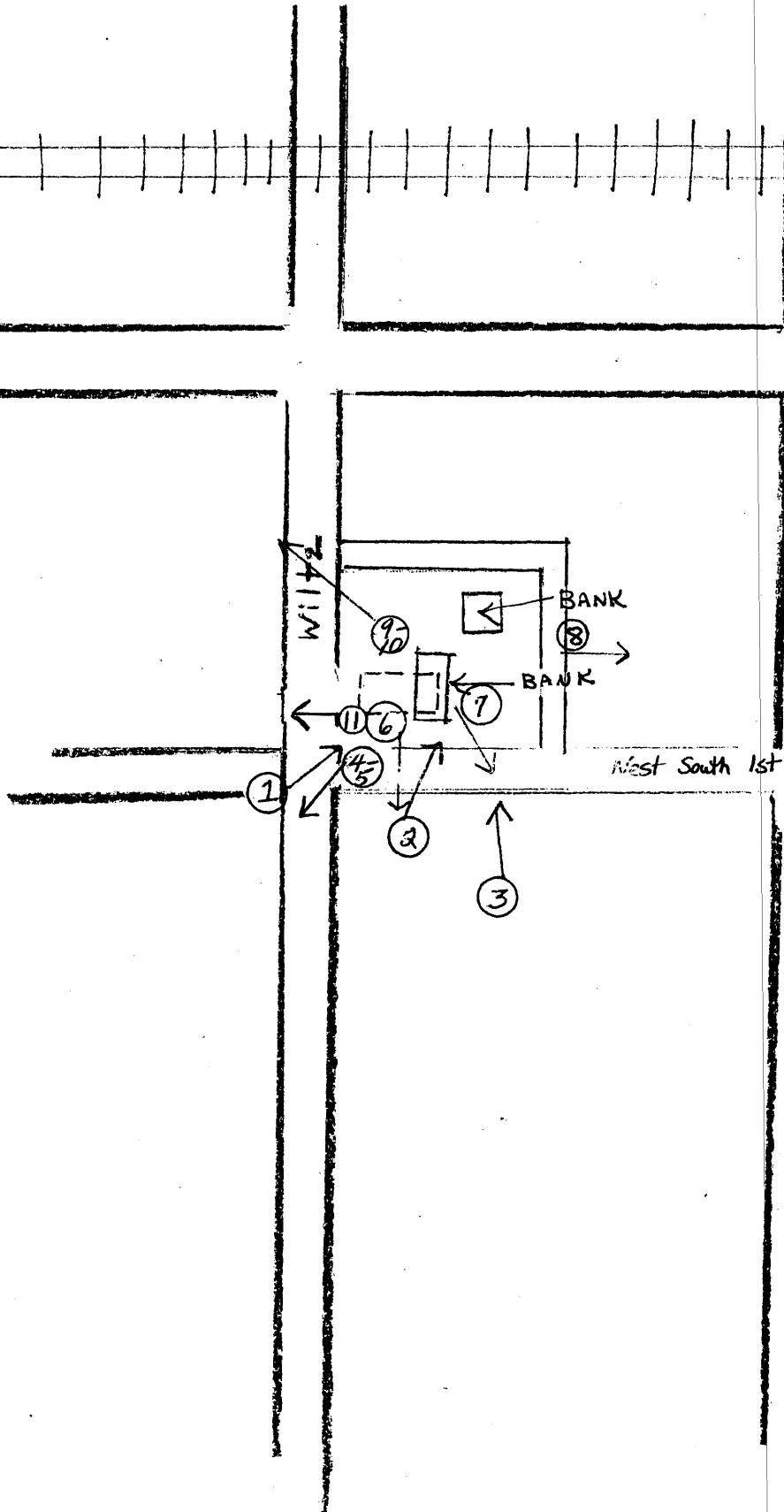
Scale: 1" = 60'

House: 



Bernard House
Rayne, Acadia Parish, LA

Sketch map showing original block
where house located



not to scale

house location