

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bordelonville Floodgate
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number LA Hwy 451
city, town Bordelonville
state Louisiana code LA county Avoyelles code 009 zip code 71320

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private, public-local (checked), public-State, public-Federal
Category of Property: building(s), district, site, structure (checked), object
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing (1), Noncontributing (0)
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination (checked) 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 (checked) meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: Leslie P. Tassin, LA SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
Date: February 4, 1991

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official
Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
Entered in the National Register (checked)
determined eligible for the National Register
determined not eligible for the National Register
removed from the National Register
other, (explain:)
Entered in the National Register (checked)
Signature of the Keeper: [Signature]
Date of Action: 3/14/91

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: flood control (floodgate)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls concrete

roof N/A

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Bordelonville Floodgate is a reinforced concrete structure built between 1929 and 1931. It served as the focus of a system of levees designed to protect the Bayou des Glaises vicinity and other areas from the floodwaters of the Atchafalaya spillway. It is located on the Bayou des Glaises levee about two miles east of the town of Bordelonville. In 1979 a reinforced levee was built around the bayou side of the gate, thus making it redundant. Despite this change in setting, the gate itself is completely intact. It therefore retains its National Register eligibility.

The floodgate controls the flow of water from the Atchafalaya spillway through to a diversion channel. Set within the mass of the Bayou des Glaises levee, the structure consists of a forward catch chamber with massive guide walls and a pair of lift gates. The metal gates are raised by chains on two foot diameter pulleys which are mounted in a platform surmounting the structure. The platform derives additional support from heavy brackets. The chains are connected to concrete weights which counterbalance the weight of the gates and thus facilitate lifting. Above the platform is a system of open-work piers and beams whose function appears to have been to add weight and architectural flair to the structure. The gate incorporates a single lane concrete vehicular bridge on its west side.

In addition to the above mentioned change in setting, the floodgate has been fitted with chain link fencing around the platform to keep trespassers off. In our view, these changes have not significantly impacted the gate's historic appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

conservation

Period of Significance

1931-40

Significant Dates

1931-40

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Bordelonville Floodgate is of state significance in the area of conservation as an early component, and a tangible reminder, of the beginning of a highly successful flood control system which has protected much of Louisiana since the late 1920s.

Flooding in the lower Mississippi River region has long been a concern of both citizens and government. As early as 1727 New Orleans had a protective levee a mile long and a yard high. Post-Civil War concerns about flooding and navigation in the Mississippi Valley led to the creation of the Mississippi River Commission in 1879. The Commission took the view that a system of high levees combined with dredging would be sufficient to control the river system. This approach was implemented over the succeeding decades, and by the 1920s it was thought that the problem of Mississippi River flooding had been largely solved. However, a series of disastrous floods in 1927 showed that levees and dredging alone were not enough. The surging river overran and broke through the levee system at various points, and the levee at Poydras Plantation actually had to be dynamited to prevent flooding of New Orleans.

In the wake of this, Congress passed the Flood Control Act of 1928 which mandated the adoption of a new flood control plan by Mgr. General Edgar Jadwin. The Jadwin Plan called for a series of spillways or "fuse plugs" which would drain away excess water when the rising river threatened the levees. Two floodways were established in Louisiana--one at Bonne Carre above New Orleans and the other through the Atchafalaya Basin. Although floodways were envisioned as taking advantage of natural passages to the Gulf of Mexico, there was some attempt to protect nearby farmland and developed areas from the spill water. The Bordelonville Floodgate was an example of this. It was built by the state of Louisiana and the Red River, Atchafalaya and Bayou Boeuf Levee Board between 1929 and 1931 under a cooperative agreement with the Chief of Engineers of the U. S. Army. In return for the state and levee board constructing the floodgate, the army built the necessary levees to protect the Big Bend-Bayou des Glaisses region. The purpose of the floodgate was to channel backwater from the Mississippi down a diversion canal, past the Big Bend area, and south into the Atchafalaya Floodway

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Saucier, Corinne L. History of Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana. New Orleans: Pelican Publishing Co., 1943.

Cowdrey, Albert E. Land's End: A History of the New Orleans District U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, and its Lifelong Battle With the Lower Mississippi and Other Rivers Winding Their Way to the Sea. U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, 1977.

Bordelonville Floodgate Closure, General Design Memorandum, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, January 1983.

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property @ 1 acre

UTM References

A

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

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Please refer to enclosed sketch map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Boundaries were chosen to encompass the extent of the significant resource.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date November 1990

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

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Bordelonville Floodgate, Avoyelles Parish, LA

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between Hamburg and Simmesport. The Bordelonville gate was one of the first water control gates constructed under the new spillway approach to flood control. It was the focus of a local system of levees which protected over 40,000 acres from overflow, including the thickly populated area around Bayou des Glaises. The Bordelonville floodgate served its original purpose until 1979 when it was enclosed by a new levee and made redundant.

Period of Significance:

The fifty year cutoff is being used for the ending date because the floodgate continued in the significant role described above until 1979.

BORDELONVILLE
FLOODGATE,
AVOYELLES
PARISH,
LA.

SCALE 1"=80'

