

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

SEP 25 2001

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

Lancon, Hilaire, House, St. Mary Parish

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1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Lancon, Hilaire, House

Other Name/Site Number:

1210 Sub Ref requested

2. LOCATION

Street & Number 3934 Irish Bend Road

Not for publication: NA

City/Town Franklin

Vicinity: X

State: Louisiana Code: LA County: St. Mary Code: 101 Zip Code: 70538

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

Jonathan Fricker
Signature of Certifying Official/Title
LA Deputy SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

September 20, 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):

Entered in the National Register 11-9-01

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. CLASSIFICATION

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

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

Number of Resources within Property

- Contributing
1
1

- Non contributing
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: domestic Sub: single dwelling

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: no style

Materials:

Foundation: brick
Walls: weatherboard
Roof: metal
Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Hilaire Lancon House is a small mid-nineteenth century frame galleried cottage located on Bayou Teche near the town of Franklin in St. Mary Parish. It was moved to this location in 1993 from a similar rural setting elsewhere in the parish. Because of the house's deteriorated and altered condition prior to the move, an appreciable amount of architectural fabric and features had to be replaced. The replacement was done very sensitively using cypress (the original building material) and old glass.

Because the Lancon House is very simple and features no stylistic clues, it is impossible to date within a small window of time from the architectural evidence. Given its mortise and tenon construction and square nails and its central hall plan, mid-nineteenth century is the best time frame that can be given (probably earlier than later). A circa 1850 date is being used for the purposes of this nomination.

The house's gable end roofline had been severely modified in the original location; the present roofline was constructed based on the surviving evidence as well as knowledge of what would have been typical for such a house. Both the front and rear galleries were gone. The present galleries are conjectural based upon what would have been typical. The weatherboard on the façade (facing Bayou Teche) is original, while that on the other three elevations was deteriorated beyond repair. Some of the six over six window sashes are original, while others had to be replaced.

The house has a central hall plan with two rooms on each side. (One of the rooms has been subdivided for a bathroom.) The plan is marked on the exterior, front and back, with a central opening with a transom and side lights. A door and window are located to each side of the central entrance on the front elevation (Bayou Teche). At the rear the openings are a central entrance with a door to each side. All of the present French doors were added as part of the restoration, including those in the central entrances. One assumes that the entrances would not have had French doors originally – such a treatment would have been most unusual. Originally the doorways to each side of the central entrances (now filled with French doors) were covered only by batten shutters. The latter are still in place.

The interior retains most of its historic character and materials. The walls and ceiling in the hall are covered in fairly wide boards held in place with square nails. The rooms to each side feature a similar treatment, but the boards are narrower and are held in place with round head nails (the latter indicating a date of after 1880 roughly). Door and window frames are simple planks. About 50% of the plank doors are original – the others are replications. The chimneys, of course, had to be rebuilt as part of the move. The fireplaces no longer had any mantels – the present traditional style mantels were added as part of the restoration. A very steep stair with no balustrade accessed what was originally an unfinished attic. The attic has been finished off and a sympathetic balustrade added.

The Move:

The house was moved from one rural location to another within the same parish. It was originally situated on Bayou Cypremort about twenty miles from the present location on Bayou Teche. The body of the house (below the altered roofline) was moved in one piece.

Assessment of Integrity:

Because of the compatibility of the new setting, the move is not an integrity issue. However,

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National Register guidelines do consider materials to be a major aspect of evaluating integrity for properties nominated for their architectural significance. Because of the condition in which the present owner found the Lancon House, the restoration involved considerable replacement of architectural fabric and features, chiefly on the exterior, as explained above. Surviving historic features/fabric include the walls (their framing) and the pattern of openings (at least below the roofline), the weatherboards on the façade, the shutters, some of the window sashes, the floorplan (except for one room being subdivided), the sheathing of the walls and ceilings, interior door and window frames, and about half of the interior doors.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable National Register Criteria: A__ B__ C X D__

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A__ B X C__ D__ E__ F__ G__

Areas of Significance: architecture

Period(s) of Significance: c.1850

Significant Dates: c.1850

Significant Person(s): NA

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 Hilaire Lancon House is of local significance as one of a limited number of vernacular houses to represent what would have been typical in St. Mary Parish in the mid-nineteenth century.

In contrast to the rest of South Louisiana, which is known for its French Creole architecture, St. Mary Parish is renowned for its many major examples of the Greek Revival style. The parish was formed in 1811, and its parish seat, Franklin, founded in 1808. The booming antebellum economy was based largely upon sugarcane, and area planters were among the wealthiest of the wealthy. They built impressive residences on their plantations and within the town of Franklin. Today this special heritage is represented by at least eighteen large Greek Revival residences as well as numerous lesser examples (but nonetheless important).

But because old house enthusiasts tend to preserve the special rather than the typical, examples of the latter have not survived as well. Small vernacular cottages like the Lancon House were, of course, historically far more common than grand or even medium-sized Greek Revival houses. The rescue of a house such as this helps the parish convey a fuller range of architectural archetypes. While there has been no survey to determine exactly how many houses similar to the Lancon House survive in St. Mary Parish, a good general estimate can be made from a 1990s survey of antebellum homes made by local preservationist Dr. Thomas F. Kramer. Dr. Kramer recorded 47 antebellum homes, all but two of which were in Franklin and vicinity (by far the area of highest probability). Of the 47, three-fourths or more are either two story houses or good-sized one story cottages with a notable amount of architectural embellishment. About a dozen are comparable in size and character to the candidate. Given staff knowledge of the rest of St. Mary Parish, this number would not be considerably higher for the entire parish (probably not doubled).

Historical Note:

(from summary provided by owner, based on research in the Weeks Family Papers and conveyance records)

The Hilaire Lancon House was built circa 1848 by William Fredrick Weeks and Alfred Charles Weeks on the Cypremort Prairie. It was on land connected to their Grand Cote sugar plantation by a canal through the marsh. It is believed that the brothers stayed in the house occasionally when working in the area. It was not the primary residence of either man. It was sold to J. M. Burguires in 1877 and he sold it within the year to Hilaire Lancon, who lived there until his death in 1913.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Kramer, Thomas F. "Grandeur on the Bayou: The Antebellum Homes of the Franklin, Louisiana Area." Privately published, 1997. This booklet includes a photo of each house and a brief writeup.

Historical sketch submitted by owner, based on research in Weeks Family Papers and St. Mary Parish Conveyance Records.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- ___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ Previously Listed in the National Register. (partially)
___ 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:

- [X] State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
___ Local Government
___ University
___ Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreeage of Property: less than an acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing
15 646100 3302480

Verbal Boundary Description: Boundaries parallel building elevations, each at a distance of ten feet.

Boundary Justification: There is no historic setting to recognize for this moved house. Hence the boundaries cut closely around the house.

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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: August 2001

PROPERTY OWNERS

Stephen & Suzanne Stirling
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