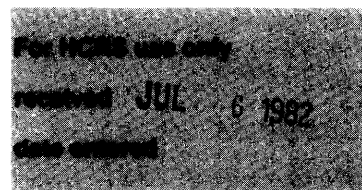


United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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 The Lemann Store

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 314 Mississippi Street N/A not for publication

city, town Donaldsonville N/A vicinity of congressional district 8th—Gillis Long

state Louisiana code 22 county Ascension Parish code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name B. Lemann & Bro., Inc.

street & number 314 Mississippi Street

city, town Donaldsonville N/A vicinity of state Louisiana 70346

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Ascension Parish Courthouse

street & number 300 Houmas Street P. O. Box 192

city, town Donaldsonville state Louisiana 70346

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title La. Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records La. 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 <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

/summary paragraph on continuation sheet/

The mercantile establishment of B. Lemann & Bro., Inc. occupies the "Lemann Block," fronting on Railroad Avenue and Mississippi Streets, the two major commercial thoroughfares of Donaldsonville. The property continues to include the curve to Crescent Place. The city block is also bounded by Houmas and Iberville Streets. The main portion of this store building is a stuccoed brick structure of two and a half stories, subdivided into four sections by brick firewalls corresponding to three departments at ground level (formerly dry goods, hardwares and groceries) plus an additional section of all-purpose spaces. A slightly later annex, formerly a warehouse, faces Crescent Place.

The exterior style may be described as Victorian. It follows an idiom that is currently designated as Italianate, with heavy moldings, rustication, and generally strong, emphatic profiles in all detailing. The major facade, fronting on Mississippi Street, has a scheme of grouped openings: three groupings of threes at the center and paired openings at either end. This rhythm appears clearly in the fenestration of the second floor (tall double hung windows extending down to floor level). At ground level the pattern appears less emphatic: the three central bays have a combination of two display windows and a door, and these are flanked by paired display windows at the end of the facade. The smaller supports separating the bays are brick. Glazed transoms divided by mutins are over each window and door at ground level. These transoms, as well as second floor windows, have segmental heads, slightly stilted. The angle corners of the building have a door at the Railroad Avenue end, a window at the Crescent Place end. At attic level the corners and central bay are featured with a dormer treatment in brick, with paired arched windows, an oculus and spandrels in the Florentine early Renaissance manner. Attic windows, spaced to align with the fenestration below, are low, wide slit-like openings. The attic level is indicated by a string course (as though the windows penetrated a frieze) and the entire structure is capped by an ornamental cornice, bracketed in the typical Italianate manner. Indented painted lettering at the top of the dormers spells "Lemann Block" at the corners and "Bernard Lemann" on the central dormer.

The facade on Railroad Avenue (formerly Cabahanosse Street) has a simpler treatment, partly in order to allow for interior shelving along the wall. The upper level has a group of windows in triple formation flanked by a single window on each end. Below is a featureless wall except for one display window near the angled entry and a large opening near the rear. This facade has no dormers, but attic windows continue the design consistently. The Crescent Place facade accommodates to the curve of the property line and is consistent in treatment with the rest of the building. It had one bay of paired openings near the corner, followed by two bays of triple openings. The folding doors at ground level on this side are original, representative of the original treatment of the entire building, which was modified in the late nineteenth century. A unroofed gallery, extending over the entire width of the sidewalk on all three facades is sheathed in metal and supported on fluted cast iron colonnettes with leafed capitals and bracketed cast iron open work. The exterior of the building remains relatively intact. The entries, at one time recessed and splayed, are now flush with the property line. The entry doors are replacements. The gallery railing, with a characteristic New Orleans pattern that dates from the 1850's, has disappeared. (The owner hopes to replace this item.) The annex front, formerly a simple brick facade with arches and a drive-in opening, now has a lower level modernized with extensive glass surface.

(CONTINUED)

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet

Lemann Store

Item number 7

Page 2

The interior spaces of the main building have undergone various shifts in use over the years, and correspondingly adaptive modifications. The major divisions remain the same, as do the structural supports. On the ground level these are fluted cast iron columns without bases, similar to the exterior colonnettes but with slightly greater diameter. At the second floor the supports are wooden colonnettes without bases and with Doric capitals. Ceiling heights are 15'6" on both levels. The attic spaces are spanned from outside walls to fire walls, with no columnar supports. These spaces remain unfinished. The second floor was of finished spaces throughout and has been used in part for merchandising at various times.

The changes include removal of some of the original counters, removal of shelving up to the ceiling with mezzanine walkways on two long walls in the dry goods section at the Railroad Avenue end and one wall in the Crescent Place section, and removal of office partitions, stairways with walnut railings and newels, and an elevator. Among the interesting remaining features are two decorated built-in vaults in the former office area, two original stairs, one elevator with manually operated rope-pull mechanism and one elaborate paneled partition wall and doorway in the central section at the second level. The warehouse addition, a slightly later structure, was extensively reworked in recent years to accommodate hardware sales and office space. Originally it had a nave-like drive-through space to handle wholesale shipping by cart and wagon, with gallery-level storage spaces at either side. Some of the heavy cypress framing is visible in the upper space.

An additional change has been the covering of some of the interior ceilings with bagass board in about 1940.

Assessment of Integrity:

The described changes have not affected the Lemann Store's identity as an Italianate commercial block or its standing as the landmark of Donaldsonville's central business district.

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The Lemann Store is a pretentious Italianate commercial block set in the central business district of a medium size bayou town. The main portion, a stuccoed brick structure of two and a half stories, dates from 1877-78. A somewhat less pretentious two-story brick annex was constructed on the west side circa 1894-95. The building has suffered little loss of integrity.

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"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
			<input type="checkbox"/> science
			<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
			<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
			<input type="checkbox"/> theater
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1877-1878 **Builder/Architect** James Freret, Architect (1877-78)

addition: c.1894-95

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criterion C

The Lemann Store is locally significant in the area of architecture for the following reasons: (1) It is typical of masonry and cast iron commercial structures throughout the East, South, and Midwest in the second half of the nineteenth century, including relatively small urban centers like Natchez or Madison, Indiana. Commercial rows in this style have been preserved in New Orleans. (2) The building was and remains conspicuous for its size in Donaldsonville (population about 7,000 in 1970). Its scale and architectural treatment are unusual for small town stores in the region, or indeed for the country at large. It is clearly the landmark of Donaldsonville's central business district, having by far the broadest facade frontage and a palatial system of bays, pilasters, and shallow arch fenestration along the Mississippi Street facade. (3) The dormer features are rare for Italianate commercial fronts. (4) The covered sidewalk is a typical regional element, now however a rare survival. In fact, there are only two remaining commercial cast iron galleries in Donaldsonville, of which the one at the Lemann Store is decidedly the finer.*

Although the business actually began in 1836, the present building dates from 1878. A news notice in the Chief (Donaldsonville weekly newspaper) on February 10, 1877 records the purchase of the land by Bernard Lemann from Emile St. Martin, and removal of debris from buildings recently destroyed by fire. The Chief reported on June 23 delivery of a "large quantity of bricks" and on October 6, 1877 that the building "has reached an altitude greater than any other in town, and workmen are constructing the roof." Finally, on February 2, 1878, the Chief reported that "the finishing touches are being put to the Lemann Block The apparatus by which the building is supplied with gas was tested The street lamps at either corner illuminated the entire neighborhood."

The ledger of B. Lemann & Bro. for February/March 1878 has an entry for payments to James Freret, architect. In Donaldsonville this could only be for architectural services. On the same and following pages are noted payments to Arnold Romain, brick mason, for work on the Crescent Block. Freret (1839-1897), of a distinguished family of architects, was the first New Orleans architect to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris and the designer of numerous important buildings in New Orleans, most of which have since disappeared. A commercial facade by him on Tchoupitoulas Street (1884), to be incorporated into the Piazza d'Italia complex, is Italianate in style and has a kind of kinship with the Lemann Block. His other work in Donaldsonville was the present Ascension Parish Courthouse (1888).

The warehouse addition facing Crescent Place was constructed circa 1894-1895, according to an account in the Daily Times, Donaldsonville, 1898.

*Because the Lemann Store is significant as a work of architecture found in small urban centers and as the architectural landmark of Donaldsonville's central business district, it is being nominated for significance at the local level.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Ascension Parish Notarial Archives (Courthouse)

The Lemann Family of Louisiana, published by B. Lemann & Bro., Inc. 1965 (two illustrations, early interior views, pp. 117-118).

CONTINUED

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 5 acre

Quadrangle name Donaldsonville, La.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	5	6	9	3	9	4	10	3	3	2	0	6	10
Zone			Easting				Northing						

B

Zone			Easting				Northing						

C

Zone			Easting				Northing						

D

Zone			Easting				Northing						

E

Zone			Easting				Northing						

F

Zone			Easting				Northing						

G

Zone			Easting				Northing						

H

Zone			Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached Sanborn Map.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Charles J. Lemann, Jr. Executive Vice-President

organization B. Lemann & Bro., Inc.

date March 1981

street & number 314 Mississippi Street

telephone (504) 473-8248

city or town Donaldsonville

state Louisiana 70346

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Robert B. DeBlieux
Robert B. DeBlieux

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date June 25, 1982

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

William H. Branham

date 8-11-82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Lemann Store

Item number 9

Page 2

Lemann Papers in Tulane Library (including ledger, July 22, 1874—April 1, 1878, folio 664-665).

The Chief (Donaldsonville), January 22, February 10, June 23, October 6, 1877.

The Daily Times, special number, Donaldsonville, La., February 1898, pp. 15-17, (two illustrations). Reproduced in Henry A. Garon (ed.) Donaldsonville Its Businessmen and Their Commerce at the Turn of the Century. New Orleans, 1976.

Marchand, Sidney A. The Flight of a Century (1800-1900) in Ascension Parish. Donaldsonville, 1936.

Sanborn Company Map of Donaldsonville -- 1900

