

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92000570 Date Listed: 6/4/92

Helvetia Dependency Ascension LA
Property Name: County: State:

Louisiana's French Creole Architecture MPS
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Em Patrick Andrus
Signature of the Keeper

6/25/92
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

The resource count for this nomination had to be clarified. The Helvetia Dependency has a secondary building (Wilton Cottage) attached as a wing. This secondary building should be counted as a non-contributing building due to alterations, according to Donna Fricker of the LA SHPO. The form is officially amended to include this information.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

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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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Helvetia Dependency

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number LA Hwy 942 N/A not for publication

city or town Darrow vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Ascension code 005 zip code 70725

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Gerri Hobdy 4/13/92
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

LA SHPO, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Patrick Andrews

6/4/92

Helvetia Dependency
Name of Property

Ascension Parish, LA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	3	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	3	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Louisiana's French Creole Architecture

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: French Creole

Federal

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls weatherboard

roof metal

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Helvetia Dependency, Ascension Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 1

The Helvetia Dependency (c. 1820) is a one story frame Creole house containing elegant Federal woodwork. It stands in a rural Ascension Parish location on the east bank of the Mississippi River near the Hermitage Plantation House. Despite a move, the loss of its basement story, and other alterations and additions, the building retains its Creole and Federal character. Thus, its National Register eligibility remains intact.

The Helvetia Dependency began as a raised Creole house with a frame second story above a ground-level basement story. It was located on the Mississippi in adjacent St. James Parish. As is the case with all raised Creole houses, the upper floor was used as the main living space. Although inundated by mud during one of the river's many floods, the seven foot basement story remained intact until 1968, when the house was moved. The home now stands only three feet above the ground.

Creole features surviving in the Helvetia Dependency include:

- 1) a hand hewn, mortised and pegged cypress frame,
- 2) a Class III gabled roof with central chimney,
- 3) bousillage walls,
- 4) a Creole floorplan with equal sized salle and chambre rooms and a partially intact cabinet/loggia range,
- 5) a full length gallery with exposed beaded ceiling beams,
- 6) additional beaded beams on the ceiling of a rear gallery which was added in the 1850s,
- 7) French doors, each leaf of which is composed of ten lights above a single wooden panel,
- 8) an unusual French door (see photograph) between the chambre and the loggia, and
- 9) wraparound mantels and overmantels.

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Helvetia Dependency, Ascension Parish, LA

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The home's Federal decorative elements include:

- 1) transoms featuring glazing bars in a sunburst pattern,
- 2) the salle's delicate denticulated cornice, and
- 3) two elegant mantels with overmantels. The salle's mantel features paneled pilasters, an entablature with oval and circular sunburst insets which alternate with rectangular panels outlined by smaller sunburst motifs, and a thin, delicate mantel shelf. The salle's overmantel is distinguished by reeded pilasters surmounted by a paneled and partially reeded entablature. The chambre's mantel and overmantel are somewhat less adorned but still noteworthy for a house which would have been considered small even before it was lowered. This mantel displays plainly molded pilasters, a paneled entablature featuring oval and circular sunbursts with rosettes in their centers, and a thin molded mantel shelf. The chambre's overmantel features raised panels on both the front and sides.

Other features of interest in the building include the salle's chair rail and baseboards, the chambre's simple molded cornice, five panel double leaf shutters framing the home's French doors, 12 over 12 windows, and plastered walls.

In addition to the lowering which resulted from the relocation, the house also underwent a restoration and renovation which included the following items:

- 1) rebuilding of the central chimney and restoration of the badly deteriorated lower section of the salle's overmantel,
- 2) the conversion of one cabinet into a bathroom,
- 3) the removal of the wall between the second cabinet and the loggia, and the addition of a staircase, new flooring and ceiling materials, and built-in bookcases to this space,
- 4) the replacement of the front gallery's decking and the enclosure and remodeling of the 1850s rear gallery to serve as a modern den and dining room,

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Helvetia Dependency, Ascension Parish, LA

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- 5) the installation of hardware salvaged from period houses, and
- 6) the addition of a wing at the right rear corner of the building. This wing consists of a second dependency building, this one moved from St. James Parish's Wilton Plantation. It is connected to the Helvetia Dependency by an enclosed breezeway. Although the Wilton cottage retains its Creole form, it has lost much of its integrity due to its renovation as a kitchen and extra bedroom.

Assessment of Integrity

Although the move of the Helvetia Dependency from one parish to another might be considered unfortunate, it should be noted that the house would have been destroyed had it remained on its original site. Furthermore, the house still stands in a rural setting near the Mississippi River in the region which is the context for its architectural significance. The addition of the smaller Wilton Dependency does not detract from the historic character of the Helvetia House because the addition is set at the rear and the Helvetia Dependency clearly stands forth. While the loss of Helvetia's basement story has obviously had a notable visual impact upon the structure, it must be remembered that this space was a utilitarian service area. The Helvetia Dependency's most impressive story, the premier etage, survives with its original character-defining Creole and Federal features intact. The outstanding quality of the home's Creole wraparound mantels and overmantels and its Federal decorative elements far outweighs the alterations that have occurred. In summation, what survives at the Helvetia Dependency is so important that the house merits a Register listing in spite of the alterations.

Non-contributing Elements

Three non-contributing elements stand within the nominated area. One is a modern brick and frame pigeonnier which was built as part of the restoration. The other two are a frame barn and a frame storage shed. Although over fifty years old, these structures were moved onto the site and are not individually eligible for the Register.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1820

Significant Dates

c. 1820

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Helvetia Dependency
Name of Property

Ascension Parish, LA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .6 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Please refer to enclosed sketch map.

Boundary Justification

Boundaries follow property lines.

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff (based on draft nomination prepared by Dr. Jay Edwards, as referenced in bibliography)

organization Division of Historic Preservation date March 1992

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

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Reverend Gerald Young

street & number 7853 Broker telephone (504) 752-6230

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70817

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Helvetia Dependency, Ascension Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 1

The Helvetia Dependency is locally significant in the area of architecture within the context of Louisiana's River Road region because it contains rare examples of Creole and Federal woodwork. Although it is unfortunate that the building has suffered some losses to its integrity, the historic fabric and details which remain mark the Helvetia Dependency as an important example of these two architectural styles.

The area comprising the east and west banks of the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans is known as the Great River Road. Although recognized primarily for its collection of grand Greek Revival plantation houses, this region was first settled by French Creoles whose surviving domestic architecture rivals in importance the later Greek Revival homes. One of the distinguishing features of these Creole houses was the French wraparound mantel, which in the earliest and finest of the Creole homes was accompanied by a decorated overmantel. Today, only a limited number of pre-Civil War Creole houses survive, and the number of Creole houses containing wraparound mantels with decorative overmantels is extremely small. The Division of Historic Preservation knows of only six houses in the region in which wraparound mantels with decorative overmantels survive. The Helvetia Dependency is one of these rare, early, and finely crafted Creole survivors. In addition, the Dependency is special because its woodwork is in the Federal style. Examples of this style are equally rare within the houses of the River Road. The Helvetia Dependency's delicate denticulated cornice, reeded overmantel pilasters, and oval and circular mantel sunbursts definitely place the dwelling within this rare category. Indeed, it is unusual to find such fine Federal woodwork in a house the size of the Helvetia Dependency.

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Helvetia Dependency, Ascension Parish, LA

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Bourgeois, Lillian. Cabanocey. New Orleans: Pelican Publishing Co., 1957.

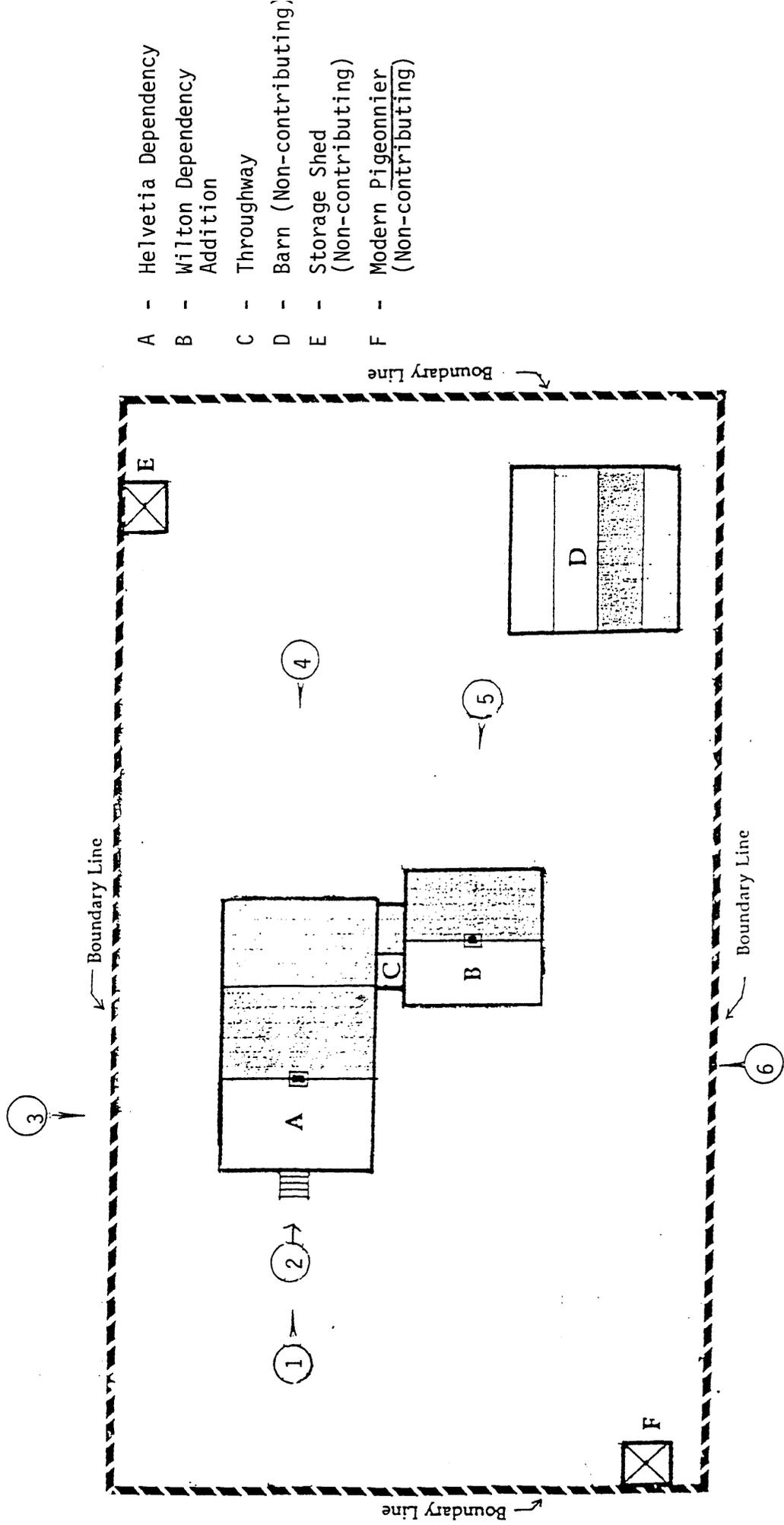
Campbell, Maire McDowell Pilkington. Nostalgic Notes on St. James Parish, Louisiana: Then and Now. Baton Rouge: n. p., 1981.

Edwards, Jay D. A Survey of Louisiana French Vernacular Architecture, Vol. II. Baton Rouge: Museum of Geoscience, Louisiana State University. A Report to the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and the Louisiana Division of the Arts, 2 Vol., 1982.

Edwards, Jay. Draft National Register Nomination, Department of Geography and Anthropology, LSU, Baton Rouge.

MAP OF HELVETIA DEPENDENCY

Located in Darrow vicinity, Ascension Parish, LA



- A - Helvetia Dependency
- B - Milton Dependency Addition
- C - Throughway
- D - Barn (Non-contributing)
- E - Storage Shed (Non-contributing)
- F - Modern Pigeonnier (Non-contributing)



Scale 1" = 30'

