

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 17 1986

date entered MAY 15 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Désiré Plantation House

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number LA 644 N/A not for publication

city, town Vacherie X vicinity of

state LA code 22 county St. James Parish code 093

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

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Michael G. Davis

street & number P. O. Box 163

city, town Vacherie N/A vicinity of state LA 70090

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. James Parish Courthouse

street & number River Road (no specific address) P. O. Box 63

city, town Convent state LA 70723

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1986 federal state county local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Désiré Plantation House (c.1835) is a bousillage Creole cottage located in a flat rural area near Vacherie. Despite some alterations, the house retains its National Register eligibility.

Originally Désiré consisted of a four room, pitched roof, galleried mass with two front doors and a single central chimney serving the two front rooms. Apparently there was also a rear gallery set between cabinets. Most of this original house survives, including the form, the bousillage walls, the fenestration, most of the board and batten doors, most of the windows, and most of the plan. (The cabinets have been lost.) In addition, the house retains its crude but more or less correctly proportioned Greek Revival front gallery and one of its two original wraparound mantels. The mantel features simple pilasters and a board entablature.

In the late nineteenth century the house received a frame rear wing which incorporated the old rear gallery. In addition, a gable dormer with decoratively cut vergeboards was added to the front.

More recently, the rear wing has acquired a small lean-to extension and porch on the east side. Also, the two front French doors have been replaced, and as previously mentioned, one of the original mantels has been lost. Despite these more recent changes, the house still retains its late nineteenth century appearance, which is the period of its historical significance.

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

Specific dates c.1891-1904 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criterion A

Désiré Plantation House is locally significant in the area of agriculture as the only remaining resource associated with the historically important perique tobacco industry of St. James Parish.

There were attempts to cultivate tobacco in much of Louisiana during the eighteenth century, chiefly for the purpose of making the European market independent of British tobacco grown in the eastern colonies. By the 1780's the Louisiana area produced about a half million pounds annually. But in the nineteenth century tobacco was largely displaced by sugar and cotton. By the mid-nineteenth century the only remaining tobacco growing area was St. James Parish, where perique tobacco was produced on a small commercial scale by family farmers. Perique is a pungent flavorful black tobacco cured by fermentation in its own juice under pressure. Regarded as a rare and exotic product, it is used to "flavor" other tobaccos in pipe and cigar blends. Much prized, its consumption traditionally has been the province of connoisseurs, and most of it has been produced for the European market.

Although secondary to sugar, perique tobacco has made a substantial contribution to the agricultural economy of St. James Parish over the years. For example, in 1922, 478,000 pounds were produced, bringing over a quarter of a million dollars into the local economy. But production has declined in recent decades, and Désiré Plantation House is now believed to be the only remaining historic structure associated with the perique tobacco cottage industry. Désiré is a particularly important resource because in addition to being the home of a perique tobacco grower, it also housed a cigar factory. Its historic role as a factory is substantiated by an 1891 United States Internal Revenue cigar manufacturing certificate issued to Désiré LeBlanc, the owner, for the purpose of operating "Manufactory No. 79" in "one of his back rooms of his dwelling house." The certificate even has a sketch of the floor plan. Other stamps, permits and legers in possession of the owner demonstrate that cigars were being manufactured at Désiré from at least 1891 to 1904.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Permits, Stamps, Leger Books in possession of owner. Some copies in National Register file. Personal communication with Mrs. Marie P. Campbell, parish historian, regarding importance of Desire as only surviving historic building connected with perique tobacco. Robert, Joseph C. The Story of Tobacco in America. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949. Tobacco Institute. Louisiana and Tobacco. 1980.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1 acre

Quadrangle name Lower Vacherie, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Boundary lines follow property lines. See attached property plat map.

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff ASSISTED BY OWNER

organization Division of Historic Preservation date February 1986

State of Louisiana

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone 504-922-0358

city or town Baton Rouge state LA 70804

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

Robert B. DeBlieux

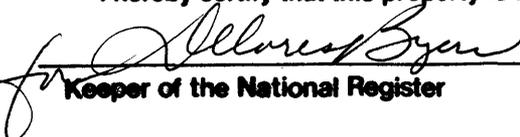
title State Historic Preservation Officer date March 27, 1986

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 5/15/86


Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

