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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

JUL 31 1989

NATIONAL REGISTER

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 Dugas House
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number LA Hwy 18
city, town Edgard
state Louisiana code LA county St. John the Baptist code 095 zip code 70049

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private (checked)
Category of Property: building(s) (checked)
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 1 buildings

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 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. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: W. Edwin Martin, Deputy SHPO, Louisiana, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
Date: July 25, 1989

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)
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
Signature: [Handwritten Signature]
Date: 8/31/89

Signature of the Keeper
Date of Action

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)

Colonial/French Colonial (Creole)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brickwalls vinyl siding

roof tinother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Dugas House (c.1810-1820) is a one-story frame French Colonial cottage which exhibits a number of elements characteristic of early Creole styling. Located on the River Road (LA 18) three miles west of Edgard on the Mississippi's west bank, the home stands on a narrow but deep parcel suggestive of the old French arpent system of land grants. Although the original building has been moved, covered by vinyl siding, and enlarged by a rear addition, the home's age and the quality and rarity of its remaining early Creole architectural elements, make it eminently eligible for nomination to the National Register.

The home's two-room-wide nineteenth century core, reminiscent of the colonial salle and chambre plan, is entered directly from the gallery without benefit of a central entrance hall. Now used as sleeping chambers, the two front rooms focus upon a shared central chimney. The east bedroom opens into a narrow rectangular dining room which stands directly behind it. The twin of this space, located behind the west bedroom, has been subdivided to create a small hallway and a modern bath. A door connects the dining room and hallway, thus allowing a circular traffic flow within the older portion of the house. The dining room and hallway also connect independently with the twentieth century addition. This section contains a modern kitchen located behind the dining room, a den connecting to the hallway, a glazed porch which extends approximately two-thirds of the way across the rear, and a utility room which abuts the porch and connects to the kitchen.

The Dugas House displays a variety of construction techniques and design elements indicative of its status as an early nineteenth century Creole building. The structure's frame consists of colompage, its timbers harvested from the immediate area and hand hewn on the site. Because several layers of siding cover the original walls, it is not possible to determine whether the infill material consists of bousillage (the usual material for rural homes of this age and size) or bricks. However, the building's aged Norman truss roof is clearly visible in the attic.

The house itself has the appearance of a simple Creole cottage. Raised approximately eighteen inches off the ground by brick piers added during the early part of the twentieth century, the home stands under a steeply pitched hipped roof with a large central chimney. Above a gallery supported by four narrow square posts, ceiling beams are exposed to view in the Creole manner. The asymmetrical facade displays two sets of narrow French doors, a third entrance consisting of a wider single door, and one window. Because the glazing of the

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Dugas House, Edgard vicinity, St. John the Baptist Parish, LA

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single door replicates that of the other entrances, the difference in size is not particularly noticeable. All openings are protected by tall, closeable batten shutters.

The Creole characteristics continue in the interior, where the beaded square ceiling beams of the salle and chambre mirror the exposed beams above the gallery. Wide cypress boards fill the spaces between these beams. The one-by-twelve inch tongue and groove boards which constitute the flooring are also made of cypress. Identical French wraparound mantels with simple moldings highlight the chimney breasts in both of these rooms. Unusually wide baseboards also emphasize the building's age. Hand forged strap hinges still function on some of the interior doors.

Assessment of Integrity:

Since construction, the most notable changes to the building's exterior have been the application of vinyl siding and the addition of a wing at the rear. Although the change in siding is unfortunate from the historical standpoint, the building had already been re-sided several times before the application of this product occurred almost twenty-five years ago. Thus, the vinyl siding does not hide or destroy original construction materials. The rear wing is unobtrusive and does not alter the historic character of the building as viewed from the River Road. This addition was in place by 1913, but has been modernized on the interior since that date. River encroachment has caused the house to be moved three times, but the house has remained in its current position at least since 1928 and retains both its orientation to the river and its rural plantation setting. Minor changes on the exterior include the replacement of front doors, the cutting of a new door on the east elevation, the deletion of two posts from the original six post gallery, and removal of a ladder which once led from the gallery to the attic. On the interior, the mantels were apparently cut down when the building was moved, but they retain their historic style and character. One of the fireplace openings has been modernized by the addition of a tile hearth and surround which does not hide the stylistically significant section of the mantel above it. Architectural evidence indicates that at least one secondary interior wall was moved, perhaps when the bath was installed. Despite these changes, the Dugas House retains many of the most significant characteristics associated with Louisiana's early Creole architecture and, therefore, retains its National Register eligibility.

Non-contributing Element

A turn-of-the-century cottage stands on the northeast corner of the property near the River Road (LA 18). One of thirteen tenant or sharecropper cottages which apparently once existed on the property, it has undergone noticeable alteration since construction. For this reason, and also because it is not contemporary with the Creole house which is the focus of this nomination, the cottage is being counted as a non-contributing element.

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
architecture

Period of Significance
c.1810-1820

Significant Dates
c.1810-1820

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 Dugas House is locally significant in the area of architecture within the context of St. John the Baptist Parish because it is an old and rare example of the Creole tradition which thrived during the parish's early years. Later, Anglo-American influences combined with and changed the Creole style.

The area which became St. John the Baptist Parish was fairly well settled by the end of the eighteenth century. Created in 1807, the parish grew to become a prosperous sugar planting area. Although St. John was part of the so-called German Coast, its dominant cultural influence was French Creole. Presumably there were once a few hundred Creole residences of various sizes in the parish. Today, out of a total of over 1100 fifty year or older buildings identified in the parish survey, the Dugas House is one of only a handful which remain to accurately portray the area's Creole environment and lifestyle.

The house's Norman truss roof marks it as an early and superior Creole building. Most extant examples have a plain roof structure with an intermediate support pole halfway up the rafters. Also important is the fact that the home lacks the Anglo-American influence reflected in the central halls and symmetrical facades of many later Creole residences. The home's exposed gallery ceiling beams, and its mirroring interior beaded square cypress beams in the salle and chambre, also attest to the structure's age and early Creole heritage. Its steeply pitched hip roof is also indicative of its age, for later examples tend to display gable roofs. Most of the home's original woodwork remains intact, and even the cut down fireplaces still reflect their early Creole styling.

Creole structures such as the Dugas House represent St. John's earliest architectural development and are the primary representatives of its well known Creole cultural heritage. It should be noted that in any given French parish in Louisiana, the Creole buildings are generally considered the most important. This is because the French Creole heritage is the major element distinguishing Louisiana from other southern states and in many ways forms its cultural identity.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

St. John the Baptist Parish Historic Structures Survey.

Site visit by Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation staff members.

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 @ 6 acres

UTM References

A

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3	3	2	5	0	2	5
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 Zone Easting Northing

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B

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 Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See attached property plat map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Boundaries follow property lines.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register staff
 organization Division of Historic Preservation date May 1989
 street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone (504) 342-8160
 city or town Baton Rouge state Louisiana zip code 70804

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Historical Note:

Although the house has been in existence since before 1820, information concerning its owners prior to 1906 is unavailable. In that year Alexis Dugas purchased the property, which remained in his hands until he sold it to his daughter Alice in 1952. Alice M. Dugas had a distinguished career in education, serving first as principal of the St. John School in Vacherie, Louisiana, and later as a librarian in Mexico, Argentina, and Egypt. After Alice's death, the home passed to her nephew, Wilfred Robert, who currently lives there with his family.

Dugas House
Edgard Vicinity
St. John the Baptist Parish
Louisiana



337818
WH

Scale: 1" = 300'

