

1264

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 Louisiana Railway and Navigation Company Depot

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Corner Depot Street and Cleco Street N/A  not for publication

city or town Mansura N/A  vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Avoyelles code 009 zip code 71350

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.)

Jonathan Fricker 9/25/96  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Deputy SHPO, Dept 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 commenting 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:)

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

11-1-96

Louisiana Railway and Navigation Company Depot  
Name of Property

Avoyelles 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	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation / Rail-related

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant - not in use

Other - storage

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Unstyled

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls brick

asbestos

roof asphalt

other

**Narrative Description**

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

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Louisiana Railway and Navigation Company Depot, Avoyelles Parish, LA

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The Louisiana Railway and Navigation Company Depot (1924) is an unstyled, one-story structure with brick and frame sections. For purposes of clarity, the brick portion of the building will be referred to as the passenger depot and the frame section as the freight room throughout this nomination. Located within the Avoyelles Parish community of Mansura, the structure stands southwest of the town's original business district in what is now a mixed industrial and residential area. An active railroad track is situated on one side of the building. The depot has received post-1924 alterations but remains eligible for National Register listing.

The depot's combination brick and frame construction is most unusual. Although the origin of the frame section remains obscure, a person who worked at the depot during the historic period confirms that it was in place next to the brick depot by 1935. At that time the two buildings were eight to ten feet apart. It seems clear from the appearance of the frame section's interior that it was constructed of recycled materials. The room is very rough in appearance. Its walls contain a number of 1 x 12 and 1 x 16 boards (some of which display flaked paint) obviously recycled from an older building. One wonders if the recycled materials came from an earlier frame depot on the site which was "retained" according to railroad documents when the brick passenger station was built. Around 1950 the frame freight room was attached to the brick depot, a continuous roof was constructed over both buildings, and asbestos siding was installed on the freight room's exterior walls.

The physical connection of the two buildings extended the length of the depot, and thus, extended its horizontal massing and rectangular footprint (which is broken only by a small bay window). A hipped roof with deep overhanging eaves covers the building. Plain large wooden brackets support these eaves. In addition to the brackets, the depot's exterior features include a high concrete watertable, concrete window sills and lintels, two over two windows, and wooden doors. These features remain virtually intact except for the west wall of the brick section, where the windows were closed and the brackets removed when the frame freight section was appended. Although slightly altered, the passenger depot's original floor plan is easy to ascertain. As was typical of the period, its facilities were segregated. There are two waiting rooms served by a centrally located ticket office (where the bay window is located) and separate restroom facilities. No internal connection between the passenger depot and the freight section exists. The freight section consists of one large open space with exposed ceiling joists and braces. As mentioned above, its interior presents a very rough, unfinished appearance.

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Changes to the depot's floor plan include the partition of one waiting room into two spaces and the construction of counters in the other waiting room. Although beaded board ceilings are still visible in some interior spaces, other areas now have dropped tile ceilings. The passenger depot's original floors have been covered by tile in some rooms and by inexpensive carpet in others. Paneling now covers the walls in the ticket office, but the original plaster walls are visible in the rest of the passenger depot. The freight section has received only one alteration--the raising of the floor surface by several feet--since it was joined to the brick depot. This was done by an oil company which currently leases the space for storage purposes.

Although the addition of asbestos shingles to the freight section is a regrettable alteration, none of the changes to the building have had a serious impact upon its historic identity as a railroad depot. Thus, it would be easily recognized by any railroad employee, passenger, or Mansura citizen from the historic period when the railroad contributed to the community's economic livelihood.

**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** N/A  
(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)

Transportation

**Period of Significance**

1924 - 1946

**Significant Dates**

1924

**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:

\_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than an acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 5	5 9 0 5 8 0	3 4 3 6 0 7 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.)

**Boundary Justification**

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

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title National Register staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date August 1996

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 Town of Mansura, The Honorable Harold Quebedeaux, Mayor

street & number P. O. Box 157 telephone (318) 964-2152

city or town Mansura state LA zip code 71350

**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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Louisiana Railway and Navigation Company Depot, Avoyelles Parish, LA

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The Louisiana Railway and Navigation Company Depot is locally significant in the area of transportation because it represents a very important force in the history of the town of Mansura. Although the present depot is a replacement and, hence, is not associated with the railroad's arrival in the town, it does represent railroading as a crucial force in the town's economy from the depot's 1924 construction date through 1946, the fifty year cutoff. (The railroad continued to be the principal method of transporting goods into the post-World War II era.)

Although one home in town dates to 1790 and two now vanished nearby settlements were also older, local citizens consider the founding of the settlement which would become the town of Mansura to date to shortly after 1815. At that time a group of French immigrants arrived in the area. These exiles were former soldiers of Napoleon who left Europe after the general's defeat at the Battle of Waterloo. Growth was apparently slow, for the community did not incorporate and hold its first mayoral election until 1860. The town was touched by the ravages of the Civil War in May 1864 when Union and Confederate forces engaged in the Battle of Mansura. Postal service, originally established in 1839 but disrupted by the war, was reestablished in 1866. Local citizens were unable to share in the boom times often created by railroad construction until the arrival of the Texas and Pacific in December 1900. This event was followed by the arrival of the Shreveport and Red River Valley Railroad in September 1902. The latter railroad was owned by industrialist William Edenborn, who used the fortune he made as the inventor of a process to manufacture wire nails to build the Red River line. In 1903 he reorganized his holdings into the Louisiana Railway and Navigation Company, which built the candidate passenger depot. The L.R. & N.C. was acquired by the Louisiana and Arkansas Railroad in 1928. It is now part of the Kansas City Southern Railway Company.

The availability of the relatively inexpensive freight connection to outside markets provided by the Texas and Pacific and the Louisiana Railway and Navigation Company railroads was indeed a stimulus to the community's agricultural economy. The relationship between the railroad industry and the businesses which its presence encouraged is vividly portrayed in a 1919 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, which is the only one available for Mansura. It indicates that several industries had established facilities directly adjacent to the tracks of the two lines by that date. These companies included the Mansura Gin Company, the Michel Gin Company, the G. L. Drouin Retail Lumber Yard, the Farmers Gin Company, the Mansura Compress and Warehouse Company, and the Naples Lumber Company. The latter two businesses had private spur lines on their properties. Later a cannery opened in town and, for a while, this business boasted of the

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largest output in the parish.

Declining usage after World War II eventually led both railroad companies to eliminate their service to Mansura. Passenger service ended in the 1960s, followed by the Kansas City Southern's decision to close the old Louisiana Railway and Navigation Company depot in 1973. Later the railroad donated the depot to the town. For the record, the Texas and Pacific depot no longer exists, leaving the candidate as the only resource left which is directly associated with the town's railroads.

Because the railroad was critical to Mansura's development, as described above, the depot is obviously of considerable significance in the town's history. It is the very symbol of the railroad and what it made possible. Thus, the Louisiana Railway and Navigation Company Depot is a strong candidate for National Register listing.



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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Eakin, Sue L. *Avoyelles Parish . . . Crossroads of Louisiana Where All Cultures Meet*. Baton Rouge: Moran Publishing Company, 1981.

Roadway Completion Report, April 22, 1924; revised September 11, 1930 (copy in National Register file).

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Mansura, Louisiana, 1919.

Saucier, Corinne L. *History of Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana*. New Orleans: Pelican Publishing Company, 1943.

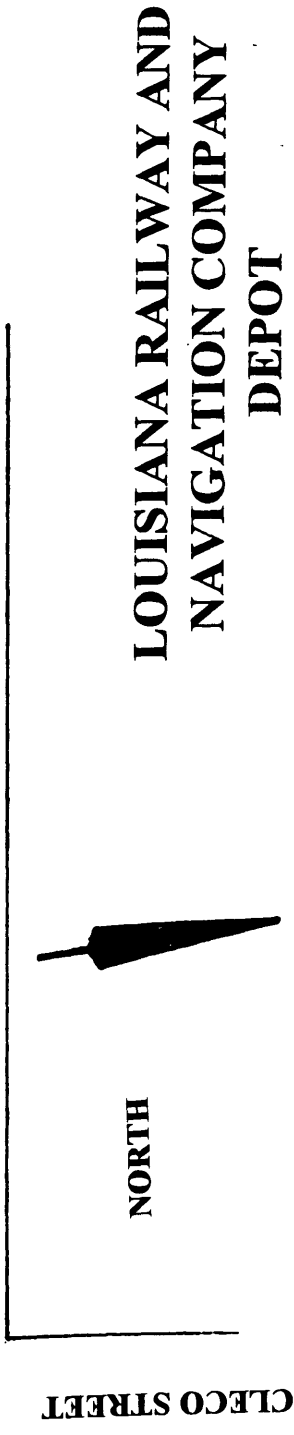
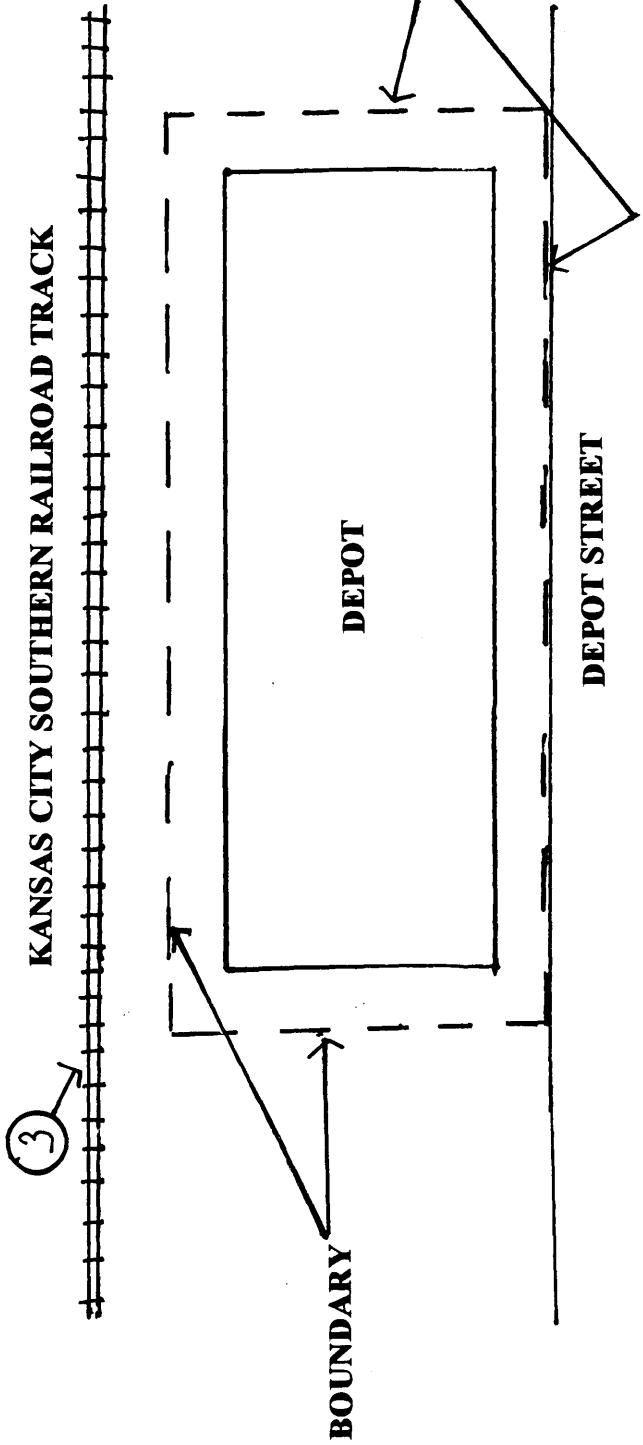
Telephone interview with John Roy, long-time railroad employee. Mr. Roy placed a new roof on the freight section in 1935, worked nights at the depot between 1939 and 1941, and served as Mansura station agent from 1946 until the depot closed in 1973.

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**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:** See attached sketch map.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:** Boundaries follow property lines of the parcel of land donated by the railroad to the town of Mansura.

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MANSURA, AVOYELLES PARISH, LA