

PH0351296

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUN 20 1976
DATE ENTERED	NOV 7 1976

# 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

AND/OR COMMON

South Lafayette Street, District

*Creole Cottages*

*Called Ala. Elder Institute 7-2-76  
change District to Creole Cottages.*

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

20, 22 & 23 South Lafayette Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Mobile

VICINITY OF

1

STATE

Alabama

CODE

01

COUNTY

Mobile

CODE

097

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

~~X~~ DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Holmes, Jr. - 22 S. Lafayette Street

Mr. and Mrs. Ben Harris, Jr. - 20 S. Lafayette Street

Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Erickson, Jr. - 23 South Lafayette Street

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Mobile

VICINITY OF

STATE

Alabama

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Mobile County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Royal and Government Streets

CITY, TOWN

Mobile

STATE

Alabama

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Old Dauphine Way Association

DATE

1973

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

20 South Lafayette Street

CITY, TOWN

Mobile

STATE

Alabama

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE	
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED	DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED			

---

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

These three small cottages, grouped together toward the northern end of South Lafayette Street, were constructed from 1852 to 1868 as single family residences for middle class Mobile families and are unpretentious but well crafted examples of the Creole Cottage style. All three framed one-and-a-half story, clapboarded structures raised on brick piers, and share the gabled roofs, full-width recessed porches, and five bay facades which serve as the distinguishing marks of this Gulf Coast style. The Greek Revival influence is felt in the moulded stock capitals of the square box columns of all three houses, while in the March-Erickson House, the motif is further elaborated on the interior.

The oldest of the three, the March-Erickson House constructed in 1852, is somewhat smaller and is raised two feet higher, contrasting with the longer and lower proportions of the two later houses. The entranceway is surrounded with shouldered trim and features glass side lights surmounting paneled lower sections, a four light transom, and pilasters with moulded capitals similar to those of the box columns. The gabled roof is broken by a centered double dormer window thought to have been in the early 20th Century.

The original floor plan consisted of a wide center hall, with a steep reversed stairway flanked by two rooms on either side. A rear wing, believed to have been moved from the east end of the lot and attached to the main structure in the late 1800's, consists of a back hall, screened porch and kitchen. The Greek Revival influence appears in the two original pine mantels and the shouldered trim surrounding the doors and windows. Original random-width pine floor is found both upstairs and down, ceiling height is 11 feet, and fireplaces are located in each of the original rooms.

The Dorgan-Holmes House and the Hobbs-Harris House are almost identical, sharing similar entrances, interior floor plans, and trim. The major difference appears in the full length, 6 over 9 facade windows, and the 1946 dormer windows of the Dorgan-Holmes House.

Entrances are flanked by full length pilasters within five pane sidelights with wooden panels underneath, while the doors are surmounted by small transoms. Original floor plans consisted of a central hall with 5'x15' rooms on each side and a kitchen wing extending to the rear of the north side. Both houses have had additions to the rear, making the floor plan of each rectangular. Moulded architrave trim for interior doors and windows, eleven foot 6 inch ceilings, four-paneled doors with moulded stops and random width pine flooring are features of both structures.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1852, 1868

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This notable grouping of Creole Cottages formed the nucleus of a middleclass district which developed after 1850 as one of the major western suburbs of Mobile. Most of the earlier structures along Lafayette Street have either burned or been demolished, but these three restored homes remain as fine examples of the Creole Cottage style with strong Greek Revival influences. Since the formation of the Old Dauphine Way Association in 1973, this midtown resident area is making an organized effort to retain the later 19th Century dwellings, and the restoration of these three structures has played a significant role in the renewal of this urban area. The three homes include: the March-Erickson House, 1852; the Dorgan-Holmes House, 1868; and the Hobbs-Harris House, 1868.

The March-Erickson House, constructed in 1852 by Mr. Henry March, is one of Mobile's oldest Creole Cottages and is one of the oldest structures in the area. It is safe to assume that March, listed in the Mobile City Directory as both a ships carpenter and an architect, was the builder. During the late 19th and 20th centuries, the house was occupied by a number of families until it was purchased by Ernestine Beckman in 1940. For her efforts in restoring the home, Mrs. Beckman was presented with an architectural award by the Mobile Historic Preservation Society in 1955.

Both the Hobbs-Harris and the Dorgan-Holmes houses, situated on adjoining lots across from the March-Erickson House, were constructed in 1868. The tract of land had been acquired in the 1850's by Franklin Kimball, a large landowner who built a number of homes in this section in the mid-19th Century. Kimball may have built the two houses on the west side of the street, speculating that Mobile's growth would be in a westwardly direction. More probably, Hobbs and Dorgan had the homes built by Kimball after purchasing the land from him.

A. P. Dorgan, who acquired his lot in 1867, was cited as living at this address in the 1869 City Directory which listed him as a clerk for a steamship company. Identified in later directories as a steamship agent and a bar pilot, Dorgan retained possession of the house until the early 1900's. In the latter part of the 1940's the house was purchased and restored by Francis Inge who later sold it to the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas H. Holmes.

Hobbs, a bookkeeper for a cotton factory, purchased his property in 1867 from Kimball for \$500, and city tax records for 1869 show James W. Hobbs assessed for a house and lot at this address. The house was briefly occupied as the parish school for St. Mary's Catholic Church during the early years of the 19th Century and afterwards served primarily as rental property until it was restored by Mrs. Richard Murray in 1946. The present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Ben H. Harris acquired the home in 1971.

