

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 Solitude Plantation House

and/or common Same

2. Location *NW of St. Francisville on Tunica Rd.*

street & number @ 4 miles Northwest of St. Francisville on Tunica Road N/A not for publication

city, town St. Francisville *vicinity* vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state LA code 22 ~~parish~~ West Feliciana code 125

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Jefferson Lusk Smith

street & number RFD 5W, Box 1230

city, town St. Francisville vicinity of state LA 70775

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. West Feliciana Parish Courthouse

street & number Highway 61 (no specific address) P. O. Box 71

city, town St. Francisville state LA 70775

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1982 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 type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Solitude (c.1815 and c.1850) is a single story rambling raised plantation house which was built in two sections. It shows Federal and Creole influences. The property includes two turn-of-the-century outbuildings. It is located in low rolling hill country approximately four miles northwest of the town of St. Francisville. Despite numerous alterations, the property retains its architectural significance.

The Original Portion

Although family tradition suggests 1788 or '89 as the date of construction for the original portion of Solitude, the earliest known documented date for the existence of the house is 1826. The architectural evidence suggests that the earliest portion was built c.1815.

Raised almost a full story above the sloping ground on brick piers, the pitched roof, galleried, original portion of the house consists of five rooms and a small cellar. There are three large rooms set across the front and two cabinets in the rear with a gallery space between them. Each of the front rooms has a set of double doors leading off the front gallery. The central room is larger than the others, and its doorway is set in the center of the seven bay facade. The pit sawn, pegged, frame of the house has bousillage infill and clapboard siding.

The most significant feature of the original portion is its decorative woodwork. The facade has a paneled and molded dado under the windows with flutes, in groups of three, cut into the upper board. This dado treatment is repeated in the large central room. The central doorway is inscribed in an aedicule motif with end panels on the entablature and a box cornice which is also fluted. There are three fluted mantels in the original portion of the house. The one in the large central room wraps around the chimney and has an elaborate Adamesque articulation consisting of horizontally reeded pilasters, two different rows of fluting, four panels and three bolection protrusions. The other mantels in the original house do not wrap around the chimney, but are similar in style, though simpler. Both of the front rooms, which flank the large central room, have chair rails. All windows in the three front rooms rest upon the chair rails.

The Addition

In about 1850 a large frame pitched roof addition of four rooms was appended to the west end of the original house. This created an elongated pitched roof building mass thirteen bays wide. The original front gallery was extended to encompass the larger house. The two front rooms of the addition are a pair of parlors connected by sliding doors. Each parlor has a simple slate mantel. One of the two rear rooms was built as a dining room and still retains the original punka. Both rear rooms have wooden aedicule motif style mantels.

The addition has large six over six windows unlike the smaller nine over six windows in the original portion of the house. The addition also has transomed four panel doors, unlike the untransomed double doors in the original portion of the house. Virtually all of the present shutters on the house date from the time of the addition.

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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Continuation sheet Solitude Plantation House Item number 7

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Description (cont'd)

Since the c.1850 period of construction, the following changes have been made to the house:

1. In about 1900 a small and narrow gallery was built on the east side.
2. The present crude front gallery columns were added sometime after the Civil War; their exact date is not known.
3. Sometime in the early twentieth century the rear gallery on the original portion of the house was enclosed.
4. Sometime later a new rear gallery was built which was subsequently enclosed in the 1940's.
5. Also in the 1940's, a few of the ceilings were treated with bagasse board, and a closet was installed in the large central room which partially covers one of the wraparound ends of the mantel.
6. The present surface material of the facade above the dado is plaster. It is now known if the plaster is original to the house or not.
7. Recently a small rear lean-to has been added which contains bathrooms and closets.

Assessment of Integrity

Despite these changes, the essential features which contribute to Solitude's significance, as noted in Item 8, remain intact. The only exception to this is the partial covering of the wraparound part of the mantel in the large central room, and this change is reversible.

Outbuildings

To the rear of the house is a pair of frame, board and batten outbuildings which date from the turn-of-the-century (see photographs). One is a cistern house, the other is a kitchen. The kitchen is linked to the plantation house by means of a covered walkway. Neither outbuilding retains any of its original interior features. However, they are being nominated to the Register as contributing elements because they enhance one's appreciation of Solitude's historic identity as a plantation house.

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 c.1815 & c.1850 **Builder/Architect** c.1815 Builder: Levi O. Sholar
c.1850 Builder: Joseph D. Smith

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph) Criterion C

Solitude is architecturally significant on the local level in the following respects:

1. It is one of only a small number of pre-Greek Revival residences in the Feliciana Parishes and, of these, it most reflects the Creole influence.
2. It is noteworthy within the context of the Feliciana Parishes for its fine Federal woodwork.
3. Certain features make it important within the context of South Louisiana as an example of Creole style architecture.

Solitude is one of a small number of pre-Greek Revival residences in the Feliciana Parishes, an area which is mainly noted for its Greek Revival architecture. This can be seen if one examines Miriam Reeves', The Felicianas of Louisiana. Of the forty-two major historic residences documented in the book, only eight show a distinctively pre-Greek Revival taste. Of the pre-Greek Revival houses in the two parish area, Solitude most reflects the Creole influence. This can be seen in its hall-less plan with cabinets, its sets of double doors which communicate with the front gallery, its wraparound mantel, its gallery facade dado, and its bousillage construction. As far as the State Historic Preservation Office is aware, no other house in the Feliciana Parishes has so many French Creole characteristics.

Solitude is also noteworthy for its fine Federal style woodwork. Its mantels, dado, and front doorway, as described in Item 7, feature a degree of pretention and elaborateness which is seen on only four or so other period houses in the two parish area.

Solitude is also significant within the context of Creole South Louisiana for two reasons:

1. Some Creole plantation houses have a chair rail on the gallery facade, but the additional pretention of a paneled dado with fluting, such as one finds at Solitude, is most unusual.
2. Solitude, as enlarged c.1850, has a thirteen bay galleried facade, which is one of the longest in South Louisiana, an area which is noted for elongated galleried houses. (The thirteen bay figure refers to doors and windows, not the column spacing.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

West Feliciana Parish Conveyance Records
Watts, Beulah de Veriere Smith and DeGrummond, Nancy Janes Lucas. Solitude: Life on a Louisiana Plantation, 1788-1968. Baton Rouge, LA: Claitor's Publishing Division, 1970.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property approx. one acre

Quadrangle name St. Francisville, La-Miss.

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

UMT References

A

1	5	6	5	0	7	5	0	3	4	1	0	7	0	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Please refer to sketch map

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jefferson Lusk Smith

organization N/A

date October 1982

street & number RFD 5W, Box 1230

telephone (504) 635-3897

city or town St. Francisville

state LA 70775

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 December 7, 1982

<p>For NPS use only</p> <p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register of Historic Places.</p> <p><i>Thomas B. Brown</i></p> <p>Keeper of the National Register</p> <p><i>Patricia Andrews</i></p> <p>Chief of Registration</p>	<p>date <u>12/10</u></p> <p>date <u>12/10</u></p>
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SOLITUDE PLANTATION HOUSE

W. FELICIANA PARISH

LA

