

PH0509299

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED NOV 25 1977  
DATE ENTERED MAR 29 1978

# 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 Felix Labauve House  
AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
235 Magnolia Drive  
CITY, TOWN  
Hernando  
STATE  
Mississippi  
VICINITY OF  
First  
COUNTY  
DeSoto  
CODE  
28  
CODE  
033  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input 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	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: <u>vacant</u>

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
City of Hernando  
STREET & NUMBER  
70 Highway 51 North  
CITY, TOWN  
Hernando  
STATE  
Mississippi  
VICINITY OF  
38632

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, OFFICE OF THE CHANCERY CLERK  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. DeSoto County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER  
Highway 51 North  
CITY, TOWN  
Hernando  
STATE  
Mississippi  
VICINITY OF  
38632

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
Statewide Survey of Historic Sites  
DATE  
May, 1976  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
Mississippi Department of Archives and History  
CITY, TOWN  
Jackson  
STATE  
Mississippi  
FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

# 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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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

Located on a side street in the small, courthouse community of Hernando, Mississippi, the Felix Labauve House occupies a flat, tree-shaded, mid-block lot that falls off steeply along its rear boundary. Facing east, the house is approximately in the center of casually planted grounds, a positioning which accommodates a deep front yard. The more open back area once featured a number of outbuildings, but only one small, open-sided, board-and-batten barn of later construction remains.

The single-story frame house reflects the late nineteenth century fascination with the picturesque, since the basic, vernacular structure is richly embellished with fanciful, eclectic detailing. Originally T-shaped, the five-bay, gable-roofed structure rests on low brick piers and is sheathed with clapboards. A very shallow, gabled pavilion is set to the south of the central entrance, giving the structure a varied silhouette. The overhanging eaves are boxed with flat, sawn pendants at each corner. Sheltering the full facade and breaking forward to express the pavilion is a sophisticated Italianate-inspired gallery with an elliptical and round-arch frieze with keystones, board-and-batten sheathed spandrels, and a deep, molded cornice. Rounded arches flanking the central elliptical arch define the curiously narrow entrance bay, which has a deep, single-light transom set over a single-leaf door with Renaissance Revival detailing and an arched, glazed upper panel. Full-length, two-over-two windows fitted with operable, three-panel louvered blinds flank the entrance. A highly decorative circular ventilator is set in each gable end. The rear portion of the house was remodeled and enlarged after World War II into an unobtrusive one-and-a-half-story wing employing the same simple detailing of the original section. The large, hip-roofed dormer on the main elevation was added at the same time.

Structural evidence indicates that the house originally consisted of three rooms radiating from the wide, central hall. The rear chamber, replaced by the present one-and-a-half-story wing, is serviced by double-leaf doors, while the side rooms have single-leaf openings. Simply detailed, each front room features an interior end chimney with a closet closed by double-leaf, two-panel doors set in one side of the reveal. The pilastered mantel in the north room is of an earlier style than the existing woodwork and may date from the previous house on the property. Much of the original Eastlake-style decorated hardware survives. Ceilings throughout the first floor have been dropped but cut out around the fenestration.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
___PREHISTORIC	___ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	___COMMUNITY PLANNING	___LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	___RELIGION
___1400-1499	___ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	___CONSERVATION	___LAW	___SCIENCE
___1500-1599	___AGRICULTURE	___ECONOMICS	___LITERATURE	___SCULPTURE
___1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	___EDUCATION	___MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
___1700-1799	___ART	___ENGINEERING	___MUSIC	___THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	___COMMERCE	___EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	___PHILOSOPHY	___TRANSPORTATION
___1900-	___COMMUNICATIONS	___INDUSTRY	___POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	___OTHER (SPECIFY)
		___INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1860-1879

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Labauve House was the home of Felix Labauve (1809-1879), an orphaned French emigré whose years of dedicated, unselfish service to his community as a whole made him one of the most revered and respected of DeSoto County's early leaders. Known as the "Father of Scholarships in Mississippi," he was the first Mississippian to bequeath an endowment to a university for the explicit purpose of establishing a permanent scholarship. Founded to enable orphaned boys from Labauve's home county of DeSoto to attend the University of Mississippi, the ongoing scholarship survives not so much as a memorial to the man as to his ideal of an education available to all young men and his concern for the welfare of orphaned youths. His single-story frame house with its graceful, classically inspired, arcaded gallery is an important regional example of picturesque detailing applied to a frequently used vernacular form.

The premature death in 1815 of Felix Labauve's father, a professional soldier who served with Rochambeau at Yorktown and later with Napoleon, left the family in France so hard pressed that Madame Labauve sent her son to America to be raised by her brothers, successful merchants in Camden, South Carolina. Labauve remained in Camden in the mercantile business with his uncles until 1835, when he moved to Noxubee County, Mississippi. Initially interested in agriculture, he quickly abandoned farming, moved west, and established a trading post at Cockrum, a predominantly Indian settlement in the Chickasaw lands ceded to the state and opened in 1832. In 1838 he moved to nearby Hernando, the seat of the newly created DeSoto County, where, in addition to conducting his mercantile business, he read law. His studies were motivated more by an enthusiasm for politics than a desire to pursue a legal career. The following year he became editor of Hernando's first newspaper, The Hernando Free Press and State Rights Democrat, which he used as a means of setting forth his political views.

Labauve was an ardent Democrat whose concern for the common man never wavered throughout his distinguished career of public service. In 1839 the Frenchman was elected to the Hernando town council, but running on a platform which included the establishment of common schools, he lost in his bid to capture a seat in the Mississippi senate. Undaunted, he continued to espouse the Democratic philosophy and in 1841 acquired a new paper, The Phenix, which replaced the discontinued Free Press. At the urging of his many supporters in the county, Labauve ran for the lower house of the state legislature in 1843 and was elected. He was noted as "a man who could never be neutral on any question relating to public welfare" (Owens, p. 19), and his political career was characterized by concern for improvements in public education and the protection of the interests of the common man.

Sensing controversy because of his Franco-Catholic background, Labauve returned to Camden, South Carolina, after his first term in the legislature and acquired his American citizenship. In 1846, he was elected to the state senate, despite the efforts of the Know-Nothing nativist faction, and was returned in 1848.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

DeSoto County, Mississippi. Chancery Clerk. Will Record Book 2, Deed Books R, S.  
 Owens, Ida. "Felix Labauve: Emigrant Patriot" (M.L.S. thesis, University of Mississippi, 1970).

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Latitude: 34°49'11"  
 Longitude: 89°59'23"

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.725 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 

ZONE	EASTING							NORTHING				

B 

ZONE	EASTING							NORTHING				

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies the northern portion of City Lot 423 of the City of Hernando. Beginning at a point approximately 85' north of the original southern boundary of Lot 423, the present lot is approximately 122' x 255'.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mary McCahon Shoemaker, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

DATE

October, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 571

TELEPHONE

(601) 354-6218

CITY OR TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi 39205

# 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

*Elmer A. Milliard*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

November 21, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

~~DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION~~

~~KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER~~

ATTEST:

*Wathover Cole*

DATE

*3 28 78*

DATE

*3 26 78*

~~KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER~~

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Pressing business matters in Hernando forced Labauve to leave state politics temporarily and return to DeSoto County. There his interest in politics and participation in the activities of the Democratic party continued, leading to his election in 1853 as clerk of the circuit court, a position he held until 1860. Curiously, he did not become a licensed attorney until 1857.

The land on which Labauve's house is located, lot 423 in the original plat of Hernando, was purchased by him in 1860 (Deed Book R, p. 111). Between 1853 and 1855 a "house" had been built on the property by Hiram B. Phillips. That structure apparently served as Labauve's home until it was either removed or incorporated in the present structure, which stylistically appears to date from the 1870s. In 1866 Labauve added lots 426, 427, and 428, immediately south of his house lot, to his holdings (Deed Book S, p. 514).

When the Civil War broke out, Labauve was presumably too old for active service, but he did participate in the war effort, traveling with the Confederate armies and serving as a member of the generals' staffs. Supportive efforts on the home front included organizing benefit balls. He was returned to the state legislature for three one-year terms at the conclusion of the war.

Locally, Labauve is credited with providing the design source for the 1870 DeSoto County courthouse. Replacing a modest frame facility that was practically destroyed during the war, the new courthouse, which stood until it was consumed by fire in 1940, was an extremely fine Chateausque structure designed by the noted architectural firm of Jones and Baldwin of Memphis. A drawing of a French chateau that Labauve provided the architects supposedly served as the basis for the design. Fittingly, Labauve's last official responsibility before his death in 1879 was to represent his state and county as an honorary Commissioner of the International Industrial Exposition in Paris in 1878. The occasion marked the first time that Labauve had returned to his native country.

Perhaps even more significant than the many accomplishments of Felix Labauve's productive lifetime was his legacy to his adopted community. He left monetary remembrances to several widows and his only known living relative in France, but the bulk of his estate went for charitable purposes. He

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willed lots 426, 427, and 428 to the bishop of the Roman Catholic Church in Natchez for the purpose of erecting a "Roman Catholic Chapel" in Hernando. He further stipulated that he should be interred on lot 426, envisioning it as the church's burial yard. The remainder of his estate (nearly \$16,000, which included the \$800 value of his house and lot) was devoted "to the creation of a scholarship in the University of Mississippi to be called Labauve Scholarship, for the Education of Boys in the University and their support while there who are Orphans Children of worthy parents and citizens of DeSoto County . . ." (Will Record Book 2, p. 148). The scholarship supports several students at a time and has aided young men in a variety of disciplines who have distinguished themselves on both the local and state level. Through his generosity, Labauve's ideals as a businessman, lawyer, legislator, and philanthropist continue to serve as a source of pride and inspiration for the community.

In 1976 the former Labauve property was donated to the city of Hernando. The possibility of its restoration is currently being pursued by the city and the Executive Committee for the Restoration and Preservation of the Felix Labauve House.